

GOODSPEED MUSICALS

AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

BYE BYE BIRDIE





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MICHAEL P. PRICE

Founding Director

presents

BYE BYE BIRDIE

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Lyrics by

LEE ADAMS

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MICHAEL O'FLAHERTY

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PATRICIA WILCOX

Directed by

JENN THOMPSON

JUNE 24 - SEPT 4, 2016

THE GOODSPEED

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Goodspeed's Audience Insights can be found on our website:
www.goodspeed.org/guides

Audience Insights for *Bye Bye Birdie* was prepared by:
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MAX
SHOWALTER
CENTER FOR EDUCATION
IN MUSICAL THEATRE

Audience Insights updated 06.27.16

CHARACTER & SHOW SYNOPSIS

THE CHARACTERS

ALBERT PETERSON: a devoted son to an overbearing mother and head of the Almaelou Music Corporation. He works as Conrad Birdie's agent, songwriter, and publicist. He is in love with Rose Alvarez, but will not admit it because his mother dislikes her. His dream is to be an English teacher.

ROSE ALVEREZ: the smart and sassy Latina secretary and girlfriend of Albert Peterson. She concocts the idea to help Albert pay off his debt by offering "one last kiss" to a fan before Birdie goes off to war.

KIM MacAFEE: the winner of Conrad Birdie's "one last kiss;" she recently started going "steady" with Hugo Peabody.

MRS. DORIS MacAFEE: Kim and Randolph MacAfee's mother.

MR. HARRY MacAFEE: Kim and Randolph MacAfee's ill-tempered father.

RANDOLPH MacAFEE: Kim's younger, well-behaved brother.

MRS. MAE PETERSON: Albert Peterson's overbearing mother. She is constantly nagging him and she uses his sense of devotion to control him.

CONRAD BIRDIE: a rock n' roller, inspired by Elvis Presley, who was drafted to go to war.

HUGO PEABODY: Kim's "steady," or boyfriend, who is extremely jealous of Conrad Birdie.

URSULA MERKLE: Kim MacAfee's over-excited best friend and a Conrad Birdie enthusiast.

MAYOR MERKLE: Ursula's father and the mayor of Sweet Apple, Ohio.

MAYOR'S WIFE: Mayor Merkle's wife and Ursula's mother who is also infatuated with Conrad Birdie.

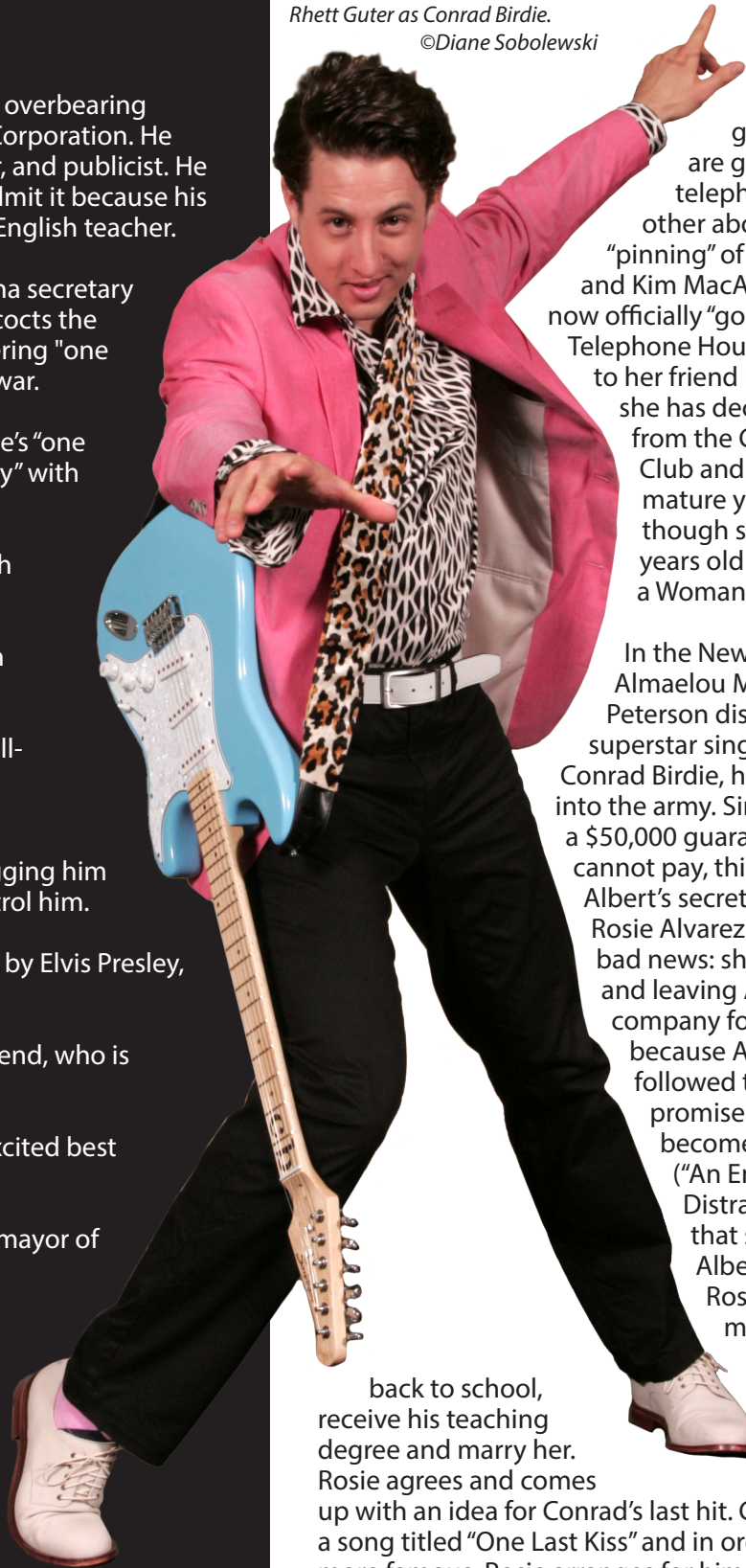
MRS. PERKINS: Kim MacAfee's friend Margie's mother

MR. JOHNSON: the father of Harvey Johnson, Sweet Apple's resident nerdy teen.

