

# upstageGUIDE



**ROUNDAABOUT  
THEATRE  
COMPANY**

A publication of  
**EDUCATION AT  
ROUNDAABOUT**

# upstageSPOTLIGHT



## SCOTLAND, PA

Book by Michael Mitnick  
Music and Lyrics by Adam Gwon  
Choreographed by Josh Rhodes  
Directed by Lonny Price

This deliciously dark new musical comedy, based on the cult film (and the bard's *Macbeth*), springs to life in a sleepy Pennsylvania town (population 1,203—and dropping), where a burger-joint manager and his wife cook up a plan to super-size their lives. As their ambitions grow and the bodies fall, the couple finds out just how far they'll go for a taste of the oh-so-tempting American dream.

a note from ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## TODD HAIMES

I could not be more thrilled to welcome back composer and lyricist—and Roundabout Board Member—Adam Gwon for his second new musical with Roundabout. Adam's smash hit show *Ordinary Days*, which has now been produced at hundreds of theatres across the country and around the world, made its New York debut at Roundabout Underground in 2009. Like all Underground productions, *Ordinary Days* included an automatic commission for another new work from Adam. With book writer Michael Mitnick and director Lonny Price, Adam has developed his commission at Roundabout over the past several years, growing it from a seed of an idea into the deliciously twisted comedy of power and revenge on the Laura Pels stage right now. Adapted from the 2001 film of the same name by Billy Morrisette, *Scotland, PA* brings to life the explosive collision between ambition and fate with heart-stopping humor, roof-raising rock 'n' roll, and spine-tingling suspense.

**WHERE: SCOTLAND, PENNSYLVANIA**

**WHEN: FALL, 1975...IN AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE**

### TODAY'S SPECIALS

#### DUNCAN'S EMPLOYEES

MAC.....MARRIED TO PAT

PAT.....MARRIED TO MAC

BANKO.....MAC AND PAT'S FRIEND

DOUG.....AN EMPLOYEE AT DUNCAN'S BURGER SHACK

MALCOLM.....DUNCAN'S SON

MRS. LENOX.....DUNCAN'S SECRET LOVER AND ACE EMPLOYEE

DUNCAN.....THE OWNER OF A BURGER SHACK

STONERS: JESSIE, HECTOR, & STACEY.....THREE OTHERWORLDLY PRESENCES

PEG MCDUFF.....A LIEUTENANT HOMICIDE DETECTIVE

ANDY.....FORMER GYM TEACHER, DOWN ON HIS LUCK

BRENDA.....FORMER LIBRARIAN, CURRENT BABYSITTER

GARY.....A LOCAL TV NEWS REPORTER

RAY CRUMP.....AN INVESTOR

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# CREATING SCOTLAND, PA

In 2009, composer and lyricist Adam Gwon made his New York debut with the musical *Ordinary Days* as part of Roundabout Underground, and, like all Underground writers, Adam immediately received a commission from Roundabout to write another show. With Roundabout's support, Adam wrote and developed his commissioned work over the next decade alongside book writer Michael Mitnick, ultimately creating *Scotland, PA*. How did this new musical grow from a seed of an idea into a full-length production?

Late 2012

Interested in finding a collaborator to write the book for his next show, Adam meets playwright Michael Mitnick for the first time. Michael pitches Adam some ideas for musicals that they could create together, suggesting that they adapt Billy Morrisette's 2001 independent film *Scotland, PA* into a musical.

September  
29, 2014

Adam and Michael receive the rights to create a musical adaptation of *Scotland, PA*.

July 18–28  
2016

Roundabout hosts its first 10-day developmental workshop of *Scotland, PA*. In a **developmental workshop**, a writing team actively works with other creatives such as a director, music director, choreographer, orchestrator, band, cast of actors, and Roundabout's Artistic staff to write—and rewrite—their show. By the end of this workshop, a full draft of *Scotland, PA* has not yet been completed, but the team presents the first two-thirds of the musical for an invited audience as a **semi-staged reading**—a performance in which the actors read some of the scenes directly from scripts without any blocking (stage movement), but stage other scenes with blocking and occasionally some simple choreography (dancing).

Summer  
2014

Adam and Michael officially decide to write a musical adaptation of *Scotland, PA*, excited by the film's unique approach to retelling *Macbeth* and by the opportunity to write a score influenced by the music of the 1970s. Adam will write the show's music and lyrics, or score, and Michael will write the book. They ask the film studio that originally produced the movie for the **rights**, or legal permissions, to adapt the film into a musical.

May 9,  
2016

Adam and Michael, now with director Lonny Price attached to the project, present a few songs and scenes from *Scotland, PA* at a concert at Lincoln Center as part of the "LC Originals: First Look" series. Of the three songs shared at this first-ever public presentation of material from *Scotland, PA*, only one—"Kick Ass Party"—still remains in the musical in full.



Adam Gwon



Michael Mitnick



Lonny Price

## WHAT IS A COMMISSION?

A commission is an agreement between an artist and a theatre company in which the theatre pays an artist to create a new work, often in exchange for the right to produce that show's world premiere.

Roundabout hosts a third workshop with the goal of more fully mounting the show to explore how its production elements—things like staging, set, costumes, etc.—might add to the storytelling. The almost-fully-staged presentation at the end of the workshop features rehearsal props, custom-made rehearsal set pieces, simple costumes, and some choreography. Adam and Michael rework the script and score throughout the process, and their revisions include a rewrite of the song “Bad Dream” as well as changes to many other scenes.

Oct. 30–  
Nov. 17, 2017

Roundabout hosts a fourth and final workshop of *Scotland, PA*, which ends in the most fully-staged presentation of the show yet. Incorporating extensive choreography by Josh Rhodes, scenic elements by set designer Anna Louizos, and a full array of rehearsal props and costumes, this workshop allows Adam and Michael to fine tune the journey that each character takes through the story. To this end, Adam and Michael rewrite or delete some songs. One existing melody is given new lyrics, turning it into the pivotal song “What We’ve Got.”

After this workshop, the show is **programmed**, or scheduled, for a full production in Roundabout's 2019-2020 season.

Feb. 18–  
March 8,  
2019

Opening Night for *Scotland, PA*. At this point, the musical is frozen, meaning that it has reached its final production stage and will not be changed any further over the course of the run.

October  
23, 2019

April 10–  
20, 2017

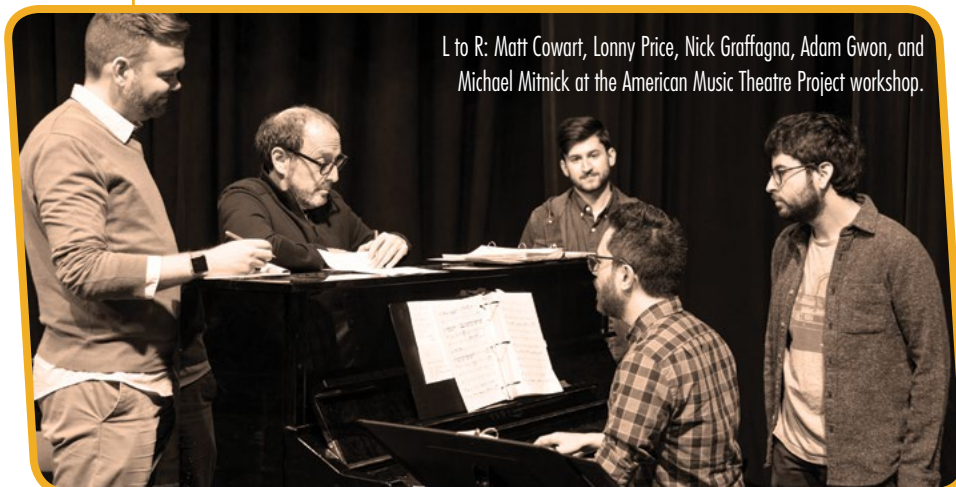
A full draft of the musical is now completed, with the songs “Clairvoyant” and “Bad Dream” added to the show, and Roundabout hosts a second 10-day workshop of *Scotland, PA* to explore how this full draft works all together on the stage. The musical is again presented as a semi-staged reading at the end of the workshop.

Oct. 20–  
28, 2018

The *Scotland, PA* team workshops the musical with students at Northwestern University as part of Northwestern's American Music Theatre Project. Adam and Michael continue to revise and rewrite the musical, even completely changing the show's opening number. This workshop culminates in a concert reading performed by students at Northwestern.

August  
12, 2019

Rehearsals begin for Roundabout's full production of *Scotland, PA*. The script and score will continue to undergo revisions until the show's Opening Night.



L to R: Matt Cowart, Lonny Price, Nick Graffagna, Adam Gwon, and Michael Mitnick at the American Music Theatre Project workshop.

# INTERVIEW WITH AUTHORS ADAM GWON AND MICHAEL MITNICK



Adam Gwon



Michael Mitnick

Education Dramaturg Ted Sod spoke with composer and lyricist Adam Gwon and book writer Michael Mitnick about their work on *Scotland, PA*.

**Ted Sod: Where were you born and educated? Did you have any teachers who had a profound influence on your decision to write for the theatre?**

**Adam Gwon:** I was born in Boston but grew up in Baltimore from the time I was two. I went to high school at Carver, a public magnet school for the arts where my 10th grade English teacher was constantly making the hard sell on Stephen Sondheim. One day he just played the *Assassins* cast album for a whole class period. Another time, he made me stand and recite the lyrics to “Putting It Together” and “Music of the Night” as a compare-and-contrast. I went to college as an acting major at NYU and had a teacher my freshman year who overheard me playing the piano, pulled me aside, and said: that’s where your voice is. He was a composer, and he died that year, and shortly after I started writing with his words in my ear.

