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## The Braggart Soldier: An Archetypal Character Found In "Sunday In The Park With George"

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THE BRAGGART SOLDIER: AN ARCHETYPAL CHARACTER  
FOUND IN "SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE"

By

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B.M. James Madison University, 2002

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts  
in the Department of Theatre  
in the College of Arts and Humanities  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term  
2007

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## ABSTRACT

In preparation for performance, an actor must develop an understanding for the character they portray. A character must be thoroughly researched to adequately enrich the performance of the actor. In preparation for the role of the “Soldier” in the production, *Sunday in the Park with George*, it is important to examine the evolution of the “Braggart Soldier” archetypal character throughout the historical literary canon. It is also of equal importance to study an author’s canon of literature to acknowledge the reoccurring use of similar archetypal characters in order to successfully interpret the intentions of the author.

This thesis paper will be divided into four main sections. First, research of the evolution of the “Braggart Soldier” archetypal character from Greek Theater to Contemporary Theater will help to define the character type. Second, historical production research associated with the musical’s creation will also provide a deeper insight into the musical’s inception. *Sunday in the Park with George* was based on the painting *A Sunday on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. Furthermore, a specific focus will be placed on the painting’s creation, the background of the Soldier’s inclusion in the painting, the musical’s collaborative process, and critical responses of the original production. Third, research of four other Stephen Sondheim shows in which similar archetypal characters appear will demonstrate the author’s utilization of the character type. The characters referenced from Sondheim’s shows will be: Miles Gloriosus from *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*; Carl Magnus from *A Little Night Music*; The Princes from *Into the Woods*; and John Wilkes Booth from *Assassins*. By studying the scripts and scores of each of these shows, a pattern of character traits will be revealed to enlighten the actor’s preparation for the role of the “Soldier” in *Sunday in the Park with George*. Lastly, an

understanding of the musical's overall structure and themes helps to further define the characterization revealed from script and score analysis.

This thesis project will contribute to the pre-existing canon of musical theatre research but will also provide insight to non-musical actors who are researching similar archetypal characters. Musical theatre performers who are preparing for Stephen Sondheim shows can apply this research to help understand the role of this archetypal character in the context of each show.

To Earl Weaver for serving as committee chair

To Mark Brotherton, and Chris Niess for serving as thesis committee members

To John Bell for being my educational mentor throughout  
Undergraduate and Graduate school study

To the cast of *Sunday in the Park with George* at UCF

To my Graduate classmates:

Jo Leffner, Michael Swickard, Debbie Tedrick, and Courtney Winstead  
for being the most nurturing and supportive classmates/friends a student could wish for while  
earning a MFA in Musical Theatre

To close friend Lester Malizia for advice, chocolate, and support

To my wife, Brooke Gebb, and son, Greyson Gebb, for supporting and loving me  
even though I was not home as much as I would have liked to be

To my family for constantly encouraging me to pursue my love of theatre

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to prepare for the performance role of the Soldier in Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George*. By studying the "Braggart Soldier" archetypal character throughout the historical literary canon and its reoccurring use in other Sondheim musicals, the actor will more accurately portray the character. This thesis will also examine the background of the production's conception and apply this knowledge to preparation for the role of the Soldier through script and score analysis.

## CHAPTER TWO: A VIEW OF THE BRAGGART SOLDIER THROUGHOUT THE LITERARY CANON

When preparing for the role of the Soldier in *Sunday in the Park with George*, I realized this character embodied similar traits as many characters found throughout the literary canon. It is important to study the development of this archetypal character in order to understand the historical function associated with the character type. By gaining an understanding about where the character type was derived and how it has evolved will provide a deeper wealth of knowledge from which to base my performance. Studying the past provides a clearer picture for the present. Characters written in today's literature face many of the same situations encountered by their ancestors, except the emotional responses have evolved to display a more contemporary feel that represents the realism of today's theatre. The theater is a venue in which actors should reflect the current interpretation of past problems in order to resonate with its modern audience. The knowledge gained from the past will help future actors to interpret the present and effectively prepare for the Soldier found in *Sunday in the Park with George*.

The Braggart archetypal character first appeared in Greek drama and can be traced through history to the literature of today. A myriad of examples can be examined ad nauseam but, instead, a look at five plays from different literary periods will be used as supportive evidence. Plautus, Shakespeare, Moliere, Farquhar, and Shaw have each used similar boastful, arrogant, and lecherous characters who share like characteristics displayed by the Soldier in *Sunday in the Park with George*. The plays to be examined are *The Swaggering Soldier*, Plautus, *Taming of the Shrew*, William Shakespeare, *The Trickeries of Scapin*, Moliere, *The Recruiting Officer*, Farquhar and *Arms and the Man*, George Bernard Shaw. By reading these plays and

researching the history behind the similar character traits I will gain a greater depth from which to base my characterization.

*The Swaggering Soldier* by T. Maccius Plautus

Plautus, the Roman playwright, was heavily influenced by Greek drama. Plautus was known to take Greek plays and recycle the same plot and characters in his own “Romanized” interpretation. In fact, *The Swaggering Soldier* is acknowledged as a translation of the Greek play entitled *Alazon*. *Alazon* literally means “the braggart.” In Plautus’ play the character Pyrgopolynices represents one of the earliest examples of the braggart soldier archetypal character. This character works as the anti-hero in the play. This swaggering soldier is doomed to fall victim to the flaws of boastfulness, arrogance, and lechery. Pyrgopolynices is the character everyone loves to hate. They enjoy watching his demise unfold on stage.

Greek and Roman theatre is similar in nature. Roman playwrights took the issues and characters created by Greek drama and adapted them to fit the issues faced in Roman society.

T. Maccius Plautus (c. 254-184 B.C.) wrote comedies for the Roman stage, based on, and probably in part translated from, Greek comedies of the fourth and third centuries. His scenes and characters remain nominally Greek but reflect Roman manners and contemporary life and the influence of a popular taste for broad and lively rather than contemplative or romantic comedy (Watling, 6).

For this reason, I decided to focus on Plautus’ play *The Swaggering Soldier*. While researching, I discovered that other translations provided similar titles such as “The Braggart Warrior” and “The Braggart Soldier.” It is interesting to note that a simple translation of title exhibits an example of variation adaptation. These examples of variation represent how interpretations of drama likewise change to the surrounding society. In the Roman society, the swaggering soldier was a common part of a citizen’s every day life. These real life characters were present in

Plautus' society, and this play provides a comedic view. In addition, learning how a character type should function within a particular culture is important to its function within the play.

Character insight is gained by understanding these facts.

Typically the braggart soldier character's purpose in Greek and Roman drama is to act as an obstacle between the young man and his lover, a prostitute. This defines the soldier's purpose as a "blocking" figure. The next part of the Roman plot revolves around the scheming slave manipulating the soldier to earn his own freedom and that of the young ingénue. In the end, the soldier's arrogance is displayed as his Achilles heel. An actor should use this knowledge of the archetypal figure's tendencies to help clarify the character's action in a typical Roman play.

The play does not begin with Pyrgopolynices bragging about himself but with Artotrogus, the clever slave, feeding into the soldier's boastfulness. The slave speaks of the soldier's magnificence, but this verbiage is soon revealed to be flattery with self-seeking purpose. The slave's first aside discloses that he inflates the soldier's ego for the purpose of feeding his own stomach. This aside also confirms the first evidence that the soldier's previous boasting is false. Boastfulness is the first character flaw presented in the soldier. In fact, all of the soldier's character flaws are introduced in the first scene of the play.

