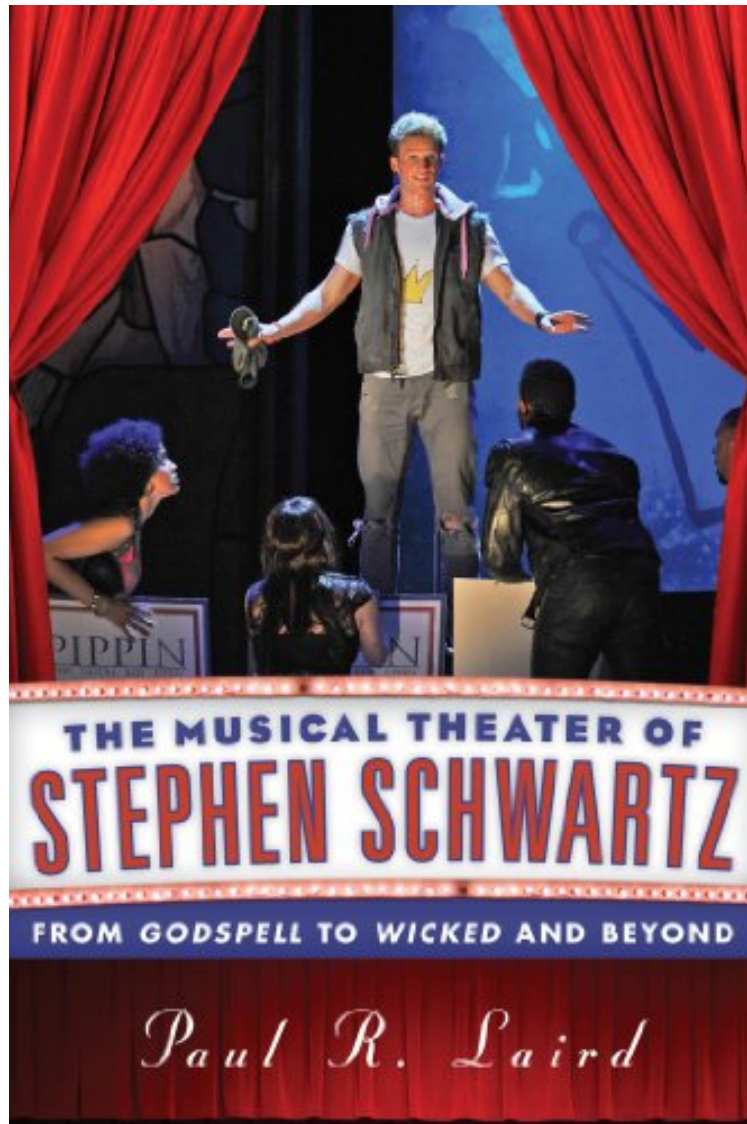


[DOWNLOAD] The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz: From Godspell to Wicked and Beyond

The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz: From Godspell to Wicked and Beyond

Paul R. Laird

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Paul R. Laird : The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz: From Godspell to Wicked and Beyond before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz: From Godspell to Wicked and Beyond:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Don't waste your \$\$\$ or timeBy R. Patrick BaughThis is basically a textbook, which gets way too far into the weeds about musical theory, making it unreadable to any reader who is not schooled in musical theory. And to top it off, only 8 pages (out of 453) about "Wicked", instead asking the reader who

wants to know more about that show to buy the author's other book (currently selling for \$40+ on). Not happening. The author refers continually to Carol de Giere's "Defying Gravity", even mentioning it in his introduction's first paragraph, which in hindsight should have been a tipoff that hers is a far superior book. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Pedantic and stodgy

By TomFirst off, the good points: Laird has done a lot of research and a great deal of scholarship has gone into this book. The book is full of useful information and does a nice job of giving an overview of Schwartz's work. The not so good points: I found the book a tad boring. Also, there were several errors in his story telling. He claims that *Godspell* at the Roundhouse in London did not use a fence, but it did. His source was publicity photos taken in a rehearsal hall. He also states that the Broadway revival had 30 premieres. I assume he meant 30 previews as a show gets only one premiere. If he doesn't understand theatre nomenclature, why is he writing about the theatre? The book takes a scholarly approach to the music in Schwartz's shows. To the lay reader without a music theory background, the book may be mystifying. At times informative, but always dry and stodgy. I much prefer Carol de Giere's *Defying Gravity*.

As the composer/lyricist for *Godspell*, *Pippin*, *Wicked*, and other musicals, Stephen Schwartz has enjoyed one of the most significant careers in American musical theater for more than four decades. Schwartz has also achieved success on the big screen, contributing to such films as *Enchanted*, *The Prince of Egypt*, and *Pocahontas*. For his work, he has received six Tony nominations, three Grammys, and three Academy Awards. *The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz: From Godspell to Wicked and Beyond* is a detailed examination of Schwartz's various projects throughout his career. Musicologist Paul R. Laird discusses at length Schwartz's major shows and also considers his other ventures, such as the music and lyrics for animated features from Disney and Dreamworks. The book focuses on two major aspects of Schwartz's creations: the process of collaboration resulting in a project's completion and a descriptive analysis of his music and lyrics. Laird also describes each show's critical reception and its place in the larger history of musical theater. Based on extensive interviews with Schwartz and a number of his major collaborators, this book provides a rare look into the creation of the composer and lyricist's shows and films. *The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz* is intended for fans as well as students and professional researchers in music, theater, and the musical theater.