**Michael Mitnick:** I was born in Pittsburgh, PA. I went to Fox Chapel, a public high school with a strong extracurricular theatre program led by Craig Cannon and Sally Meyers. They made me feel I had value. My piano teacher Olga Kurland taught me piano and music theory. In graduate school, Paula Vogel, Lisa Kron, John Guare, and Lynn

Nottage cracked open my brain. My mentors, though they might not want that designation, were Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty. I was their gofer on four projects at Lincoln Center, and they taught me not to write shows that rely on attitude or style, but rather ones that aim to tell a dramatic story with essential songs that advance character or plot.

**TS: What do you feel the musical *Scotland, PA*, is about? Does the material have personal resonance for you, and if so, how?**

**MM:** The musical is based on the movie of the same title, which is based on the Scottish Play, which is about ambition. Who doesn’t look around and say, “If only I had X, my life might be better?” That’s our show’s central theme, though I’d maybe paint it a little sunnier: What little do we need to be happy? It’s something I think about, and I imagine most people do—when does “happy and satisfied” click in?

**AG:** I love that the story in our version doesn’t start with generals and noblemen; it’s set in a forgotten, working-class town. When I think of ambition, I think of the American Dream, and these are characters who’ve been denied their ambition, denied that shiny American promise of greatness. So they try to wrest it back. I found myself realizing: who can blame them? Ambition and greed, assertiveness and aggression, justice and revenge, they are points on the same spectrum. What is the tipping point from one to the other? We are always walking these lines, and I feel that especially now.





Book Writer Michael Mitnick in rehearsal for *Scotland, PA*  
Photo by Jeremy Daniels

**TS:** Adam, how did you decide what the score for *Scotland, PA* would sound like? What kind of research did you have to do in order to write it?

**AG:** The film studio had only one request when we pitched them our adaptation: that we keep the story rooted in the 1970s. Happily, that was never a question for me. It's what excited me about wanting to write this score. I hadn't heard a musical take the sound of that era and filter it through a contemporary lens, the way, say, *Hairspray* did with the 1960s. Pop music of the '70s has such a broad, exciting palette. Even the radio hits are harmonically interesting and unabashedly theatrical. I listened to a lot before I started writing—Bad Company, The Eagles, Lynyrd Skynyrd, David Bowie, Queen, The Carpenters, Elton John—then put it all away and did my own thing.

**TS:** Can you give us a sense of your individual process? What was the most challenging part of adapting *Scotland, PA* into a musical? What was the most fun?

**AG:** For me, music and lyrics come at the same time, and I work closely with my book writer to make sure we're building a cohesive world. The biggest challenge was figuring out the exact way that musical theatre songs spill out of these characters' mouths. They live in 1975, but they're not listening to the original cast recording of *A Chorus Line*, if you know what I mean. We wanted there to be something unpolished and a little off-center about how and what they were singing, a specific point of view. I'm realizing now that the most challenging part was also the most fun.

**MM:** I'd studied Shakespeare's play in college and obsessively watched Billy Morrisette's film in high school. Adam and I had many conversations in person before any writing took place. I sketched an outline. Things shifted significantly over four years. More often than not, I wrote monologues/dialogue that I knew would get chopped up and replaced with music and lyrics. My goal was to write as economically as possible to connect plot dots and then get out of the way so Adam's songs can carry the story.

It stinks writing a musical for characters who lack motivation. While pop and rock work well with the idea of "I don't want X" and "screw Y," musicals work better when there is a positive goal. Otherwise, we hear people singing on and on about what they don't want and we say, "OK. I get it. Fine. If you don't want it, don't take it. Now, where did I park?" It's stronger hearing the aspirational goals of the central characters and watching as they do or don't achieve them. In our show, we have people like Mac (one of our two main characters), who is essentially fine being exploited by life as long as he's drunk and with his love Pat, so what's the big deal? The fun was the challenge of figuring how to activate him while still portraying a stoner/slacker.

**TS:** How are you collaborating with Lonny Price, the director?

**MM:** Lonny has the rare gift as a director of simultaneously living inside the work as a character, playing out the work as an actor, and overseeing the entire experience as the audience. Writing a musical based on the Scottish Play is tricky because it's a tragic story that can bend rather unsympathetically away from our main characters. We need people on Mac and Pat's side as they kill people and get greedier. Lonny was a compass that guided us through the musical tone. He and Matt Cowart, our associate director, also work with such a level of detail, focus, and enthusiasm that there was no hope but to be all aboard the same ship.

**AG:** We connected with Lonny early in the process, before we'd even finished the first draft. He's got fantastic instincts about story and the mechanics behind what makes musicals tick. But one of the first things he did was get us thinking about a physical production. What's the set going to do? How's he going to change his costume? How can it be part of your storytelling? We built the Act One finale after Lonny told us what he thought the set should look like. That combination of dramaturgical insight and big vision is invaluable on a new work. Everyone's trying to fit these puzzle pieces together, and you're always calibrating. Lack of ego helps, too—the sense that, if something isn't working, a solution can come from anyone in the room.

**TS:** Who or what inspires you as an artist?

**MM:** A work that contains genuine surprise. A story that is actually dramatic. A song that goes to both unexpected and inevitable places. I like to see things that aren't murky or boring. I'm inspired by what cuts through to some kind of emotional or thoughtful truth.

**AG:** My collaborators, a perfect rhyme, and a well-made plot.

**TS:** What advice would you give to a young person who wants to write for the theatre?

**MM:** Don't give up, but write a lot. Write every day. Read at least 30 novels a year. You may have to write a lot for a very long time that goes on and on and into your thirties and your friends now have very nice houses on very nice bodies of water, but sooner or later, you will have the chance to share your writing in a professional setting.

**AG:** Be steadfast in your pursuit of craft, but flexible enough to know when it's getting in the way of doing something surprising.

**TS:** What other projects are you currently working on?

**MM:** Teaching my dog Mabel that at a point in the near future she will stop receiving treats for going to the bathroom. I don't get treats when I do, and neither should she.

**AG:** I'm working on commissions from Playwrights Horizons, South Coast Repertory, and the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia. I'm kind of behind, so if you see me after the show, remind me that I should get home to write. •



Composer and Lyricist Adam Gwon in rehearsal for *Scotland, PA*  
Photo by Jeremy Daniels

# MACBETH MEETS "THE ME DECADE": AMERICA IN THE MID-1970S

By recontextualizing William Shakespeare's play into a small northeastern town in the middle of the 1970s, *Scotland, PA* invites us to revisit an important era in our recent history. In *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics*, author Bruce J. Schulman presents the decade as a pivotal time for our American character; shifts that began in the late '60s led to profound transformations, some of which continue to impact our lives today.

In 1975, a year before our collective 200th birthday, Americans were hardly celebrating. A disastrous war, unprecedented political scandal, a struggling economy, rising crime rates, decaying inner cities, and the growing threat of nuclear war had Americans feeling something had gone wrong with our country. Many people turned their attention on their own personal lives, leading to trends in personal growth, recreational drug use, and sexual exploration for men and women, straight and gay.



President Nixon leaves the White House after resigning in the wake of the Watergate scandal.

Photo by Oliver F. Atkins

revelation further eroded American support for the war and trust in our government.

## **WATERGATE: THE END OF INNOCENCE**

Americans experienced what was considered the worst political scandal in our nation's history during the events known as "Watergate," which began in 1972 and led to President Nixon's resignation in 1974. Several burglars who had been arrested for breaking into the Democratic National Committee office to steal documents and wiretap phones were revealed to have connections to Nixon's reelection campaign. While Nixon took aggressive steps to hide his involvement, journalists and a special prosecutor investigation exposed the president's abuse of power and obstruction of justice. Congress moved to impeach Nixon, but he resigned before the proceedings began. When his successor, Gerald Ford, immediately gave Nixon a full pardon, many Americans felt disappointment and skepticism about our leaders. *The Washington Post* opined that Watergate caused "the loss of innocence for all but the most jaded and cynical among us."

## **AN ECONOMY OUT OF GAS**

Since World War II, Americans had enjoyed a booming economy and decades of personal prosperity, but in the



Mass demonstrations and domestic tension over Vietnam divided the country through the early 1970s.

## **"GET OUT OF VIETNAM"**

The U.S. withdrew from Vietnam in 1973, unable to claim victory, after over 58,000 Americans had died in the most unpopular (and then longest) war in our history. Anti-war demonstrations had started almost simultaneously with the launch of direct military intervention in Vietnam in 1965, and by the early '70s, the country

was in turmoil. At Kent State University in 1970, National Guard troops shot at students protesting the U.S. invasion of Cambodia, killing four demonstrators. One year later, the *New York Times* published a series of articles based on the Pentagon Papers, a top-secret report by the U.S. Department of Defense. The leaked document revealed that since 1945, all of our presidents had been covering up interventions and policies that perpetuated the conflict in Vietnam. This



early '70s, the boom turned into a bust. The period has been called "The Great Inflation," highlighting the unprecedented crisis of inflation (a persistent rise in prices as a result of a decline in the buying power of the dollar). Combined with rising unemployment, the term "stagflation" was coined to describe the stagnant economy. In 1973, the Organization of Oil Producing Countries (OPEC) enforced an oil embargo to discourage all countries from allying with Israel, including the U.S. Besides causing a nationwide gasoline shortage, the rising cost of petroleum impacted prices on manufacturing and transportation of many products, which hurt consumers.