GLORIA RASPUTIN: a Russian tap dancer who Mae Peterson wants her son to have as his secretary and to date.

Rhett Guter as Conrad Birdie.

©Diane Sobolewski



As the curtain rises on Sweet Apple, Ohio, a group of teenagers are gathered making telephone calls to each other about the recent "pinning" of Hugo Peabody and Kim MacAfee, who are now officially "going steady" ("The Telephone Hour"). Kim explains to her friend Ursula Merkle that she has decided to resign from the Conrad Birdie Fan Club and become a more mature young woman, even though she is just fifteen years old ("How Lovely to be a Woman").

In the New York City office of Almaelou Music Corp., Albert Peterson discovers that his superstar singing sensation, Conrad Birdie, has been drafted into the army. Since Conrad has a \$50,000 guarantee that Albert cannot pay, this is a big problem. Albert's secretary and girlfriend Rosie Alvarez also walks in with bad news: she is resigning and leaving Albert and his company forever. She is angry because Albert has not followed through with his promise to marry her and become an English teacher ("An English Teacher"). Distraught over the fact that she is leaving him, Albert makes a deal. If Rosie will help get the money to pay the \$50,000, he will go

back to school, receive his teaching degree and marry her. Rosie agrees and comes up with an idea for Conrad's last hit. Conrad will sing a song titled "One Last Kiss" and in order to make him more famous, Rosie arranges for him to kiss a randomly selected president of one of his fan clubs. The president she and Albert pick is Kim MacAfee.

Albert, Rosie and Conrad travel to Penn Station for

Conrad's last press event before leaving for Sweet Apple, Ohio ("Bye Bye Birdie"). Albert runs into his mother and attempts to tell her of his plans to close down Almaelou and marry Rosie, but she becomes so distraught over Albert telling her of his plans to close the company that he does not even mention Rosie. Mrs. Peterson leaves and Albert tries to present Conrad as an upstanding American citizen, though the questions from the reporters reveal that he is not. Albert, Rosie and Conrad depart for Sweet Apple ("A Healthy Normal American Boy").

Arriving in Sweet Apple, Conrad is introduced to Kim and the members of the Conrad Birdie Fan Club. Hugo tells Kim that he is very upset about her plan to kiss another boy right after they started going steady. Kim reassures him that he is the only boy for her ("One Boy"). Rosie longingly admires Hugo's dedication to Kim and Albert tries to cheer her up ("Put On a Happy Face"). After the mayor gives Conrad the key to the city, Conrad sings for the town, causing all the women and girls, including Kim, to swoon and faint ("Honestly Sincere").

The next morning, Albert discovers Ursula and the rest of the Conrad Birdie Fan Club singing to Conrad outside his window ("Put On a Happy Face Reprise"). Inside the house, Mrs. McAfee and Kim try to hurry Mr. MacAfee through his breakfast in anticipation of Conrad waking up, but all Conrad does is drink a beer and return to bed. Disgusted by his behavior, Mr. MacAfee threatens to throw Conrad out. Albert calms Mr. MacAfee down by promising the whole family a cameo on *The Ed Sullivan Show* ("Ed Sullivan").

At the theatre before the *Ed Sullivan* filming, Albert tells Rosie he has written to his mother to say he is closing Almaelou. Rosie is thrilled, but Mrs. Peterson shows up and blames Rosie for the letter and Almaelou's closing. On *The Ed Sullivan Show*, Conrad sings to Kim and prepares to kiss her ("One Last Kiss"). Out of nowhere, Hugo knocks Conrad out cold while Kim runs off. Albert rushes onto the stage while Rosie confesses to letting Hugo into the theatre. She leaves Albert to deal with the mess, all of which has happened on live television ("A Healthy Normal American Boy Reprise").

Rosie returns to the MacAfee house and prepares to leave. Kim enters, trying to comfort her as they both lament their choice in men ("What Did I Ever See In Him?"). Rosie encounters Conrad, Mrs. Peterson and Albert, who boasts about how big of a music industry giant he will become ("What Did I Ever See In Him? Reprise"). Kim sneaks out while her parents lament how horrible kids are these days ("Kids"). *TIME* magazine calls looking for Rosie. Albert confesses she has gone and realizes how much she means to him. Mrs. Peterson tells Albert that Conrad has snuck out with plans to have one last night out before boot camp and Albert panics ("A Lot of Livin' To Do"). Kim joins Conrad and the girls as they all decide to head to the **ice house**. The parents start

searching for their kids and encounter Hugo, who proclaims he is going to drink himself to death now that Kim has run off with Conrad.

Hugo ends up at a bar, where he tries unsuccessfully to buy a drink. Meanwhile, Rosie buys tequila and proclaims herself to be the Spanish Rose, a better woman than Mrs. Peterson's false perception of her ("Spanish Rose"). Albert calls to talk to Rosie, but she refuses the call after Albert says he needs to find Conrad ("Baby, Talk to Me"). She hangs up and Albert vows to get her back. Rosie sees Hugo, who mentions that Conrad has run off with Kim to the Ice House. Rosie realizes her mistake and takes Hugo to find Albert and Conrad. Albert rushes into the bar, looking for Rosie and is confronted by his mother. Instead, Albert tells her to go home, saying he does not need her anymore ("A Mother Does Not Matter Anymore"). Mr. and Mrs. MacAfee rush in, along with the parents of many other girls in the town and Mrs. Peterson, and they all head towards the Ice House ("Kids Reprise").

Conrad and Kim are in the ice house smoking while Conrad realizes his upcoming responsibility. Suddenly, all the teenage girls rush in and pull Conrad into a screaming, dancing mass ("Ice House Livin'"). The parents and policemen enter, arrest a grateful Conrad and break up the party. As Conrad is led away and Kim and Hugo are reunited, Albert proclaims his love for Rosie and insists he intends on marrying her after he bails Conrad out of jail ("An English Teacher Reprise"). Rosie reconciles with Mrs. Peterson ("Spanish Rose Reprise").

