

The Pippin Score – Stephen Schwartz Answers Questions About the Songs of Pippin

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Pippin: Corner of the Sky alternate lyrics?

Question:

Dear Stephen,

I'm a fan for over 30 years, blah blah. I have a question about Corner of the Sky. I've seen two different sets of lyrics for it; the one I'm familiar with has the lyrics "Rain comes after thunder; winter comes after fall" while the other one uses "Thunderclouds have their lightning". I learned the one I learned because that's the version my 1983 singing partner Heidi knew. Can you enlighten me about these differing versions?

Also, for some strange reason my brain keeps wanting to do "Rivers will run" instead of "Rivers belong" and "Children play in" instead of "Children fit in"-- I think I was doing that back in '83 too. Why do I do that? Did such lyrics ever exist, or is it just my brain acting weird (and if so, should I correct myself)?

...Thank you for all your wonderful contributions both in the music world and on this board, archived messages of which I've been reading the past few days and from which I'm receiving much inspiration and support. -Walter

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Your guess was a good one. That was the original final verse of the song:

So maybe some misty day, you'll
Waken to find me gone
And far away, you'll
Hear me singing to the dawn
And you'll wonder if I'm happy there
A little more than I've been
And the answer will come back to you
Like laughter on the wind:

Rivers belong where they can ramble, etc.

It was rewritten during rehearsals to be more specific as to Pippin's goal: "I won't rest until I know I have it all".

Some of the vocal selections were published prior to the show opening, and thus were not in a couple of cases the final version of the songs.

Of course, I do like this original lyric too, in fact perhaps I prefer it as slightly more evocative. So when the song is sung out of context, I certainly don't mind it being used.

Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Re: Pippin: Corner of the Sky alternate lyrics?

Question:

Hi Stephen...First off, just let me say what a tremendous fan of yours I am. I remember seeing Pippin for the first time as a child and have loved the music ever since. On American Idol last night, Bo Bice sang a version of Corner of the Sky that had a complete verse I had never heard before. It went something like "So you ask me if I'm happy there; A little more than I've been; And don't you know sometimes the truth is like laughter on the wind?" Is this verse a part of the original lyrics for this song, because I know clearly that these are not part of the Pippin score version. Thanks so much for your contributions! I think you're incredible and hope that someday I have the opportunity to tell you so in person! Steve S.

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Dear Walter: The lyric which has "rain comes after thunder" and also has a third verse which concludes "And far away you'll hear me singing to the dawn" is from an earlier version of the song. The lyrics were changed in rehearsals for the Broadway production, but the music publishing company had already released a version with the original lyrics. So both versions are still out there, thirty-plus years later. There was never any version, however, that included the lyrics "rivers will run where they can ramble" or "children play in the snow", so that was probably a dream or an example of "false memory syndrome". (There was an annoying copying error in one of the versions of the song that contained the lyric "children sit in the snow" as opposed to "fit in" and every so often I come across someone singing the song from that version, which is irritating.) Hope this clarifies things for you. Thanks for writing. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Cover Songs: Michael Jackson & Diana Ross

Question:

I saw on one of the songwriting web pages that Mr. Schwartz has had his songs performed by Michael Jackson and Diana Ross? Does anyone know which songs they were? Were they from his shows, or independent of projects? What albums can they be found on today? Thanks for any knowledge you can pass on...

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Diana Ross recorded "Corner of the Sky" on DIANA ROSS LIVE; Michael Jackson recorded "Morning Glow" on his MUSIC AND ME album and sang lead on "Corner of the Sky" for the Jackson 5 single which is included on their album, SKYWRITER. Both songs are from PIPPIN, and these recordings no doubt derive from the fact that Motown released the PIPPIN original cast album. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Pippin, The Magic Show and Phil Ramone

Question: I'd be interested in hearing about your experience working with well known record producer Phil Ramone on the original cast recordings of PIPPIN and THE MAGIC SHOW. How did you 'hook up' with him? Also, what prompted you to team up with a co-producer on these recordings as opposed to producing them yourself as was the case with the OCR of GODSPELL?

