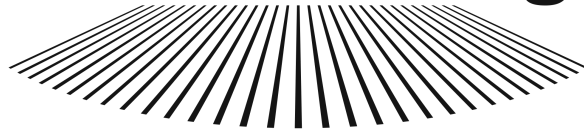


The Western Stage



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Written by Jeffrey T. Heyer

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The Last Five Years

by Jason Robert Brown

tagline: Backwards and forwards in time and in love

THE STORY:

Cathy Hiatt, a struggling actress, tells the story of her marriage from breakup to first meeting. Interspersed with her scenes, Jamie Wellerstein, rising novelist, tells his story of their marriage from first meeting to breakup. The two characters only come together in the same scene at their marriage in the middle of the play. Scenes of good times and bad, of hopeful coming together and of sad falling apart are juxtaposed sharpening the emotional impact of both.

WHY THIS PLAY WAS CHOSEN:

This Fiftieth Anniversary season of The Western Stage is an homage to its four Artistic Directors and a celebration of its history as reflected in a series of titles not previously produced at Western Stage. *Merrily We Roll Along*, TWS' season opener, was a nod to Jon Patrick Selover, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, celebrated Tom Humphrey's artistic directorship, and the upcoming production of *Emilia* harkens back to Ron Danko's Shakespeare canon but from a modern, feminist twist.

Time figures heavily in the artistic form of *The Last Five Years*, just as it did in *Merrily We Roll Along*, the two musicals that bookend the season. Anniversaries are a time for recalling the journey from the past to the present, and to look backwards and forwards at the same time is a way to see each rise and each fall in the larger context of our evolution as a whole. *The Last Five Years* mirrors our look back at the beginnings of Western Stage while at the same time we imagine the program in the next 50 years, and while not always sweet, it has certainly been a worthy endeavor.

BACKGROUND OF *THE LAST FIVE YEARS*:

This musical was inspired by the playwright Jason Robert Brown's relationship with actor Theresa O'Neill. The original version was so close to the real events that O'Neill sued Brown for breaking the non-disclosure and non-disparagement clauses of their divorce decree. Brown responded by counter-suing O'Neill for interference with his creative work. The issue was resolved when Brown rewrote the script, making the character of Cathy Hiatt less like Theresa O'Neill. This included removing all references to the character being Irish Catholic and changing the song "I Could Be in Love with Someone Like You" to "Shiksa Goddess."

The Last Five Years premiered at Chicago's Northlight Theatre in 2001 and was produced Off-Broadway in 2002. It has had numerous productions since in the United States and internationally. It opened on Broadway in 2025. The cast album was released by Sh-K-Boom Records in 2002. A movie adaptation starred Anna

Kendrick and Jeremy Jordan, and was directed by Richard LaGravenese, known for *The Fisher King*, *The Bridges of Madison County* and other fine films.

THE AUTHOR:

Jason Robert Brown's work on *Parade* won him the 1999 Tony Award for Best Original Score. His songs in *Urban Cowboy* got him nominated for the 2003 Tony Award for Best Original Score. In 2009 he won the Tony for Best Original Score and Best Orchestration for *The Bridges of Madison County*. For *Mr. Saturday Night* he was nominated for the 2022 Tony Award for Best Original Score. He also received Drama Desk Awards in 1999, 2002 and 2014, along with a number of nominations. Brown received the 1999 New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Musical and the 2014 Outer Critic's Circle Award for Outstanding New Score for *The Bridges of Madison County*.

Besides his work as lyricist, composer and playwright, he teaches various courses in musical theatre composition and performance at the University of Southern California. He is also a singer and piano player with his band the Caucasian Rhythm Kings.

PRODUCTION TEAM:

Directed by: Dennis Beasley. Beasley has been a freelance director, actor, producer and educator for fifteen years. His undergraduate training was at the Ray Bolger Musical Theatre Program at UCLA's School of Theatre, Film and Television. Until recently he was the Artistic Associate and Associate Producer at Downstairs Cabaret Theatre in Rochester, NY. He was also the Artistic Director of the Odyssey Theatre Company in Gilroy. Beasley has worked at theatres across the U.S., including Tony Award-winning South Coast Repertory and Utah Shakespeare Festival. He is currently Artistic Director at Stockton Civic Theatre and an Adjunct Professor at San Joaquin Delta College.

