

THEATREWORKS SILICON VALLEY PRESENTS
WORLD PREMIERE TRIBUTE TO THEATRE LEGEND

Being Alive:
A Sondheim Celebration

Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Conceived by Robert Kelley and William Liberatore

Directed by Robert Kelley

Music Direction by William Liberatore

Choreography by Alex Perez

June 5-30, 2024 (opening night: June 8)

MOUNTAIN VIEW CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA (29 April 2024) — **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** will close its 53rd season with the World Premiere of a new musical tribute honoring Stephen Sondheim, ***Being Alive: A Sondheim Celebration***. Founding Artistic Director **Robert Kelley** returns to TheatreWorks, collaborating with TheatreWorks Resident Musical Director **William Liberatore** to conceive this unique musical celebration of the legacy of one of Broadway’s greatest composers. ***Being Alive: A Sondheim Celebration*** will be presented **June 5-30, 2024 (press opening: June 8)** at Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St, Mountain View. For tickets (\$27-\$100) and more information the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org** or call **877-662-8978**.

Throughout his storied career, Sondheim chronicled the depth of human relationships, exploring love and loss as well as breakdowns and breakthroughs in a wealth of unforgettable musicals, including *Into the Woods*, *A Little Night Music*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Company*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Passion*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, and many more. With brilliant wit, exquisite melodies, and astonishing lyrics, he became TheatreWorks’ most-produced composer in its 54 seasons of presenting musicals and plays. In this revelatory World Premiere revue, Sondheim’s profound understanding of the human heart takes center stage. ***Being Alive: A Sondheim Celebration*** spotlights an interconnected group of performers, exploring the

tumultuous and ever-changing nature of love in their personal lives. A paean to both the theatrical titan himself and the process of creating theatre, this musical also showcases the performers' journey staging a show through dress rehearsals all the way to opening night.

TheatreWorks is committed to creating an environment that is accessible for all audiences in its community. American Sign Language interpretation will be available at the performance of ***Being Alive: A Sondheim Celebration* at 7:30pm Tuesday, June 18.** In partnership with c2 Caption Coalition, TheatreWorks will include open captioning (a screen displaying all dialogue and a description of sound effects) for the performances **2pm and 7pm on Sunday, June 23** and **2pm Wednesday, June 26.** TheatreWorks is collaborating with Gravity Access Services in offering audio descriptions to assist patrons who are visually impaired. This service will be available **8pm Saturday, June 29** and **2pm Sunday, June 30.** (To utilize audio description, patrons should pre-register at **877-662-8978** after purchasing tickets). Assistive listening devices are offered at every performance with no advance registration required. For more information about accessibility programs at TheatreWorks the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org/accessibility.**

TheatreWorks will hold post-show discussions with the cast following the **Wednesday, June 12** and **Wednesday, June 26** performances of ***Being Alive: A Sondheim Celebration*.**

TheatreWorks will require face masks to be worn for the performances of ***Being Alive: A Sondheim Celebration* at 8pm Friday, June 14; 2pm Saturday, June 15; and 2pm Sunday, June 23.** For up-to-date information about COVID-19 health and safety procedures the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org/safety.**

Director Kelley has assembled a talented cast to bring Sondheim's remarkable music to life. **Anne Tolpegin** makes her TheatreWorks debut as Lena. Seen on Broadway in *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Les Misérables*, she has also appeared in the national tours of *Kinky Boots*, *Billy Elliot*, *Mamma Mia*, and *Ragtime*. Off-Broadway credits include *Carrie* at MCC Theater and

Sweeney Todd at Barrow Street Theatre. Her TV credits include USA Network's "Mr. Robot," Marvel Television/ABC Studios' "Iron Fist," and ABC Studios' "All My Children."

Nick Nakashima returns to TheatreWorks as Gene. He was featured in *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Sense and Sensibility*, both TheatreWorks productions of *Jane Austen's EMMA* (2007 & 2015), *The Learned Ladies of Park Avenue*, and *A Little Night Music*, as well as TheatreWorks New Works Festival workshops of *Jane Austen's EMMA*, *Burnt Part Boys*, and *Unlock'd*. Nakashima has appeared in productions at 42nd Street Moon, Foothill Music Theatre, San Jose Musical Theatre, Jewel Theatre Company, and American Musical Theatre of San Jose.

