

PROGRAM NOTES

QUINCY SYMPHONY CHORUS

March 15, 2025 Quincy, Illinois

Compiled by Mason Ellison

Welcome to the Rock -- music and lyrics by Irene Sankoff and David Hein: From the 2017 Broadway musical **Come From Away**. *Welcome to the Rock* is the opening number that paints a picture of life in the small town of Gander, Newfoundland and the hardy people who live there. Based on true events during the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the town of 10,000 citizens, suddenly found itself sheltering 6,600 people when their flights were diverted to the closest airport which was Gander. In the wake of tragedy and loss, the people of Gander opened their hearts and lives to these strangers, and came together in kindness and generosity during a dark moment in history. **Come From Away** was nominated for 7 Tony Awards and closed its Broadway run in 2022, but not before making a film of the Broadway production.

Seize the Day -- music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Jack Feldman: This musical, from the 1992 Disney film **Newsies**, was inspired by the 1899 newsboys' strike in New York City. After forming a union and going on strike against a price hike on the papers they sell, *Seize the Day* raises the morale of the newsies to keep resisting Joseph Pulitzer's newspaper price hike. Originally a box office bomb, the film maintained a dedicated cult following since its release. In 2012 a musical adaptation of the film debuted on Broadway to great acclaim and was nominated for 8 Tony Awards, winning best original score for Alan Menken.

Always Look on the Bright Side of Life -- music and lyrics by Eric Idle: Originally, this song was performed in the climax of the 1979 film *Monty Python's Life of Brian*. The song was later used to lift King Arthur's spirits in the musical **Spamalot**. Based on the 1975 film, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, **Spamalot** debuted on Broadway in 2005, and won three Tony Awards including Best Musical.

Circle of Life -- music by Elton John, lyrics by Tim Rice: Memorably opening the smash Disney film **The Lion King**, the song *The Circle of Life* illustrated the connection all creatures share in nature and the roles they play. Debuting on Broadway in 1997, the musical adaptation of **The Lion King** was nominated for 11 Tony Awards, winning 6. As of 2024 it is one of the longest running Broadway shows and is currently the highest grossing Broadway show of all time.

One Short Day and ***Popular*** -- music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz: From the musical **Wicked**, *One Short Day* takes place in the iconic Emerald City and follows Elphaba and Glinda taking in the sights and wonders of the glamorous city before meeting the Wizard of Oz.

Popular is performed by Glinda, the future Good Witch. She wishes to celebrate her new friendship with former rival Elphaba and offers a makeover to gain her popularity with their schoolmates.

Wicked was based on the Gregory Maguire novel of the same name and debuted on Broadway in 2003. The show won 3 Tony Awards and has earned over \$1 billion in revenue, making it one of the

highest grossing musicals of all time. The first act of **Wicked** was adapted into a feature film in 2024 and was a box office success with a sequel set to be released later in 2025.

Make Them Hear You -- music by Stephen Flaherty and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens: Based on the novel by E.L. Doctorow, the musical **Ragtime** chronicles three stories in America during the early 20th century. *Make Them Hear You* is sung near the end of the show by Coalhouse Walker Jr. trying to convince his colleagues to fight injustice and discrimination in society through words and not violence. **Ragtime** went on to win 4 Tony Awards and was revived on Broadway in 2009.

Jersey Boys Medley -- lyrics and music by Bob Crewe and Bob Gaudio: Inspired by the story of the Four Seasons and their whirlwind career, **Jersey Boys** features several of their greatest hits. *Sherry* was released in 1962 and according to Gaudio took about 15 minutes to write. It was their first nationally released single and their first number one hit on the Billboard Hot 100. *Big Girls Don't Cry*, also released in 1962, was their second #1 hit single. In 2015 the song was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame. *Walk Like a Man*, released in 1963 was their third #1 hit single and is about a young man who heeds his father's advice to leave a dysfunctional relationship and maintain his dignity.

