



CYGNET THEATRE COMPANY

2410 Congress Street, San Diego, CA 92110

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CYGNET THEATRE KICKS OFF ITS "PLAYWRIGHT COMPANION SERIES" **WITH SONDHEIM'S PASSION!**

Cygnet Artists Take On Sondheim San Diego-Premiere for Two Nights Only.

SAN DIEGO, CA – With accolades pouring in for its current production of *Sweeney Todd*, Cygnet Theatre is excited to introduce its "Playwright Companion Series" with a **Concert Staging of Sondheim's *Passion***. This rarely staged musical, with **music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by James Lapine**, will feature some of Cygnet's finest artists and joins the list of other Sondheim works already produced or produced in staged-readings on Cygnet's stages. Directed by Kim Strassburger, ***Passion* runs for two nights only - April 12th & 13th, 2010** at Cygnet's Old Town Theatre.

Stephen Sondheim's *Passion* is a gorgeous, haunting musical that examines the landscape of the human heart. In a remote military outpost in Italy in 1863, a handsome army captain, separated from his beautiful but married mistress, is forced to re-evaluate his beliefs about love when he becomes the object of the obsessive, unrelenting passion of Fosca, his Colonel's plain and sickly cousin. *Passion* explores the theme of love as something not necessarily pretty or safe, but rather as a blazing lifeforce that consumes and enlightens. ***Passion* is notable for being the only other show, apart from *Sweeney Todd*, that Stephen Sondheim himself conceived.**

Although Sondheim's romantic production was the **1994 winner of four Tony Awards**, including Best Musical, Best Original Score, Best Book of a Musical and Best Actress for Donna Murphy (Fosca), *Passion* is one of Sondheim's least produced works. It is, in fact, notable for holding the record for the very shortest Broadway run of any Tony-winning musical. The New York Times review of the production praised its over-all power, beauty and force, yet referred to the story about a young military officer "drawn into an intense relationship with a sick, ugly woman" as disturbing and unsettling. Perhaps the atypical, gender-reversed "Beauty and the Beast" theme has kept this moving Sondheim gem one of his best kept secrets. This Fall, London's Donmar Warehouse hopes to give it new life in a grand revival. **Cygnet's Concert Staging of *Passion* will be its San Diego Premiere.**

Passion is emblematic of the staged-readings Cygnet will present through its **Playwright Companion Series**. In an effort to deepen the theatre-going experience for Cygnet audiences, **the program - headed by Associate Artistic Director Francis Gercke - will offer "partner pieces" to each of Cygnet's main-stage shows**. Gercke plans to find alternate works by playwrights featured in the Cygnet season, as well as complementary pieces to illuminate the artistry and influence of each playwright upon the American Theatre.

The cast of ***Passion* comprises** a list of Cygnet favorites, including **Sandy Campbell** (*Noises Off, Mauritius, Communicating Doors*) as Fosca, **Jason Heil** (*Noises Off*) as Giorgio, **Amy Biedel** (*My Fair Lady, It's a Wonderful Life, Invention of Love*) as Clara, **Jim Chovick** (*A Christmas Carol, Desire Under the Elms, Copenhagen, Invention of Love, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*) as the Doctor Tambourri, **David McBean** (*It's a Wonderful Life, Fully Committed, Pageant, Burn This, The Book of Liz*) as Count Ludovic, **Jeannine Marquie** (*It's A Wonderful Life, The Matchmaker*) as the Mistress and **Andy Collins** (*Pageant*) as Colonel Ricci. Actors making their Cygnet debut include **Brian Barbarin** as Fosca's Father, **Gigi Coddington** as Fosca's Mother, **Tony Houck** as Sergeant Lombardi, **Justin Martin** as Private Augenti and **Eric Vest** as Lieutenant Torasso.

Cygnet's Concert Staging of ***Passion* will be directed by Kim Strassburger** who directed the highly-lauded Concert Staging of Sondheim's *Assassins* for Cygnet Theatre in 2009. Strassburger is a Theatre Teacher at Coronado's School of the Arts and has been seen as an actor on multiple San Diego stages - most recently in the Cygnet's Critic's Circle Award Winning *Noises Off*. Cygnet's *Passion* also features the musical talents of **Mark Danisovszky** who **serves as Musical Director** and plays Piano/Keyboard.

Performances of *Passion* will play on two off-nights during the run of Cygnet's *Sweeney Todd*... **Monday, April 12th and Tuesday, April 13th at 7:00 pm** on Cygnet's Old Town Stage located at 4040 Twiggs St. in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. **Tickets are \$25 general admission and \$20 for Cygnet Subscribers.**

Tickets can be purchased by visiting Cygnet's website at **www.cygnettheatre.com** or calling the box office at **(619) 337-1525**. Tickets can also be purchased in person by visiting Cygnet's box office located at the Old Town Theatre, **4040 Twiggs St.** in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park.

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CYGNET THEATRE FACT SHEET

PASSION

WHAT: Cygnet Theatre Company presents **A Concert Staging of Stephen Sondheim's *PASSION***.

WHERE: Cygnet Theatre – The Old Town Stage
4040 Twiggs St. in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

WHO: Music and Lyrics by **Stephen Sondheim**
Book by **James Lapine**

Director: **Kim Strassburger**
Musical Director: **Mark Kanisovszky**
Stage Manager: **Heather Brose***

CAST: **Sandy Campbell*** (*Fosca*)
Jason Heil* (*Giorgio*)
Amy Biedel*° (*Clara*)
Brian Barbarin (*Major Rizzoli*)
Gigi Coddington (*Fosca's Mother*)
Andy Collins (*Colonel Ricci*)
Jim Chovick° (*Doctor Tambourri*)
Tony Houck (*Sergeant Lombardi*)
Jeannine Marquie (*Mistress*)
Justin Martin (*Private Augenti*)
David McBean*° (*Count Ludovic*)
Eric Vest (*Lieutenant Torasso*)
* Member of Actors Equity Association, °Resident Artist

MUSICANS:
Mark Danisovszky (Piano and Keyboard)

DATES: April 12th – April 13th, 2010

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE
Monday & Tuesday at 7:00pm.
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PRICES: \$25 General Admission/\$20 Cygnet Subscribers

HOW: Phone: (619) 337-1525
Online: www.cygnettheatre.com
In Person: Old Town Theatre - 4040 Twiggs St., San Diego, CA 92110