The next morning, Albert leads a disguised Conrad to the train. Conrad promises Albert he does not have to pay his guarantee anymore in return for saving him from the girls. The parents, kids and Kim all enter with the news that Hugo and Kim are back together again. Albert surprises Rosie by presenting a train ticket to Pumpkin Falls, Iowa, where he plans to join the teaching staff of the junior high school ("Rosie"). He and Rosie happily agree to marry ("Bye Bye Birdie Reprise").



The cast of Goodspeed's Bye Bye Birdie. ©Diane Sobolewski

BYE BYE BIRDIE GLOSSARY

ACT I, SCENE 1

PINNED: in the '60s, a girl would get pinned by a guy when he made her his girlfriend. He would formalize the relationship by putting a silvery pin on her, signifying that the girl is taken.

GOING STEADY: when two people are considered to be "going out" or "dating."

ACT I, SCENE 3

INDUCTION CENTER: a place where new military recruits are examined and processed.

"EVERY WOMAN ALIVE WANTS CHANEL NO. 5":

in the 1960s, the glossy fashion magazines such as *Vogue* and *Bazaar* presented the perfume Chanel No. 5 as a required accessory to every woman's femininity. Two catch phrases alternated as ad copy: "Every woman alive wants Chanel No. 5" and "Every woman alive loves Chanel No. 5."



FIFTY-THOUSAND DOLLAR GUARANTEE: a monetary advance payable upon signing a contract. As all advances are non-returnable and recoupable only from future earnings, they constitute a financial guarantee.

PHI BETA KAPPA: the oldest academic honor society in the United States. The organization honors the brightest college students across the nation.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER: 1340-1400, "the Father of English Literature," he is considered the greatest English poet of the Middle Ages, and is particularly important to English language literature because he dared to write in the common man's tongue.

WILLIAM MORRIS: the William Morris Agency was a Hollywood based talent agency. It represented some of the best known 20th century entertainers in film, television, and music. During its 109 year tenure it came to be regarded as the "first great talent agency in show business"

JOAN OF ARC: a French military leader of the fifteenth century. She was a national heroine who, at the age of seventeen, took up arms to establish the rightful king on the French throne. She claimed to have heard God speak to her in voices.

CAPITOL 7 DOUBLE EIGHT TWO OH: an old fashioned phone number. The first two letters of the first word were translated to numbers when dialing a number. The first two letters of "Capitol" would have been "2," "2". The whole number would be 227-8820. Area codes (such as "860") were not widely used.

ACT I, SCENE 4

OPERATOR: through the 1960s, companies used manual telephone switchboards, and switchboard operators connected calls by inserting a pair of phone plugs into the appropriate jacks.



Telephone operators

ACT I, SCENE 5:

CREED: an idea or set of beliefs that guides the actions of a person or group.

RUBBERS: also known as galoshes, these are protective overshoes for walking in the rain and will keep your shoes dry.

ACT I, SCENE 8:

HARPIES: originally from Greek mythology, three bat-like women who served the lord of the underworld. It is more modernly used to describe annoyingly noisy and disagreeable females.

MAGNA CARTA: a fundamental constitution or law guaranteeing rights and liberties.

NERO: the Emperor of Rome from a.d. 54-68 who was known for his cruelty and depravity.

THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW:

an American TV variety show that ran on CBS from 1948 to 1971. It was hosted by New York entertainment columnist Ed Sullivan. It set a record as the longest-running variety show in U.S. broadcast history.



ACT 1, SCENE 9:

TELEGRAM: a message sent by telegraph and then delivered in written or printed form.

TOUCH SYSTEM: a typing system in which the fingers are trained to find the correct keys, permitting the typist to read and type copy without looking at the keyboard.

ACT 1, SCENE 10:

COLOR SLIDES: a photography format which used film. After a photo was taken, the film was mounted between two pieces of cardboard and could be viewed in a "slide" presentation.

ACT 2, SCENE 1:

BENEDICT ARNOLD: a traitor. Benedict Arnold originally fought for the patriot cause against England in the American Revolutionary War, but after disappointment over his career advancement, he switched sides, giving patriot secrets to the British Army.

MUSOLLINI/ROSSELLINI:

a comic confusion of the names Benito Mussolini and Roberto Rossellini. Mussolini was a brutal Italian dictator who held power from 1922-1945. Roberto Rossellini was an Italian film director.



Rossellini and Bergman

INGRID BERGMAN:

a popular film star who caused a scandal when she left her husband and child to be with Italian film director Roberto Rossellini, whom she later married.

ACT 2, SCENE 2:

TERRAMYCIN:

an antibiotic used mostly for skin problems, such as acne.

SAMMY KAYE: a bandleader with a TV variety show that ran for 10 years starting in 1950.

ACT 2, SCENE 3:

ICE HOUSE: a building for storing ice that was common in past times when ice was routinely delivered to homes.

LOOP THE LOOP: a carnival ride where the riders complete at least one 360° roll.

ACT 2 SCENE 5:

FLYING DOWN TO RIO: a 1933 musical film noted for being the first screen pairing of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, though Dolores del Rio and Gene Raymond received top billing and the leading roles.

GREED: a 1924 American silent film based on the 1899 Frank Norris novel McTeague. It stars Gibson Gowland as Dr. John McTeague, Zasu Pitts as his wife Trina Sieppe and Jean Hersholt as McTeague's friend and eventual enemy Marcus Schouler.

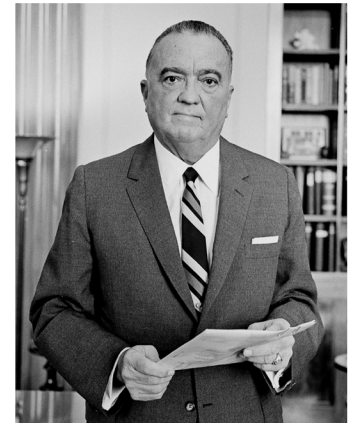


Dolores del Rio

DOLORES del RIO: (1905-1983) an actress originally from Mexico who was a regular on the Hollywood party circuit when she was discovered in the 1920s and made a career in both silent movies and the talkies.