Arrogance, the second character flaw, is exhibited by the soldier's ability to use Artotrogus's praise to bolster his own ego. At the end of the first scene the soldier leaves for the marketplace dressed in full warrior regalia followed by an entourage to superficially display his significance. In actuality, the soldier's business at the market place is that of King Seleucus. He believes his work is as important as the King's and, therefore, his arrogance is proven. This overbearing sense of self worth is evident throughout the play, but it is most present at the beginning of the play.

The soldier's third character flaw, lechery, is also introduced in the first scene. From first sight the audience sees that Pyrgopolynices is physically imposing and handsome. The character description found at the beginning of the play notes that Pyrgopolynices is "a handsome and conceited soldier" (Watling, 151). He is also told by Artotrogus:

Need I say, sir—since the whole world knows it—that the valor and triumphs of Pyrgopolynices are without equal on this earth, and so is his handsome appearance? The women are all at your feet, and no wonder; they can't resist your good looks; like those girls who were trying to get my attention yesterday. Oh, they pestered me with questions. "Is he Achilles?" "No, his brother," I said. And the other girls said, "I should think so, he's so good-looking and so charming; and hasn't he got lovely hair? I envy the girls who go to bed with him" (Watling, 155).

His love for women is evident by all who know him. The main conflict of the play is thus created because Pyrgopolynices swindles Philocomasium's mother to sell her as a concubine. As a result, Philocomasium's lover, Pleusicles, travels to the house next to Pyrgopolynices' to rendezvous with Philocomasium in secret. The resulting situation is the catalyst for all action within the play. In summation, Pyrgopolynices' lechery and need of women leads to his downfall.

The three fatal flaws of boastfulness, arrogance, and lechery lead to the public disgrace, destitution, and emasculation of Pyrgopolynices. These three flaws are the basis for the characterization of this archetypal figure. It is also important to understand how the figure functions within the society surrounding the play's history. The Roman audience would revel at observing the swaggering soldier's demise. These traits and tendencies should inform the actor of how the character type functions within the play.

### Taming of the Shrew by William Shakespeare

Plautus heavily influenced many Shakespeare's comedies. For example, "Shakespeare drew on the Roman comedy *Menaechmi* by Plautus for his plot" (Rubie, 235) in *The Comedy of Errors*. The minstrels and traveling players of the Elizabethan era recycled many of the standard reoccurring plots and characters used in Greek and Roman drama. In *Taming of the Shrew* we identify that the young lovers, Bianca and Lucentio, are blocked from marriage until Katherina, the older sister, is married. To secretly meet with his beloved, Lucentio submits his identity to his servant, Tranio. Tranio, the clever slave, cunningly works toward a solution for his master. Finally, the braggart soldier, Petruchio, arrives to save the day. He will tame the shrew, Katherina, and simultaneously collect a substantial dowry. This ending is a variation created by Shakespeare and is not the typical comedic ending for the braggart soldier. This play concludes with an increased swagger for Petruchio and raised tensions between the young lovers. Usually the braggart soldier archetypal figure becomes consumed in his folly and is left in a lonely destitution. Instead, Shakespeare alters the typical outcome for the braggart character on purpose.

The reason for the braggart character's lack of suffering is due to the author's comment upon a common topic of the day. The issue of how to settle marital disputes was a prominent topic during the Elizabethan era. Henry VIII chose to annul his marriage to Catherine because he could not wait for her to produce an heir to the throne. As a result, this annulment created a schism between England and the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, history makes a profound impact on most Shakespearian literature. For instance, Katherina's strong personality in *Taming of the Shrew* is probably a reflection upon the strong feminine English queens of the Elizabethan

era. Mary and Elizabeth ruled in a society where the common woman would not have thrived without a husband. Peter Rubie, points out that:

The plot was familiar to Elizabethan audiences, being drawn from popular ballads and folktales such as *A Merry Jest of a Shrewde Curste Wyfe* published in 1550. In the ballad the woman is thrashed to a bloody pulp and then wrapped in the salted skin of an old horse (Rubie, 248).

*Taming of the Shrew* provided the perfect venue for theatrical comment upon current issues of the day. To reiterate, a deeper understanding of why drama is written can be comprehended by studying the time period in which it was written.

Petruchio is a model character of the braggart soldier for many reasons. Even though his trade is not that of a soldier, I believe he is a warrior for love. The pairing of the two personalities, Katherina with Petruchio, provides fuel to feed his braggart personality. While Petruchio does not function as the typical braggart blocking figure, there is evidence to Plautine influence. First, *The Taming of the Shrew* is a farcical comedy just like the plays from which the braggart soldier was derived. The methods from which the two characters fight and struggle for power are absurd and extreme. Secondly, the archetypal relationships are still in tact. Two young lovers, Bianca and Lucentio, are blocked from love, and Petruchio holds the power to unite them. Lastly, Petruchio possesses the same three attributes described previously: boastfulness, arrogance, and lechery.

Boastfulness is immediately discovered in the character of Petruchio. While Gremio and Hortensio explain the shrewdness of Katherina to Petruchio, he instantly insists on his own courage. He boasts five consecutive times in one declamation to his bravery.

PETRUCHIO:

Think you a little din can daunt mine ears?  
Have I not in my time heard lions roar? (One)  
Have I not heard the sea puff'd up with winds

Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat?	(Two)
Have I not heard great ordnance in the field, And heaven's artillery thunder in the skies?	(Three)
Have I not in a pitched battle heard Loud 'larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets' clang?	(Four)
And do you tell me of a woman's tongue, That gives not half so great a blow to hear As will a chestnut in a farmer's fire?	(Five)
Tush, Tush ! fear boys with bugs (Shakespeare, 235).	

A man who needs to boast in such a manner is aptly titled a braggart.

Next, Petruchio was the perfect candidate to introduce to Katherina because of the second trait of the braggart soldier, arrogance. Only a man with complete arrogance would be impervious to the shrew. Katherina could not come close to removing a scale from Petruchio's arrogant exterior. Never mind her constant chides, she remained unsuccessful. In fact, as soon as Hortensio made mention of the challenge, Petruchio was ripe for the hunt that Katherina posed. Of course, the mention of her substantial dowry was an encouragement.

**PETRUCHIO:**

Signior Hortensio, 'twixt such friends as we  
Few words suffice; and therefore, if thou know  
One rich enough to be Petruchio's wife,  
As wealth is burden of my wooing dance,  
Be she as foul as was Florentius' love,  
As old as Sibyl and as curst and shrewd  
As Socrates' Xanthippe, or a worse,  
She moves me not, or not removes, at least,  
Affection's edge in me, were she as rough  
As are the swelling Adriatic seas:  
I come to wive it wealthily in Padua;  
If wealthily, then happily in Padua (Shakespeare, 234).

Petruchio's words reveal his arrogance and greed. Proving his own domineering superiority and greed were the primary reasons for Petruchio's decision to pursue Katherina.

Lechery is inferred within in the previous quote. Whether in boast or truth, a man so full of arrogance is bound to have had his fair share of sexual debauchery. Only changed by his

father's death is Petruchio in search of a wife. While lechery was not directly provided for in text, it is inferred through the previous quotes tone. Petruchio's "woowing dance" is worthy only if money is present. This leads the reader to believe Petruchio must be a powerful and attractive physical specimen just like the braggart soldier. Why else would Katherina's first sight of Petruchio provide her with the duality of such outward anger as well as submerged longing? This proof of his physical appeal provides potential for past sexual frolicking. If a man of his personality wants a woman, he takes what he wants in the same manner as he treats Katherina.

