

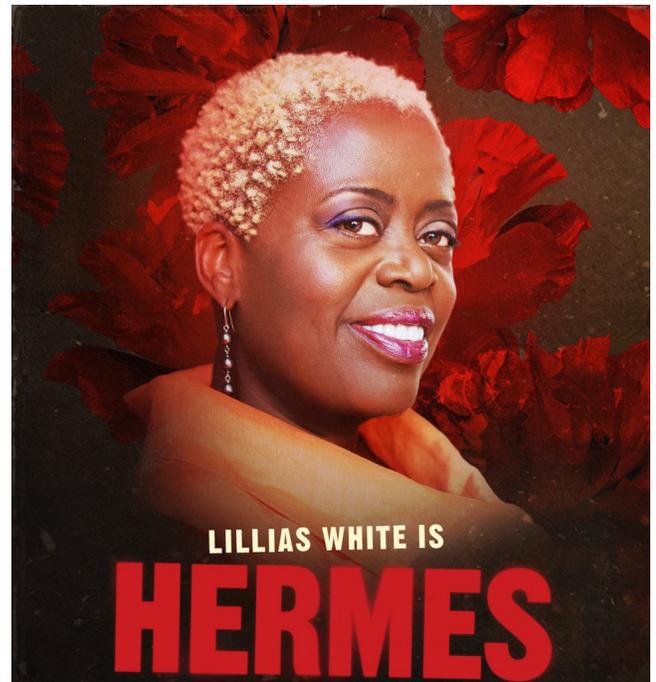
## **Tick...Tick...NEWS! Broadway Updates with Heather Power**

Hello CFPA Community! Welcome to the 8th edition of **Tick...Tick...NEWS! Broadway Updates with Heather Power**. After a nice long weekend in Carbonear (and another weekend of research) I'm here to deliver some really fun (and shocking!) news pieces floating about the Broadway world right now! Sit back, relax, enjoy the articles, and remember to click those blue links!

### **All Aboard! Lillias White Joins *Hadestown***

Listen up, folks, because Broadway is about to have its world rocked. It has been announced that Broadway LEGEND Lillias White will be joining the cast of *Hadestown* on September 13th. Not just as any character though, this is no ordinary casting. Lillias will be playing Hermes in the show, the narrator of the show and a role that is typically (and always has been up until this point) played by a man. Lillias White's Broadway career has spanned a whopping 40 years, making her an absolute icon. Some of Lillias's most notable turns on Broadway include roles in *Dreamgirls* (as [Effie White](#), a role she played numerous times), *Once On This Island*

(as Asaka), *How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (as Miss Jones), *Carrie* (as Miss Gardner), *Chicago* (as [Matron Mama Morton](#)) and *Cats* (as Grizabella). Some readers may even recognize Lillias by name and not face, as the voice of Calliope in the 1997 Disney film *Hercules*! Lillias won a Tony for Best Featured Actress in a Musical back in 1997 for her role in *The Life*. The cast and crew of *Hadestown* are thrilled to welcome Lillias into the fray, and audiences will absolutely be as well! Be sure to keep your eye on the *Hadestown* socials for videos of this performance!



## **“Scamilton”: Texas Church Illegally Performs *Hamilton***

Well, this is one group that took a shot when they probably should have thrown it away. The internet was thrown through a loop when the Door McAllen Church, a Christian Fellowship located in Texas, released footage of their performance of *Hamilton* a short while ago. The Church performed *Hamilton* in full, which would normally be fine IF the show had licensing out (which of course is what allows local theatre performers to perform popular content legally!). However, the licensing for *Hamilton* is not out yet, and it quickly became clear that this production of the Lin-Manuel Miranda musical was highly illegal. On top of this the Church’s version of *Hamilton* - which the internet has cheekily dubbed “Scamilton” - features a plethora of cuts and edits that dogpile onto the already illegal nature of their performance.



