



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Playbill for The Piano Lesson

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Broadway Babies

Three years later, Kidd was not only choreographer but also director and co-producer of L'il Abner.

Kidd, of course, did not limit his activities to Broadway. Indeed, he may be best remembered today for his classic choreography for the films *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* and *The Band Wagon*, and Kidd even appeared in featured parts in several movies. But in terms of Broadway, Kidd takes his place beside Robbins as one of the first of that new breed of mid-fifties animal, the director-choreographer, one who, while creating rousing dance routines, was now taking on the responsibility of an entire production.

Bob Fosse

No choreographer in Broadway history ever had such a readily identifiable style as Bob Fosse, recipient of nine Tony Awards for his work as Broadway director-choreographer. The famous Fosse characteristics, which included isolation of body parts, pelvic movements, turned-in feet, derbies and white gloves, were seen in show after show, and while Fosse contributed fully integrated stagings, he believed in choreography for its own flashy, sexy, funny sake. His dances, which eschewed ballet in favor of jazz styles, called attention to themselves, drove audiences wild, and invariably stopped the shows which contained them. It was Fosse's particular skill to develop star dancers, and after putting Carol Haney on the map he took Kidd's dancing star Gwen Verdon and, in *Damn Yankees* (1955), established her as the only dancing lady in post-war Broadway history to reach the top echelon of stardom which contained the likes of Mary Martin, Ethel Merman or Angela Lansbury.

In 1959 Fosse made the inevitable step toward total control when he took on the direction and choreography of a musical for the first time. *Redhead* won the Tony as the Best Musical of 1959, but it was Fosse's series of wildly imaginative dances for Verdon that made it so successful.

Sweet Charity (1966) marked a turning point in his career. Fosse had always been a distinctly original choreographer, but with *Charity* he used dance more to convert character. *Charity* began with Gwen Verdon performing a two-minute dance which established the personality of the eponymous taxi-dancer heroine more vividly than a lengthy song or book scene could have done. *Charity* had a fine score by Cy Coleman and Dorothy Fields and a fast-paced, funny book by Neil Simon, but the personalities and fantasies of the heroine and her cohorts were expressed more strongly in Fosse's dances than in the dialogue or songs.

In *Pippin* (1972), Fosse's stamp was on every minute of the show, from the moment the house lights dimmed and the audience saw a black haze in which only moving hands could be discerned. This time it was Ben Vereen whom Fosse

[[image - dancers]]

[[image - dancers]]

Martha Swope

The Fosse style performed to perfection in *Pippin* (1972) and *Dancin'* (1978)

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[[end of page one]]

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No one. For this quiet who would want to drive a luxury car on a wet, slippery road without the benefits of one of the world's most advanced braking systems?

Advertisement for the Chrysler New Yorker Fifth Avenue, highlighting its advanced braking system and leather seats.

[[image - black car]]

Introducing the Chrysler New Yorker Fifth Avenue.

What good are soft leather seats in a luxury car if you can't stop straight on a wet, slippery road?

Who would argue against the option of rich, soft Mark Cross leather... and an eight-way power seat with infallible memory? Or an inner quiet that shuts out the distractions of the outer world?

No one. But then again who would want to drive a luxury car on a wet, slippery road without the benefits of one of the world's most advanced braking systems?

[[diagram]] Advanced anti-lock braking system (ABS)

Anti-lock braking... safer stopping power.

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One quick emergency stop can teach you that.

Hit the advanced anti-lock braking system (ABS) available in an all-new Chrysler Fifth Avenue and your braking skills increase noticeably - with or without your cooperation. Because you shed the limitations of conventional braking systems.

With ABS, an electronic control unit constantly senses the pressure that can be applied to each wheel without causing lockup... thus, helping to prevent skidding.

Equally important, Fifth Avenue's ABS allows steering control during braking and can help to shorten stopping distances.

[[image - interior of a car]]

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