Petruchio is a clear example of the braggart soldier archetypal character in the Shakespearian repertoire. The character is farcical in nature and also possesses the three qualities of boastfulness, arrogance, and lechery. Lechery was not as present in this story's plot due to subject matter. Therefore, the subject matter containing lechery is not as prevalent. This is due to the fact that Petruchio did not play the part of the blocking figure but, instead, was the enabler of the young couple's marriage.

#### *The Scams of Scapin* by Moliere

Moliere utilized the studies of his childhood in *commedia dell'arte* to further evolve archetypal characterization when he wrote *The Scams of Scapin*. Unlike other authors who duplicated *commedia* throughout history, Moliere used the genre to create a fresh interpretation that signified his style and beliefs. He took the stock characters of *commedia dell'arte* and combined their character traits into a more complex characterization. Moliere's audience demanded a more intricate character to reflect the growing complexity of the society.

At the age of fourteen, Moliere, also known as Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, was sent to study at the college of Clermont. He began study of Greek, Roman and *commedia dell'arte* and excelled in literature and theatre. Clermont provided a strong background in *commedia dell'arte*. *Commedia* developed in Italy during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. This genre was characterized by the use of actors who portrayed stock characters and improvised a standard plot line. *Commedia* did not rely upon a formal dramatist and the performance was an improvisation from a loosely established plot. One of Moliere's contributions was to reinsert the dramatist while keeping the spontaneous feel that past *commedia* had possessed. While Moliere respected Aristotle's comedic theories, he pushed to create new boundaries. "Turning to Aristotle to check whether or not one is right to enjoy a play is like consulting a cookery-book to find out if the sauce one has just tasted is as delicious as it seemed" (Calder, 3). The character Scapin possesses a dual reality within the characterizations of two *commedia dell'arte* stock characters.

There are many stock characters that comprise the literary cannon of *commedia dell'arte*, but, for brevity purposes, I will focus on Il Capitano (Scaramouche) and Zanni (Coviello or Arlechino).



Figure 1: *Scapino and Cap. Zerbino*

Callot, Jacques. *Scapino and Cap. Zerbino*. 1622. National Gallery of Canada. 09 April 2007

[http://gallery.ca/cybermuseum/search/artwork\\_e.jsp?mkey=48087](http://gallery.ca/cybermuseum/search/artwork_e.jsp?mkey=48087).



**Figure 2: Scaramucia and Fricasso**  
Callot, Jacques. *Scaramucia and Fricasso*. 1622. National Gallery of Canada. 09 April 2007  
<[http://gallery.ca/cybermuse/search/artwork\\_e.jsp?mkey=48086](http://gallery.ca/cybermuse/search/artwork_e.jsp?mkey=48086)>.

Scapin in *The Scams of Scapin* embodies the character traits and functions of both of these figures. Il Capitano, Scaramouche, represent the archetypal character traits of the Braggart Soldier. Il Capitano is the self-proclaimed title appointed by the character that is or once was a soldier who claims the successes of others. He tries to convince those around him that he is strong and brave but is later revealed as a coward. This character possesses the three characteristics of boastfulness, arrogance, and lechery. Secondly, Scapin also functions as Zanni, or later exemplified as Coviello. This character represents the archetypal character of the clever slave, who Plautus named in his play *Pseudolus*. Moliere incorporates characteristics and

function from both archetypal characters when he wrote the character of Scapin. I believe that Scapin is more Il Capitano than Zanni. Another scholar who shares this belief is Rafael Sabatini.

Then here we have Scaramouche, whom also you already know. Sometimes he is Scapin and sometimes Coviello, but in the main Scaramouche, to which let me tell you he is best suited - sometimes too well suited, I think. For he is Scaramouche not only on the stage, but also in the world. He has a gift of sly intrigue, an art of setting folk by the ears, combined with an impudent aggressiveness upon occasion when he considers himself safe from reprisals. He is Scaramouche, the little skirmisher, to the very life. I could say more. But I am by disposition charitable and loving to all mankind (Sabatini, 104-105).

The story involves two pairs of young lovers who are being blocked in marriage by their fathers. The fathers, Argante and Gerante, are outraged because of their son's proposal without asking for permission or blessing. Scapin then suggests that he provide a solution without plan. His arrogance is immediately shown. As the story progresses, Scapin digs a deeper hole from which he has to climb out. At the end of the play, all is resolved when the conspiring fathers discover their future daughter-in-laws are each other's daughters. Scapin is left to pay for his exposed deceptions. In the play's final scene, Scapin is absolved when he tricks the fathers to believe that he is dying. It is interesting to point out that Scapin does not try to earn his freedom at the end of the play. Plautus' clever slave would have tried to gain freedom, but Scapin did not. This is more proof supporting the fact that Scapin is closer to the braggart than the clever slave.

Upon meeting Scapin in the first scene a sense of his boastful character is immediately revealed. There is no limit to his bravado.

**SCAPIN:**

Well now, practically nothing is impossible when you know what you're about. And I do. Call it genius if you like. But when it comes to what vulgar people look on as lies, intrigues, dirty tricks, swindles, and similar honorable pursuits, I can say without bragging that I am the craftiest craftsman in the world. And the most famous. But not enough people

appreciate those skills nowadays, and I gave them up after a particular experience (Moliere, 5).

He brags to be the craftiest in the world. He even goes as far to say that he was infamous even in his youth. “When I was a tot, no taller than that, I was famous for hundreds of little gags and pranks” (Moliere, 8). Scapin does not turn down the chance to brag just like the swaggering soldier archetypal character.

Where braggadocio resides, arrogance is not long to follow. Scapin provides evidence of arrogance soon after his boastful statements. In the character description by Moliere, Scapin holds the title of “valet” (Moliere, 2) or more appropriately, man-slave to his young master Leandre. It is very arrogant of Scapin to expect equality of treatment, but he boldly opionates his treatment from a past encounter with the law. “Yes. Didn’t treat me at all fairly. I said to myself, “This is an ungrateful century. I won’t do another thing for it”” (Moliere, 5). Similar examples of his arrogance fill the play. Scapin even daringly belittles the two young masters and strikes Geronte, Scapin’s master. In one of the more funny scenes, Scapin tells Geronte to hide in a bag. He then alters his voice to represent various thugs who are looking for his master. It is not until the third time and after the third beating that Geronte discovers Scapin’s deception.

Lastly, because Scapin does not participate in any relationships within the script, he has little opportunity to display lecherous characteristics. The text provides little proof of sexual interactions with other characters due to Scapin’s function with in the play. This is the result of combining the two character types. Instead, he does display a keen interest in the beauty of the young women within the play. When Octave first describes how he fell in love with Hyacinte, Scapin replies in lecherous tones.

OCTAVE:

In her plight, somebody else would have made a ridiculous impression, because all she had on was a mischievous little skirt with a simple cotton pajama top, and a yellow band that let her hair fall below her shoulders. But she looked so gorgeous, so fascinating, so ravishing that if I went into each wonderful particular—

SCAPIN:

No need to. I can guess what's coming.

OCTAVE:

Scapin, if you'd only seen her, you'd have been bowled over.