For the first time since the Great Depression, Americans faced the possibility of a declining standard of living for their children. However, where the Depression had a unifying impact on the country ("we're all in this together"), the '70s saw an "everyone looks out for themselves" response from Americans. As wealthy people moved into the suburbs, big cities and their minority populations took the hardest hit, facing declines in household income, blue-collar jobs, and living conditions.



Gasoline prices tripled in the '70s, and Americans experienced long waits (and sometimes no gas) at the pumps.

## THE "ME" DECADE

In 1976, journalist Tom Wolfe labeled the 1970s as "The Me Decade." Wolfe argued that Americans' values had shifted from the collective causes of the '60s, such as civil rights and political justice, towards a preoccupation with individual well-being. In "The Me Decade," more Americans began seeing therapists, reading self-help books, working out, participating in growth programs like "EST" — a popular self-transformation program created by Werner Erhardt — and exploring new-age spirituality and religious groups, like Scientology. Wolfe pointed to the 30 years of

economic prosperity as the major force eroding Americans' class consciousness in favor of individualism, while other thinkers viewed the focus on self-improvement as a reaction to the political and economic stresses of the times. The freedoms (and excesses) of the '70s, among other factors, gave rise to The New Right, a new conservative moment that ultimately led to the election of President Ronald Reagan and a nationwide swing to the right at the dawn of the 1980s. •

## "You deserve a break today"



A McDonald's store in California, the late '70s.

Photo by John Margolies

*Scotland, PA* takes place in an "alternative universe" of 1975, where Duncan's burger stand exists without competition from familiar chains. In reality, the fast-food industry expanded so widely throughout the '70s that one industry analyst called it "the decade of the fast-food business." By 1977, for the first time ever, more than half of Americans were working, and 20% of American food dollars were spent in restaurants. The fast-food industry began advertising at children: in 1972, almost every child in America could identify Ronald McDonald — only Santa Claus was more recognizable. Although the first drive-throughs appeared in the late '40s and '50s (Jack in the Box was actually the first drive-through chain), McDonald's did not actually open its first drive-through until 1975.

# INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR LONNY PRICE

**Ted Sod:** Why did you choose to direct *Scotland, PA*, and how have you been collaborating with the writers Adam Gwon and Michael Mitnick?

**Lonny Price:** The thing about doing a lot of revivals, particularly by Sondheim, is that it spoils you. The show is already amazing, the kinks worked out, and the quality of the work is of the highest order. I guess what I mean by that is I can be kind of a snob about material, but I fell in love with this show probably... on page 5. (I'm kidding, but awfully quickly.) Michael and Adam know their craft and they have a tremendous respect for and skill in this form. They break rules in an exciting way, but they know the rules they're breaking. In terms of how we work together is, we sit around a table at one of our homes, calm the dogs down, and we discuss what's working and what we think needs improving or clarifying. If there's a section in question, I will start the discussion with two words, "bad pitch," which oftentimes leads to a better one from someone else, and on rare occasions, sometimes it's the precise thing we'll wind up doing. I also have to say, we really have always been on the same page about what needed to be rethought.

We've been working together on various readings and workshops for three years. It's a tricky tone because it has something on its mind, and it is also entertaining and funny. Finding the right balance has been challenging, but it seems we are always getting closer to something that has the correct integrity.

**TS:** What would you say the musical is about?

**LP:** *Scotland, PA* is a cautionary tale about how unchecked ambition (desire) and greed leads to doom, and how easy it is to get seduced by those particular (and very human) emotions. And, of course, the cost is the loss of one's more human values as one climbs the ladder of success. If the show makes people think a little bit about that, that would be wonderful.

**TS:** What kind of research did you have to do to direct and dramaturg this show?

**LP:** *Scotland, PA* takes place in 1975, so the focus of research for me has been delving into the sociological elements of the seventies. It was a fascinating time what with the Vietnam War finally ending that year(!), the country still reeling from the post-Watergate fallout, the Me Generation on the rise, the women's movement, the economy being absolutely terrible, etc. I did a lot of reading and watched a lot of documentaries about America in the 1970s. These characters exist in a specific time and place, and knowing as much as you can about the context of the story is enormously useful.

**TS:** What kind of atmosphere do you like to create in the rehearsal room? Do you look for a lot of collaboration?

**LP:** Unlike what you hear about, say, Jerome Robbins, who apparently liked a lot of tension in the room, I am the opposite. I was an actor for many years, and I think my best work was done in a room where I wasn't afraid, where I was encouraged to try things and allowed to fail, and even fail big. I like to set up a room where the best idea wins and it doesn't have to be mine. It often isn't and I'm very good at that. The older I get, the less ego I have about where the good idea comes from. I try to set up a situation where everyone is contributing. I may be the



final arbiter, but at the same time, I like a lot of input, particularly early, in pre-production, before we get into rehearsal. There's no quantifying the amount of input Josh Rhodes (choreographer) and Matt Cowart (my associate director for the last 15 years!) have had on the many pieces we have done together. A free and respectful collaboration is everything.

**TS:** How important is Billy Morrisette's film in your process? Is it something you return to like the source material, *Macbeth*?

**LP:** I've seen it several times. Film is such a different medium. We're obviously in a time where people are turning films into Broadway and off-Broadway musicals every five seconds, but the most successful of them, to me, are the ones that aren't utterly faithful to their screenplays.

**TS:** What is your understanding of the relationship between Mac and Pat?

**LP:** I think they're two disenfranchised people, very much in love with each other, who are unable to rise up to fulfill their potential. Each in a funny way winds up doing things they probably wouldn't have done had they not thought they were helping the other. Interestingly, the more we worked on the show, the more we started viewing it as a tragic love story. Unlike *Macbeth*, I think they both make some very bad decisions in service of the other's supposed happiness. ("Gift of the Magi?") I think she's encouraging him not only for her ambition, but because he

has enormous potential that is unrealized and because she genuinely loves him. I think he goes along because he wants her to have better things, a better life than he's been able to provide for her. We did a bunch of workshops with wonderful actors in their forties. Then when we went to Northwestern University, we worked with students. What struck us while working with younger people is how much more moving the story was; with people in their forties, they should know better, but in their twenties, you may forgive them a little. They get carried away.

**TS: I love the device where Mac keeps coming up with all these ideas and Duncan, his employer, doesn't pick up on any of them. Mac's seeing into the future in some ways and the musical is saying, "Watch and see how we got to where we are now."**

**LP:** The essential idea is the explosion of rampant consumerism. You acquire one thing and then you want more, which is a metaphor for this country. It's gotten so conglomerates are eating each other up to make bigger and bigger companies that seem to be running our government.

**TS: What traits did you look for in casting the actors?**

**LP:** A little bit of danger. The people who we cast have a bit of an edge to them because this musical is reflecting our worst nature at times. I looked for people who weren't afraid to go there. They aren't cookie-cutter musical-comedy performers. For me, the acting is always paramount. We managed to find wonderful actors who are great singers, so we feel very blessed with this cast.

**TS: How will the musical visually manifest in terms of the set?**

**LP:** With our wonderful designer, Anna Louizos, the set is a character in this show, in no small part because the primary location (the restaurant itself) transforms three times. But even more important to me was that the set reflects a growing coldness, less natural anything, more plastic...progress. When you go to rural places, there's often a Dairy

Queen in the middle of the woods or off a small highway. They throw down some blacktop and there it is. So this restaurant is in the middle of a wooded area, and as it expands it keeps destroying the nature around it, which is what we do as we keep building up our arsenal of corporations. Regulations disappear, nature gets destroyed. The set reflects the gestation of that very phenomenon very well.

**TS: What or who inspires you as an artist?**

**LP:** So many people. In the theatre, Stephen Sondheim. Hal Prince has had a huge influence on me. Joe Mantello inspires me; I think he does spectacular work. Dan Sullivan, Sam Gold, John Tiffany, George Wolfe. I feel very lucky to have grown up in the theatre and in New York where I got to see Bob Fosse's work on the Broadway stage. John Dexter's production of *Equus* was wildly inspiring. I work a lot in London, so I really enjoy watching wonderful directors work there. And now, there's so much great television that's inspiring. All those new short series like "Fleabag," are addictive to watch.

