



**MASTEROICES PERFORMS *ANYONE CAN WHISTLE*, THE MADCAP MUSICAL SATIRE BY  
STEPHEN SONDHEIM AND ARTHUR LAURENTS, ON MARCH 10 AT CARNEGIE HALL**

**STARRING VANESSA WILLIAMS, ELIZABETH STANLEY, SANTINO FONTANA,  
DOUGLAS SILLS, EDDIE COOPER, AND MICHAEL MULHEREN**



**New York, NY, February 3, 2022** — MasterVoices continues its 2021-22 season celebrating its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary on **Thursday, March 10** at **Carnegie Hall** with a concert staging of the cult-favorite musical, ***Anyone Can Whistle*** by **Stephen Sondheim** and **Arthur Laurents**. The performance will star **Vanessa Williams**, who performed in the 2002 Broadway revival of Sondheim’s *Into the Woods* and the 2010 revue *Sondheim on Sondheim*, in the role of a corrupt mayor of a small economically depressed American town. Joining her will be **Elizabeth Stanley**, seen most recently on Broadway in *Jagged Little Pill* and who played April in the 2006 revival of *Company*; and one of Broadway’s favorite leading men, Tony Award winner **Santino Fontana**, along with **Douglas Sills**, **Eddie Cooper**, and **Michael Mulheren**. It is directed and conducted by MasterVoices Artistic Director **Ted Sperling**.

In the early 1960s Sondheim and Laurents set out to satirize the loss of individuality in the Eisenhower years with a free-wheeling production that would also break with the conventions of musicals of the era. The 1964 show revealed early signs of Sondheim’s rebel genius as it skewered many targets, revealing what can happen when a community puts its faith in an unreliable leader. In his book *Finishing the Hat*, Sondheim describes the zany plot as “a fanciful story about a venal Mayoress who gets the bright idea of arranging a fake miracle to attract tourists. [...] Farcical complications ensue.” Also in the mix is an unlikely romance between a rational nurse, out to expose the fraud, and a chaos-loving doctor, who makes us question the very notion of sanity. *Anyone Can Whistle* has not been seen in New York since 2010, when it was presented by the Encores! series at City Center.

Said Ted Sperling, "MasterVoices mourns the recent passing of the irreplaceable Stephen Sondheim. Steve was a friend, a great colleague and a mentor. He was delighted we were revisiting *Anyone Can Whistle*, which has one of his favorite songs, 'With So Little to Be Sure Of,' and he had agreed to help us with the project. The month ahead will be a labor of love, and we know his spirit will be with us as we bring his and Arthur's work back to the stage."

### [Anyone Can Whistle](#)

**Thursday, March 10, 2022, 7:00 pm**

Book by Arthur Laurents

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

### **MasterVoices**

**Ted Sperling**, Artistic Director and Conductor

Choreography by **JoAnn M. Hunter**

Lighting design by **Aaron Tacy**

Sound design by **Marc Salzberg**

Costumes coordinated by **Tracy Christensen**

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

[Vanessa Williams](#) CORA HOOVER HOOPER

[Santino Fontana](#) J. BOWDEN HAPGOOD

[Elizabeth Stanley](#) FAY APPLE

[Douglas Sills](#) COMPTROLLER SCHUB

**Eddie Cooper** TREASURER COOLEY

**Michael Mulheren** POLICE CHIEF MAGRUDER

**Tickets**, starting at \$30, may be purchased online at [carnegiehall.org](http://carnegiehall.org), by calling CarnegieCharge at [212.247.7800](tel:212.247.7800) or in person at Carnegie Hall's box office at 57<sup>th</sup> and Seventh Avenue. Ticket holders need to comply with the venue's health and safety requirements, which can be found [here](#).

### **About Anyone Can Whistle**

With *Anyone Can Whistle*, Stephen Sondheim and Arthur Laurents—who had previously worked together on *Gypsy* and *West Side Story*—created a surreal, experimental show about political corruption and civil upheaval that in the light of recent national events is uncannily prophetic. It boasts a complex, tuneful score that demonstrates Sondheim's wit and range as both composer and lyricist and "is invaluable for providing an early, precocious example of a skill that Mr. Sondheim plies better than anybody in Broadway history: a gift for defining in song characters who are a hair's breadth from nervous breakdowns" (Brantley, *The New York Times*). Arthur Laurents' book reflects the zeitgeist of the era as it questions—as did such 1960s films as *The Graduate* and *King of Hearts*—who can be sane in an insane society and argues the importance of nonconformity. It skewers politicians who lie to stay in power, as well as religion, science, psychotherapy, and the conventions of musical theater itself.

The original show, directed by Mr. Laurents and starring Angela Lansbury, Lee Remick and Harry Guardino—all making their Broadway musical debuts—was ultimately more satirical social commentary than mainstream entertainment. In a season that also included the premieres of *Hello Dolly!* and *Funny Girl*, *Anyone Can Whistle* closed after nine performances, the briefest run of any of Sondheim's Broadway productions. The

original cast album was recorded the day after the show closed, because Columbia Records' president Goddard Lieberson wanted to make a permanent record of the score, which he admired. Hit songs from the show include "Me and My Town," "There Won't Be Trumpets," "Anyone Can Whistle," "Everybody Says Don't" and "With So Little to Be Sure Of."

Details of MasterVoices' 2021-22 season can be found at [mastervoices.org](http://mastervoices.org).

