

SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS  
EXUBERANT BROADWAY MUSICAL MEGA-HIT

# Hairspray

Music by Marc Shaiman

Lyrics by Scott Wittman & Marc Shaiman

Book by Mark O'Donnell & Thomas Meehan

Based on the New Line Cinema film written and directed by John Waters

Directed by Bill English, Musical Direction by Dave Dobrusky, Choreography by Phoenix  
Rose

July 10 – September 12, 2026 (*opening night: July 17*)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (14 May 2026) — **San Francisco Playhouse** will close its 2025-26 season with the mega-hit musical *Hairspray*. Winner of eight Tony Awards including Best Musical, this bold Broadway phenomenon is piled bouffant-high with laughter, romance, and groovy dancing. Set in 1962, *Hairspray* follows Baltimore teen Tracy Turnblad, who dreams of dancing on her favorite TV show. When her wish comes true, she shakes up the system, using her platform to confront racial segregation and to inspire a movement that changes the face of television forever. *Hairspray* features **Marc Shaiman** and **Scott Wittman**'s upbeat R&B and Motown-infused score including "You Can't Stop the Beat," "Good Morning Baltimore," "Welcome to the 60's," and "I Know Where I've Been" plus **Mark O'Donnell** and **Thomas Meehan**'s uplifting book full of humor and heart. Helmed by San Francisco Playhouse Artistic Director **Bill English** with **Phaedra Tillery-Boughton** as associate director, **Dave Dobrusky** as musical director and **Phoenix Rose** as choreographer, *Hairspray* will perform **July 10 – September 12, 2026** (*opening night: July 17*) at San Francisco Playhouse, 450 Post Street. For tickets (\$52-\$145) and more information, the public may visit [sfplayhouse.org](http://sfplayhouse.org) or call the box office at **415-677-9596**.

Based on the 1988 film by John Waters, *Hairspray* premiered at Seattle's The 5th Avenue Theatre before opening on Broadway, where it swept the Tony Awards and ran for more than eight years. It later opened in the West End where it won four Olivier Awards including Best New Musical. It was adapted into a film starring John Travolta, Michelle Pfeiffer, Queen Latifah, Zac Efron, and Amanda Bynes and received a live TV production by NBC starring Ariana Grande, Kristin Chenoweth, Jennifer Hudson, and Harvey Fierstein. *The New York Times* commended *Hairspray*'s "Deliriously tuneful songs" and said the musical "Succeeds in recreating the pleasures of the old-fashioned musical comedy without seeming old-fashioned." *Variety* lauded it as "Effortlessly adorable. Infectious jubilation." *The Mercury News* said the 2004 Broadway tour was "A big-hearted, high-energy bubble gum spectacular" while *San Francisco Chronicle* deemed it "Irresistible. A winner. A joyfully syncopated celebration."

"In San Francisco Playhouse's new production, we will reimagine *Hairspray* with a sharper edge, stripping away some of its bubblegum sheen to restore the subversive bite of John Waters," said San Francisco Playhouse Artistic Director **Bill English**. "This production leans into the story's racial politics and cultural satire, examining Baltimore's fight for integration through our contemporary lens. In an era marked by polarization, erasure, and the lingering shadows of racist

ideology, *Hairspray* becomes more than a feel-good musical. It's a defiant, joyful call to resistance, where dancing is protest and inclusion is revolutionary.”

Director English helms a talented cast for this Broadway musical favorite. **Ella Ruth Francis** (she/her) makes her Playhouse debut as Tracy Turnblad, a bubbly Baltimore teen who loves to dance. She won a Theatre Bay Area Award for her performance in Los Altos Stage Company's production of *Next to Normal*. She has also performed at New Conservatory Theatre Center and Dacha Theatre and was a former resident artist at San Francisco Shakespeare Festival.

Seen as Cinderella's Prince and a Wolf in the Playhouse's recent production of *Into the Woods*, **Trevor March** (he/him) returns to Playhouse as Link Larkin, the handsome heartthrob of The Corny Collins Show. He has also performed with San Jose Stage Company, Sierra Repertory Theatre, Pacific Conservatory Theatre, Disney Cruise Line, and Princess Cruise Line.

**Jeffrey Brian Adams** (he/him) returns to the Playhouse as Corny Collins, the host of Baltimore's popular dance TV show. Adams' previous Playhouse performances include roles in *She Loves Me*; *City of Angels*; *Dogfight*; *Promises, Promises*; and *Into the Woods* (2014). He has also performed at American Conservatory Theater, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, San Jose Stage Company, and Hillbarn Theatre. His New York credits include 59E59 Theaters, Theatre Row, and New York Fringe.