**TS: What advice do you have for young people who want to direct for the theatre?**











**LP:** Go to a training program. See as much theatre as you can and see different varieties. Go to BAM, look at world theatre, know what Kabuki is, know what Grand Guignol is, know what German Expressionism is, see Theatre de Complicité. Go to all of the stuff that isn't mainstream. Do the mainstream stuff as well, but you'll probably learn more from the stuff on the fringe. If you find a director that you really admire, write to them and see if you can observe on their shows. They will teach you a lot just by osmosis. Also, go to museums a lot. Understand art because it will help you in your design meetings. And, know the world and the time you are living in. Not just its art, but its politics, too. It influences everything. •



Director Lonny Price in rehearsal for *Scotland, PA*  
Photo by Jeremy Daniels



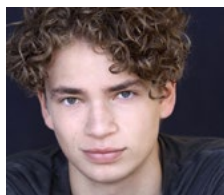
# CHARTING THE ORIGINS OF SCOTLAND, PA

	MACBETH	LADY MACBETH	KING DUNCAN
<p><b>SCOTLAND, PA</b> THE MUSICAL 2019</p>	<p>"I JUST WANNA LIVE. DON'T GOTTA BE ON TOP. THEY MAKE ME FEEL BAD AND THEY NEVER STOP."</p>  <p><b>MAC McBETH</b> Fast food genius, held back by his boss Duncan, but mostly content</p>	<p>"YOU GOT SO MUCH INSIDE YOU, BABY. YOU DESERVE MORE. WE BOTH DO."</p>  <p><b>PAT McBETH</b> Frustrated by Duncan's treatment of her husband, Mac; wants better for their lives</p>	<p>"FORGET IT. IT'S A STUPID IDEA. IT'S EVEN WORSE THAN YOUR CHICKEN BALL THING."</p>  <p><b>DUNCAN</b> Arrogant, sometimes violent, boss and father</p>
<p><b>SCOTLAND, PA.</b> THE FILM 2001</p>	<p>"JESUS, PAT, THE GUY WAS JUST A LITTLE DRUNK... WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?"</p>  <p><b>JOE "MAC" McBETH</b> Hard-drinking, hard-working man beaten down by his life</p>	<p>"YOU DON'T GET IT MAC, YOU DON'T GET IT... YOU'RE THE ONE RUNNING THAT PLACE AND WE LIVE IN A TRUCK."</p>  <p><b>PAT MacBETH</b> Frustrated by the way she and Mac are treated; sick of Mac not standing up for them</p>	<p>"OH PAT, MAC, THANK GOD! SOMEBODY JUST HIT ME ON THE HEAD."</p>  <p><b>DUNCAN</b> Oblivious and old school; doesn't realize how he makes people feel</p>
<p><b>Macbeth</b> THE PLAY (c. 1606)</p> <p>Shakespeare was writing at the time of the coronation of King James. To flatter the new monarch, Duncan was a good king, and Banquo, one of James's ancestors, was portrayed as noble and moral. Shakespeare also took ideas from <i>Daemonologie</i>, a book James himself wrote about the supernatural.</p>	<p>"I HAVE NO SPUR TO PRICK THE SIDES OF MY INTENT, BUT ONLY VAULTING AMBITION WHICH O'ERLEAPS ITSELF AND FALLS ON THE OTHER."</p>  <p><b>MACBETH</b> Heroic military captain; his ambition, his wife, and the words of the witches push him to evil</p>	<p>"WHEN YOU DURST DO IT, THEN YOU WERE A MAN"</p>  <p><b>LADY MACBETH</b> Ambitious and ruthless in her pursuit of power</p>	<p>"CONDUCT ME TO MINE HOST. WE LOVE HIM HIGHLY, AND SHALL CONTINUE OUR GRACES TOWARDS HIM."</p>  <p><b>KING DUNCAN</b> Middle-aged; a good, moral king</p>
<p><b>Holinshed's</b> <b>Chronicles</b> THE ORIGIN (1577)</p> <p>The <i>Chronicles</i> were written in Early Modern English and during time before spelling was standardized.</p>	<p>SHORTLIE AFTER, HE BEGAN TO SHEW WHAT HE WAS, IN STEAD OF EQUITIE PRACTISING CRUELTY.</p>  <p><b>MAKBETH</b> Not a military hero, but justified in his claim to the throne. Makbeth kills Duncan and rules justly before becoming a tyrant.</p>	<p>SHE THAT WAS VERIE AMBITIOUS, BURNING IN UNQUENCHABLE DESIRE TO BEARE THE NAME OF A QUEENE.</p>  <p><b>MAKBETH'S WIFE</b> Ambitious and fierce</p>	<p>AFTER IT WAS PERCEIVED HOW NEGLIGENT HE WAS IN PUNISHING OFFENDORS, MANIE MISRULED PERSON TOOKE OCCASION THEREOF TO TROUBLE THE PEACE...</p>  <p><b>KING DUNCAN</b> A weak, gentle, ineffective ruler</p>

Ambition. Love. Guilt. The tragic flaws on display in *Scotland, PA*, are universal. They underpin not just the musical but the film, play, and book that preceded it. While the stories of each adaptation are similar, every author shapes the main characters to suit their context and to highlight pressing themes of the time.

## MALCOLM

"SOMETIMES, WHILE YOU SLEEP, I STAND BY YOUR BODY AND THINK ABOUT SEWING YOUR EYES SHUT."



### MALCOLM

Spoiled rich kid with a secret; hates his father

## BANQUO

"I KNOW ONE THING'S ALWAYS TRUE: IT'S OKAY FLYIN' SOLO, BUT PEOPLE THRIVE WHEN THERE ARE TWO."

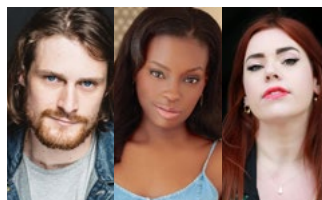


### BANKO

Lonely, simple-minded coworker

## THE WITCHES

"DONTCHA WANT TO BE A BIG TIME BIG SHOT?"



### STONERS

Three otherworldly spirits, two women and one man, who entice Mac with visions of his destiny

## MACDUFF

"WITH A CORPSE YOU CAN BE CERTAIN HE WON'T LIE TO YOU NO MORE. WITH THE LIVING IT'S HARDER TO BE SURE."



### PEG McDUFF

Bubbly vegetarian cop who trusts no one

"I WOULD SAY I HAD A SUCKY RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM, BUT NOT SUCKY ENOUGH TO STICK HIS HEAD INTO A FRYER."



### MALCOLM AND DONALD

Malcolm is a hippy rocker who hates his father; Donald is his compliant, closeted younger brother

"WHY DID YOU KILL ME?"



### ANTHONY "BANKO" BANCONI

A classic "wise fool"

"NOW HONEY WANTS THE MONEY, AND THERE'S NO REASON TO STOP NOW. SCREW MANAGEMENT."



### HIPPIES

Three colorful clowns, two men and one woman, who tell Mac his fortune and give him ideas

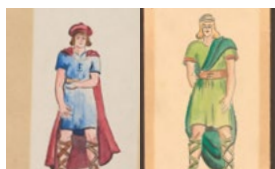
"LET'S HAVE A CONVERSATION THAT MAKES YOU NOT GUILTY."



### LT. McDUFF

No-nonsense vegetarian cop; smarter than everyone in the room

"WHERE WE ARE THERE'S DAGGERS IN MEN'S SMILES."



### MALCOLM AND DONALBAIN

Brothers who get along with each other and their father; not confident

"THOU HAST IT NOW: KING, CAWDOR, GLAMIS, ALL AS THE WEIRD WOMEN PROMISED; AND I FEAR THOU PLAYED'ST MOST FOULLY FOR'T."



### BANQUO

Noble captain; equal to Macbeth; sons go on to rule Scotland

"DOUBLE, DOUBLE, TOIL AND TROUBLE, FIRE BURN AND CAULDRON BUBBLE."



### THE WITCHES

Three bearded women whose words either foretell or create the future

"BLEED, BLEED, POOR CAOUNTRY! GREAT TYRANNY, LAY THOU THEY BASIS SURE, FOR GOODNESS DARE NOT CHECK THEE."



### MACDUFF

Noble, moral, and loyal to Duncan; family killed by Macbeth; prophesied to defeat Macbeth

MAKBETH SOUGHT BY THIS MANNER OF MEANES TO BRING ME INTO HIS HANDS



### MALCOLM CAMMORE AND DONALD BANE

Intelligent sons; Malcolm saves Scotland with MakDuffe

NOW MAKBETH THOU HAST OBTAINED THOSE THINGS WHICH THE TWO FORMER SISTERS PROPHESED...



### BANQUHO

Witnesses the prophecy and helps Makbeth kill Duncan

THREE WOMEN IN STRANGE AND WILD APPARELL, RESEMBLING CREATURES OF ELDER WORLD...



### WEIRD SISTERS

Otherworldly creatures who prophecy

IT IS TRUE MAKBETH, AND NOW SHALL THINE INSATIABLE CRUELTY HAVE AN END...

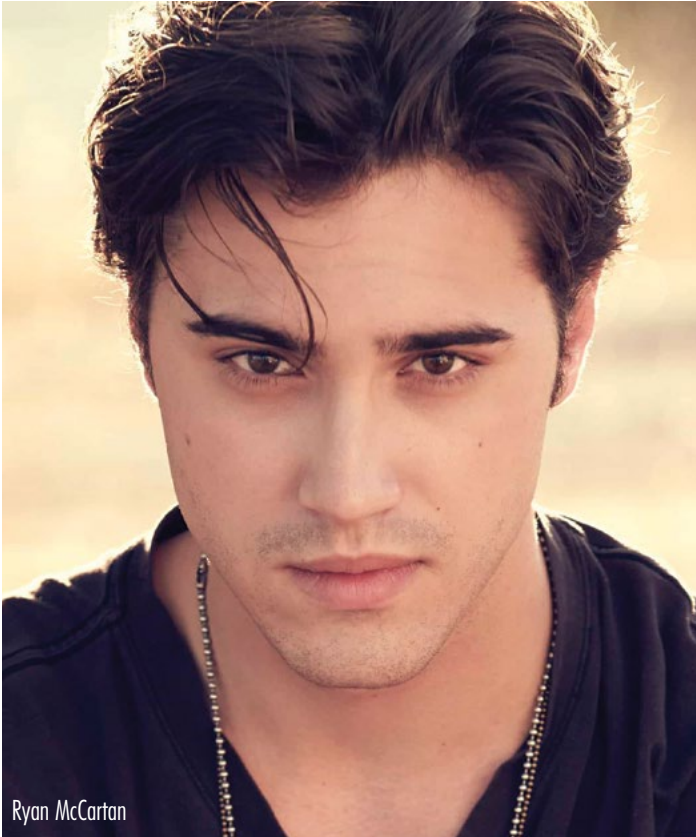


### MAKDUFFE

Nobleman who disobeys Makbeth for fear of his life; instigates Malcolm's return; loves Scotland above all; family killed by Makbeth



# INTERVIEW WITH ACTORS RYAN McCARTAN AND TAYLOR IMAN JONES



**Ted Sod:** Where were you born and educated? Did you have any teachers who had a profound influence on your decision to become performers?