Myself and a few friends took it upon ourselves to watch it this past weekend and, yeah, it’s pretty bad! Handfuls of songs were cut in half or in full, including “The Story of Tonight”, “The Room Where It Happens”, “Farmer Refuted”, and “Stay Alive” and the character of John Laurens was essentially erased. The edits, however, are by far the biggest crime of the show in my opinion, and the most jarring. The Church decided to edit lyrics of songs to weave Jesus/the practicing of Christianity into the narrative (for

example, changing Eliza's lyrics in ["That Would Be Enough"](#) from "I'm not afraid/I know who I married" to "I'm not afraid/My hope is in Jesus" and completely altering the end of ["Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story"](#)), even going so far as to include a scene before "It's Quiet Uptown" where a Pastor tells Hamilton that if he were to let Jesus into his life, there might've been a way for his son to have not been killed in a duel. They also capped off the show with a sermon that had direct homophobia/anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric in it, so there's that.



The creators of *Hamilton* got wind of this production and immediately condemned it, clarifying that they NEVER gave Door McAllen permission to do this show (something the church actually claimed happened, but turns out it was completely false). The show's creator, composer and lyricist Lin-Manuel Miranda revealed on Twitter that they were in fact pursuing legal action against the production, and a week later the Official Door McAllen Church Twitter account issued a formal public apology to the *Hamilton* creatives for the illegal use of the show and illegal lyrical modifications they made.

The Church has said they will accept and pay off any charges that come their way. Overall, this was a whole mess! I'm glad the creatives are getting legal justice, and honestly, I hope some of the young adults involved in the show who showed potential (I'm looking at you, Aaron Burr and Angelica Schuyler actors!) get to pursue their passions in local, LEGAL, non-narrative changing/preaching productions.

## **Welcome to the Woods! *Into the Woods* Announces New Cast**

By now, you should all know that my current absolute FAVOURITE show to report news on is the latest Broadway revival of Stephen Sondheim's *Into The Woods*. Well, I'm back again with more news, this time about the replacement cast coming in at the beginning of the September month! Starting on September 6th, brand new actors for The Baker, The Baker's Wife, Cinderella, The Witch, and more join the cast! Cinderella will be played by Krysta Rodriguez, who many most likely know as the original Wednesday Addams in *The Addams Family* musical. She's an incredibly unique pick for Cinderella, and I'm excited to see what she



brings to the role! The Witch is an interesting one, as current Witch actress Patina Miller will be sharing the role weekly with the mega talented Montego Glover (*Memphis, Les Misérables, Hamilton*). However, my absolute favourite of these casting announcements HAS to be hands down the announcement of The Baker and The Baker's Wife. Joining the cast in these two roles are Sebastian Arcelus and Stephanie J. Block, real life musical theatre couple/royalty! They've previously shared the stage as a couple together [in \*Wicked\* \(as Elphaba & Fiyero\)](#) and I am brimming with excitement at this lovely married duo sharing the stage once again!

Gavin Creel and Joshua Henry stay in the show throughout this cast change as Cinderella and Rapunzel's Princes. However, due to a prior commitment, Gavin will be briefly leaving the show from the 6th to the 15th. During that time, *Legally Blonde* and *Groundhog Day* star Andy Karl will be joining the cast as Cinderella's Prince/The Wolf! I'm telling you, dear readers, this production of *Into the Woods* is like the *Avengers: Endgame* of Broadway, our faves are popping up all over the place! September 6th, mark it on your calendars!

## *Merrily We “Cast” Along: Who’s Joining Daniel Radcliffe in the Sondheim Revival?*



Folks, you may remember back in the very first edition of *Tick..Tick...NEWS!* I wrote an article about Daniel Radcliffe leading a revival of Stephen Sondheim’s *Merrily We Roll Along*. In that article, I theorized who may be joining him in that show and who I’d personally like to see. Well, we’ve finally got an answer! It was announced this month that Jonathan Groff (*Hamilton*, *Spring Awakening*, *Glee*) and Lindsay Mendez (*Dogfight*, *Carousel*, *Wicked*) will be joining The Ex-Boy Who Lived/current Weird Al performer in the show this coming year.