Performing as Rapunzel in this season's production of *Into the Woods*, **Samantha Rich** (she/her) returns to the Playhouse as Penny Pingleton, Tracy's best friend. Rich has acted with Ray of Light Theatre, Woodminster Summer Musicals, Foothill Music Theatre, Altarena Playhouse, and American Conservatory's Young Conservatory.

Seen in the Playhouse's productions of *Fat Ham*, *Waitress*, and *Nollywood Dreams*, **Jordan Covington** (he/him) returns to the Playhouse as Seaweed J. Stubs, a classmate in Tracy's school. He has appeared in productions at San Francisco Opera, American Conservatory Theater, Marin Theatre, Berkeley Playhouse, PlayGround, Theatre Rhinoceros, 3Girls Theatre, and The Lower Bottom Playaz.

**Jonathan Chisolm** (they/them) makes their Playhouse debut as Edna Turnblad, Tracy's mother. They have been seen onstage at Papermill Playhouse, Forestburgh Playhouse, Area Stage Company, The Firehouse Theatre, Sierra Repertory Theatre, and Bigfork Summer Playhouse. Chisolm also performed in the original Off-Broadway production of *Waiting in the Wings*.

**Ken Brill** (he/him) plays Wilbur Turnblad, Tracys' father. Brill appeared onstage in the Playhouse's *Into the Woods* (2025), *A Christmas Story*, *City of Angels*, and *Camelot*. He also served as the keyboardist/synthesist for the Playhouse's *Into the Woods* (2025), *Company*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Follies*, *A Chorus Line*, *As You Like It*, *Evita*, and *Waitress*. He was the associate musical director for the Playhouse's *Follies*. Other performances include roles with Ray of Light Theatre, Palo Alto Players, Broadway By the Bay, and 42nd Street Moon.

**Mackenzie Macdonald** (she/her) makes her Playhouse debut as Amber Von Tussle, the lead dancer on The Corny Collins Show and Tracy's nemesis. She has acted with Ray of Light

Theatre, Foothill Music Theatre, and Hillbarn Theatre.

Most recently seen at the Playhouse as The Witch in this season's production of *Into the Woods*, **Alison Ewing** (she/her) returns as Velma Von Tussle, Amber's mother who directs The Corny Collins Show. Other Playhouse performances include *A Chorus Line* and *Guys and Dolls*. Ewing has been seen on Broadway in *Mamma Mia!* and Roundabout Theatre Company's *Cabaret*. She has performed in the national tours of *Anastasia*, *An American In Paris*, *Cabaret*, *Flashdance*, and *Mamma Mia!*. In the Bay Area, she's appeared onstage with TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Marin Theatre, SFBATCO, San Jose Stage Company, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Center Repertory Company, Playhouse West, Hillbarn Theatre, Ray of Light Theatre, and Theatre On San Pedro Square. Her TV credits include "Ally McBeal" and "Six Feet Under."

**Jeannine Anderson** (she/her) makes her Playhouse debut as Motormouth Maybelle, the Guest DJ of The Corny Collins Show. Anderson has toured across the United States and Europe, performing in operas and concerts. She was seen as the titular character in Lorraine Hansberry Theatre's World Premiere of *HALIE! The Mahalia Jackson Musical* as well as in Campo Santo's *the boiling* and *Post Pardon: The Opera* at the Gordon Center for Creative and Performing Arts.

**Rebecca Pingree** (she/her) makes her Playhouse debut as Penny's mother Prudy Pingleton, the gym teacher, and the Matron. She has performed with American Conservatory Theater, Marin Theatre, Shotgun Players, Ray of Light Theatre, Panto at the Presidio, Marin Shakespeare Company, San Jose Stage Company, and Berkeley Playhouse. She co-founded San Francisco's Analog Theatre Collective.

**David Boyll** (he/him) plays boutique owner Mr. Pinky and Ultra Clutch Hairspray owner Harriman F. Spritzer. Boyll was an understudy for the Playhouse's production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. He has acted with Palo Alto Players, Pear Theatre, Shotgun Players, and Eugene O'Neill Festival.

**Sanaiya Johnson** (she/her) and **Suleika Onia Patton** (she/her) play Little Inez, a talented young dancer. **Sanaiya Johnson** makes her professional debut with this production and attends Oakland School for the Arts. **Suleika Onia Patton** makes her professional debut with this production and has performed with Little Theater Company. **Kareem Jenkins** (he/him) plays Duane, a classmate in Tracy's school. He was seen in the chorus of *My Fair Lady* and served as an understudy for the Playhouse's productions of *Fat Ham*. He previously performed with Sacramento Theatre Company and was a featured singer in multiple cabarets including the Pride cabaret at the B Street Theatre.