Melissa WolfKlain returns to TheatreWorks as Helen. She performed in *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Tinyard Hill*, as well as TheatreWorks New Works Festival workshops of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Caraboo*, and *Asphalt Beach*. She won a Theatre Bay Area (TBA) Award for *Dames at Sea* at 42nd Street Moon as well as SFBATCC Awards for her appearances in Broadway By the Bay's *Singin' in the Rain* and *Crazy for You*. Seen in the national tours of *White Christmas* and *42nd Street*, WolfKlain has also performed at regional theatres including San Francisco Playhouse, Hillbarn Theatre, and Arizona Repertory Theatre. Her film and TV credits include FOX TV's "America's Most Wanted" and Lifetime's "The Truth about Jane."

Noel Anthony Escobar returns to TheatreWorks as Ben. He was seen in the World Premiere of *A Little Princess*, as well as *Ragtime*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Rags*, *The Secret Garden*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Jane Eyre The Musical*, and *Merrily We Roll Along*, and in several New Works Festivals. Anthony won San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics (SFBATCC) and Shellie Awards for his performance in *She Loves Me* and Shellie Awards for his performances in *The Music Man* and *Les Misérables*. He has starred in leading roles at local theatres including American Conservatory Theater, Broadway By the Bay, Marin Theatre Company, Center Repertory Company, Diablo Theatre Company, American Musical Theatre of San Jose, and has performed with Alameda Civic Light Opera and Symphony Silicon Valley.

Also making her TheatreWorks debut in this production is **Solona Husband**, who plays Sally. Husband has been seen on Bay Area stages including Hillbarn Theatre, Masquers Playhouse, Palo Alto Players, Sunnyvale Community Players, and Plethos Productions.

Sleiman Alahmadieh, who has performed at Berkeley Playhouse, Throckmorton Theatre, Pacifica Spindrift Players, Masquers Playhouse, and Novato Theater Company, makes his TheatreWorks debut in this production as George.

Being Alive: A Sondheim Celebration features choreography by **Alex Perez**, assistant direction by **Ev Shiro**, scenic design by **Wilson Chin**, costume design by **Fumiko Bielefeldt**, lighting design by **Pamila Z. Gray**, and sound design by **Cliff Carruthers**. **Randall K. Lum** serves as stage manager with **Laura Hicks** as assistant stage manager.

Stephen Sondheim is widely acknowledged as the most innovative, most influential, and most important composer and lyricist in modern Broadway history. He received eight Tony Awards, more than any other composer, including a special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre. He also won eight Grammy Awards, an Academy Award, and a Pulitzer Prize. Sondheim wrote the music and lyrics for *Into the Woods*, *A Little Night Music*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Company*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Passion*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Assassins*, *Follies*, *Anyone Can Whistle*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and *Road Show* as well as the lyrics for *West Side Story*, *Gypsy*, *Do I Hear a Waltz?*, and additional lyrics for *Candide*. Revues of his work include *Side by Side by Sondheim*, *Putting it Together*, *Marry Me a Little*, *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow*, and *Sondheim on Sondheim*. He composed the film scores of *Stavisky* and *Reds* and songs for *Dick Tracy*, for which he won the Academy Award. He also wrote songs for the television productions and provided incidental music for plays. He won the Pulitzer Prize in Drama for *Sunday in the Park with George*.

Robert Kelley (co-creator and music director) is TheatreWorks' Founder. In 2020, Kelley retired from his post as Founding Artistic Director, where he had served as artistic head of the

company since its inception in 1970. During his 50 seasons at the helm of the Tony recipient regional theatre, he directed more than 175 TheatreWorks productions, including many World and Regional premieres. In 2003 Kelley was honored with the SFBATCC Paine Knickerbocker Award for Lifetime Achievement, in 2016 was awarded the Jerry Friedman Lifetime Achievement Award from the SFBATCC, and in 2019 he received a TBA Legacy Award. Kelley received a TBA Award for his direction of *Daddy Long Legs* and SFBATCC Awards for Outstanding Direction for his productions of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Jane Eyre*, *Into the Woods*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Rags*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Another Midsummer Night*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Caroline, or Change*.