**Ryan McCartan:** I was born and raised in a suburb west of the Twin Cities in Minnesota. Our high school theatre director Kent Knutson—who we fondly referred to as “Coach”—created an unbelievable program to which I owe an immense amount of thanks for propelling me into my adult life and this occupation.

**Taylor Jones:** I was born and raised in California's Bay Area. I started doing theatre when I was 11 after my friend at school invited me to join the local youth musical. I haven't stopped performing since then. Before moving to New York, I tried to do as many shows and work at as many theatre companies as I possibly could in the Bay Area. I credit the majority of my training to those amazing actors I was able to meet and work with along the way. But some of my favorite teachers include Vivian McLaughlin and Stacy Arriaga, who taught me how to work like an adult when I was a kid. And later in life, Nick Gabriel, Stephen Buescher, and Robert Barry Fleming taught me how to be a professional actor.

**TS:** Why did you choose to do the musical *Scotland, PA* and the roles of Mac and Pat? What do you find most challenging/exciting about your role?

**RM:** So far in my career, there is very little I've gotten to choose. The amazing opportunities that have come my way in life have been outside of my control/design. It's in that way that I like to think this role

and others before it have “chosen” me! Before dropping out of college, I was enrolled in rigorous Shakespeare coursework at the University of Minnesota. I love *Macbeth* (I hope you're not reading this out loud in a theatre), and the chance to play this iconic and tragic role in such a unique adaptation is something that thrills me to no end.

**TJ:** I have had the ultimate pleasure of being involved in *Scotland, PA* for a couple of years now, and I've enjoyed every second of it. Getting to do it at this stage is a dream come true. As for Pat, I can't even fully describe how excited I am to play this role. Lady Macbeth is one of the fiercest roles in theatre history, and now add Adam Gwon's score and Michael Mitnick's book and I've basically won the lottery. Pat loves hard, and she's not afraid to be strong, so I'm a little nervous about but thoroughly looking forward to the opportunity to play her.

**TS:** Please give us some insight into your process as an actor: What kind of preparation or research did you have to do in order to play these roles?

**RM:** I have, of course, read Shakespeare's *Macbeth* numerous times. If it is available, I familiarize myself with any source material before starting a project. That is something I find inherently valuable and important to the process. For me though, the real work and the deepest part of preparation happens in the rehearsal room, in the heat of the moment with my colleagues. Lonny Price, our director, is a hero of mine; and having had the opportunity to work with him developing the musical, I trust his leadership with 100% certainty.

**TJ:** I found reading the play and watching the movie gave me a



foundation to work from, but it also allowed me the freedom to make it my own. I think one of the biggest lessons I've learned while creating new theatre is to come in with an open mind and a willingness to play. I'm still working on bringing as many options as I can to the table; not being afraid to try new things on a daily basis. It can be frustrating at times, but always so rewarding when things finally come together.

**TS: What do you think the musical *Scotland, PA* is about? I realize the rehearsal process hasn't begun yet, but can you share some of your initial thoughts about who these characters are?**

**RM:** *Scotland, PA* is *Macbeth*. It's about power, it's about greed, and it's about what happens when that devilish and divisive cocktail of the two is poured haphazardly down the throat of someone totally unequipped to deal with its corrupting influence. Mac is a modernized Macbeth. A stoner, a wannabe. He's a dreamer with no real grasp on making his dreams a reality. By a combination of magic and circumstance, he finds himself the king of his own empire; and, in full Shakespearean-tragedy form, climbs higher than he could ever imagine, only to fall over a precipice of his own making.

**TJ:** *Scotland, PA* is about people wanting more out of life and going to extremes to get it. Pat and I are both driven. I know what it means to want to leave your small town. I would argue she's a little braver than I am, and I've actually found some of my own strength through her. Her willingness to do anything for those she loves reminds me of my mother. I'm looking forward to exploring her dynamics and seeing what happens when certain opportunities present themselves that lead to her wild decisions.

**TS: Taylor, will you talk about your current understanding of the relationship between Mac and Pat?**

**TJ:** Pat and Mac's partnership is so important. They truly love each other, which drives them to make very unique decisions. I think it's really interesting to watch characters who seem to be on solid ground get pushed beyond their normal behavior. In this case, they have each other to lean on and go places they've never been before.

**TS: Ryan, how do you understand the connection between Mac and his "voices"?**

**RM:** A modernized *Macbeth* must realize a modernized relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth (in our case, Mac and Pat). In the Shakespearean text, Lady Macbeth is a villain, and Macbeth is the victim of her influence. For the purposes of our updated narrative, Mac and Pat become co-conspirators. In it together, they dig a hole too deep, precipitated in part by the "voices" Mac starts hearing in his head. These voices, representing Shakespeare's common Witch/Seer trope, are responsible for prophesying a destiny of great fame and fortune, but of great peril as well. Mac only listens to the first half of these visions, and together with his wife, walks down a dangerous road.

**TS: What do you look for from a director, choreographer, and music director when you are collaborating on a role in a new musical?**

**RM:** I look for guidance, vision, and the guts to do something new, daring, and unexpected. Equally important to those big ideas is a willingness to listen to fellow collaborators on the other side of the table. When the leadership of a project grants the freedom for everyone in the room to express their opinions on the piece, the nexus of the best ideas creates the most thrilling artistic expression every time.

**TJ:** I learn a lot about myself when creating new work. You have to go outside of your comfort zone. I enjoy working with people who make that zone feel safe. Lonny is an incredible director who trusts his actors and helps them expand that trust within themselves. Every person on our creative team is open to ideas, but they also have very specific points of view, which tells me they care. At the end of the day, it's a team effort and everyone wants what's best for the whole. It's awesome to look around in admiration of everyone around you, not only on the creative team but in this amazing cast as well.

**TS: What keeps you inspired as an artist?**

**RM:** This is probably not the most profound answer, but art inspires me the most. A perfectly crafted novel, a brilliantly engineered song, an insurmountably moving play. Any time I experience art in its natural habitat, I can't help but go home and make my own. I am proud to have many artistically inclined friends through whom I experience a wide gamut of artistic exploration. I would be remiss not to mention my sister Alison, who inspires me daily and deeply and has taught me everything I know onstage and off.

**TJ:** My family has always supported me, so I'm on a mission to make them proud. I am so lucky to spend my life with the most creative and empathetic people. Through performance, I am able to express and learn about myself and the world around me. Selfishly, I just love it and have so much fun doing it. Theatre is a very intimate and vulnerable enterprise. You can't hide from the audience, the audience can't hide from you, or each other.

**TS: Students will read this interview and will want to know what it takes to be a successful actor—what advice can you give young people who say they want to sing, dance, and act in the musical theatre?**

**RM:** I have spent a long time thinking about this question over the past almost two decades that I've been acting professionally. I've been so fortunate to work with many amazing and awe-inspiring talents, and they all have key factors about their artistry and personality in common. The biggest thing I notice in people is their burning passion for what they're doing. It's all they care about. Because it's more important to have passion rather than a plan. Where young people (myself included, for a time) get bogged down is where the devil is: IN THE DETAILS. Who cares? My father always told me, "If you want to make God laugh, make a plan." There is so little in this life we actually have control over. There are many paths up the mountain, but only one mountain top. Don't worry about the forks in the road, or which paths seem like they'll get you there faster. Just fix your gaze on the summit of your desires, and climb!