The cast also includes **Kaila Dyson** (she/her), **Anese Jade** (she/her), and **Cai Rodis** (she/her) as The Dynamites and **Sierra Bolar** (she/her), **Matt Letton** (he/him), **Gwen Tessman** (she/her), and **Hunter Yocom** (he/him) as The Nicest Kids in Town.

#### **PRODUCTION TEAM:**

*Hairspray* features direction by **Bill English**; associate direction by **Phaedra Tillery-Boughton**; musical direction by **Dave Dobrusky**; choreography by **Phoenyx Rose**; dramaturgy by **Margo Hall**; scenic design by **Heather Kenyon**; lighting design by **Michael Oesch** with lighting design

assistant **Tristan Fabiunke**; projections design by **Erik Scanlon**; costume design by **Bethany Deal**; wigs, hair & makeup design by **Sharon Peng**; sound design by **James Ard**; properties design by **Amy Benjamin**; intimacy direction by **Vicki L. Hoskins**; and fight direction by **Dave Maier**. **Sarah Marie Selig** is the stage manager with **Rachel Lau-Kee Browne** as assistant stage manager.

### **CREATIVE TEAM:**

**Marc Shaiman** (Music and Lyrics) wrote music and lyrics for *Hairspray*, *Catch Me If You Can*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Some Like It Hot*, *Martin Short: Fame Becomes Me*, and *SMASH*. He provided additional lyrics for the recent revival of *The Music Man* and original music for *Plaza Suite*. For *Hairspray*, he won a Tony Award for the score and a Grammy Award and served as an executive producer on the film. He also won an Emmy Award for co-writing Billy Crystal's Academy Award performance and an Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Music and Lyrics for his work on "Only Murders in the Building." He has earned seven Academy Awards nominations and was honored with ASCAP's Henry Mancini Award in recognition of his outstanding achievements and contributions to the music of film and television. Shaiman wrote songs for Disney's *Mary Poppins Returns*, and has also provided music for *Sleepless in Seattle*, *When Harry Met Sally*, *Beaches*, *Patch Adams*, *The First Wives Club*, *The Addams Family*, *Sister Act*, *Hocus Pocus*, *The American President*, *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut*, among others. His television credits also include "Saturday Night Live" and "Smash." He has also provided arrangements for Broadway concerts by Bette Midler, Patti LuPone, Harry Connick Jr., André De Shields, Peter Allen, among others. His memoir *Never Mind the Happy: Showbiz Stories From a Sore Winner* published earlier this year.

**Scott Wittman** (Lyrics) co-wrote (with Marc Shaiman) the lyrics for *Hairspray*, for which the pair received Tony and Grammy Awards. He also served as an executive producer on the hit film. They teamed up again on Broadway for *Martin Short: Fame Becomes Me*, which he also directed, and *Catch Me If You Can*, *Charlie and Chocolate Factory*, *Some Like It Hot*, and *SMASH*. He provided additional lyrics for the recent revival of *The Music Man*. For their original songs on NBC's musical drama "Smash," Wittman and Shaiman were nominated for two Emmy Awards, a Grammy, and a Golden Globe. Wittman won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Music and Lyrics for his work on "Only Murders in the Building." For Patti LuPone, Wittman has created and directed two Broadway shows, three recordings, and three sold-out Carnegie Hall concerts. He collaborated with Shaiman on new songs for Disney's *Mary Poppins Returns*, receiving an Oscar nomination for the song "The Place Where Lost Things Go" featured in the film.

**Mark O'Donnell** (Book) won a Tony Award for co-writing the book of *Hairspray* and also co-wrote the book for *Cry-Baby*. His plays include *That's It, Folks!*; *Fables for Friends*; and *The Nice and the Nasty* (all produced at Playwrights Horizons), and *Strangers on Earth* and *Vertigo Park* (both produced by Zena Group Theatre). He wrote the book and lyrics for the musical *Tots in Tinseltown*. O'Donnell collaborated with Bill Irwin on an adaptation of Moliere's *Scapin* and he co-authored a translation of Feydeau's *A Flea in Her Ear*, both for Roundabout Theatre Company. For Manhattan Theatre Club he translated Jean Claude Carriere's *La Terrasse*. He published two collections of comic stories *Elementary Education* and *Vertigo Park and Other Tall Tales* (both Knopf) as well as two novels *Getting Over Homer* and *Let Nothing You Dismay*

(both now in Vintage paperback). His humor, cartoons, and poetry have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, and *Esquire*, among many others. He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Lecomte du Nuoy Prize, and the George S. Kaufman Award.