William Liberatore (co-creator and music director) is TheatreWorks's Resident Musical Director and has worked as a Choir Director at Gunn High School for more than 30 years. Liberatore has conducted more than 40 shows at TheatreWorks, including the World Premieres of *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Prince of Egypt*, and *The Four Immigrants: An American Musical Manga*, as well as *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Ragtime*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *Fun Home*, *Rags*, *The Life of the Party*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Once on This Island* (TBA Award), *Crowns*, and *Pacific Overtures*. He has been a frequent recipient of the SFBATCC Award for Best Musical Direction.

TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, led by Artistic Director **Giovanna Sardelli**, presents a wide variety of contemporary plays and musicals and revitalizes great works of the past. Founded in 1970 by **Robert Kelley**, TheatreWorks has grown from a truly original Silicon Valley start-up to become one of the nation's leading professional non-profit theatre companies. TheatreWorks was recently honored as the recipient of the 2019 Regional Theatre Tony Award. TheatreWorks also champions new work, offering artists support and a creative home as they develop new stories for the American theatre. Offstage, TheatreWorks' arts education programs in local schools and arts engagement programs in Silicon Valley neighborhoods uplift its audiences and strengthen community bonds. Onstage and off, TheatreWorks welcomes the mosaic of people that embody

the Bay Area and beyond, celebrating the transformative power of theatre to ignite imagination, inspire conversation, and enliven souls.

Media sponsor for TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's 2023/24 season is *San Francisco Chronicle*.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: TheatreWorks Silicon Valley will close its 53rd season with the World Premiere of a new musical tribute honoring Stephen Sondheim, ***Being Alive: A Sondheim Celebration***. Founding Artistic Director **Robert Kelley** returns to TheatreWorks, collaborating with TheatreWorks Resident Musical Director **William Liberatore** to conceive this unique musical celebration of the legacy of one of Broadway's greatest composers. Throughout his storied career, Sondheim chronicled the depth of human relationships, exploring love and loss as well as breakdowns and breakthroughs in a wealth of unforgettable musicals, including *Into the Woods*, *A Little Night Music*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Company*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Passion*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, and many more. With brilliant wit, exquisite melodies, and astonishing lyrics, he became TheatreWorks' most-produced composer in its 54 seasons of presenting plays and musicals. In this revelatory World Premiere revue, Sondheim's profound understanding of the human heart takes center stage. ***Being Alive: A Sondheim Celebration*** spotlights an interconnected group of performers, exploring the tumultuous and ever-changing nature of love in their personal lives.

WHEN: Previews: Wednesday, June 5 – Friday, June 7, 2024
Opening: Saturday, June 8, 2024
Closes: Sunday, June 30, 2024

SHOWS: Previews: 8:00pm
Tuesdays: 7:30pm
Wednesdays: 2:00pm, 7:30pm
Thursdays & Fridays: 8:00pm
Saturdays: 2:00pm, 8:00pm
Sundays: 2:00pm, 7:00pm

ACCESS: **ASL Interpretation:** 7:30pm Tuesday, June 18, 2024
Open Captioning: 2pm and 7pm on Sunday, June 23, 2024; 2pm on Wednesday, June 26, 2024
Audio Description: 8pm Saturday, June 29, 2024; 2pm Sunday, June 30, 2024
Please register in advance, as service includes a pre-show talk 30 minutes before the performance.
Assistive Listening Devices available at every performance

EVENTS: **Post-show discussions with cast:** 7:30pm Wednesday, June 12, 2024;
7:30pm Wednesday, June 26, 2024

WHERE: **Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts**, 500 Castro St., Mountain View, CA 94041

TICKETS: Single tickets (\$27-\$100) are currently available. Pricing subject to change.

INFO: For information visit **theatreworks.org** or call **877-662-8978**

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PRESS: Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co., lauren@cb-pr.com

PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available: <https://cbpr.co/press/beingalive/>