GENE RAYMOND: (1908-1998) an actor who debuted on Broadway at age 12 and worked in the movies for 40 years.

J. EDGAR HOOVER: (1895 - 1972) was the first Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the United States. He was appointed director of the Bureau of Investigation—predecessor to the FBI—in 1924. Hoover was instrumental in founding the FBI in 1935, where he remained director until his death. Hoover is credited with building the FBI into a larger crime fighting agency, and with instituting a number of modernizations to police technology, such as a centralized fingerprint file and forensic laboratories.



J. Edgar Hoover



Loop the Loop

MEET THE WRITERS



Charles Strouse

CHARLES STROUSE (*Music*) Charles Strouse was born in New York City on June 7, 1928. He began taking piano lessons at the age of ten, and at the young age of 15, he entered the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester. After graduating in 1947, he held various music-related jobs and studied with Aaron Copland, Nadia Boulanger and David Diamond.

In 1949, Strouse met lyricist Lee Adams at a party, and a long and successful partnership was formed. The duo began contributing songs to revues at the Green Mansions summer resort in the Adirondacks, which led to their writing tunes for numerous New York revues in the mid-'50s as well as special material for performers such as Kaye Ballard, Carol Burnett and Jane Morgan.

In 1958, producer Edward Padula was auditioning writing teams for a new musical about American teenagers, and Adams and Strouse won. Within a year, they wrote over 50 possible songs for the show that would ultimately become *Bye Bye Birdie*. It opened on Broadway in 1960 and was an enormous success, winning six Tony Awards including Best Musical.



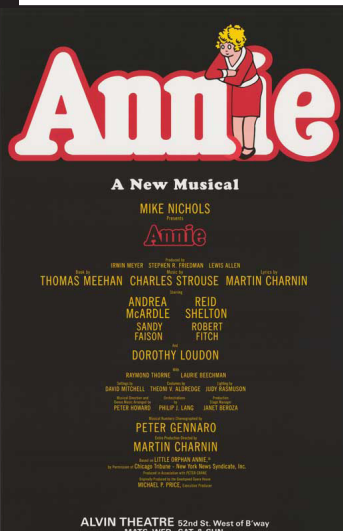
Janet Dacal (*Rosie*), Charles Strouse, George Merrick (*Albert*), and Director Jenn Thompson. Photo by Diane Sobolewski.

After the success of *Bye Bye Birdie*, Strouse grew to become one of America's most successful musical theatre composers. He followed up with *All American* in 1962, *It's A Bird... It's A Plane... It's Superman* in 1966 and *Applause* in 1970, which earned him his second Tony.

In 1976, Strouse teamed up with lyricist Martin Charnin and librettist Thomas Meehan to develop *Annie* at The Goodspeed before it moved to Broadway in 1977 for a remarkable run of 2,377 performances. The Broadway phenomenon earned Strouse his third Tony Award.

Strouse has written scores for over 30 stage musicals, including 14 that went on to Broadway, four Hollywood films, two orchestral works and an opera. In addition to his three Tony Awards, he earned Tony nominations for his Broadway scores of *Golden Boy* (1966), *Charlie & Algernon* (1980), *Rags* (1986) and *Nick and Nora* (1991). His musicals *Annie* and *Bye Bye Birdie* are among the

most popular of all time—produced by regional, amateur and school groups all over the world.



LEE ADAMS (*Lyrics*) was born in Mansfield, Ohio on August 14, 1924. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from Ohio State University and then a Master's degree from the renowned Columbia School of Journalism. For the next ten years he worked as a newspaper reporter, magazine writer and editor and radio writer and interviewer. Simultaneously, he began writing lyrics to accompany Charles Strouse's music for reviews at the Green Mansions Summer Resort and special material for nightclub acts. He subsequently wrote songs with Strouse for theatrical revues in New York and London.

The first production for the team of Adams and Strouse was the musical, *Bye Bye Birdie*. It debuted on Broadway on April 14, 1960 and was an instant success. The initial production ran for over 600 performances and earned the 1960 Tony Award for Best Musical. Three years later a film version was released starring Janet Leigh, Dick Van Dyke and Ann Margaret.

The duo's next musical, *All American*, opened on Broadway on March 19, 1962. Two years later on October 20, *Golden Boy*, starring Sammy Davis, Jr., opened and Adams and Strouse again received critical acclaim and success with a Tony nomination for Best Musical. Perhaps the most successful of the Adams and Strouse productions opened on March 30, 1970: *Applause*. The production won the Tony Award for Best Musical and ran for over 850 performances.

In addition to his notable Broadway credits, Adams, with Strouse, wrote an acclaimed London musical, *I and Albert*, in 1972. Following that success, Adams became active in films and television. His theme for TV's long-running *All in the Family*, titled "Those Were the Days," has been heard more often than any other television theme. He also wrote the lyrics for the acclaimed film *The Night They Raided Minsky's*.

MICHAEL STEWART (*Book*) was born on August 1, 1924 in Manhattan. He graduated from the Yale School of Drama with a Master of Fine Arts in 1953. Stewart began his career creating sketches and writing lyrics for revues that were produced at Green Mansions, a summer resort in New York with Strouse and Adams. He then contributed to the written materials for *Shoestring Revues* and worked on the concert adaptation of *Candide*.

Stewart's Broadway debut, *Bye Bye Birdie*, was a major success and awarded him the Tony Award for his libretto. As a result, he was readily sought after and wrote the librettos for *Carnival*, which won him a Drama Critics Circle Award; *Hello, Dolly!*, which won him both Tony and Drama Critics Awards; *42nd Street*; *George M!*; *Mack & Mabel*; *Harrigan 'n Hart*; and *The Grand Tour*. He also wrote both the book and lyrics for *I Love My Wife* and the lyrics for *Barnum*.

Stewart died in New York City on September 20, 1987 at the age of 63. After his passing, Jule Styne said of him, "he was an extremely talented and knowledgeable man of the theatre. He was one of the great musical theatre writers, and his string of hits showed that."



