

Sunday in the Park With George

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(Applause Libretto Library). This 1995 Pulitzer Prize-winning musical was inspired by the painting A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte by Georges Seurat. A complex work revolving around a fictionalized Seurat immersed in single-minded concentration while painting the masterpiece, the production has evolved into a meditation on art, emotional connection, and community. This publication contains the entire script of the musical. " Sunday is itself a modernist creation, perhaps the first truly modernist work of musical theatre that Broadway has produced ... a watershed event that demands nothing less than a retrospective, even revisionist, look at the development of the serious Broadway musical." Frank Rich, The New York Times Magazine

Sunday in the Park With George Details


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From Reader Review *Sunday in the Park With George* for online ebook

Bevan says

I've read this through and through over the past decade and a half, since I was first introduced to it. I've read it several times in the past month as I prepare to play George in a production. It is, and quite possibly always will be, my favorite work of Sondheim's and my favorite theatrical piece in general. I can't not give this 5 stars.

Lauren says

Apparently 1985 was the year the Pulitzer Committee decided that plot was not a prerequisite for a nomination. All three nominees are more about ideas and concepts than storytelling, although of the three, I found *Sunday in the Park with George* the most interesting – and the closest to having a more traditional plot.

At its heart, *Sunday* is a story of art, of how we create and interpret art, of what art means and how we judge it. *Sunday* is a play about art written by artists and for artists. The first act – which went through a longer development period – is considerably stronger, especially as the second act relies a bit too much on intellectual talking points. Recommended.

Stuart says

A beautiful musical by James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim, the Applause publication of the script features the full libretto, a history of productions, photos and a lovely color plate at the front of the book depicting one of the set design models. This play is rarely produced but it's understandable why it is a favorite with so many artists and theater folk. Sondheim nails the artistic process in all its joy and pain, loneliness and failure, triumph and splendor. He gives us in Dot and George a pair of characters who virtually anyone can relate to while also illustrating that the world is essentially divided between artists and subjects, and that art is the celebration of the world and everything that makes the world worth living in.

Scott Lee says

This Pulitzer prize winner is a treasure, and one of the few Sondheim musicals where the book truly stands up to the music and lyrics. An amazing meditation on art, artists, creativity etc. with some of the greatest songs ever written by Broadway's greatest composer.

Sam says

Four and a half stars for the book, a solid five for the actual musical when performed

I mostly read this because as much as I love Sondheim, I have trouble keeping up with his lyrics sometimes. Also, I really like James Lapine's work too, so why not?

This is a great musical, and that's largely down to its terrific book and music/lyrics, so this was great to read. Also, listening to the songs while reading their lyrics helped me to keep up and to get some additional context as I went.

Andrew says

Spectacular production by the Guthrie - a marvelous work

Laura says

Watched it on YouTube with Mandy Patinkin and Bernadette Peters.

Emily says

Sunday in the Park with George is one of my favorite musicals and while I loved reading the libretto, I didn't gain much else from this book. There weren't many essays, so I would have loved to have read more about the original Broadway production or composition or the play. I've also seen the recorded production, so it was interesting to see how the original production drawings were realized in the finalized production, and I would have loved to see more. Maybe I've just been spoiled by more recent Broadway books, but I just would still love to read more essays about the creation of this musical.

Reshma Popat says

It's a play; based on an artist's life. George. It incorporates how art can be a science, and the strong use of color to describe certain aspects of a character or theme.

It is a fast read. If you like plays, you might enjoy this one. It's written well. The characters are very distinctive, each being provided with their own stories.

James says

This book puts a fictional story behind the famous painting "A Sunday on La Grande Jatte" by Georges Seurat. I became absolutely immersed and developed a whole new perspective on this painting and art itself.

The film that goes along with the book is something I highly recommend people watch.

Neil says

I enjoyed reading this script about the life of George Seurat and his descendants, having been acquainted with the cast album previously. It's an interesting rumination on art and the creative act, the obsession that art may take and the damage that does to relationships. Finishing the Hat and Putting It Together are the standout songs, even when just reading them. Off the top of my head, I would say this would have to be the toughest Sondheim show for a small theater to produce: Too many arty special effects to handle.

Book lover;) says

A very well written show! Truly takes a look into the life of a very talented artist, and showcases his passion and view. I highly recommend either reading and then watching the show, or reading and listening to the track at the same time. It really helps get all of the meaning through on everything... Also, the video of this show stars Mandy Patinkin and Bernadette Petters!

Andrew says

I'm not really a Sondheim fan. Not sure what it is about his songs that don't work for me, but there it is. I did find this interesting though, and it probably helped that I only had a vague remembrance of how the songs actually go (reading a musical is kind of a weird experience). This didn't get to me on an emotional level, as musicals tend to for a lot of folks, but this did connect with me on an intellectual level.

David says

I read this today while listening to the recent British revival recording. It's such a beautiful masterpiece of a musical, and reading it as a play is another way to experience it, apart from just listening to the songs, or watching it live or recorded.

It may seem odd to think that this strange, surreal little musical about a fictionalized Georges Seurat could have anything important to say to us sophisticated modern citizens, but surprise! it is simple, profound, and moving. While most of what it has to say relates directly to Art and the challenges of the creative process, it is also more generally applicable to all humans.

'Move On' is one of my favorite pieces in all of musical theatre, and while I always appreciated the wry wisdom in this line:

Stop worrying if your vision
Is new.
Let others make that decision--
They usually do.

You keep moving on.

it wasn't until a wise teacher pointed it out to me that I fully grasped the depth of this line:

I chose, and my world was shaken--

So what?

The choice may have been mistaken,

The choosing was not.

You have to move on.

Highly recommended in all media: book, CD, DVD, live theatre.

Tony says

SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE. (1984). Stephen Sondheim & James Lapine. ***.

This is the first time I have “read” a musical play. It didn’t work. I made it through the first act of this two-act play and then had to stop. One of the problems was that I had not seen this show, nor had I heard the music that goes along with the lyrics. That will be corrected when I get the CD from our library, but without the music, the words take on little meaning. The only music dramas that I have read (operas don’t count) were those of Gilbert & Sullivan, where I knew the music and had probably seen them in performance. The purpose there was to catch the words that I missed in their patter songs. In this work, which, by the way, won the Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1985, the authors tried to render a story around George Seurat and his famous painting, “A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte.” The plot is divided among Seurat and his various models, and, to give it more class, a probe into his purpose in painting like he did. I’m sure that I’d enjoy seeing a production of this musical, but reading it left me cold. I feel guilty about only giving it three stars, but...
