

Lincoln Center's

January 21–March 28, 2015

American Songbook

Sponsored by Prudential Investment Management

The Program

Wednesday Evening, February 4, 2015, at 8:30

Judy Kuhn Sings Richard Rodgers, Mary Rodgers, and Adam Guettel

Todd Almond, *Arranger and Musical Director*

Josh Clayton, *Orchestrator*

Malcolm Gets, *Director*

Jeremy Clayton, *Woodwinds*

Suzy Perelman, *Violin*

Peter Sachon, *Cello*

Michael Aarons, *Guitar*

Alana Dawes, *Bass*

John Hadfield, *Drums*

This evening's program is approximately 75 minutes long and will be performed without intermission.

Please make certain all your electronic devices are switched off.

Major support for Lincoln Center's American Songbook is provided by Amy & Joseph Perella.

Wine generously donated by William Hill Estate Winery, Official Wine of Lincoln Center.

This performance is made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.

The Appel Room

Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall

American Songbook

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UPCOMING AMERICAN SONGBOOK EVENTS IN THE APPEL ROOM:

Thursday Evening, February 5, at 8:30

Lea DeLaria

Friday Evening, February 6, at 8:30

Megan Hilty

Saturday Evening, February 7, at 8:30

Danny Rivera & Nelson González: Obsesión

Wednesday Evening, February 11, at 8:30

Meshell Ndegeocello:

Pour Une Âme Souveraine—A Dedication to Nina Simone

Thursday Evening, February 12, at 8:30

San Fermin with Metropolis Ensemble

Friday Evening, February 13, at 8:30

Talib Kweli

Saturday Evening, February 14, at 8:30

Dawn Landes

The Appel Room is located in Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall.

For tickets, call (212) 721-6500 or visit AmericanSongbook.org. Call the Lincoln Center Info Request Line at (212) 875-5766 or visit AmericanSongbook.org for complete program information.

Join the conversation: #LCSongbook

We would like to remind you that the sound of coughing and rustling paper might distract the performers and your fellow audience members.

In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, those who must leave before the end of the performance are asked to do so between pieces. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in the building.

A Family's Secrets, Buried in Generations of Song

By Barry Singer

If the father, the daughter, and the grandson share anything at all through their music, it is an unwillingness to surrender their secrets easily. Perhaps this is what makes the music of each one of them so mesmerizing.

Listen to the songs of Richard Rodgers, as the world has now for nearly a century. Nothing in the effortless melodicism—not the joy or even the pathos that these songs so rapturously convey—suggests the crushing depression that haunted Rodgers to the end of his life.

Listen to his daughter Mary's music. No hint of the resentment that Mary Rodgers readily acknowledged she bore toward her often-distant father seems present in these songs. Only the wit, the light-hearted, even tender, lyricism of an open-hearted creative spirit can be heard.

As for Richard Rodgers's grandson Adam Guettel—the son of Mary Rodgers—his music possesses both his grandfather's penetrating melodicism and his mother's lyrical sense of play. Underscoring this utterly exquisite amalgamation, however, is the burden Adam Guettel has privately admitted to bowing under as the anointed heir to the Rodgers legacy.

All three of these extraordinarily complicated talents were born in New York City: Richard Rodgers on June 28, 1902; Mary Rodgers on January 11, 1931; Adam Guettel on December 16, 1964. The elder Rodgers's career in the theater is unmatched—a litany of hits including many of the longest-running Broadway shows of his age. The theater's collaborative art defined Richard Rodgers, inspiring in him music that divided along the fault lines of his two most constant collaborators: Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein II. Rodgers evolved two very different songwriting voices to set the words of his infamously different lyricists—the erratically brilliant Hart and the unfailingly brilliant Hammerstein. Rodgers's genius was not only protean, it was also a little schizophrenic.

Is it any wonder that his daughter Mary embraced her destiny as a musical theater composer, only to abandon it? Her first Broadway hit was also her last, the much beloved *Once Upon a Mattress*, written with lyricist Marshall Barer, which moved to Broadway in 1959 after opening Off-Broadway. In 1966, she created another delightful score for another Off-Broadway hit, the *Mad* magazine revue, *The Mad Show*.