**Thomas Meehan** (Book) won the Tony Award for co-writing the book for *The Producers* and for co-writing the book for *Hairspray*. He received his first Tony Award for writing the book of *Annie*, which was his first Broadway show. He wrote the books for the musicals *Rocky*, *Elf the Musical*, *Cry-Baby*, *Young Frankenstein*, *Chaplin*, *Bombay Dreams*, *I Remember Mama*, *Ain't Broadway Grand*, and *Annie Warbucks*. In addition, he was a long-time contributor of humor to *The New Yorker*, an Emmy-Award winning writer of television comedy, and a collaborator on a number of screenplays, including Mel Brooks' *Spaceballs* and *To Be Or Not To Be*. Meehan was also a member of the Council of the Dramatists Guild.

**Bill English** (Director) is the co-founder and Artistic Director of **San Francisco Playhouse**. Alongside co-founder Susi Damilano, he has guided its growth from a bare-bones storefront to the second-largest nonprofit theatre company in San Francisco. Milestone accomplishments include introducing Pulitzer Prize winner Stephen Adly Guirgis to the Bay Area by directing three of his plays; commissioning over 30 playwrights including Theresa Rebeck, Aaron Loeb, Lauren Gunderson, Lauren Yee, and Christopher Chen; and developing World Premieres from workshops to Sandbox Series to Mainstage Season to Off-Broadway (including the Off-Broadway transfers of *Ideation* and *Bauer*), and presenting the very first production of *Grounded* by George Brant which later played at The Public Theater.

#### **SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE:**

Founded by Bill English and Susi Damilano in 2003, **San Francisco Playhouse** has been described by *The New York Times* as “a company that stages some of the most consistently high-quality work around” and deemed “ever adventurous” by *The Mercury News*. Located in the heart of the Union Square Theatre District, San Francisco Playhouse is the city’s premier Off-Broadway company, an intimate alternative to the larger more traditional Union Square theatre fare. The Playhouse provides audiences the opportunity to experience professional theater with top-notch actors and world-class design in a setting where they are close to the action. The Playhouse also fosters the development of new work, including commissions and new play readings. *KQED/NPR* described the company as “one of the few theaters in the Bay Area that has a mission that actually shows up on stage. Artistic Director Bill English’s commitment to empathy as a guiding philosophical and aesthetic force is admirable and by living that mission, fascinating things happen onstage.” The Playhouse is committed to providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, directors, writers, designers, and theatre lovers converge to create and experience dramatic works that celebrate the human spirit.

*Hairspray* is licensed by Music Theatre International.

#### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** **San Francisco Playhouse** will close its 2025-26 season with the mega-hit musical *Hairspray*. Winner of eight Tony Awards including Best Musical, this bold Broadway phenomenon is piled bouffant-high with laughter, romance, and

groovy dancing. Set in 1962, *Hairspray* follows Baltimore teen Tracy Turnblad, who dreams of dancing on her favorite TV show. When her wish comes true, she shakes up the system, using her platform to confront racial segregation and to inspire a movement that changes the face of television forever. *Hairspray* features **Marc Shaiman** and **Scott Wittman**'s upbeat R&B and Motown-infused score including "You Can't Stop the Beat," "Good Morning Baltimore," "Welcome to the 60's," and "I Know Where I've Been" plus **Mark O'Donnell** and **Thomas Meehan**'s uplifting book full of humor and heart. San Francisco Playhouse Artistic Director **Bill English** will direct the production with **Phaedra Tillery-Boughton** as associate director, **Dave Dobrusky** as musical director, and **Phoenyx Rose** as choreographer.

**WHEN:** Previews: Friday, July 10 – Thursday, July 16, 2026  
*Opening: Friday, July 17, 2026*  
Closes: Saturday, September 12, 2026

**SHOWS:** Tuesdays and Thursdays: 7pm  
Wednesdays: 2pm & 7pm  
Fridays: 8pm  
Saturdays: 3pm & 8pm  
Sundays: 2pm

**WHERE:** San Francisco Playhouse (450 Post Street, San Francisco)

**TICKETS:** Single tickets (\$52-\$145). Pricing inclusive of fees and subject to change. For tickets and more information, the public may visit <https://sfplayhouse.org/2025-2026-season/hairspray/> or call the box office at 415-677-9596.

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**PRESS:** Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co. [lauren@cb-pr.com](mailto:lauren@cb-pr.com)

**PHOTOS:** Downloadable high-res photos are available: <http://cbpr.co/press/hairspray>