



The Guide to Musical Theatre

COMPANY

a musical comedy in two acts. Book by George Furth.
Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim.

Produced at the Alvin Theatre, New York, 26 April 1970 (705 perfs) with Dean Jones (Robert), Barbara Barrie (Sarah), Elaine Stritch (Joanne) and Donna McKechnie (Kathy). Produced at Her Majesty's Theatre, London, 18 April 1972 with Larry Kert, Marti Stevens, Elaine Stritch and Donna McKechnie.

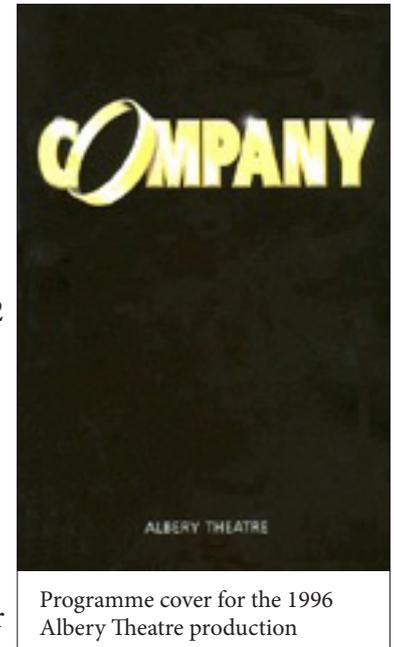
STORY

Act I

Amidst the gleaming chrome and plexiglass towers of modern middle-class Manhattan dwells Robert - all alone in his sleek bachelor apartment. Except for his friends, who are gathered together one evening at the dawn of the Seventies to wish him a happy birthday. Sarah and Harry, Susan and Peter, Jenny and David, Amy and Paul, Joanne and Larry, all living in connubial bliss - save for Robert. As he blows out the candles, his friends make a wish for him: he ought to be happily married - just like them. But in the incessant click-buzz of the telephone he has found his own happiness - good times with chums and pals, no strings, just 'Company'.

Robert goes over to Sarah and Harry's apartment. Harry has quit booze, Sarah is fighting the inch war - and they're both taking it out on each other. As Sarah demonstrates her newly-acquired karate skills by pinning Harry to the floor, their friends observe that it's 'The Little Things You Do Together' that keep a marriage alive. Robert isn't entirely convinced and asks Harry if he's sorry he got married? Or is he grateful? Well, yes and no: Harry's 'Sorry- Grateful'. Across town, at Susan and Peter's, Robert finds an enviable idyllic marriage. Peter is proud and affectionate, Susan sweet and adoring: it's because they've decided to get divorced. Robert moves on to Jenny and David's, where they're experimenting with marijuana and talking about . . . marriage. Robert says he just wants to meet the right girl, but right now is dating three not-so right girls. 'You Could Drive a Person Crazy', boop-boop-de-doop this frustrated trio, April, Kathy and Marta. Everyone, it seems, knows what's best for Robert: Have I Got a Girl For You! promise his friends, as they pair him off with chicks from the office and nieces from Ohio. But Robert knows what he wants: somewhere 'Someone Is Waiting', his ideal girl, "an Amy sort of Sarah, a Jennyish Joanne" - a mix 'n' match compilation of the five wives he knows best.

Robert sits in the park, as a drifting tide of single women washes all around him: April, Kathy, Marta and 'Another Hundred People' swarming up from the subway. Even Paul and Amy are tying the knot, after years of merely living together. But at the wedding breakfast Amy announces that she can't do it. Paul runs off in the rain and Robert asks the distraught ex-bride-to be if she'll have him instead. Resolute as ever, Amy declares that she has no intention of 'Getting Married Today'. But she does ... to Paul.



Act II

Meanwhile, back at the surprise party, Robert and his good friends congratulate themselves on their good fortune in going through life 'Side By Side By Side'. But, as they fall into a good-natured hats-and-canes vaudeville routine, Robert realises that everyone has a dancing partner except him. 'What Would We Do Without You?' chorus his friends. "Just what you usually do", he replies. But they do worry so. As Robert beds April, his lady friends brood on her unsuitability. Poor Bobby, 'Poor Baby', they sigh. All they want is for him to find a nice girl. But April? She's tall enough to be your mother", pronounces Joanne. April and Robert, though, hear only the inexorable 'Tick-Tock' of their own perfect, practised countdown to take-off. "What a lovely, smooth body!" "He really likes me!" If only I could remember her name ... At 4.30 in the morning, the alarm goes. She has to fly to 'Barcelona'. Look, this isn't just a one night stand, he reassures June - er, April. Does she have to leave? Couldn't she stay? "Okay", says April. "Oh, God", says Robert.