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Thanks for the question. I worked with Phil on the PIPPIN album because I didn't have experience recording an orchestra and a larger chorus at that time; I really had done only pop groups till then. We became good friends and so we're happy to work together again from time to time. Phil is, as everyone knows, a great producer and a terrific guy. My only complaint was that he was such a perfectionist that I was in the studio mixing the PIPPIN album till my contact lenses dried up in my eyes (literally)! Thank God we now live in the era of computerized mixing boards. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

PIPPIN: Disagreements with the Orchestrator?

Question:

I read somewhere that during the initial production of Pippin you had some disagreement as per the Orchestration for the score. Is this true, and if so, what were your original plans for such a deceptively simple score?

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

I didn't really have strong disagreements about the orchestrations; my orchestrator was Ralph Burns, one of the best ever. I just felt that in certain places, the "Broadway" quality of the orchestrations was at odds with the more "pop" quality of some of the score. For the recording, I eliminated some of the brass writing, etc., that I thought exacerbated this; therefore, the cast recording more closely represented how I heard the score than the Broadway orchestration. PIPPIN was the first time I had worked with an orchestrator, and I had to learn how to communicate with one to achieve the style and tone I was after. I hope this helps to answer your question. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Love Song La la la la la la la la la

Question:

Mr. Schwartz, I'm currently playing Pippin, and I was wondering...Is Love Song meant as a set rote piece (a part of the players' "show") or is it truly felt. Or, is it a combination on the part of Pippin and Catherine (each singing from a different personal place) Any light shed would be much appreciated- Thanks

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Good question. I would say that although the "Love Song" moment is still within the Leading Player's plan (as opposed to "I Guess I'll Miss the Man", which is clearly Catherine behaving outside the framework), it is meant genuinely by both Pippin and Catherine. In other words, the short answer is: play it for real. Whew -- these Pirandello-esque shows can get tricky! Thanks for asking, Stephen Schwartz

With You Lyrics

Question:

In the song "With You" from Pippin, there is a line about "incense and stars and smoke bamboo". I am imagining that part of the set may be a bamboo hut, the rafters of which have been exposed to smoke for many many years. Alternately, I understand that smoke bamboo may just be one variety of bamboo often used for construction. Am I at all close, here? Anyway, though this is not an earthshattering question, an answer would clear up this mini-mystery for us!

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

I was just thinking about the smell of the incense, and that was what I thought it might have been. I didn't really mean any more than that. The truth is that I was trying to come up with a romantic and unusual rhyme for "you" (as in the title line of the song), and being a relatively young lyricist with not the greatest technical craft yet, that was the best I could come up with. I wish I had a more impressive explanation (maybe I'll use the one you suggested from now on.) Thanks for your interest, Stephen Schwartz

The Missing Song from Pippin

Question:

I have a couple of questions about "Marking Time", the cut song from Pippin.

1. Has it ever been put back into the show for any production?
2. Where did it originally occur?
3. Where, if anywhere, can I find it and hear it?

Thanks so much, John D.

Answer from Carol de Giere:

Hi John,

Stephen's swamped so I'll answer this one.

1. It was in the show in the pre-Broadway trial in Washington, D.C. but was replaced by Extraordinary.
2. It was exactly where "Extraordinary" is now. "Marking Time" is a fine song but in context it wasn't allowing the actor playing Pippin to express enough frustration over his situation. So the director Bob Fosse asked Stephen Schwartz to write a new one. Stephen wrote "Extraordinary," which musically supports what the actor needs to communicate.
3. John Barr has recorded a wonderful version, and there's another source as well – both listed in the cover song section of <http://www.musicalschwartz.com/pippin.htm>

Manson Trio Lyrics?

Question:

Mr. Schwartz, I know you're away, but I wanted to ask you this. If you could answer when you return that'd be great. I just found on the song list section of your site that the "Manson Trio" (as the dancers of Pippin and most fans call it) in "Glory" has lyrics named The Goodtime Ladie's Rag. If you could post them that'd be great. They're probably in new stock versions of the script, I read the one Mr. Fosse "revised" from the public library. Thanks! Have a nice rest of vacation!-John

Answer from Michael Cole:

I have a PDF file of the music to The Good-time Ladies Rag. Email me and I'll send you a copy of the file.
Best, Michael
office@stephenschwartz.com

Irene Ryan and "No Time At All"

Question:

I just found out I'll be directing Pippin next year at a local community theatre and I'm very excited about it! While listening to No Time At All, I was wondering if you wrote the lyrics before you knew that Irene Ryan would be playing the grandmother, or were they written specifically for her? And what was the audience's reaction to the line "a man who calls me Granny"? Did they just go wild? Also, what were the circumstances of her passing? I've read that she collapsed after performing the song. Did this really happen?