Jonathan Groff is a two-time Tony Award nominee and Grammy winner. In *Merrily We Roll Along*, Jonathan will be playing the lead role of Frank Shepard, a composer and producer. The show spans his 20 year career and is a loosely semi-autobiographical story about Sondheim himself, featuring some of his most personal musical numbers. As previously mentioned, Daniel Radcliffe will be playing Frank’s former best friend and lyricist, Charley, and I’m really looking forward to seeing how these two actors will play off of each other. Lindsay Mendez is a Tony award winner and Grammy nominee, winning the Tony for her role in *Carousel* back in 2018. She will be playing Mary in the revival, who is described typically as Frank’s oldest friend within their career circles that harbours unresolved feelings for him. This revival is sure to bring *Merrily* to audiences old and new, introducing it to brand new eyes for the very first time. How thrilling!



## **Broadway's Laura Osnes SUES The New York Times**



I think it is safe to say there is not a single soprano in the musical theatre scene who is not familiar with Laura Osnes. Osnes, who is probably most known for her roles as Bonnie in *Bonnie & Clyde*, Julia Trojan in *Bandstand*, and Ella in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*, has revealed that she is suing The New York Times newspaper for defamation. Over a year ago, The New York Times posted an article about Osnes allegedly being fired from the Broadway revival of *Crazy For*

*You* due to her refusal to comply with COVID-19 mandates and vaccine requirements.

Osnes admitted to not being vaccinated against the virus, but claimed that she was not fired and actually withdrew herself from the show. At this point in time, *Crazy For You* is no longer the only role she's lost due to her refusal to get vaccinated, being replaced in the touring production of *Bonnie & Clyde*. Who knows what the truth is, really, but here we are over a year later and Osnes is suing for \$5 million dollars in damages. The *One Royal Holiday* star claims that since that NYT article was posted her career, personal and professional reputations have been tarnished, causing her mental distress, humiliation, and public disgrace. She is currently performing as a vocalist in a Nashville Tennessee circus show and has not been on Broadway since the COVID-19 Pandemic first shut it down. I try to stay as neutral as possible in these *Tick Tick News* articles, but let's be honest for a minute here: Is it really defamation if the supposed slander to your character is a fact that you yourself have confirmed? Not sure about that one, Bonnie. Either way, it'll be fascinating to see how this suit plays out.

## **He's Back! Lin-Manuel Miranda Working On New Musical**

“Just you wait”, he said. We did, and now we’re finally getting rewarded! It’s finally been announced that Lin-Manuel Miranda is working on a new musical. The Tony-Award winning composer of *In the Heights* and *Hamilton* has announced that this brand new musical is a collaboration between himself and John Kander (of Kander & Ebb - *Chicago*, *Cabaret*). The musical is loosely based on the 1977 Martin Scorsese musical drama film [New York, New York](#) (who could’ve guessed - a Lin show set in New York!) which starred Liza Minnelli and Robert DeNiro. Funnily enough, the characters Minnelli and DeNiro played in the film will not be featured in the musical adaptation. That’s about the only bit of plot information we’ve received at this time though,



besides the fact that it is set in the 1940s. Everything else is being kept under wraps for now. We do know however that some songs in the show will be originals from the 70s film, while others will be brand new collaborations between Kander and Miranda.

Joining Lin-Manuel Miranda and John Kander in the creative team is Susan Stroman, who will be directing AND choreographing the show. Stroman is a five time Toward-Award winner who has directed and choreographed shows such as *Crazy For You*, *Show Boat*, *Big*, *Contact*, and arguably most famously (considering it still currently holds the record for most single run Tony Wins) *The Producers*. Given the sheer strength of this creative team, this new musical could shape up to be a major success!