SCAPIN:

I'm bowled over without seeing her (Moliere, 7).

To further support Scapin's lechery, he takes an aside to the audience to convey his impressions after meeting Hyacinthe. "She's no fool. And quite a beauty" (Moliere, 7). Another informative comment is found when Silvestre and Scapin are sent to deliver a message to Hyacinthe and Zerbinette.

SILVESTRE:

Our masters told us it'll be better for you, Zerbinette, if you stay here with Hyacinthe.

HYACINTE:

I'm only too pleased to have your company, Zerbinette, and I'll make it as easy as I can for us to become friends, like our sweethearts.

ZERBINETTE:

So will I. I never resist an offer of friendship.

SCAPIN:

How about an offer of love?

ZERBINETTE:

Love? Not the same. It's a little riskier. I don't give it away so readily.

SCAPIN:

I can see that. But what my master has just sacrificed on your behalf deserves an equal sacrifice from you (Moliere, 40).

The use of these three comments cause Scapin to appear to have a lecherous side not as frequently acknowledged in the script. Taken directly from the play's script, Scapin never misses a chance to comment upon the appearance of a woman. These comments allude to the possible active and sexually deviant life led by Scapin.

Scapin shares the three character traits found in Plautus' swaggering soldier. The only deviation from the braggart figure is found in the character's function. Scapin primarily functions in the role of the clever slave and provides the solution to the young lover's problem. In opposition, he does not try to gain his freedom at the end of the play. For this reason he deviates from typical clever slave plot function. Scapin is a complex character who plays the dual function of both the braggart soldier and the clever slave within *The Scams of Scapin*. Due to the character's vast reactions to the different situations encountered within the play, I find him to be both Il Capitano and the Zanni.

#### *The Recruiting Officer* by George Farquhar

George Farquhar modeled *The Recruiting Officer* after a personal experience. Farquhar wrote the play while he was a recruiting officer in Shrewsbury. This is why scholar Eric Rothstein describes the play as a comic documentary (Jeffares, 7). The play possesses a sense of true realism that is palpable when being read. As a matter of fact, there is an actual account by E. Blakeway of who each character was based upon. Every character but one is modeled after a real life model. The character without model is Captain Brazen. E. Blakeway wrote this note to Bishop Percy on July 4, 1765.

Justice Balance is Mr. Berkley than Deputy Recorder of the town—One of the other Justices, Mr. Hill, an inhabitant of Shrewsbury—Mr. Worthy is Mr. Owen of Rusason on the borders of Shropshire—Capt. Plume is Farquhar himself—

Brazen unknown—Melinda is Miss (Dorothy) Hanage of Belsadine near the Wrekin—Sylvia, Miss (Laconia) Berkley Daughter of the Recorder above mentioned, The story I suppose the Poets invention (Jeffares, 2).

Without knowledge of this fact, it is easy to believe that *The Recruiting Officer* was constructed from fictional archetypal characters represented in society. The fictitious Captain Brazen fits effortlessly into the realistic collection of characters. Since Captain Brazen is not based upon an authentic person, this character was written to represent the braggart soldier archetypal figure that commonly occurs in society.

To understand how Captain Brazen fits into the play, it is important to understand the intricacies associated with the play. *The Recruiting Officer* possesses many issues that make it unique to the literary canon. The play was written at the end of the English Restoration period and leads dramatic literature into a new era. The play addresses topics not usually commented upon by other dramatists of his time. For example, how the play's society accepts the sexual promiscuity of the recruiting officers. Blatant sexual promiscuity was not approved of by society. This acceptance of loosened morals created controversy and produced much critical response. Initially, I did not question the promiscuity because similar incidence was common to the braggart soldier figure, but, as the play progresses, Farquhar's dramatic comment becomes more blatant and bawdy. One of the main statements inferred from reading *The Recruiting Officer* is that society forgives military men when the common man would have been chastised.

Next, the play also contains many factual discrepancies. One example is found in Sylvia's introduction to Captain Plume. First, she introduces herself as Jack Wilful but later calls herself Captain Pinch without any question from Plume. I found the play difficult to read due to its many spelling and grammatical errors. In later quotes you will experience how the play was left in a sloppy state before being published. The most annoying mistakes were that of incorrect

capitalization. As a result, the play seems unfinished. Why is the play not discredited more? Three reasons keep the play from being discredited: the story's construction was innovative, later corrected publications resolve grammatical issues, and literary historians forgave the discrepancies due to the play's place within the literary canon.

The genesis of the Captain Brazen character is important because the audience must be distracted from Captain Plume's haughtiness. The audience must invest and care about the success of the central relationship between Silvia and Plume. As a result, Brazen must become a more detestable figure to lure the audience's judgment from Plume. For these reasons, it was easy to find the character flaws of boastfulness, arrogance, and lechery.

The story's plot does not revolve around the Captain Brazen figure, so the number of textual references to these three traits is fewer than in the previous plays discussed. Although the character might not be in as many scenes, the character is pivotal to the play. Brazen is a part of the love triangle between Worthy, Melinda and himself. Once again, the braggart soldier figure is used as the blocking figure between two lovers. The only archetypal difference is that he does not end up impoverished at the end of the play. Brazen does lose the girl but becomes the beneficiary of all of Plume's recruiting efforts. While he has lost the woman, who he knows is easy to replace, he has gained the prestige of completing his job.

Boastfulness is easily proved from the text. The first description of the character is derived from his name, Brazen. The definition of brazen is "marked by insolence and bold disrespect" (Merriam-Webster, 139). The next indication is introduced by the description of the character, Worthy, "But I engage he knows you, and every Body at first sight; his Impudence were a Prodigy, were not his Ignorance proportionable;" (Farquhar, 56). The word impudence

describes the character's proclivity towards boastfulness. The last proof of boastfulness is a quote from the character.

BRAZEN:

I have reason to remember the time, for I had two and twenty Horses kill'd under me that Day.

WORTHY:

Then, Sir, you rid mighty hard.

BALLANCE:

Or perhaps, Sir like my Countryman, you rid upon half a dozen Horses at once.

BRAZEN:

What d'e mean, Gentlemen, I tell you they were kill'd; all torn to pieces by Cannon-shot, except six that I stak'd to Death upon the Enemies *Chevaux de Frise* (Farquhar, 58).

This statement sounds completely contrived. Even Ballance and Worthy doubt its authenticity. How could one man have two and twenty horses killed from underneath him and still be alive? How could a man survive on a horse that was shot to pieces by a cannon? Due to the absurdity of Brazen's fabricated statement his boastfulness is substantiated as fabrication.

Captain Brazen's actions bare witness to his arrogance throughout the play. This is seen primarily in the love triangle between Worthy, Melinda, and himself. Brazen never makes a show of jealousy. He is so arrogant and secure, he knows Worthy is no match for his masculinity. In Act III, Scene II and Act IV, Scene I, Brazen plunges in while Melinda and Worthy are together and steals her attention. Another act of his arrogance is revealed when he believes Melinda is to marry him. He receives a letter by courier informing him of a plan to be married in the country. He arrogantly flaunts his soon acquisition of twenty thousand pounds to Captain Plume. "You can't imagine, my Dear, that I want twenty thousand Pound; I have spent twenty times as much in the Service—Now, my Dear, Pray advise me, my Head runs much upon

Architecture; shall I build a Privateer or a Play-house” (Farquhar, 93)? Only a truly arrogant and boastful man would plan to spend money before it is acquired.