**TJ:** Get ready for hard work! Musical theatre is hard. From the moment you wake up, everything you put into your body and what you do with your body affects how your performances go that day. If you're doing it professionally, then you need to be your own biggest cheerleader and your own biggest critic. Know your weaknesses, so that you continue to work on improving them, and know your strengths so that you can celebrate and use them to your advantage. Always remember that there is only one of you, you are more than enough and deserving of any role. •



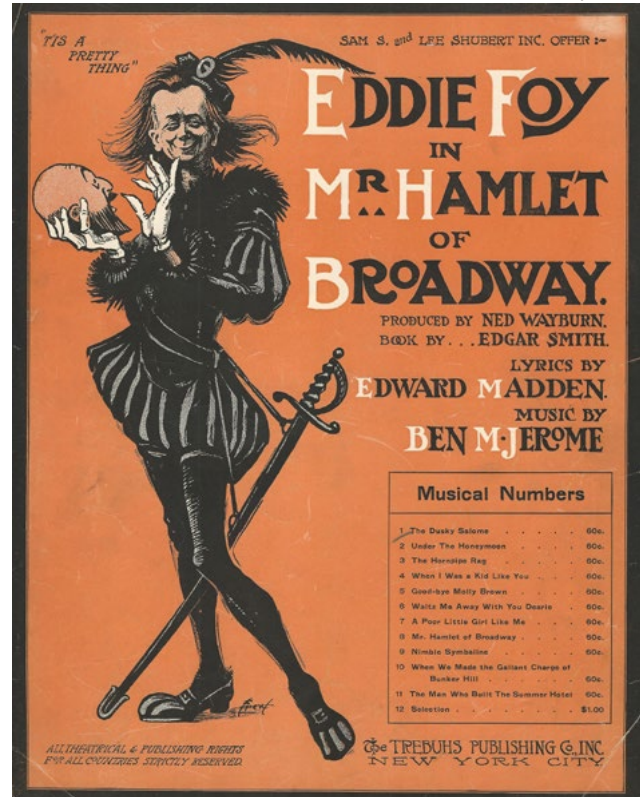
# SHAKESPEARE AND THE MUSICAL

From movies to songs to ballets to symphonies, William Shakespeare's work provides rich source material for many art forms. His plays have inspired creators of musical theatre, in particular, for decades, perhaps because the musicality of verse easily translates to storytelling through movement and song. Some of the earliest examples of this exploration come from Eddie Foy, a well-known American clown. His pieces *Mr. Bluebeard* (1903) and *Mr. Hamlet of Broadway* (1908) were musical parodies inspired by the characters and stories of Shakespeare. His mixture of song, dance, and clowning paved the way for large-scale musical theatre to venture into adapting Shakespeare.

The first musical inspired by a Shakespeare play to hit Broadway did so in 1938. *The Boys from Syracuse* used modern language and music to tell the story of *Comedy of Errors*. One year later, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was given a jazz spin with *Swingin' the Dream*. Although this production boasted a star-studded cast, featuring Maxine Sullivan and Louis Armstrong, it only played 13 Broadway performances.

Since these productions, Shakespeare's plays have inspired musicals such as *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948), *West Side Story* (1957), and *All Shook Up* (2004). Some of these musicals adhere closely to the source material, while others interpret the stories more loosely. Moving beyond the typical musical theatre form, *The Donkey Show*, for instance, immerses the audience in an interactive disco as the story of *A*

Sheet music cover for *Mr. Hamlet of Broadway*, 1908



*Midsummer Night's Dream* unfolds around them. Whether modernizing the language and setting or completely reimagining the story, the themes of Shakespeare's plays remain relevant across time and art form. •

## A SUMMARY OF THE SCOTTISH PLAY

Macbeth meets three witches who prophesy that he will become Thane of Cawdor and eventually King of Scotland. Although initially skeptical, once Macbeth is named Thane of Cawdor, he becomes intrigued by the possibility of becoming king. He is encouraged by his wife, Lady Macbeth, to fulfill this prophecy by killing the King of Scotland to take over the throne. Macbeth carries out this deed but grows uneasy with

his new power. Afraid that others will try to seize the throne, Macbeth orders the murders of those who have been prophesied to harm him. Overwrought with guilt, Lady Macbeth begins to sleepwalk and has visions of blood on her hands. As an army marches on his castle, Macbeth learns that his wife has killed herself. In a final battle, a second prophecy of the witches is fulfilled and Macbeth is killed.



# THE SONGWRITING RECIPES OF SCOTLAND, PA

## RECIPES

Scotland, PA is the first collaboration between Adam Gown and Michael Mitnick. As the book writer, Michael figures out the architecture of what's happening scene by scene. Adam, the composer and lyricist, takes Michael's insights into the characters' thoughts, feelings, or actions and translates them into song. Once a scene and a song exist, Adam and Michael work together to integrate them into a single vision. Here's a behind-the-scenes look at a few of the songwriting recipes that transformed Scotland, PA from raw material to a fully cooked musical.

### RECIPE: "Clairvoyant"

INGREDIENTS:  $\frac{2}{3}$  instinct

$\frac{1}{3}$  plot unfolding

CHEF'S NOTE: "Clairvoyant" came out of Michael Mitnick's instinct that the two lead characters should have a duet at that moment. Adam translated that impulse into a song.

### RECIPE: "Reg McDuff is on the Case"

INGREDIENTS: 1 long scene

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup of character's point of view  
dash of economical lyricism

CHEF'S NOTE: For "Reg McDuff is on the Case," Adam adapted a long scene that Michael had written into a song.

### RECIPE: "Outta Here"

INGREDIENTS: 1lb. of raw material

3 tbsps. stream of consciousness  
essence of subtext  
add emotional vibe to taste

CHEF'S NOTE: "Outta Here" is based on a monologue that was written by Michael. Although the monologue was not intended to be a part of the script, it provided deep insight into the character's point of view. Adam used the monologue as raw material to write this song for the show.

## SCOTLAND, PA

"As you've probably gleaned, there's not really one recipe going on, just a lot of improvising! One thing we did try to develop was the palette of spices we were cooking with, flavors that felt specific to the world of Scotland, PA. A lot of the rewriting process has been about the seasoning, making sure every moment has a taste of this very specific, slightly off-kilter, dark and funny world."  
-Adam Gown



## A DEEP DIVE FROM RAW MATERIAL TO SONG

### MICHAEL'S ORIGINAL MONOLOGUE:

#### "OUTTA HERE" MONOLOGUE EXCERPTS

PAT: We're not thieves. No. We're just underachievers making up for lost time. Leave it all behind. The piss-stained bar and the same dumb jokes, night after night. Don't want a suitcase. Just the framed photo of our wedding day and my Dad's bomber jacket and then we hit the road. Start from scratch. Somewhere by the water where there's a lot going on. And people with big ideas who like other people who have big ideas. And we'll be respected for what we do. And if we don't feel like working, why, we don't have to. We can just sit on the sand. While the money rolls in from all your big ideas. And we'll watch the sun disappear behind the water. Forever.



### ADAM'S LYRICS

PAT: WE HOP IN OUR PONTIAC AND DRIVE. HEAD TO THE OCEAN, / FEELIN' ALIVE. / OPEN UP A PLACE / RIGHT THERE IN THE SUN. / WITH ALL YOUR BIG IDEAS, / EVERY SINGLE ONE. / OH, WE GET OUTTA HERE YEAH, WE GET OUTTA HERE / BLOW OFF THESE JERKS, / TELL 'EM TO SCREW. / THAT'S ALL WE GOTTA DO. / THEY'RE CALLIN' THE SHOTS, / THEY'RE KEEPIN' US DOWN. / SO WHEN IS IT OUR TURN? / SCREW THIS DIVE BAR TOWN. / IT'S NOT THAT WE ARE BAD.

BOTH: WE'RE UNDERACHIEVERS MAKING UP FOR LOST TIME. / CAN'T WE GET OUTTA HERE? WE COULD GET OUTTA HERE.



# DESIGNER STATEMENTS

## TRACY CHRISTENSEN—COSTUME DESIGN

I had never seen the film *Scotland, PA*, so I came to this project completely fresh and found it enthralling!

Every show I design begins with a conversation. I sit with the director (Lonny Price), who shares with me his impressions, his feelings, what he thinks the major themes are, and what he wants the tone of the piece to be. I go away and start doing research, taking into consideration who the characters are, what they want, what they value, their means, where they get their clothes from. One main reason behind the events in this musical is that Mac and Pat have reached the end of their twenties and they're totally over living in a trailer and working at a fast-food restaurant. They've hit a point in their lives where they want more and have to figure out how that can happen. So, my research centers on regular people from middle America circa 1975—lots of photos of real people instead of fashion images.

Lonny and I then look at the research together, and he responds to specific images. I slowly start to get my bearings as to what the design of the show is from a conceptual point of view and begin to identify looks that represent who these characters are.

As a team, we have been having a lot of conversations around the characters of the three stoners, who are representative of the three witches from *Macbeth*, and the idea of choice vs destiny—it's a major theme in Shakespeare's play that is also presented here. For the purposes of our discussions, destiny is something to really consider and contemplate as something you believe in or something you don't, and this has a huge impact on my design.

Despite the Roundabout being an incredibly generous producer, I am working within fiscal parameters—I have to be clever about finding solutions to the requirements of this piece that are within the means of the budget and the theatre space itself. My job is to be support for the play, the writers, the actors, my director, and certainly my producers.