Lee Adams



Michael Stewart



Director Jenn Thompson

Some shows stay with us. They last. They brand a generation and then stick in our collective musical theatre DNA. We hum the tunes and sing the lyrics without necessarily knowing how we know them. They just live in us—somewhere. But sometimes that deep affection and familiarity can potentially come with a fairly limited view of what is possible and potent in a piece of theatre. In other words: we take them for granted.

Since bursting onto the scene as the surprise, runaway hit of the 1960/61 Broadway season, *Bye Bye Birdie* has enjoyed a kind of unprecedented and universal popularity. For good reason. Armed with a solid gold score and a sunny disposition, *Birdie* exploded into our national consciousness, spawning multiple film versions, pop albums, sequels, and countless amateur productions. For many of us, *Birdie* is the very first show we saw, or did, or watched our kids do.

My deep affection for this show is certainly personal. My first introduction was as a young Broadway cast member of another Charles Strouse mega-hit: *Annie*. And then again as a young woman when I played Kim at the River Rep in Ivoryton—the theatre my family ran for nearly two decades, just up the road from Goodspeed. And now, the opportunity to introduce it to a new generation of theatregoers; it is, indeed, a thrilling one, but perhaps the charge of reintroducing it to their parents and grandparents presents the biggest opportunity of all.

So how to shine a new light on an old friend? There's nothing to fix here—'cause it ain't broke. But there sure is plenty to explore and excavate. And with *Birdie's* legendary creators Charles Strouse and Lee Adams' blessing and participation we've done just that. Armed with a new song or two and exciting, bold dance arrangements by Broadway's David Krane, we've taken a fresh look at these characters and reinvested in them. Aiming to both remind audiences of why they fell in love with *Birdie* to begin with as well as surprise them with its craft and relevance.

As creatives, we're not immune to preconceptions, either, and we've challenged ourselves to toss out our own biased notions about what this show is expected to look and feel like—and what a perfect venue for our venture. The Goodspeed offers both intimacy and history, and we've used both as a jumping off point—designing the show to include the audience and embrace the theatre itself in an effort to create an inclusive, electrifying atmosphere that showcases the authenticity of small town America as well as the immediacy of live performance. East Haddam as our very own Sweet Apple! What could be more fun?

// Armed with a new song or two and exciting, bold dance arrangements by Broadway's David Krane, we've taken a fresh look at these characters and reinvested in them. //

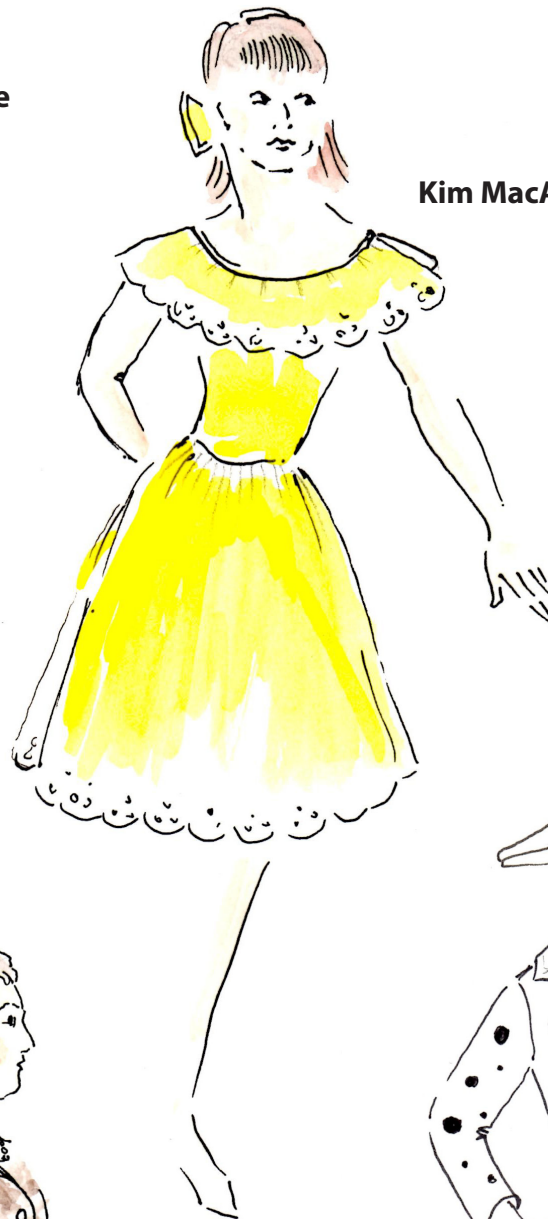
Goodspeed has never produced *Bye Bye Birdie*—another wonderful and surprising first! I cannot imagine a better setting in which to rediscover this classic, iconic, gloriously entertaining show.

BEHIND THE SCENES

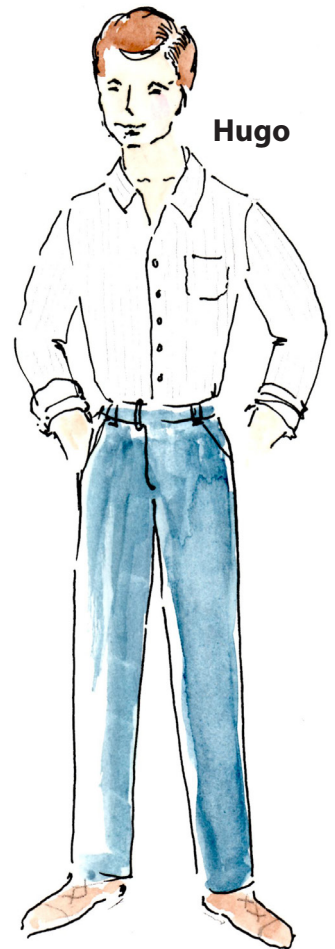
COSTUME DESIGN BY DAVID TOSER



Conrad Birdie



Kim MacAfee



Hugo



Mae



Rosie

PROGRAM NOTES BY JOSHUA S. RITTER



When *The New Yorker* interviewed *Bye Bye Birdie*'s young producer Edward Padula in May of 1960, he stated, "I felt from the beginning that if I was going to dive off and take a chance, I might as well take a big one." With its hummable hit songs and riotously funny book, *Bye Bye Birdie* is certainly a risk that has paid off for Padula, Broadway, and countless musical theatre fans. Amazingly, when *Bye Bye Birdie* opened on Broadway on April 14, 1960, the producer, librettist, lyricist, composer, and most of the cast were virtually unknown. Chita Rivera landed her first leading role as Rose Alvarez. Leading man Dick Van Dyke made his musical comedy debut as Albert Peterson, and Dick Gautier made his first Broadway appearance as Conrad Birdie. Gower Champion had built up