Finally, lechery is the most easily proven flaw of Captain Brazen’s personality. In Worthy’s first description of Brazen, we also discover his reputation as a womanizer. “He has the most universal Acquaintance of any Man living, for he won’t be alone, and no body will keep him Company twice; then he’s a Caesar among the Women, *Veni, Vidi, Vice*, that’s all. If he has but talked with the Maid, he swears he has lain with the Mistress” (Farquhar, 56). More proof of his lecherous ways comes directly from Melinda, his lover. “Oh! Here comes another Captain, and a Rogue that has the Confidence to make Love to me; but indeed I don’t wonder at that when he has the Assurance to fancy himself a fine Gentleman” (Farquhar, 61). Brazen does not stop with Melinda. He also chooses to fornicate with Lucy, Melinda’s maid. To complicate the plot more, Lucy is smitten.

In Act V, Scene V, it is unveiled that Lucy sends a note to Brazen, with Melinda’s signature, to trick him to marry her. This rendezvous almost ends in a duel to the death between Worthy and Brazen. Only when Lucy reveals herself from behind a mask is the duel stopped. It is important to note that the duel was initiated by Worthy. Brazen did not want to fight over Melinda. Brazen only accepts the duel as a challenge to his masculinity. Once the two men discover that it is Lucy, the animosity is ceased at once, and Brazen quickly moves on. This play speaks to the depths at which lechery affects maidens.

Brazen is the perfect example of the braggart soldier archetypal character. This character’s presence in the play is the only character not to be modeled after Farquhar’s recruiting experience in Shrewsbury. Brazen possesses the three flaws of boastfulness,

arrogance, and lechery. He is the consummate lifelong, professional soldier who, like his literary predecessors, acts as the blocking figure between two characters in love.

### *Arms and the Man* by George Bernard Shaw

The key to understanding why a play is written is found by studying the circumstances surrounding the play's inspiration. As examined in the earlier section on Shakespeare, Shaw, too, lets society reflect within his plays. *Arms and the Man* was written in 1894, after the Serbo-Bulgarian War. The war was fresh on the minds of the European public. In *Arms and the Man*, George Bernard Shaw uses comedy to comment upon war and the professional fighting man. Since Shaw was a known socialist, a member of the Social Democratic Federation, the war provided excellent opportunity for him to express his beliefs about the Serbo-Bulgarian war and war in general. *Arms and the Man* comments upon the idiocy associated with the men who captained the Serbo-Bulgarian war. The term captained was used because the highest-ranking officer of the conflict was only a Captain.

Major Sergius Saranoff is the final example chosen to represent the braggart soldier archetypal character within this study of the literary canon. He, too, possesses many of the archetypal character functions within the play's dynamic structure. For example, Saranoff is the blocking figure between the love triangle containing Raina, Captain Bluntschli, and himself. He also falls victim to poor decision-making and, as a result, marries below his station when he chooses Louka over Raina. This action represents a comment upon society by George Bernard Shaw. Marrying beneath your station was highly abnormal due to the customs in Bulgaria at the time the play was written. Marriages between propionate families were still arranged. This point shows how Shaw changes the typical archetypal figure to comment upon society. Though

this is one exception, the other three main flaws are still present in the archetypal figure's character.

The first braggart soldier flaw is that of boastfulness. When we first meet Saranoff, he has returned home victoriously from the war. He is conceited and pompous and is ready to tell anyone who might listen. When asked how he won the war he replies with this statement.

SERGIUS:

I won the battle the wrong way when our worthy Russian generals were losing it the right way. In short, I upset their plans, and wounded their self-esteem. Two Cossack colonels had their regiments routed on the most correct principles of scientific warfare. Two major-generals got killed strictly according to military etiquette. The two colonels are now major-generals; and I am still a simple major (Shaw, 33).

This statement begins sounding modest, but it becomes extremely egotistical by the end. In fact, Saranoff does not know why he has not earned a promotion after defeating so many higher-ranking officers. Saranoff's boastful nature immediately surfaces. He later dubs himself "the hero of Slivnitza" (Shaw, 38). Later, Nicola explains to Louka how Saranoff gives him a substantial amount of money with little reason. "See! a twenty leva bill! Sergius gave me that, out of pure swagger. A fool and his money are soon parted" (Shaw, 60). These three examples speak of Saranoff's boastfulness.

The second flaw, arrogance, is also present in Saranoff's personality. Before Saranoff's first entrance, Captain Bluntschli makes fun of the arrogant major who leads a cavalry charge directly into a machine gun's line of fire. The arrogant major turns out to be Saranoff himself. Bluntschli then explains that if the machine gun would have fired not a man or horse would have survived. Arrogance is apparent in the fact that Saranoff is aware he should have been killed but will not admit his ignorance to Raina later in the play. Another proof of Saranoff's arrogance is found in his inability to say he is sorry. Twice Saranoff mentions, "I am never sorry" (Shaw, 63)

and “I never apologize” (Shaw, 67). Only when Saranoff’s arrogance is shattered at the end of the play does he apologize. He is forced to apologize in order to keep Louka from also abandoning him. Saranoff’s last show of arrogance is highlighted when he discovers Raina and Bluntschli are lovers. He vows to kill the Swiss, even though Bluntschli is far better than he at the skills of war. Saranoff’s arrogance blinds him to the fact that Bluntschli will easily defeat him in combat. These three examples aptly support the arrogance of Major Sergius Saranoff.

Lechery is the most blatant of Saranoff’s flaws. His lechery is primarily represented through his interactions with Louka. At the beginning of the play, the audience knows that Saranoff is betrothed to Raina. As the play progresses, there are two major incidents when Saranoff flirtatiously and sexually approaches Louka. From these occurrences we discover Saranoff’s propensity to lecherous behavior. The first occurrence takes place in Act II. Raina and the rest of the family have gone into the house, and Louka and Saranoff are left alone outside. This is how Shaw describes the scene.

RAINA:

I trust you. I love you. You will never disappoint me, Serfius. (*Louka is heard singing within the house. They quickly release each other.*) I can’t pretend to talk indifferently before her: my heart is too full. (*Louka comes from the house with her tray. She goes to the table, and begins to clear it, with her back turned to them.*) I will get my hat: and then we can go out until lunch time. Wouldn’t you like that?

SERGIUS:

Be quick. If you are away five minutes, it will seem five hours. (*Raina runs to the top of the steps, and turns there to exchange looks with him and wave him a kiss with both hands. He looks after her with emotion for a moment; then turns slowly away, his face radiant with the loftiest exaltation. The movement shifts his field of vision, into the corner of which there now comes the tail of Louka’s double apron. His attention is arrested at once. He takes a stealthy look at her and begins to twirl his moustache mischievously, with his left hand akimbo on his hip. Finally, striking the ground with his heel in a something of a cavalry swagger, he*

*strolls over to the other side of the table, opposite her, and says) Louka: do you know what the higher love is (Shaw, 38)?*

Then he pulls Louka close to him.

SERGIUS:

I am surprised at myself, Louka. What would Serfius, the hero of Slivnitza, say if he saw me now? What would Sergius, the apostle of the higher love say if he saw me now? What would the half dozen Sergiuses who keep popping in and out of his handsome figure of mine say if they caught us here? (*Letting go her hand and slipping his arm dexterously round her waist*) Do you consider my figure handsome, Louka (Shaw, 39)?