## JEANETTE YEW—LIGHTING DESIGN

I am really familiar with the movie on which this musical is based, and I am excited by how deeply the musical dives into the interior of the characters. For me, the themes of the musical are global. It asks us to evaluate the line between "wants" and "needs," which constitutes the bedrock of desire. Having desire



Costume Design Sketches by Tracy Christensen for *Scotland, PA*

Aurora Borealis by Visit Lakeland



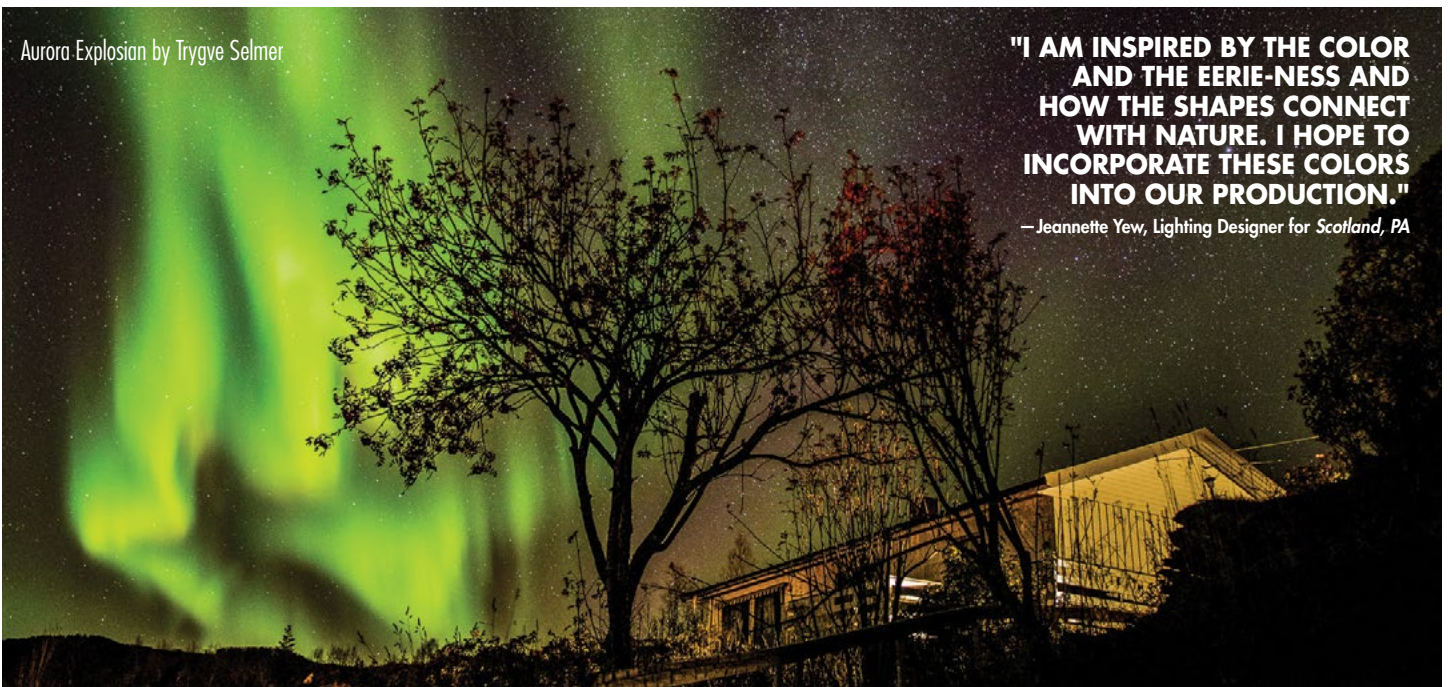
is natural and definitely has propelled us into doing great things, but how far should one go to fulfill their desires, and to what degree are the actions taken or choices made to fulfill them justified?

The musical starts with the mention of an aurora borealis, which is an exciting proposal for a lighting designer. Researching it, I found, aside from its beauty, there exists a sense of fear and bewilderment—a fitting visual metaphor for the theme of desire. It is natural, and it is also frightening. Since light is an ephemeral element, I can enhance this metaphor by playing with the contrast between light and dark, deep and shallow, hidden and exposed. The theme of nature versus the man-made is likewise very present

in our overall design. How the light sources are perceived and used can accentuate the interior conflicts that the various characters in the musical are experiencing.

The biggest challenge lighting this musical is how we take the audience on a dark journey, particularly in today's tension-filled world, while maintaining a sense of delight. Theatron, Greek for theatre, translates to "a seeing place." Theatre is a form that is meant to reflect. To reflect effectively, entertainment is a vital ingredient, so the challenge is to display the raw and dangerous emotions that are present and package them in a captivating and dynamic visual environment that keeps pace with the audience's expectations. •

Aurora Explosion by Trygve Selmer



**"I AM INSPIRED BY THE COLOR AND THE EERIE-NESS AND HOW THE SHAPES CONNECT WITH NATURE. I HOPE TO INCORPORATE THESE COLORS INTO OUR PRODUCTION."**

— Jeannette Yew, Lighting Designer for *Scotland, PA*

# UP FOR DISCUSSION

## READ WHO WROTE IT BEST?

Many of the events and characters in *Scotland, PA* line up with William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Read *Macbeth* and check out the "Charting the Origins of *Scotland, PA*" on page 12 of this guide.

- Which characters do you feel changed the most between *Macbeth* and *Scotland, PA*?
- What motivated the characters of Mac and Macbeth in each story?
- How are the roles of the Witches and the Stoners similar? How are they different?

## WATCH BRING THE STORIES TO LIFE

Many of Shakespeare's plays have been adapted to film. Some of them remain true to what Shakespeare wrote, like *The Tragedy of Romeo & Juliet* (2013), while others keep the words but change the setting, like *Romeo + Juliet* (1996). Still others, such as *Private Romeo* (2011) or *Romeo Must Die* (2000), abandon Shakespeare's text entirely and are inspired to write new stories using the play as the skeleton for the plot.

**After watching one of the movie adaptations, pick your favorite scene and try to find its corresponding scene in *Romeo and Juliet*.**

- How similar was your favorite scene to what Shakespeare wrote on the page?
- Why might the film creators have chosen to do this scene in this way?
- With a few friends, take the script from your favorite scene and use your phone camera to film it your own way. In what time period will you set the scene? How will you change the characters? Will you stick to Shakespeare's words or write some of your own?
- Post your video and use the hashtag #rtcUpstage



Leslie Howard and Norma Shearer in  
*Romeo and Juliet* (1936)  
Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Image Collection

## DO FIND INSPIRATION FROM POETRY

Writer's block keeping you from dropping your next hit? Practice adapting lyrics from poetry for some inspiration. Try setting the following monologue from *Macbeth* or your favorite poem to a beat or tune, or see if you can rearrange the words to fit a familiar melody.

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!*

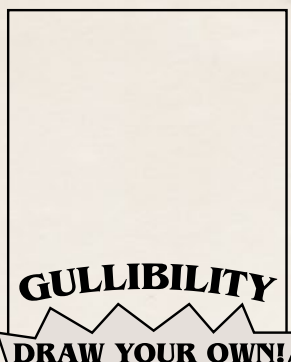
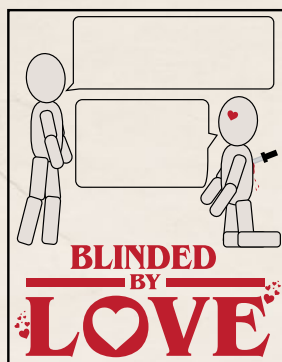
*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.*



# FUN and GAMES

**FATAL FLAWS** A fatal flaw is a personality trait of a character that ultimately leads to their death.

Each of the comics portrays a different fatal flaw. Fill in the speech bubbles to complete each scene, and use the prompt in the empty box to create your own!



**WORD SEARCH** Can you find all the *Scotland, PA* song titles and and lines from *Macbeth*?

C E S E F R I U D S N H H E H  
U N S L M T O K I Y A T U L Q  
R O E B O T U F L K O E Y D J  
H D N U W O T Z U Q S B T N F  
T S I O B J D F O H M C R A N  
E I S R J E A O F J T A A C J  
V E U T L A M U S F E M P F W  
I N B D J Y N L I R E L S E Q  
R O R N B N E I R J H I S I L  
D D O A Z I D S I H J A A R S  
X S F L X T S F A G T H K B J  
R T N I Z S P A F Z D L C T V  
A A E O X E O I Q V X L I U A  
I H P T Y D T R C K I A K O Y  
T W O I B A O Z F N X Y M P

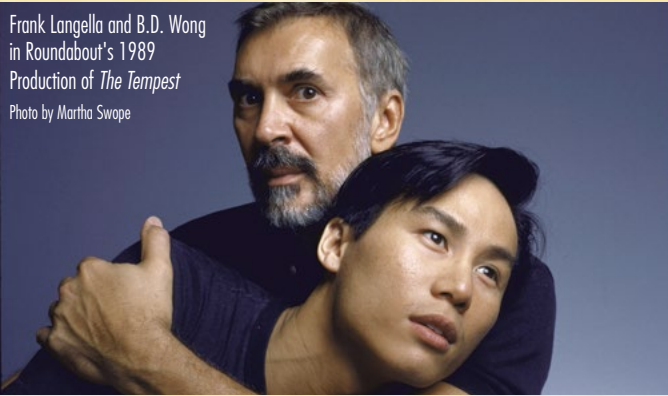
ALL HAIL MACBETH  
DESTINY  
DRIVE THRU  
FAIR IS FOUL  
FOUL IS FAIR  
KICK ASS PARTY  
OPEN FOR BUSINESS  
OUT BRIEF CANDLE  
OUT DAMNED SPOT  
TOIL AND TROUBLE  
WHATS DONE IS DONE

An answer key to this word search can be found [HERE](#).