considerable recognition as a dancer and choreographer, but *Bye Bye Birdie* would be his first experience as a stage director. Despite its unexpected breakout success, *Bye Bye Birdie*'s gestation period was somewhat prolonged and challenging.

Initially, the show's title was *Let's Go Steady*, and Padula announced plans to open in October of 1958. However, he decided to postpone the show due to problems with the book. The team kept hiring and firing librettists in an effort to find someone who could make the show work. Yet, Padula and his songwriters, Charles Strouse and Lee Adams, believed in the project and remained persistent in their efforts to find a book writer who understood their intentions. Finally, they recruited Michael Stewart. Stewart contributed a great deal and was responsible for the *Bye Bye Birdie*

plot as it stands today. Lyricist Lee Adams suggested that they build the story around an Elvis Presley-like rock star's induction into the Army, and Stewart latched on to this key plot element.

Many, including the show's songwriters, consider *Bye Bye Birdie* the first rock 'n' roll musical. Conrad Birdie has two rock numbers, performed as parodies. The style of these numbers closely resembles rockabilly, an early form of rock that blends country music with rhythm and blues. *Bye Bye Birdie* was certainly the first musical to use the nascent rock 'n' roll phenomenon as its primary theme. In fact, Edward Padula had a difficult time raising money for the show, given its revolutionary rock 'n' roll content and Broadway's widespread indifference to the burgeoning genre. To make matters worse, *Bye Bye Birdie*'s advance sales at the box office were abysmal. Nevertheless, *Bye Bye Birdie*'s fresh, ebullient, and satirical portrayal of youth culture won over the critics. Its enduring success paved the way for other rock-based musicals, such as *Hair*, *Tommy*, *Godspell*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Pippin*.

Bye Bye Birdie's lively score produced such musical theatre favorites as "Put on A Happy Face," "A Lot of Livin' to Do," and "Kids." Composer Charles Strouse paired these classic show tunes with songs that demonstrated his understanding of the new rock 'n' roll sound, such as "One Last Kiss" and "Telephone Hour." Strouse's versatility, impressive musical training, and natural melodic gift positioned him to become one of the most celebrated musical theatre composers in Broadway history. Strouse earned his first of three Tony Awards for his work on *Bye Bye Birdie*. He earned his third Tony Award for the smash hit *Annie*, which had its world premiere at Goodspeed Musicals.

Choreographer and Director Gower Champion also won a Tony Award for his wonderfully imaginative dance routines and direction. His work conveyed an all-inclusive sense of stage movement by incorporating every stage element including set pieces and props. Having made his name working as a dancer



CLICK HERE to watch Chita Rivera perform "Spanish Rose."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xc8EY6W6FLU>



CLICK HERE to watch Dick Van Dyke perform "Put on a Happy Face."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_CE7GqqrY&list=RDL_CE7GqqrY

on films, Champion brought a Hollywood sensibility to his Broadway projects. His unusual approach to stage direction and choreography made his work stand out even more. After Champion directed and choreographed *Bye Bye Birdie*, he never returned to performing.

Bye Bye Birdie won the Tony Award for Best Musical and Dick Van Dyke received a Tony while starring opposite Chita Rivera. The show launched Van Dyke's career and helped lead to a weekly television sitcom bearing his name: *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. Although Rivera did not win a Tony for *Bye Bye Birdie*, she was nominated for Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Musical, and her performance established her as a versatile and extremely talented performer. Charles Strouse stated, "Birdie would never have been what it became were it not for Chita." Surprisingly, she did not win her first Tony Award until she starred in *The Rink* in 1984.

Jenn Thompson is making her Goodspeed debut as the director of *Bye Bye Birdie*. Thompson has a deep personal affection for the show, having played Kim and worked with Charles Strouse as Pepper in the Broadway production of *Annie*. Thompson endeavors to reinvest in the characters while tossing out any biased preconceived notions of what the show is expected to become. She would like to "both remind audiences of why they fell in love with *Birdie* to begin with, as well as surprise them with its craft and relevance." Thompson's fresh take on the youthful classic includes two added Strouse and Adams songs: "Bye Bye Birdie" from the 1963 film and "A Mother Doesn't Matter Anymore" from the 1995 television presentation. Her version of the show will also include new dance arrangements by Broadway's David Krane. Please "put on a happy face" and prepare to rediscover this gloriously entertaining musical comedy.



Dick Van Dyke and Chita Rivera in the original Broadway production of *Bye Bye Birdie*.



Charles Strouse and Lee Adams in 1960 at the recording session for the *Birdie* cast album.

1961: A NEW FRONTIER



President Kennedy making his inaugural address.



