

Snapshots

AUTHOR'S NOTES

By David Stern

Way back in 1991, Michael Scheman asked me a simple question: "Are you a fan of Stephen Schwartz's work?" "Absolutely," I answered. Then he asked, "Did you know there's no official revue of his work?" I couldn't believe it. How was it possible that the man who brought us *Pippin* and *Godspell* and so many other fantastic musicals didn't have a revue? Michael and I, being in our early twenties, decided that we were the ones to fix this glaring omission.

I had just finished creating a revue that was basically a series of songs connected by light patter—and I found it somewhat unsatisfying as a writer. There was no narrative connection between songs. Each moment had to start from scratch, and there was no cumulative emotional effect by the end of the evening. I wanted to do something more. If I was going to write another revue, I wanted to string the songs together to tell a story—with characters and arcs and emotional punch. And again, being in our twenties, Michael and I thought this was a grand idea. We had no idea that no one had successfully pulled this off before. We were also naïve enough to think that we could just look up Stephen Schwartz in the phone book (yes, there were phone books back then), tell him our idea, and he would say, "That's great! Go for it!"

And then a crazy thing happened: we looked up Stephen Schwartz in the phone book, told him our idea, and he said, "That's great! Go for it!" Only later did I learn that that's pretty much what he says to everybody. But being naïve young men, we took him at his word and started working. Two years later, we presented the material at the Dramatists' Guild, and Stephen decided to join us in process. Two years after that, we had a production and realized that we had much more work to do. Then, as so often happens, our careers took us in different directions, and we put the project on hold. For decades.

Snapshots is a memory piece that covers a couple's relationship from the moment they met as children to their present empty-nest lives. At the time we began working, I was in my twenties, and Stephen was in his forties—and we brought our respective life experiences to the piece. When we picked it up again, I was in my forties and Stephen in his sixties—and while the break wasn't planned, it turned out to be vital. Through the passage of time and our new life experiences, we were finally able to finish the piece. On the page, at least. And that's why we're here at Goodspeed.

How can we present the material in a way that bridges revue and book musical, memory piece and present story, narrative story-telling, and presentational show piece? How can we deliver the songs in a way that satisfies the most ardent fan, yet also brings in first-time listeners? How can we bring our audience on a familiar, yet entirely new ride—and will they stay on the bus with us, or get off at the first stop? With the help of our talented director, stellar cast, and team of experts here at Goodspeed, we hope to answer all of these questions at The Norma Terris Theatre.