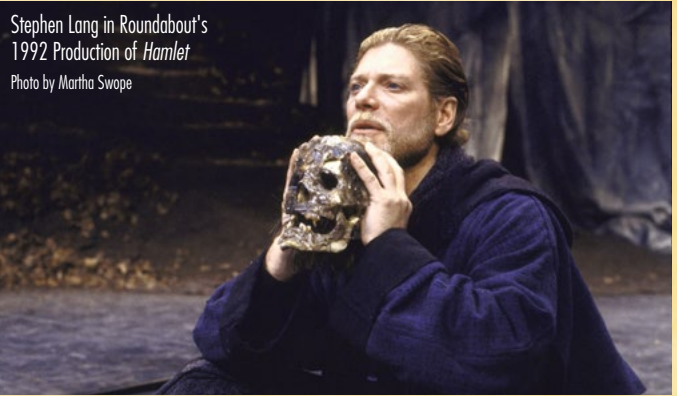
# ROUNABOUT ARCHIVES

## From Shakespeare TO NEW WORKS

Frank Langella and B.D. Wong  
in Roundabout's 1989  
Production of *The Tempest*  
Photo by Martha Swope



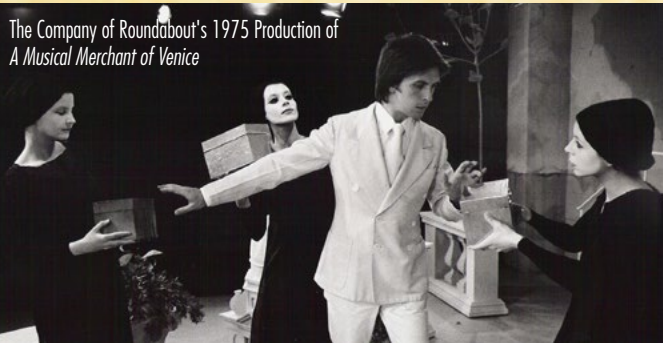
Stephen Lang in Roundabout's  
1992 Production of *Hamlet*  
Photo by Martha Swope



In our early decades, Roundabout produced seven works by William Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* (starring Earle Hyman as Othello), *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, and a "musical" *Merchant of Venice*. Several were staged multiple times, including *King Lear* and an all-male production of *Hamlet*. Recently, the Bard has surfaced referentially in *Bernhardt/Hamlet* and *Kiss Me, Kate*. All told, there has been a lot of Shakespeare in our past.

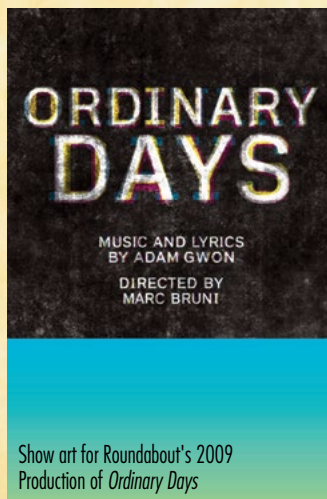
The "musical" *Merchant of Venice* was staged in 1975—coincidentally the same year in which *Scotland, PA* is set. The production was presented in workshop form as part of a Directors' Showcase. According to reviews at the time, Roundabout was providing a venue for new and emerging directors to work on experimental projects. This *Musical Merchant of Venice* married pop music with a strict Shakespearean script—a coupling that, according to reviews, lacked clarity of execution. Its lack of success wasn't the point, however: more important was the fact that Roundabout recognized the need and provided a forum for workshopping new works.

The Company of Roundabout's 1975 Production of  
*A Musical Merchant of Venice*

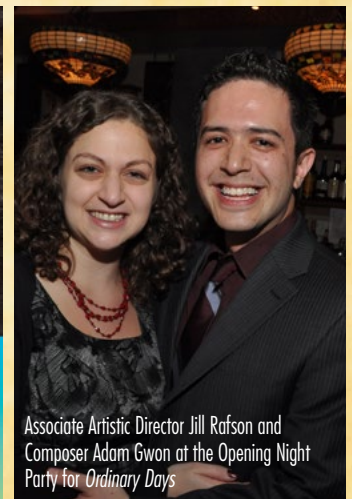


Looking back, there have been jumps and starts in programming that is today codified in the company's New Play Initiative (NPI)—the writers, composers, directors, and actors who emerge first through workshops and then in Black Box productions are provided with the experimental program known as Roundabout Underground through which they can bring new works to life. The *Musical Merchant of Venice* was an early precursor to this important initiative.

Adam Gwon, lyricist and composer of *Scotland, PA*, staged his first Roundabout show, *Ordinary Days*, as part of the Underground series. Now, and with collaborator Michael Mitnick, he has written an exciting new musical based on the film *Scotland, PA*. This musical version of *Scotland, PA* has been in workshop for nearly 5 years and is the latest testament to Roundabout's dedication to nurturing new works. •



Show art for Roundabout's 2009  
Production of *Ordinary Days*



Associate Artistic Director Jill Rafson and  
Composer Adam Gwon at the Opening Night  
Party for *Ordinary Days*

For more information on the Roundabout Archives, visit <https://archive.roundabouttheatre.org>  
or contact Tiffany Nixon, Roundabout Archivist, at [archives@roundabouttheatre.org](mailto:archives@roundabouttheatre.org)



**Ted Sod: Tell us about yourself. Where were you born and educated?**

**DMJ:** My family was stationed at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas when I was born. As some say, I'm an "army brat." I began my studies for a double major, Theatre and Psychology, at Temple University in Philadelphia. After two years I transferred to Barnard College in New York City and received a BA in Program in the Arts and Psychology. After graduating from Barnard, I was offered a position in Barnard's Theatre Department. While working, I continued my studies in Arts Administration at Columbia University.

**TS: How and when did you become an Education Coordinator for Roundabout's Education Department?**

**DMJ:** I had been doing work with the IATSE Labor Union. While there, my colleagues learned of my previous experience working as an event coordinator, actor, acting coach, and my work with at-risk youth. When the opening for a position as an Education Coordinator with the Education Department became available, my contact at IATSE referred me to Roundabout. I applied with the knowledge that there were a lot of applicants whom I would be competing with. I interviewed and started my tenure as Education Coordinator of Roundabout's Youth Ensemble (RYE) at the beginning of October 2018.

**TS: Describe your job at RTC. What are your responsibilities?**

**DMJ:** I work with the Teaching Artists at Roundabout to plan, organize, and coordinate RYE's after-school workshops, and I also serve as Producer for RYE's summer production. My job is to monitor and evaluate the programming and events for the ensemble. As RYE has expanded to the five boroughs of New York City, I oversee the development of each ensemble's individual programming.

**TS: What is the best part of your job? What is the hardest part?**

**DMJ:** I take great pleasure in having the opportunity to enrich the learning experience of students. We are providing a unique skill set for them to



achieve successful and creative theatre-making while simultaneously developing positive methods to approach challenges they may face as they pursue their future endeavors. Watching their growth and achievements is quite fulfilling. The hardest part may be keeping abreast of the public school schedules and checking for conflicts that may interfere with RYE programming.

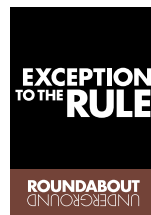
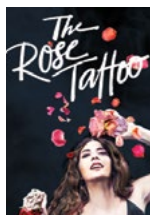
**TS: Why do you choose to work at Roundabout?**

**DMJ:** Working at Roundabout has allowed me to combine my interests in theatre and mentoring young people. As Education Coordinator of RYE, I can help to create an environment where theatre techniques empower and enhance the development of positive, self-assured students. •

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CLICK [HERE](#) TO VIEW THE WORKS CITED PAGE FOR THIS GUIDE.

### ROUNABOUT THEATRE COMPANY • 2019-2020 SEASON



Roundabout Theatre Company (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director/CEO), a not-for-profit company founded in 1965, celebrates the power of theatre by spotlighting classics from the past, cultivating new works of the present, and educating minds for the future. More information on Roundabout's mission, history and programs can be found by visiting [roundabouttheatre.org](http://roundabouttheatre.org).

Learn more at [roundabouttheatre.org](http://roundabouttheatre.org). Find us on:







This theatre in 1995.  
Photo by Bill Barvin. ©NYPL

# IN THIS THEATRE

Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center for Theatre/Laura Pels Theatre

- Beware the curse of *Macbeth*! For superstitious theatre folks, saying the word "Macbeth" in the theatre can bring bad luck to the production. This myth comes from a legend that Shakespeare wrote authentic incantations into *Macbeth* to please King James I, who was interested in black magic. When witches discovered he was revealing their spells, they put a curse on the play that caused the actor playing Lady Macbeth to die just before the first performance. Many people now call the play "The Scottish Play" to avoid saying the title. If you do accidentally say "Macbeth" in the theatre, you can reverse the curse by exiting the theatre, spinning around three times, spitting over your left shoulder, and yelling a curse before knocking on the door to be let back in.
- *Macbeth* was last produced in this theatre in 1999 by Theatre for a New Audience.
- The space now named The Laura Pels Theatre was built due to a "Special District" incentive as part of the 1961 New York City Zoning Resolution. The deal offered building developers additional tax-free space if they built a legitimate theatre in their building. In 1971, the first tenant was the American Place Theatre, which was known for its commitment to the advancement of learning in all aspects of the dramatic arts and for producing experimental plays that demonstrated minority or immigrant experiences.
- In 1975, when *Scotland, PA* takes place, the rent for this theatre was just \$5 a year!

Major support for *Scotland, PA* is provided by Hal Luftig/LHC Theatrical Development, Ken Davenport, Sara Miller McCune, Perry and Marty Granoff, and The Ted & Mary Jo Shen Charitable Gift Fund. *Scotland, PA* benefits from Roundabout's Musical Theatre Production Fund with lead gifts from the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, Michael Kors and Lance Le Pere, Diane and Tom Tuft, and Cynthia C. Wainwright and Stephen Berger.

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