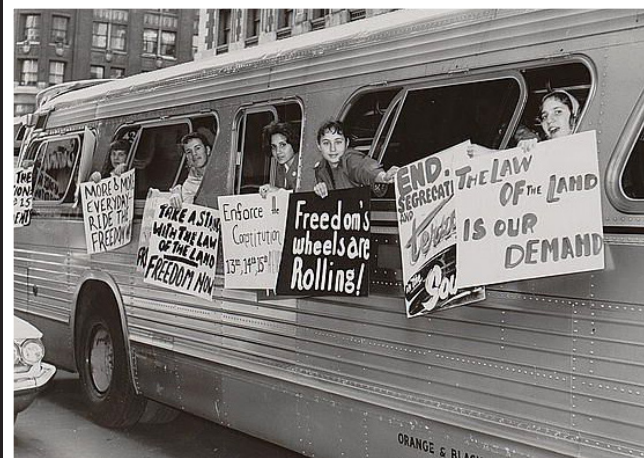
CLICK HERE to watch Kennedy's inaugural address.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEC1C4p0k3E>

Bye Bye Birdie brings us back to a simpler time when the influence of rock n' roll idols' swiveling hips and trembling lips were the biggest worry on the minds of parents. However, the world was undergoing a lot more turmoil and change in 1961 than the musical lets on. John F. Kennedy took office, the first human flew into space, the Freedom Riders were fighting for civil rights, Communism was spreading to Cuba and construction began on the Berlin Wall.

THE KENNEDY PRESIDENCY

President John F. Kennedy began his campaign in January of 1960. Kennedy faced Richard Nixon in an evolving political sphere, including the first televised debate and an all-important national popular vote. After one of the closest presidential elections of the 20th century, Kennedy was sworn into office on January 20, 1961. The President famously proclaimed in his inaugural address: "We stand today on the edge of a New Frontier—the frontier of the 1960s, the frontier of unknown opportunities and perils, the frontier of unfulfilled hopes and unfulfilled threats... Beyond that frontier are uncharted areas of science and space, unsolved problems of peace and war, unconquered problems of ignorance and prejudice, unanswered questions of poverty and surplus." His policies thus focused on tyranny, poverty, disease and wars of the time.



The Freedom Riders



CLICK HERE to watch a documentary about the Freedom Riders.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/freedomriders/watch>

The New Frontier was based on President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal during the Great Depression of 1930. The ambitious domestic agenda included a package of laws and reforms that targeted American injustice and inequality. The Kennedy administration consistently avoided an increase in military presence in Vietnam. By rejecting to commit combat troops, only 16,000 military advisors were in Vietnamese

territory during his presidency. Instead, Kennedy remained a key player in civil rights activism until his assassination in 1963.

CIVIL RIGHTS

Since the institution of the Jim Crow Laws in the 1890s, African Americans in the South had been forced into segregated conditions while traveling on railways and buses. They were forced to use separate waiting rooms and drinking fountains, and to sit at the back of the bus.

The sixties sparked the journey of the Freedom Riders. These racially-integrated civil rights activists rode Greyhound and Trailways buses into the segregated southern states to test the Supreme Court decisions that outlawed segregation on interstate buses and segregated waiting rooms, lunch counters and restroom facilities for interstate passengers, though the rulings were widely ignored in the Deep South.

The first Freedom Ride departed Washington, D.C. on May 4, 1961. During this time, bus station ticket counters were flooded with activists making their way south, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tensions peaked when an Alabama Freedom Rider bus ignited due to a firebomb.

On September 22, 1961, discriminatory seating practices on interstate bus transit was finally outlawed by the Interstate Commerce Commission, which also ordered the removal of "whites only" signs from bus terminals.

INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS

International relations were also a major factor of the time. Prior to Kennedy's election, Vietnam was considered a drastically divided nation. In 1954, Communists controlled the Northern part of the country, while anti-Communists dominated the South. The U.S. feared the continual spread of Communism in Southeast Asia and subsequently increased the flow of aid and equipment during the early 1960s.

Tensions became increasingly present

between the U.S. and Cuba during the sixties. The Bay of Pigs Invasion was a three-day attempt to invade southern Cuba. U.S.-trained forces of Cuban exiles fought to overthrow communist President Fidel Castro. In April 1961, a mock diversionary landing was organized by the CIA and momentarily lured Castro away from the Bay of Pigs battle area. The brigade of exiled Cubans was defeated by the Democratic Revolutionary Front. Castro's leadership was strengthened, as was his alliance with the Soviet Union. This later led to the declaration of Socialist Cuba and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

A symbolic barrier, the Berlin Wall separated East Germany from West Germany for more than a quarter of a century. It was constructed during the post-World War II era to symbolize an Iron Curtain between Western Europe and the Eastern Bloc nations. Construction began on August 13, 1961. During its existence, nearly 100 people were reported killed attempting escape over the wall into West Berlin.

SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM: THE DRAFT

For more than half a century, the United States used the Selective Service System to draft young men for mandatory military service. The agency worked to maintain information on those potentially subject to military obligations. It was the law for all male U.S. citizens to register with Selective Service, and subsequently, those between the ages of 18 and 25 were automatically enlisted.

From 1948 to 1973, men were drafted to fill vacancies in the armed forces during times of both peace and conflict. The involuntary draft for Vietnam accelerated following President Johnson's informal declaration of war. In 1973, the U.S. converted to an all-volunteer military, and eliminated the draft. However, in 1980 President Carter reinstituted the draft as a contingency plan to ensure the availability of a sufficient number of servicemen in a future crisis. It is technically still a man's legal obligation to register for service today.

THE SPACE RACE

On April 12, 1961 the Vostok 3KA spacecraft was launched. On board was Yuri Gagarin, a cosmonaut from the Soviet Union who would become the first human to enter outer space. The spaceflight consisted of a single orbit of the earth. The flight took 108 minutes from launch to landing and remains the shortest orbital manned spaceflight to date.

On May 5, only a few weeks after the Russian flight, U.S. Astronaut Alan Shepard became the second man in space, piloting the *Freedom 7*. After a dramatic splashdown in the Atlantic Ocean, a recovery helicopter lifted the capsule partially out of the water and Shepard emerged from the main hatch. For the first time, the world was able to share in the tension and excitement as the historic event unfolded on television in real time. Shepard quickly became a celebrated national hero, honored with ticker-tape parades and the NASA Distinguished Service Medal.

On May 25, President Kennedy announced a goal of landing a man on the moon by the end of the decade: "I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important in the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish." Thus, NASA's Apollo Program was established, making 11 spaceflights and eventually achieving Kennedy's goal of landing a man on the moon on July 20, 1969.



Alan Shepard



CLICK HERE
to watch Alan
Shepard's flight.