### **About MasterVoices**

MasterVoices (formerly The Collegiate Chorale) was founded in 1941 by legendary American choral conductor Robert Shaw. Under the artistic direction of Tony Award winner Ted Sperling since 2013, the group is known for its versatility and a repertoire that ranges from choral masterpieces and operas in concert to operettas and musical theater. Season concerts feature a volunteer chorus of 100+ members from all walks of life, alongside a diverse roster of world-class soloists from across the musical spectrum, including Julia Bullock, Dove Cameron, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Renée Fleming, John Holiday, Jennifer Holliday, Norm Lewis, Victoria Clark, and Kelli O'Hara. Under Sperling's direction the group has created cross-disciplinary collaborations with such diverse creative minds as *Vogue* Editor-at-Large Hamish Bowles, fashion designer Zac Posen, Silk Road visual artist Kevork Mourad, illustrator Manik Choksi, stage designer Doug Fitch, and choreographers Doug Varone and Andrew Palermo. Roger Rees was the group's Artistic Associate from 2003–2015, and in 2021 the group received a Drama League Award nomination for its multi-genre digital concert production, *Myths and Hymns*.

Known for its presentation of lesser-known artistic treasures such as Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha*, and Tchaikovsky's *Maid of Orleans*, the group has received recent accolades for productions of rarely-heard works such as the 2018-19 season's *Lady in the Dark* by Kurt Weill and Ira Gershwin, Victor Herbert's *Babes in Toyland*, and the Gershwins' *Let 'Em Eat Cake*. They also commission and premiere new works; recent examples include choral works by Ricky Ian Gordon, Marisa Michelson, Tariq Al-Sabir, and Randall Eng.

As one of the country's first interracial and interfaith choruses, MasterVoices (as The Collegiate Chorale) performed at the opening of the United Nations and has sung and recorded under the batons of esteemed conductors including Serge Koussevitzky, Arturo Toscanini, and Leonard Bernstein, among others. It has been engaged by top-tier orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic and the Israel Philharmonic, and has appeared at the Verbier and Salzburg Festivals.

For more information, visit [mastervoices.org](http://mastervoices.org). Connect with MasterVoices on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) (@mastervoicesny).

### **About Ted Sperling**

One of today's leading musical artists, Tony Award-winning Maestro Ted Sperling is a classically trained musician whose career has spanned from the concert hall and the opera house to the Broadway stage. Presently Artistic Director of MasterVoices, he has led such symphony orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Boston Pops, San Diego Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, the Iceland Symphony, Czech National Symphony, and BBC Concert Orchestra, as well as New York City Opera and Houston Grand Opera. Formerly Principal Conductor of the Westchester Philharmonic, Mr. Sperling is a multi-faceted artist also known for his work as orchestrator, singer, pianist, violinist, violist, director, and music director.

With MasterVoices, Maestro Sperling has led acclaimed productions of rarely-heard gems as both director and conductor. These include Kurt Weill's *The Firebrand of Florence*, *Knickerbocker Holiday*, *The Road of Promise* (based on *The Eternal Road* and subsequently recorded on Navona Records), and the 2018-19 season's sold-out three-performance run of *Lady in the Dark* at New York City Center. Other notable productions with the group include Carnegie Hall performances of George and Ira Gershwin's satirical musicals *Of Thee I Sing* and *Let 'Em Eat Cake*, a reconstruction of Victor Herbert's *Babes in Toyland*, and *Song of Norway*; the New York City premieres of David Lang's *battle hymns* at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum; and Ricky Ian Gordon's operas *The Grapes of Wrath* at Carnegie Hall and *27* at New York City Center.

During the pandemic season of 2020-2021, Maestro Sperling spearheaded a filmed production of Adam Guettel's *Myths and Hymns* for MasterVoices, producing and music directing 24 short musical films and directing roughly half of them. This project was nominated for a Drama League Award, and featured over 100 artists collaborating remotely, including Renée Fleming, Take 6, Jennifer Holliday and Julia Bullock. Now that live performances are back, Maestro Sperling is supervising national and international productions of *My Fair Lady*, *The King and I*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. He has symphonic engagements in the US and Europe and continues to teach at NYU, conducting three different orchestras and training the next generation of Broadway musicians and conductors.

Sperling has conducted multiple concerts for PBS's *Live From Lincoln Center*, the American Songbook Series at Lincoln Center, and the *Lyrics and Lyricists* series at the 92nd Street Y. He conducted Audra McDonald in a double bill of *La Voix Humaine* and the world premiere of *Send: Who Are You? I Love You?* at the Houston Grand Opera. He won the 2005 Tony and Drama Desk Awards for his orchestrations of Adam Guettel's *The Light in the Piazza*, for which he was also Music Director.

In addition to his directing work with MasterVoices, Mr. Sperling's work as a stage director includes the world premieres of four critically acclaimed original musicals Off-Broadway—including *The Other Josh Cohen* and *See What I Wanna See*—and a noted production of *Lady in the Dark* at the Prince Theater in Philadelphia, starring Andrea Marcovicci. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Yale University, and received the Faculty Prize at The Juilliard School. He made his Broadway stage debut as Wallace Hartley in *Titanic* and appeared as Steve Allen in the finale of Season Two of "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel."

Images from left to right: Vanessa Williams © Kate Best, Elizabeth Stanley © Jenny Anderson, Santino Fontana © Nathan Johnson, Ted Sperling © Charles Chessler.

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