This first encounter is the beginning of Saranoff's lechery with Louka. In Act III this encounter is discussed between Raina and Saranoff. Saranoff refuses to admit to the affair until Raina blatantly tells him she had seen them through the window arm in arm. Saranoff's only response is, "Raina: our romance is shattered. Life's a farce" (Shaw, 68). Saranoff's lechery leads to the downfall of the major. As a result, he chooses to marry beneath his class to Louka. While the outcome of Saranoff's decision is not discussed in the play, it is inferred that the relationship between Saranoff and Louka would not end well either. Louka is trying to climb the social ladder while Saranoff's lechery causes him to fall. *Arms in the Man* is a play about the socialistic principles created within the society of the play.

## CHAPTER THREE: PRODUCTION RESEARCH, *SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE*

To grasp a clear understanding of the Soldier in *Sunday in the Park with George*, it is important to research the production and the historical background behind the character presented in the story. In this section, I will focus on four main points: the musical's subject matter; George Seurat's *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*; how the soldier was represented in the painting and the historical background of a typical soldier during the time of the painting's creation; the collaborative creation process in regards to Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine; and the critical responses to the original and most current revival productions. An understanding of this information is important to help discern what the composer and librettist were trying to accomplish with the character. This is particularly important due to the minor size of the role. The role of the soldier demands a complex characterization but allows the actor little stage time from which to develop growth provided by the text. An actor's characterization must be finely tuned in order to create character credibility. For this reason, it is important that an actor utilize every piece of production and historical research available.

### The Painting and the Painter

Few observers of *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* recognize the immensity of the painting's actual size because they view the painting from second- and third-hand reproductions. Unless witnessed first-hand the painting is not as impressionable as it is in person. The painting itself is approximately 81 by 121 inches or approximately 7 by 10 feet. It has been housed at the Art Institute of Chicago since 1926. Surprisingly, few of George Seurat's contemporaries cared to understand the genius behind what he was trying to accomplish. They

did not appreciate how this painting turned many small brush strokes into a study of color and balance. Seurat's goal was to create a unique form by utilizing many different colors to produce the appearance of a single color. He used his knowledge and study of color and brush stroke to create a new method of painting. The methods of color manipulation Seurat used were revolutionary in his own time. Seurat was not appreciated until after his death in 1891. His importance in the history of the visual arts evolution was finally recognized in the early twentieth century.



**Figure 3: A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte**  
Seurat, George. *A Sunday on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. 1886. Chicago Art Institute, Illinois. 09 April 2007

[http://dbeveridge.web.wesleyan.edu/wescourses/2001f/chem160/01/Photo\\_Gallery\\_Humanities/seurat2/images/A%20Sunday%20Afternoon%20on%20the%20Island%20of%20La%20Grande%20Jatte.jpg](http://dbeveridge.web.wesleyan.edu/wescourses/2001f/chem160/01/Photo_Gallery_Humanities/seurat2/images/A%20Sunday%20Afternoon%20on%20the%20Island%20of%20La%20Grande%20Jatte.jpg).

The impressionist period preceded Seurat. The artists of this time focused on creating the mood of common, everyday events. Characteristics of this period were the use of deliberate brush strokes, lighter colors, changing qualities of light, new angles, and a more accessible

subject matter. Seurat bridged the advancements of this period and made it his own. For this reason, George Seurat was the most important innovator of the post-impressionist period. He introduced the style of pointillism. “Pointillism is the theory or practice in art of applying small strokes or dots of color to a surface so that from a distance they blend together” (Merriam-Webster, 899).

George Seurat never sold a painting during his lifetime. Like other similar revolutionists in the visual artistic fields, his work was constantly under-appreciated and misunderstood. In the show, *Sunday in the Park with George*, one of his contemporaries states that his art had “no life” (Sondheim, 586). This statement was inspired by the actual opinions of many of Seurat’s contemporaries. They could not comprehend what Seurat was trying to accomplish in his work. They were looking for the individuality and expression of his painting’s inhabitants. Seurat was not focusing on individuality but was instead recording an overall social observation of a specific location using a new painting technique later described as pointillism.

There is no question the subjects from George Seurat’s *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* were the working class of 1880’s France. Seurat preserves this society in his painting. La Grande Jatte was located by the Seine in Paris. Soon after Seurat’s documentation of this moment in time, the island was lost to the industrial revolution. The simplicity and beauty of the island and society was corrupted. Today, La Grande Jatte is once again the location of parks and subdivisions, but it will never return to what it was when Seurat viewed it. Seurat’s painting acts as a snapshot in time. From the period, 1884 through 1886, La Grande Jatte was a bucolic park for the working class of Paris. Seurat returned to the park on many occasions to practice and document the inhabitants of the park using sketches and oil renderings; “*Grande Jatte* is primarily a work of direct social observation” (Russell, 142). In essence, A

*Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* summarizes Seurat's work for two years.

Seurat was perfecting his methods that were later described as pointillism.

Historians know that Seurat's painting did not take place during a single moment. This is why Seurat's painting is so captivating. In his painting, Seurat creates a fictional moment on La Grande Jatte. What did he mean to convey? The inhabitants of Seurat's *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* are social stereotypes of that time. The goal for the painting was to represent the relationships between the working class of Paris. This is supported by the single fact that no subject in the painting makes direct eye contact with another but all seem to be either relaxing in meditation or staring at the water. Each of the representations of the varying working classes presents a different purpose of their presence.

In regards to the character of the Soldier in *Sunday in the Park with George*, Seurat creates a stereotype of two soldiers, which reflect their societal involvement during the period of the paintings creation. The two soldiers appear to be watching over the inhabitants of the island. They are two stentorian figures standing at attention protectively watching over the captured moment. Even though the purpose for their visit to La Grande Jatte is leisure, they cannot ignore their training to protect.

#### Background on the French Soldier

George Seurat collected many sketches of the citizens who frequented La Grande Jatte and compiled them into one painting. These sketches were collected over the two years that Seurat worked perfecting his masterpiece. In 1884, Seurat painted *Cadet from Saint-Cyr* as a study for *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. *Cadet from Saint-Cyr* provides

useful for an actor portraying the Soldier in *Sunday in the Park with George*. The information is directly related to the rank of the soldier and the soldier's purpose in the park.



**Figure 4:** *Cadet from Saint-Cyr*  
Seurat, George. *Cadet from Saint-Cyr*. 1884. Chicago Art Institute, Illinois. 09 April 2007  
<<http://www.robtaonthearts.com/seurat08150418.jpeg>>.

Founded by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, Saint-Cyr was a military training academy located near the western suburbs of Paris. Currently Saint-Cyr no longer resides in Paris but, instead, in Brittany, France. Since Saint-Cyr is near to La Grande Jatte, it would be a common occurrence to find military men strolling through the park on their day off. An oddity is acknowledged by recognition that the soldier is in full uniform and standing at full attention. This peculiarity hints at the fact that the soldier might have been posing for Seurat.

Equally likely, the artist may have relied on his memory for such a simple figure. He may never have seen the island as empty as here, so placing the soldier is one of many arbitrary trials of scale, pose, location, and color in a painting primarily dedicated to studying the colors he would use (Herbert, 76).

There is no concrete proof behind the painting's muse, but the painting's title suggests the soldier wore a uniform that resembled that of a Saint-Cyr's Cadet. Also, it is interesting to acknowledge that the soldier stands in approximately the same position as in Seurat's later finished *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. This is evidence that Seurat was already beginning to balance the arrangement of the characters in his future painting.