By the 1970s, though, Mary Rodgers was primarily writing children's books, and to great acclaim, most decisively with *Freaky Friday*. Here and

there, she contributed individual songs to revues: to the 1978 collaboratively composed Broadway musical *Working*, and to Phyllis Newman's one-woman show *The Madwoman of Central Park West*, in 1979. *The Griffin and the Minor Canon*, which the Music-Theatre Group produced in 1991, was her last effort as a composer. Not only did she cease writing music altogether, she barely ever touched a piano again.

Instead, she became her son's great champion. Adam Guettel's bounteous musical endowment was recognized early on by his mother particularly, if not by his grandfather, who died when Guettel was 15. The Richard Rodgers genius gene had clearly been passed to this profoundly original young composer, whose music climbed mountains that even his grandfather had not ascended. Thus far, Guettel has produced three full-length musicals, each of them a kind of masterpiece.

Floyd Collins was the first, a musical exhumation of the heartbreaking hopes, dreams, and death of a dirt-poor Ozark spelunker trapped in a cave in 1925. *Floyd Collins* ran for just 25 performances Off-Broadway at Playwrights Horizons in 1996. Many who saw it still cannot get it out of their heads.

Myths and Hymns (also known as *Saturn Returns*) followed, a dramatized Guettel songfest largely derived from Greek myths and the text of a 19th-century American hymnal that Guettel happened upon in a bookstore. This show has had multiple incarnations under both titles, as Guettel has shifted back and forth in his perception of the piece. Each version shares one commonality: glorious songs instantly recognizable as the work of Adam Guettel.

His next work was also his most successful, the sublime *A Light in the Piazza*, which won the composer Tony Awards for Best Score and Best Orchestrations, after premiering at Lincoln Center Theater in 2005. Fascinatingly, the idea for the show—an adaptation of a novella by Elizabeth Spencer—came from Mary Rodgers, who first proposed it to her father as a potential musical, before selling her son on it years later.

Last June, the world lost Mary Rodgers, which makes this concert all the more poignant. Theater music remains a Rodgers family enterprise. "I've been fascinated by their DNA since I first learned that Adam was Richard Rodgers's grandson," says Judy Kuhn. "That all that music came from these three generations of one family. When has that ever happened? As an artist, I loved the idea of exploring this music, spanning so many styles and time periods. It is *very* challenging."

It is also quite revealing. But you have to listen closely.

Barry Singer blogs about the arts, literature, and Winston Churchill for The Huffington Post.

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Meet the Artists



DENISE WINTERS

Judy Kuhn

Judy Kuhn has been nominated for three Tony Awards and three Drama Desk Awards for her work on Broadway in the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of *She Loves Me*, the American premieres of *Chess* and *Les Misérables*, and *Rags*. Other Broadway credits include Richard Nelson's play *Two Shakespearean Actors* (Lincoln Center Theater), *Alan Menken and Tim Rice's King David*, and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Recent theater appearances include *The Visit* by John Kander, Fred Ebb, and Terrence McNally (Williamstown Theatre Festival), Jeanine Tesori and Lisa Kron's *Fun Home* (Lucille Lortell Award/the Public Theater), Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's *Passion* (Classic Stage Company/Drama League Award nomination), and *The Cradle Will Rock* (Encores! Off-Center). Other theater credits include *Three Sisters*, the U.S. premiere of *Sunset Boulevard*, *Two Shakespearean Actors*, *The Highest Yellow*, *Eli's Comin'* (Obie Award), *The Ballad of Little Jo* (Jeff Award nomination), *Dream True*, and *The Glass Menagerie*. In London's West End Ms. Kuhn starred in *Metropolis* (Olivier Award nomination). This April Ms. Kuhn will reprise her performance in *Fun Home* when it opens on Broadway.

Her film and television appearances include Disney's *Pocahontas*, *Enchanted*, *Elementary*, *Hope & Faith*, *Law & Order*, *All My Children*, *The Secret Life of Mary Margaret*, *My Favorite Broadway: The Leading Ladies*, the Kennedy Center Honors, *Les Misérables: The Dream Cast in Concert*, and *In Performance at the White House*.

Ms. Kuhn has performed on concert stages around the world, including Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Feinstein's at the Regency, and the Hollywood Bowl, as well as Royal Albert Hall and the Hippodrome in London. Her solo albums include *All This Happiness* (PS Classics), *Serious Playground: The Songs of Laura Nyro* (Sh-K-Boom), and *Just in Time: Judy Kuhn Sings Jule Styne*.