On My Own and ***Bring Him Home*** -- music by Claude-Michel Schönberg and lyrics by Herbert Kretzmer: Adapted from Victor Hugo's 1862 novel of the same name, **Les Misérables** tells the story of Jean Valjean and his redemption after being imprisoned for stealing a loaf of bread. Originally produced in French, in 1980 an English version was produced and premiered in London in 1985. **Les Misérables** has maintained massive world-wide success. **Les Mis** won the Tony Award for best musical in 1987, was adapted into an Oscar winning film in 2012, and is one of the longest running musical theatre productions in the world.

Cabaret -- music by John Kander and lyrics by Fred Ebb: **Cabaret** originally premiered on Broadway in 1966. The show is set in Berlin in the early 1930s under the backdrop of the Nazi rise to power, and follows the story of cabaret performer Sally Bowles who works in the Kit Kat Klub. The titular song occurs when Sally commits to stay in Berlin and live, ignoring the problems facing Berlin. This song was later famously recorded by Louis Armstrong. The musical went on to win the Tony Award for Best Musical in 1967 and later was adapted into an Oscar winning film starring Liza Minnelli.

You Will Be Found -- music and lyrics by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul: The musical, **Dear Evan Hansen**, tells the story of a high schooler with social anxiety. *You Will Be Found* is the Act 1 finale taking place during a school assembly, in memory of a classmate, Conner, who took his own life at the beginning of the musical. The song conveys an optimistic message of hope and togetherness. **Dear Evan Hansen** premiered on Broadway in 2016 and went on to win six Tony Awards, including Best Musical, and was adapted into a movie in 2021.

Riversong: A Celtic Celebration -- music and lyrics by Roger Emerson: Inspired by traditional Irish music, this piece invites someone to come away or "shulearoon" to waters by the sea and telling the dreamers, lovers, poets, and seeker to sing and dance in the joy that their course is set by God. Roger Emerson is a graduate of Southern Oregon University with a degree in music education. In 1977 he

published his first composition and eventually his royalties exceeded his teaching salary! He then decided to commit his full attention to writing and arranging. His works have been performed at both Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center. We sing this tonight in honor of St. Patrick's Day.

The Rhythm of Life -- music by Cy Coleman and lyrics by Dorothy Fields: From the 1966 Broadway musical **Sweet Charity**. In the second act the titular character, Charity, is invited to church by an acquaintance to find that the church embraces hippie culture and is led by a man named Big Daddy. **Sweet Charity** was nominated for 9 Tony Awards and was later turned into a motion picture in 1969 starring Shirley MacLean, with Bob Fosse reprising his directing and choreography duties from the stage show.

Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story -- music and lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda: This musical is telling the story of founding father Alexander Hamilton through a combination of musical styles including Hip-hop, R&B, Pop and Soul. **Hamilton** was a smash hit when it debuted on Broadway in 2015. *Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story* is performed at the end of the show after Alexander Hamilton is killed in a duel with Aaron Burr. The cast reflects on Hamilton's legacy as a founding father and the financial system he created during his time as Treasury Secretary. The song then focuses on Eliza Hamilton and her work to preserve her husband's legacy over the remaining years. **Hamilton** won 11 Tony Awards including Best Musical, won the Pulitzer Prize award for Drama, and set a record for most money grossed in a single week in New York City at \$3.3 million for a week of eight performances.

Fiddler on the Roof Medley -- music by Jerry Bock and lyrics by Sheldon Harnick: **Fiddler on the Roof** sees a milkman named Tevye, living in a Jewish settlement in Imperial Russia in the early 1900's, struggle to keep the traditions of his faith and culture while trying to marry off his three daughters, who all insist on marrying for love. Featuring the songs *Tradition*, *Matchmaker*, *If I Were a Rich Man*, *Sabbath Prayer*, *Sunrise Sunset* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, the show, **Fiddler on the Roof**, was the first to run for over 3000 performances on Broadway. It won nine Tony Awards including Best Musical, has been revived on Broadway 5 times, and was adapted into a 1971 Oscar winning film.