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Believe it or not, those lyrics were written well before the casting of Irene Ryan in the show. The first draft rhymed "sandbar" and "Grandma", and when I realized that was clearly not good enough, I changed it to "cranny" and "Granny". I actually considered changing it again once Irene Ryan was cast, so it wouldn't look as if we were pandering to the audience based on her former television role, but I

never came up with a good enough alternative. Surprisingly enough, the audience response when Irene sang the line wasn't particularly stronger than when subsequent performers have done the song.

[As to the circumstances of her passing,] I wasn't there at the time, so my knowledge is as anecdotal as yours. Thanks for your questions, and I wish you a wonderful success with your production. Make sure you have the latest updated version from MTI -- it's definitely the best version of the show yet!
Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

I Guess I'll Miss The Man cut from Video

Question:

Stephen- why was this song cut from the video version of PIPPIN? I noticed that several small bits from the script were cut (especially involving Theo and his duck), but I'm surprised that a song of this calibre was eliminated(although I love the WHOLE score, this is one of my favorites). Was it included during its initial broadcast on cable TV, and then cut for the video version? Or just edited out altogether (I'm assuming for time purposes)? Does the footage actually still exist?

Also- we met a couple of years ago when you performed your show with Debbie Shapiro in Mission Viejo, CA at Saddleback College... I have a videotape of the original Los Angeles production of WORKING for you, so hopefully I'll see you at the afternoon talk your giving during the "Reprise" production of PIPPIN! Regards, Dave Hutchinson

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Thanks, Dave. Your guess is as good as mine as to why it was cut from the video. I didn't have anything to do with that video, and for many reasons, I don't think it is a good representation of the show. Frankly, I would just as soon it were not available. In any event, you may be sure the song will be performed as part of the Reprise production. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

New Lyrics for War is A Science

Question:

I wore out my original cast album when I was a kid, so was startled to hear the new War Is A Science lyrics--why did you rewrite it?

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

I did the revisions for "War is a Science" a few years ago, for a production in LA that was happening at the time of the Iraq War. I found the euphemistic double-speak of Donald Rumsfeld and others in charge of the war ("casualty averse", "collateral damage", etc.) irresistible to satirize. It still seems pretty apropos to me, with our drone warfare and other ways to avoid acknowledging what we're actually doing. I think if you wind up getting the new cast album, you'll come to like the revisions.

Manson Trio Melody

Question:

I have a question regarding the music in Pippin. Specifically, the melody to the famous "Manson Trio" sequence. I don't know if I'm missing something, but it seems like that melody appears nowhere else in the piece, which is odd for a dance sequence (traditionally.) If I'm missing something, where else does this music appear? And if I'm not missing something, what is the reasoning behind it?

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

You are correct that the melody to the dance trio in the middle of “Glory” appears nowhere else in the show. This has to do with the way dance sequences are sometimes created for musicals. The director and choreographer, Bob Fosse, originally used one of his favorite records, “Let the Good Times Roll”, to create the sequence. My assignment therefore was to write a melody (and harmonic sequence) that preserved what Bob was looking for while still being original. (By the way, this is why the opening number from Chicago, “All That Jazz”, is also similar — since it originally had the same director and choreographer, that too started out as “Let the Good Times Roll.”) In any event, there didn’t seem to be an motific reason to include the tune elsewhere in the show. Thanks for an interesting question I’ve never been asked before. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR PIPPIN SONGS

To find the story behind “Corner of the Sky,” “On the Right Track,” “Morning Glow,” and many other Pippin songs, see the Pippin chapter of “Defying Gravity: The Creative Career of Stephen Schwartz, from Godspell to Wicked.” www.DefyingGravityTheBook.com

For the DVD, sheet music, cast album, and albums with covers of Pippin songs, see <http://www.musicalschwartz.com/pippin.htm>