



A Grand Night for Singing **DIRECTOR'S VISION**

BY ROB RUGGIERO | DIRECTOR

"All the sounds of the earth are like music..."

I love the music of Rodgers and Hammerstein. Who doesn't? Their songs feel timeless, and they so easily can be re-interpreted to respond to this moment... to any moment. That's what makes them feel relevant. They can inspire your laughter, your feelings, your heart. What better music to share as we gather in person (safely!) to be in the theater together once again after all these months? The songs of R&H are a true celebration of life and love.

***"We haven't gone beyond the very beginning
We've just begun to know how lucky we are..."***

When finding a path into staging this musical event, it quickly became clear that we had some very specific goals: to revisit the music with a contemporary lens so the songs remain fresh and relevant; a commitment to making sure the company of actors reflect the world we live in today and represent an authentic celebration of diversity onstage; and to find a connection with the actors, audience and this enduring music that was fun, inventive and invites new interpretation.

***"Do I want you because you're wonderful?
Or are you wonderful because I want you?..."***

Well, that journey begins with finding the right company of actors, and I could not be more excited about this wonderfully talented cast that Goodspeed and the creative team have assembled. Together with Lainie Sakakura our choreographer and Adam Souza our music director, we have shaped this version of the show to highlight the individual gifts of these specific actors. We have had such fun exploring with each other new and inventive interpretations of this classic material.

***"Alone in our secret,
Together we sigh
For one smiling day to be free..."***

Exploring the show through a 2021 lens and with a contemporary sensitivity has opened up a number of unique and beautiful opportunities for our production. With these interpretations of the beautiful music of Rodgers and Hammerstein, we are able to celebrate love, relationship and identity in all its forms to truly reflect the world today. The gift of our pause indoors revealed an elevation of acceptance for our individuality in a way we have never felt before. What power and creativity comes from that intention!

***"Impossible.
For a plain yellow pumpkin to become a golden carriage."***

I can't believe we are finally back! This new gathering with other artists and this audience has a deep and special meaning for all of us. It's very emotional to be back in a rehearsal room, hearing this music being sung live in a room, and reigniting that communal connection between performer and audience. I can't imagine a more perfect place to come back together—Goodspeed has always been an artistic home for me, and I'm sure for many of you.

Welcome home.