

Dinner theater in Gilroy

Call now to see Gilroy Community Theatre's dinner show, *Side by Side by Sondheim*. Tonight's dinner show and both of Saturday's shows are already sold out, as is the final show next Saturday. If you call 842-SHOW quickly, you may still get a \$7.50 seat for the 10 p.m. show tonight or a seat for one of two shows the next Friday: the \$15 dinner show at 6:30 or the \$7.50 show at 10. All shows are at the Old Gilroy Hotel.



GCT's 'Side by Side' is nearly sold out.

GCT plans musical at hotel

GILROY — Gilroy Community Theatre will perform the popular show *Side by Side by Sondheim* Nov. 11, 12, 18 and 19 at the Old Gilroy Hotel.

Dinner shows at \$15 each begin at 6:30 each night. Dinner includes stuffed chicken with rice, soup, salad, beverage and vegetable.

Cocktail shows at \$7.50 start at 10 p.m. each night. Wine and cheese will be served.

The show lasts about 1½ hours.

The performance is more a show than a play, according to director George Costa. He says it was dreamed up by three British entertainers who wanted to provide "a little congenial employment for themselves ... and do a little missionary work on behalf of Stephen Sondheim songs among the English natives."

Side by Side is "a celebration of the work of a man considered by many to be the best lyric writer of our time, the most adventurous composer working in musical theater, and the most considerable musical dramatist," Costa said.



Photo special to The Dispatch

Twelve people star in GCT's production of 'Side by Side by Sondheim.'

The production features songs from *West Side Story*, *Gypsy*, *Do I hear a Waltz*, *Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Anyone Can Whistle*, *Company*, *Follies*, *A Little Night Music* and *Pacific Overtures*.

The cast includes Walden Sampson as narrator, Betsy An-

drade, Mary Jane Spohr, Phil Skiver, Ted Sanchez, Rosalind Farotte, Richard Nelson, Dennis Charvez, Ruthie Mullins, Steve Schneickert, Lynda Gray and Cristy Laschiver.

Marilyn Guerin and Dennis Charvez will play piano.

Advance reservations are required for dinner shows and rec-

ommended for cocktail show Costa said. The restaurant will hold only 75 people for each performance.

For reservations, call 842-SHOW or 842-1192.

Board president Debbie Nelson says GCT's dinner show have been very popular in previous years.

'Side by Side' held over

Theater-goers unable to get tickets for Gilroy Community Theatre's *Side by Side by Sondheim* get another chance in December. Due to two sell-out weekends, GCT will repeat the highly acclaimed show Dec. 2, 3 and 4 with 6:30 p.m. dinner shows each night at the Old Gilroy Hotel. (Late night cocktail shows will not continue). The \$15 tickets include a chicken dinner. For reservations, call 842-SHOW between 1 and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Tickets can also be picked up between 1 and 5 at the Theatre Angels House, 140 W. Fifth St., Gilroy. The cast features Ruthé Müllins, Steve Schneickert, Christy Laschiver, Richard Nelson, Betsy Andrade, Phil Skiver, Lynda Gray and Mary Jane Spohr. Marilyn Guerin accompanies the singers at the piano.