**Figure 5: École Spéciale Militaire de Saint-Cyr**  
Monniaux, David. *École spéciale militaire de Saint-Cyr, cadets parading on the Champs-Élysées*. 8 May 2005 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:ESM\\_St\\_Cyr\\_cadets\\_DSC03272.JPG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:ESM_St_Cyr_cadets_DSC03272.JPG)>.

In Seurat's final masterpiece, he added an additional soldier instead of the one lone figure in his earlier *Cadet from Saint-Cyr*. The most interesting part of the addition of the second soldier is revealed by the companion soldier's differing uniform. Unless specific attention is placed upon the two soldiers, most observers would not acknowledge a difference in the two uniforms. In fact, further research reveals that the two soldiers served in different areas of the French army. There are many speculations to explain the differing uniforms, but this is the closest account in current research.

According to the researches of Joseph Berton (in communication with author), neither is a cadet from Saint-Cyr. The man of the left (and here in this panel)

wears the uniform of the French Infantry of the Line, “with a double-breasted dark blue frock with red epaulettes, a black belt, and red trousers. He wears the infantry shako with a red pompom.” The other soldier, a cuirassier from a mounted unit, “wears a single-breasted, dark blue tunic with red epaulettes and a black belt. His helmet is silver and gilt metal with a red pompom and red side-plume. He wears red trousers and black boots. He would not be wearing his cuirass for a walk in the park.” ...Seurat had a month’s military duty at Laon in late summer 1885, with the Forty-Fifth Regiment. The renewed contact with the military may have inspired him to add a second soldier to the composition. Once he conceived the idea of two figures, he differentiated them, as his wont (Herbert, 95).

Did Seurat not know that his original painting sketch was incorrectly titled? This is not likely since Seurat possessed some military background. Why did he originally entitle the soldier in his sketch a Cadet? Ultimately, this information is not known for sure; the previous quote suggests that Seurat did not know that the soldier was not a Cadet until after his stint in the military in the summer of 1885. No research admits to giving the wrong title to the soldier, but he did not think it important enough to go back and change the title of his work, *Cadet from Saint-Cyr*. More importantly, he used the differentiation of the two soldiers’ to represent the acceptance of cultural diversity even between the ranks of two soldiers. Seurat differentiated each person in this painting to provide a diverse outlook upon his or her purpose for visiting La Grande Jatte. This is one of the many reasons why the painting is so appealing. The characters provide a cornucopia of stories to get lost in. The fact that these two soldiers come from different areas of the French army provides much interesting intellectual fodder.

Below is a costume rendering from the original 1984 production of *Sunday in the Park with George*. It is interesting to point out that the costume designers, Patricia Zipprodt and Ann Hould-Ward, did not differentiate between the two soldiers. It is also not known if they did not recognize the difference in the two soldiers or why they did not represent the subtleties of Seurat’s painting. Due to the importance of the secondary character, this point did not

dramatically affect the play's plot. The differentiation between the two soldiers is nothing more than an interesting side-note.



**Figure 6: Original Production Costume Sketch**  
Hould-Ward, Ann. *Soldiers*, 1984. Four by Sondheim. New York: Applause, 2000: 720.

### The Collaborative Process

The collaborative process of American Musical Theatre has a quality that is uniquely linked to the genre's birth. American Musical Theatre today is structured to provide an equal emphasis on both writing and music. This was not always the case. The genre has matured into the integrated story extravaganza that exists on Broadway today. For this to occur, the collaborative process has had to evolve in response to the demands of its audience. An equality of collaboration was developed from necessity of specialization rather than the domination of one collaborator over another. In European opera and operetta, the composer was typically the most important figure. There was little importance placed upon the librettist and, thus the story was of secondary importance. American Musical Theatre is unique because more importance is placed upon the integration of the book, libretto and music. The twentieth century audience progressively demands more theatrical realism. As a result, the story and music must be more effectively integrated. Thus, more importance should be placed upon the collaborative process. "Not just one author, but a whole team works on a musical in order to fulfill these requirements. The American Musical is a collaborative and a commercial genre" (Banfield, 61).

Musical theatre is an art form native to America. Thus, this genre was not affected by the same stimuli as European opera and operetta. European aristocracy had a significant effect on the dramatic literary canon. The aristocracy sponsored early European theatre and music as their private entertainment. This meant that subject matter of early drama and music was crafted to the wishes of its patrons and not the general public. It was not until public theatre became more prevalent that authors and composers began writing more commercially. American Musical Theatre has been more commercially driven. Neither large governing bodies nor any other major body of wealth has primarily funded the art form. The musical theatre art form has always had

to prove it could make money. In other words, it could not function on a strictly artistic basis. In its earliest stages, during Minstrelsy, small public gatherings provided the profits. As audiences grew, the art form had to pander to less controversial topics and, thus, the Vaudeville revue evolved. American Musical Theatre has been a strictly commercial art form that has had to satisfy everyone.

However, musical theatre as a strictly commercial vehicle is not entirely true. Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine were the two leading collaborators for *Sunday in the Park with George*. Between these two individuals they account for the composer, lyricist, author, and director of the show. These two multitasking individuals did the job that is usually occupied by four different people. In fact, *Sunday in the Park with George* marks the first of three collaborative efforts between these two individuals. Studying these two men's life with an emphasis on how their successful collaboration began provides valuable knowledge about how *Sunday in the Park with George* was created. This musical marked one of Sondheim's most successful collaborations. Of course, Sondheim learned from one-half of the most recognized collaborative team in musical theatre history, Oscar Hammerstein II. In fact, Sondheim has had the pleasure of working with the who's who of the music theatre world. For this reason, Sondheim values the collaborative process and realizes it is a skill that must be learned and nurtured.

Sondheim provides an exception to the rule of musical theatre as a commercial vehicle. He does not write for commercial success but for personal fulfillment. In fact, very few of his shows have been major box office successes and for this reason he has been criticized. None of his shows have had a Broadway run of over a thousand performances. Although Sondheim has had little commercial success, there is something to be said for Sondheim's desire to write

artistically. He is one of the few people to be the recipient of an Academy award, multiple Grammy awards, the Pulitzer Prize, and nine Tony awards. Artistic value must be present in order to create something fresh and new. *Sunday in the Park with George* is one of the most innovative musicals ever written. Its message speaks to the heart of a true artist. For this reason, the collaborative process between Sondheim and Lapine was very successful.

Sondheim does appreciate the need for collaborative teamwork. Sondheim would never have achieved the artistic success he has without the help of his collaborators. Collaborative writing teams have always been important to musical theatre. A myriad of collaborative writing teams can be used to signify each decade since the birth of musical theatre. Teams such as George and Ira Gershwin, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Rodgers and Hart, Comden and Green, Kander and Ebb, and Lerner and Lowe have dominated the musical theatre genre. It was not until the latter end of the twentieth century that musicals started being written by a composer/lyricist such as Stephen Sondheim. Although Sondheim is very talented, he still needed other collaborators to help inspire his writing. Sondheim collaborated primarily with James Lapine. Lapine wrote the book and directed the original Broadway production of *Sunday in the Park with George*. It is important to also acknowledge that both Sondheim and Lapine received the Pulitzer Prize for *Sunday in the Park with George*.