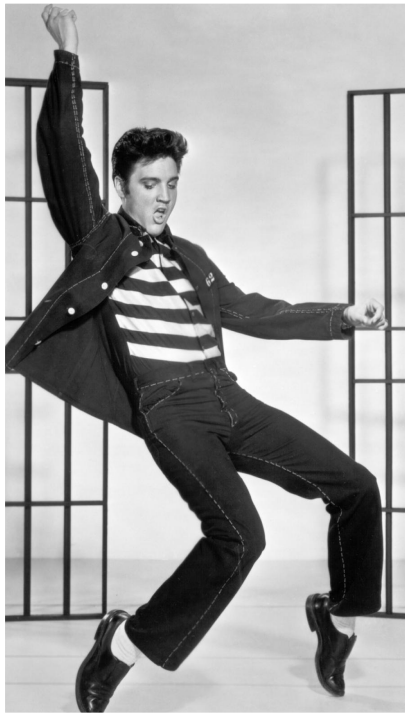
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jc0ccOmcPno>



CLICK HERE to
watch Kennedy's
Apollo speech.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kza-tTe2100>

A ROCK REVOLUTION



Elvis Presley



**CLICK HERE to
watch The Beatles
on Ed Sullivan.**

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=jenWdyITtzs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jenWdyITtzs)

Elvis Presley, The Shirelles and Chubby Checker rule the airwaves. The Pony and The Twist are national dance crazes. Audrey Hepburn takes on her most memorable role as Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Americans were collectively glued to their television sets as Alan Shepard launched into space. The year is 1961 and though the sixties were a historically tumultuous time, people still engaged in the simple pleasures of life in America. This included the emergence of rock music, celebrity culture, and television landmarks, such as *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

A ROCK N' ROLL REVOLUTION

The music of the fifties consisted mostly of Doo-Wop groups and high tenor crooners like Frank Sinatra. Then, teenagers of the late 1950s entered a rock revolution. The new sound was aggressive, loud and openly suggestive. Rock music contradicted all aspects of adult culture, and the teens flocked to it. Elvis Presley, quite often referred to as the "King of Rock n' Roll," was famously considered overly sexual for public television. In fact, he was always filmed above the waist because older generations deemed his hip swiveling and pelvic thrusting inappropriate.

Other rockers rose to fame during this time, to the despair of many outraged parents. Bands like The Rolling Stones and The Beatles essentially dominated U.S. pop culture with their performances, a phenomenon deemed the British Invasion. Acts from the United Kingdom garnered much attention on our side of the pond, creating a culture of frenzied teen worshippers. Fans relished in the teen idol era, encompassing the first divergent youth popular culture that was all their own.

THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW

Airing from 1948 to 1971, *The Ed Sullivan Show* was the primetime family program on Sunday evenings. Talents old and new were showcased, with over 10,000 performers debuting on Sullivan's program and becoming music legends of the decade. Elvis, The Beatles and The Jackson 5 all emerged onto the rock scene through appearances on the show, which became the most popular portal through which teens got their fix of rock. *The Ed Sullivan Show* worked to bridge the generation gap in 1960s America by uniting various generations for the variety hour. He even took the step to proclaim rock as real music to skeptical adult viewers. Sullivan's knack for eclectic talent seeking made him a pioneer in arranging and tracking promising musical acts for more than twenty years.

ROCK MUSICALS

Rock n' Roll also made a significant impact on the American Musical, attracting much younger audiences to the theatre. While early 1950s crooning style musicals like *The Pajama Game* were still playing, hints of rock music started to make its way into Broadway shows. *Bye Bye Birdie* is considered by many to be the first rock n' roll musical. It paved the way for a plethora of other rock shows, including *Hair* (1968); *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1970); *Miss Saigon* (1989); *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (1998); *Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson* (2006) and many more.



The Beatles with Ed Sullivan



LISTEN TO THE #1 HITS OF 1961

click the songs below to listen

"Wonderland by Night" by Bert Kaempfert

"Will You Love Me Tomorrow" by The Shirelles

"Calcutta" By Lawrence Welk

"Pony Time" by Chubby Checker

"Surrender" by Elvis Presley

"Blue Moon" by The Marcells

"Runaway" by Del Shannon

"Mother-in-Law" by Ernie K-Doe

"Travelin' Man" by Ricky Nelson

"Running Scared" by Roy Orbison

"Moody River" by Pat Boone

"Quarter to Three" by Gary U.S. Bonds

"Tossin' and Turnin'" by Bobby Lewis

"Wooden Heart (Muss I Denn)" by Joe Dowell

"Michael" by The Highwaymen

"Take Good Care of My Baby" by Bobby Vee

"Hit the Road Jack" by Ray Charles

"Runaround Sue" by Dion

"Big Bad John" by Jimmy Dean

"Please Mr. Postman" by The Marvelettes

"The Lion Sleeps Tonight" by The Tokens



The Shirelles



Del Shannon



Chubby Checker

INTERESTING FACTS

BYE BYE
BIRDIE



- There is a sequel to *Bye Bye Birdie* called *Bring Back Birdie* set 20 years in the future. In the sequel Albert and Rose Peterson try to find Birdie after he's been in retirement to convince him to perform at the Grammy's.
- Conrad Birdie has been through many name changes. Originally, the rock n' roller was to be named Ellsworth. That was quickly changed to Conway Twitty, but when the real Conway Twitty threatened to sue, the name was finally changed to Conrad Birdie.
- Writer Michael Stewart's original book, called *Love and Kiss*, upon which *Bye Bye Birdie* was to be based was about a couple going through divorce and how their kids help them reconcile.
- *Bye Bye Birdie* helped launch Chita Rivera's career. Chita was originally a dancer. She broke into musical theater when her friend asked her to audition for *Call Me Madam*, and she ended up getting the part.
- Ed Sullivan was embarrassed by the hymn praising him when he saw the show on Broadway, but he agreed to make a cameo as himself in the film adaptation of *Bye Bye Birdie*.
- *Bye Bye Birdie's* first and only Broadway revival was in 2009 starring John Stamos as Albert Peterson.

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