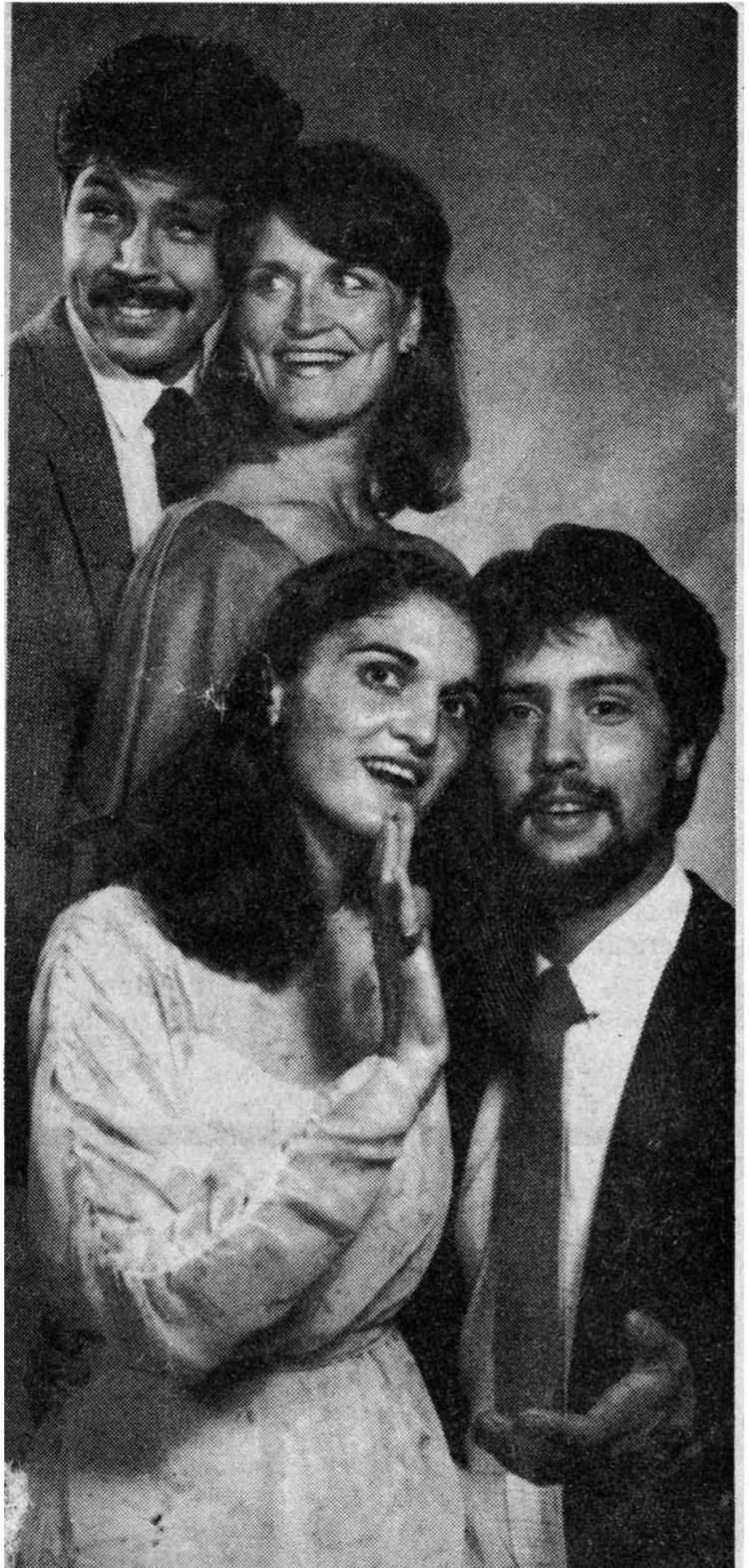


Photo special to The Dispatch

GCT performers sing Sondheim tunes.

'Side by Side': delightful, well done

*Could it be? Yes it could.
Something's coming, something good.*

11/15/83

Joanne Rife



What the something is, is *Side by Side* by Sondheim, Gilroy Community Theatre's annual dinner show, which actually arrived last week but is coming again for final Friday and Saturday performances. If you're going to get tickets you'd better get them now because it is nearly sold out for both dinner and cocktail shows (6:30 and 10 p.m.) at the Old Gilroy Hotel.

And it is at the very least, a delightful evening. *Side by Side* is a musical review of songs by the leading contemporary Broadway composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim. It showcases some of the funniest, most urbane, sophisticated and wise lyrics of our day. I consider his songs in a class with Cole Porter's and W.S. Gilbert's. The lyrics have biting wit and a view of relationships that illumines these turbulent personal times.

The GCT show begins:

*Something familiar,
Something peculiar,
Something for everyone:
A comedy tonight!
Something convulsive,
Something repulsive,
Something for everyone:
A comedy tonight!*

You will laugh and you will enjoy it. The singing ranges from fair to very good by the 10-member cast. As I left, these were among the standouts that lingered in my mind: Ted Sanchez's beautiful baritone singing *Tonight* from *West Side Story*; Betsy Andrade's wonderfully funny gimmick to go with her bump and grind, a trumpet, from *Gypsy*; Phil

Skiver (Robert) and Mary Jane Spohr (April) singing, after spending a night together when they've hardly been introduced properly:

You're just a very special girl, June!

April ...

April ...

Thank you. (Barcelona from Company)

Dennis Charvez's hilarious, *I'm So Pretty, Oh So Pretty*; Lynda Gray's *I Never Do Anything Twice*; Christy Lasichiver singing, from *Follies*:

Could I leave you

And your shelves of the World's Best Books

And the evenings of martyred looks ...

And certainly the song that is Sondheim's best known, *Send in the Clowns*, sung by Spohr. The song is Sondheim at his finest, and when narrator Walden Sampson mentioned it was coming up, the audience let out a yelp of satisfaction.

Isn't it rich?

Are we a pair?

Me here at last on the ground

You in mid air. (from A Little Night Music)

Other members equally as good in the ensemble cast are Ruth E. Mullins, Richard Nelson and Steve Schneickert.

Side by Side by Sondheim is great fun, lively,

quick and entertaining. Both director George Costa and musical director Nelson should be lauded. The only problems lay with the very difficult staging in the tiny back room of the restaurant.

The performers are so close I was sure one would be in the middle of my stuffed chicken (which was excellent). The setup in the room is wickedly difficult, but ultimately it works. Set design by Costa is blah, but doesn't matter; costume design (also by Costa) is a beautiful melange of New Yawk sophistication; lighting by Steve Mancini is pedestrian but adequate except for a spot right in the middle of the runway where it dwindled to one flickering candlepower. Performers dashed through the four feet of gloom to get back into the spotlight.

This is not *Oklahoma!* or *Fiddler on the Roof*. There is no plot and no story and no costume changes — it is not a theater production. But it is entertaining and it is well done and you will enjoy it. I can't give a better recommendation.

But then, I am enthralled by Sondheim's lyrics, and with a few very minor exceptions, the GCT production is marked by clarity of sound. Imagine — singers who annunciate. It may start a new trend. Listening to rock and roll all these years reminds me of listening to brassy mush (that's why lyrics always appear on rock and roll albums — otherwise the listener has no idea a all what is being sung). Sondheim's lyrics are astringent, analytical, clever. They are not big and lush and romantic. But they are fun and funny, and in a way, incredibly sad.

If you can get tickets, do so. Too bad that the show doesn't run for at least another weekend. Or two. Or three.

'Side by Side' preview

GILROY — If you don't make the show itself, you can catch a preview of Gilroy Community Theatre's *Side by Side* by Sondheim at a Chamber of Commerce social hour, 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday at the Old Gilroy Hotel. Cost is \$3, and GCT players will provide half an hour's worth of entertainment from their popular show. The public is invited, and tickets will be available at the door.