Seated next to Stephen Sondheim in the front row of the American musical theater pantheon is the prolific and prodigiously talented composer/lyricist Stephen Schwartz (b. 1948). Throughout a career spanning four decades that includes such hits as *Godspell*, *Pippin*, and *Wicked*, Schwartz has been honored with multiple Tony nominations, three Grammys, and three Academy Awards. Musical theater scholar Laird has written an in-depth study focusing on Schwartz's projects and music. Acknowledging Carol de Giere's biographical contributions in her 2008 book, *Defying Gravity*, the author concentrates on the music and musical styles of Schwartz's theater and film work. Arranged chronologically, the title begins with an introduction to Schwartz with individual chapters on *Godspell*; his collaboration with Leonard Bernstein on Bernstein's *Mass*; Broadway and off-Broadway shows *Pippin*, *The Magic Show*, *The Baker's Wife*, *Working*, *Rags*, and *Children of Eden*; Schwartz's work on animated features for Disney and DreamWorks; then the success of the musical *Wicked*; his opera, *Seance on a Wet Afternoon*, and works outside Broadway and Hollywood. VERDICT Laird offers a definitive musical analysis of Schwartz's incredible career to date. A trenchant investigation that is both erudite and accessible, this book is an essential acquisition for all academic, professional, and large public library collections. (Library Journal, Starred)

Laird has crafted a scholarly yet accessible review of composer/lyricist Schwartz's work. While sentences like 'The choral writing is in four parts with a few passing tones' will only resonate with readers who have studied music, there is still lots here for fans of musical theater and even a few tidbits for Disney and Dreamworks fans who are fond of the musical scores of *Pocahontas* and *The Prince of Egypt*. Laird's most insightful coverage is of Schwartz's work on *Godspell* and *Pippin*, composer's earliest successes. Interviews with Schwartz reveal both insider secrets and fun trivia, including that *Godspell*'s most famous song, 'Day by Day,' is modeled on Burt Bacharach and Hal David's 'What the World Needs Now.' (Publishers Weekly)

Laird has a fine list of publications, e.g., *Leonard Bernstein: A Guide to Research*. Here he presents a comprehensive biography of Schwartz and a guide to all his works for the musical stage, film, concert stage, and opera. Schwartz is multitalented, and the author chronicles his achievements as a composer, lyricist, director, and theatrical creator. Productions included range from *Godspell* (1971) to the opera *Seance on a Wet Afternoon* (2009). Particularly strong are Laird's descriptions of the changing versions of each production as it progressed toward the stage, with close attention to the many musical styles Schwartz employs. Throughout the volume Laird notes that this new work supplements but does not replace two earlier books: his own *Wicked: A Musical Biography* (2011) and Carol de Giere's *Defying Gravity: The Creative Career of Stephen Schwartz from Godspell to Wicked* (2008). Those volumes should be consulted, especially for more details on *Wicked*. Excellent notes and bibliography. Summing Up: Recommended. Large performing arts collections. (CHOICE)

Several years ago, the author, a music professor and writer on Broadway musicals, interrupted his writing of a book on all of Stephen Schwartz's musicals to concentrate on this

composer/lyricist's latest Broadway success, *Wicked*. The result was *Wicked: A Musical Biography*. . . .He later returned to and completed the original project, which became this detailed analysis of the complete works of Schwartz with individual chapter devoted to each of his shows beginning with *Godspell* (1971) and continuing through such works as Bernstein's *Mass* (1971) (for which he wrote the lyrics), *Pippin* (1972), *The Magic Show* (1974), *The Baker's Wife* (1976), and his only opera *Seance on a Wet Afternoon* (2009). The longest chapter (almost 60 pages) is devoted to a work not yet seen on Broadway but performed widely in schools and churches, the Biblical epic, *Children of God* (1991). Each of these chapters supplies detailed material on the individual show: its genesis, development, personnel involved, tryouts, rewrites, casts and cast changes, the contents of individual acts and scenes, a thorough analysis of each song used, revivals, foreign productions, and its critical receptions (with quotes from reviews). . . .The book also contains an introductory chapter on Schwartz's life, a chapter on his film work (mainly lyrics for several Disney features), and a concluding chapter on his work outside of Broadway and Hollywood. The work is up to date. . . .It is also extremely readable and thoroughly researched; for example, the book concludes with a separate 65-page section of footnotes, sources, Websites, and interviews used. There is also a detailed index and a few black-and-white photographs scattered throughout the text. This is an excellent and enjoyable book on this important contemporary Broadway figure. . . .This work is highly recommended for theater collections. (American Reference Books Annual)

About the Author Paul R. Laird is professor of musicology at the University of Kansas, where he teaches courses in music history, musical theater, and directs the Instrumental Collegium Musicum. He is the coauthor of *Historical Dictionary of the Broadway Musical* (2007) and author of *The Baroque Cello Revival: An Oral History* (2004) and *Wicked: A Musical Biography* (2011), all published by Scarecrow Press.