Susan and Peter are back from Mexico, where they so enjoyed getting their divorce they're now living together. At a discotheque, while Larry wiggles on the floor, Joanne gets drunk and attracts the attention of a group of bitchy onlookers. She proposes a toast to them: here's to 'The Ladies Who Lunch' and their empty lives. She also propositions Robert, but what would be the point. He's seen all these marriages, and what do you get for it? But then he understands what his friends already know: part of 'Being Alive' is committing yourself to somebody. That's what it's really about, isn't it? The five crazy couples leave, Robert stands alone and begins again (Finale). With friends like these ...

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Act I

1. "Company" — Robert and Company
2. "The Little Things You Do Together" — Joanne and Couples
3. "Sorry-Grateful" — Harry, David and Larry
4. "You Could Drive a Person Crazy" — Kathy, April and Marta
5. "Have I Got a Girl for You" — Larry, Peter, Paul, David, Harry
6. "Someone Is Waiting" — Robert
7. "Another Hundred People" — Marta
8. "Getting Married Today" — Amy, Paul, Choorgirl, and Company
9. "Marry Me a Little" — Robert

Act II

10. "Side by Side by Side"/"What Would We Do without You?" — Robert and Couples
11. "Poor Baby" — Sarah, Jenny, Susan, Amy, Joanne
12. "Have I Got a Girl for You" (Reprise) - Larry, Peter, Paul, David, Harry
13. "Tick-Tock" — Kathy (Instrumental)
14. "Barcelona" — Robert and April
15. "The Ladies Who Lunch" — Joanne
16. "Being Alive" — Robert
17. "Finale Ultimo (Company)" — Robert and Company

CHARACTERS

- ROBERT - A middle-class male who's thirty-five years old, which is no age to be unmarried.
- SARAH - A married woman who's trying to lose weight and talks about food a lot. She has taken up karate, which is no substitute.
- HARRY - Sarah's husband, a struggling! teetotaler since his arrest for Driving While Intoxicated.
- SUSAN - A southern belle and a wonderful wife.

- PETER - Susan's ideal Ivy League husband.
- JENNY - Very middle-class, very conservative.
- DAVID - Very middle-class, very modish.
- AMY - A bride-to-be who's been living in sin and in analysis for years.
- PAUL - Amy's long-standing partner.
- JOANNE - A generous but sharp-tongued broad whose drunken scorn for others is matched only by her self-contempt.
- LARRY - Joanne's husband.
- APRIL - A girlfriend of Robert's, an air hostess from Shaker Heights who came to live in Radio City because she thought it was a city near New York, not actually in it.
- KATHY - A girlfriend of Robert's, a New Yorker who's skipping town to go and find rural contentment in Vermont.
- MARTA - A girlfriend of Robert's, a kook who hangs out on 14th Street and has a zillion theories.
- THE VOCAL MINORITY - In lieu of a chorus, a small group of useful singers.

ORCHESTRATION

- REED I - Piccolo, Flute, Alto Flute, Alto Sax, Clarinet, Eb Clarinet
- REED II - Piccolo, Flute, Alto Flute, Tenor Sax, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet
- REED III - Flute, Tenor Sax, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet
- REED IV - Oboe, Cor Anglais, Baritone Sax, Clarinet
- REED V - Baritone Sax, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet
- 2 HORNS
- 3 TRUMPETS (2nd db. FLUGELHORN)
- 2 TROMBONES
- 2 GUITARS (ELECTRIC/ACOUSTIC, BANJO,
- 2nd db. BASS GUITAR)
- 2 PERCUSSION
- KEYBOARD
- 4 FEMALE BACKING VOCALISTS
- 3 VIOLINS
- 2 CELLI
- BASS

DISCOGRAPHY

COLUMBIA OS 3550 Original Cast CBS 70108 Larry Kert (replacing Dean Jones) plus Original Cast
 FIRST NIGHT - CASTCD 57 - 1996 London Cast recording