## **RUMOUR ALERT: *Sweeney Todd* Revival In The Works**



Attend the tale of Sweeney Todd (again!). The following article is based around a lot, and I mean A LOT, of rumours circulating around the Broadway spheres in the past few weeks. It's become such a big rumour that all the musical theatre outlets are reporting on it, so I guess that should also include me! It is believed that a new revival of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* will be making its way to the stage sometime in the near future. Thomas Kail (*Hamilton*) is rumoured to be sitting in the

director's chair for this alleged revival, while two unexpected Broadway stars are rumoured to be playing the leads. The role of Mrs. Lovett is rumoured to be played by Annaleigh Ashford - a bit of an indie musical theatre darling known for her roles in *Legally Blonde: The Musical* (Margot) and *Kinky Boots* (Lauren). While I think Annaleigh may be *just* a bit too young for the role, I think seeing a bit of a younger, more spritely Lovett would be a really unique choice and I could definitely see her playing up the comedic aspects of the character in the style of Angela Lansbury! As for the titular Sweeney Todd, *The Great Comet* star Josh Groban is rumoured to be playing the demon barber. This is a WILD casting choice to me, but it continues the tradition of no one Sweeney ever truly feeling too much alike. I think Groban will/could bring a deep sense of grief to the role that might sometimes get lost amidst the rage. I'm really hoping these rumours have some sense of truth to them!



## **Star of the Week: Stephanie J. Block**

This edition's **Star of the Week** is one of my personal inspirations and all time favourites; the incomparable Miss Stephanie J. Block! Stephanie J. Block (who, I just feel the need to tell you, has liked TWO of my tweets on Twitter) is a Tony Award winning actress, winning Best Lead Actress in a Musical for *The Cher Show* back in 2019. She is a prominent female staple in musical theatre nowadays, with some of her most notable roles (both originals and replacements) including Trina in the [2017 revival of \*Falsettos\*](#) (a performance I've been frankly obsessed with since its premiere), Judy in the musical adaptation of *9 to 5*, Elphaba in *Wicked* (a role she replaced on Broadway, but was actually the [original actress in the workshops for](#), before Idina Menzel was even in the picture!), Grace O'Malley in *The Pirate Queen*, and Reno Sweeney in *Anything Goes*. Stephanie has also had some minor roles on film and television (though Broadway is her true home), including parts on/in *Orange is the New Black*, *Rise*, *Madam Secretary*, and this year's *iMordecai*.



Next year, as previously reported, Stephanie will be stepping into the role of Norma Desmond at the Eisenhower Theatre production of *Sunset Boulevard*. That performance, I'm sure, is going to literally change my life. In the meantime, you'll be able to catch her in the *Into the Woods* revival on Broadway opposite her real life husband, Sebastian Arcelus! And just as a bonus video, I'd love to share with you all a piece of my time honoured Thanksgiving traditions: this Stephanie J. Block and the cast of *Falsettos* interview from [Side By Side With Susan Blackwell](#)! Enjoy!

**Remember to check out the CFPA Star of the Week playlist on Spotify!:**

**CFPA & Tick Tick News Present: Star of the Week.**

## *Songs of the Week*: Move On & The Ballad of Guiteau

For the next few editions of TTN, I will be spotlighting specific composers in the **Songs of the Week** segment! This edition's Composer Spotlight is none other than: **Stephen Sondheim**. If any of you know me well (or even just barely!), you'll know that Sondheim is my all time favourite composer. I think he was a brilliant man who mastered the art of motifs in music and musical patterns. Along with writing the lyrics for Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, Sondheim has composed a plethora of famous works - including but not limited to *Into the Woods*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Company*, *A Little Night Music*, and *Follies*. For this showcase though, I'd like to focus on two of Sondheim's perhaps underappreciated and lesser known musicals (at least by casual musical goers - I know a number of diehards who adore both of these shows!).



The first song is "Move On" from *Sunday in the Park with George*. This is probably one of, if not my all time favourite Sondheim number. Check it out here - music and lyrics by Sondheim and performed by the original cast stars, Bernadette Peters and Mandy Patinkin: <https://youtu.be/HVC4MrUEBRo>

The second song is from *Assassins*, a "criminally" underrated Sondheim show surrounding a bunch of, you guessed it, assassins - real life assassins who killed Presidents at

that. This song in particular, "The Ballad of Guiteau", tells the story of the man who assassinated President Garfield after believing he was robbed of consulship after convincing himself he was the reason why Garfield won the election. Music and lyrics by Sondheim and performances by Denis O'Hare and Neil Patrick Harris: <https://youtu.be/a5QjBrcjUJE>

