

Director's Vision

BY HUNTER FOSTER

When I first read *The Drowsy Chaperone*, my initial impression was that it was a cute show that was very successful at lampooning a certain style of musical comedy. It wasn't until I saw the Broadway production that I realized just how special this little show was. A lot was owed to the incredible performance of Bob Martin. Not only was he hilarious, but, more importantly, by the end of the show, he broke your heart.



Whenever I approach a show, regardless of whether it's a comedy or drama, I look for its core, its heart. I never want a show to just be "funny;" I want the audience to walk away having an emotional experience. Yes, there are a lot of wacky characters, funny dialogue, and hilarious physical comedy in *The Drowsy Chaperone*. But in order for the show to have the complete emotional impact, for it to truly resonate with an audience, we must follow the journey of "Man in Chair."

This sad and lonely character spends most of his time immersed in musical comedy records—especially his favorite, Gable and Stein's *The Drowsy Chaperone*. He is the heart of this show. If we don't care about him, then the show is just a bunch of funny sketches. He is our core, our foundation, and we see *The Drowsy Chaperone* through his eyes.

Before BroadwayWorld.com and YouTube, if you were a fan of a certain Broadway show and you weren't able to witness the show live, all you had to go on were photos on the cast album. I remember being a kid and buying the record of the musical *Chess*. I never got to see the show, but I stared at the pictures on album and make up my own staging (maybe this was the beginnings of my career as a director!). When I finally saw the show, I was disappointed because it didn't live up to my imagination.

Maybe that's why the show is so special to "Man in Chair": his imagination has created a production that's far better than the original. And that's how the creative team will approach the show. Imagination allows Choreographer Chis Bailey and me to create not how the show was originally staged, but how "Man in Chair" envisions it. This will allow the audience to go on the journey with the character and discover the world as he sees it. Hopefully, by the end of this hilarious romp, they will also empathize with his despair and loneliness—maybe even seeing a little bit of themselves in him.

I am extremely excited to bring *The Drowsy Chaperone* to the stage at The Goodspeed. I can't think of a more fitting place to stage a show about "one's love of musicals" than at a venue which has such a rich history of bringing classic musicals to the stage.

THE
Drowsy
CHAPERONE
a musical within a comedy