Beasley's 2009 production of *The Little Dog Laughed* was recognized by BroadwayWorld.com as the Best Regional Production for LA/Orange Counties. It also won Beasley a Garland Award nomination for Best Director from Backstage West Magazine. StageScreenLA.com recognized his work on Andrew Lippa's *Wild Party* with seven of its year-end awards including Outstanding Direction and Best Musical. Favorite shows include *Take Me Out*, *Songs for a New World*, *Damn Yankees* and *Les Miserables*. More information is available on his website: dbeasley5.wixsite.com/director/biography

Music Director: Dante Carballo
Stage Manager: John G. Bridges
Costume Design: Jessica Moreno Caychoja
Hair & Makeup Design:
Lighting Design: John Englehorn
Props Design:
Scenic Design: Dani Maupin
Sound Design: Dante Carballo

CAST:

CATHY HIATT	Andee Estrella
JAMIE WELLERSTEIN	Tyler Harding

WHEN:

October 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 26. and 27
Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

WHERE:

The Studio Theatre on the Hartnell College Main Campus, 411 Central Avenue, Salinas, CA.

TICKETING INFORMATION:

Adult \$28; Seniors/Military/Teachers \$24; Hartnell Students FREE; Other Students \$16; Youths (5-15) \$12; Hartnell Staff/Faculty \$15; Student Rush \$5; Group tickets available by contacting the TWS Box Office.

Online tickets and more information: westernstage.com or call (831) 755-6816.

TWS Box Office is open Wednesday-Saturday 5:00-8:00pm. and Sundays with performances 12-3pm. Leave VM to get callback within 24 hours.

ACCOMMODATIONS:

This event is wheelchair accessible. Individuals requiring other accommodations should contact the ticket office at least one week prior to the event.

CURRENT COVID-19 INFORMATION:

The Western Stage is not requiring masking or proof of Covid negative test result or vaccination at this time. Ticket holders are asked to not attend if they have temperature or other symptoms or have been recently exposed to COVID-19 or have recently tested positive for COVID-19. This policy is subject to change based increase infection rates and or Hartnell College policy updates.

ABOUT THE WESTERN STAGE – ESTABLISHED 1974:

The Western Stage (TWS) is a professionally managed, community-based theatre company and educational program that provides opportunities for the creative process and high-level artistic experiences. Led by its educational mission and believing that strong arts experiences are important for building innovative, creative, and resilient communities, The Western Stage endeavors to offer a robust variety of programs designed for personal growth and skill development that address the need for a safe space where students and theatre enthusiasts may engage in theatre production while working side-by-side with theatre professionals. Through its annual production season, The Western Stage endeavors to provide strong pathways and development for artists throughout the continuum of a career in theatre and its related performing arts. The Western Stage develops new works that speak to the history and culture of the Salinas Valley and provides educational opportunities for students of all skill levels to explore and develop their unique talent. www.westernstage.com

ABOUT HARTNELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT – ESTABLISHED 1920

The Hartnell CCD provides educational services to the Salinas Valley and its neighboring regions through its main campus in Salinas, the Alisal Campus in East Salinas, and education centers in King City, Soledad, and Castroville. Hartnell College is a Hispanic Serving Institution that provides associate degrees, bachelor's degrees and certificate programs. It prepares students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities and to enter the workforce with necessary skills. Hartnell College is known for its innovative public and private partnerships that support world class education for STEM, career technical education, fine and performing arts, humanities and social sciences, nursing and health sciences, and athletics. We are proud to be winners of the 2015 Innovation Award for CSin3 –a Computer Science collaboration with CSU Monterey Bay that leads to a bachelor's degree in three years. **We are growing leaders through opportunity, engagement and achievement.** For more about Hartnell CCD, visit www.hartnell.edu.

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