James Lapine graduated Franklin and Marshall College with a master's degree in photography and design. He never intended to become a director. At the Yale School of Drama he worked as a design teacher and graphic artist. It was here that his students convinced him to direct his first play, *Photograph*. As a side note, Lapine used *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* as a projection in this production. His directorial debut led to immediate acclaim, and he was awarded an Obie award. It was from this experience that Lapine began his

illustrious career. Lapine has a diverse background in design, writing, and directing on both the stage and film.

He does, however, prefer the collaborative process to working alone, for it allows him an objectivity toward his work that is more difficult to achieve when writing and directing a play. The camaraderie contributes another set of eyes and ears off of which to bounce ideas and upon which he relies to insure his own are being realized on stage” (Thelen, 64).

While he has such a diverse background, he is still dependent upon others to give him feedback, especially in musicals. In fact, Lapine does not know much about music. This is an ironic fact being that Lapine has had such a successful career in the musical world. Lapine’s musical credentials are as follows: libretti and direction for *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984), *Into the Woods* (1987), *Falsettos* (1992), *Passion* (1994), and *A New Brain* (1999); direction for *March of the Falsettos* (1981), *Amour* (2002), and *The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (2005).

Stephen Sondheim has created a legacy that easily rivals any of the aforementioned writing teams. It seems as if he was born to specifically write musicals. At an early age, he became friends with Oscar Hammerstein II’s son, Jimmy. This friendship produced the beginning of Sondheim’s apprenticeship with Hammerstein II. Hammerstein II is one of the biggest influences on Sondheim’s work, introducing Sondheim to many of the best and the brightest in the musical theatre world. After Hammerstein, Milton Babbitt was another major influential figure on Sondheim. Sondheim studied composition under Babbitt, who encouraged Sondheim to utilize his complete tonal resources. Thick and dense tonality is one of Sondheim’s greatest trademarks. Sondheim has composed and written for many different mediums. While earning most of his acclaim in the musical theatre genre, he has also written music for plays, television productions, films scores, songs for motion pictures, as well as provided film scripts.

It is important to point out that Sondheim wrote a musical at Williams College entitled *Phinney's Rainbow* (1948). "In this musical, he already speculated on how to depict an artist on stage" (Banfield, 17). This characterization must have influenced Sondheim's later characterization of George in *Sunday in the Park with George*.

Sondheim's musical credentials are as follows: lyrics for *West Side Story* (1957), *Gypsy* (1959), and *Do I Hear a Waltz?* (1965); music and lyrics for *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), *Anyone Can Whistle* (1964), *Company* (1970), *Follies* (1971), *A Little Night Music* (1973), *The Frogs* (1974), *Pacific Overtures* (1976), *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (1979), *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981), *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984), *Into the Woods* (1986), *Assassins* (1990), *Passion* (1994), *Saturday Night* (1999), and *Bounce* (2003).

The pairing of Sondheim and Lapine came at a very dark time in Sondheim's life. According to Stephen Banfield, Sondheim's career should be split into three divisions: (1) *West Side Story* (1957) through *A Little Night Music* (1973); (2) *Pacific Overtures* (1975) through *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981); (3) *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984) through the present (2007) (Banfield, 50).

*Merrily We Roll Along*, 1981, marked the end of the Sondheim and Hal Prince collaboration. Until this moment in Sondheim's career, he had worked exclusively with Prince as a director/producer. The show was considered such a flop that it adversely affected Sondheim. This failure caused Sondheim to feel artistically bankrupt and he was ready to quit writing for the stage altogether. Luckily, producer Lewis Allen convinced Sondheim to try collaborating with a new person. He introduced Sondheim to James Lapine. It was at this meeting Lapine suggested that Sondheim think about writing a musical based on Seurat's *A*

*Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. Lapin is quoted saying, “It’s an image I’ve always been fascinated with, so it wasn’t unusual, in a way, that I ended up going back to it” (Thelen, 60). It was this project that helped revive Sondheim’s love for creating art. Gordon explains how their first musical helped pull Sondheim from an emotional low:

The thematic focus on *Sunday in the Park with George* centers on the nature of artistic creativity: What does it mean to be an artist? How does one make art? And most significantly, how does being an artist affect relationships with the world and other people? Because such issues are central to understanding the lives of artists, this work is the most clearly autobiographical of all Sondheim’s work (Gordon, 264).

Sondheim was able to look within himself and draw from his own yearning to create. He worked out a lot of his personal angst through the character of George. *Sunday in the Park with George* is Sondheim’s personal emotional climax due to his connection with the character.

Sondheim and Lapine shared a meticulous love for creation. They loved to share and collaborate on each step of the process. When creating *Sunday in the Park with George*, they broke each piece of song and dialogue into small pieces and then put them together. Quoting one of Sondheim’s lyrics:

GEORGE:

Piece by piece—  
Only way to make a work of art.  
Every moment makes a contribution,  
Every little detail plays a part.  
Having just the vision’s not solution,  
Everything depends on execution:  
Putting it together—  
That’s what counts (Sondheim, 681).

Together they broke their compositional work down piece-by-piece and character-by-character. They decided how each character should speak, sing and how the diction should be reflected in each characterization. Then they justified each transitional moment and revised what they wrote

to make the musical function smoothly. A central metaphor helps to unify the musical.

Sondheim says in *Art Isn't Easy*:

I always start with the motifs. Always. That's partly because of my training with Milton Babbitt, who taught me the long-line technique of musical development, whereby small musical ideas are expanded into large structural forms, and the point to make the most out of the least and not vice-versa. I've always taken that to be the principle of art. Specially, in terms of music, if you look at a Bach fugue you see this gigantic cathedral built out of these tiny little motifs. I've always composed that way, and I think that's why I'm attracted to the kind of musical I'm attracted to—the kind that offers opportunities to the characters and assign motifs to them which can grow with them (Gordon, 265).

It was sheer brilliance to pair these two individuals together. Any other two persons would have failed telling the story. Sondheim possessed the facilities to compose such a beautifully complex score and Lapine was the person with the vision to stage and connect the project. Sondheim was the artist searching for the answer to what it meant to be an artist and Lapine, with a background in photography, was able to show him. As a result, the two created a powerful piece of art that speaks to the heart of every artist. I remember the first time I listened to the score, I was deeply moved. I couldn't explain it but the underlying theme of artistry pours from this musical. I didn't truly understand it until I was part of the show. Part of these two collaborator's process that was extremely successful.

It is important to point out that the braggart soldier archetypal character is of secondary importance in *Sunday in the Park with George*. The plot does not pivot around this character. However, an awareness of the collaborators' minds during composition provides insight into the character's presence. The collaborators methodically chose each character. The soldier is present in the musical because of its presence in the painting. In turn, the collaborators had to justify the purpose for the Soldier in the fictional story they created. Why did the collaborators choose the soldier rather than the many other people present in the painting? Not all figures are

accounted for from the painting. The Soldier provides a lecherous backdrop to counteract the story's central love relationship. Also, the Soldier carries a cutout companion so the character's purpose is that of comedic relief. Lastly, the presence of two Soldiers in the park provides suspicious intent from which to add intrigue to the musical's story.

### Critical Response

The original Broadway production of *Sunday in the Park with George* opened May 2, 1984. The successful completion of the musical would have never occurred without the extended workshop process hosted by Playwrights Horizons. In fact, at the first Playwrights Horizons' performance, July 1983, only an incomplete Act One was performed. In fact, Act Two was only performed three times at Playwrights Horizons. The production was transferred to Broadway and landed at the Booth Theatre for a respectable 604 performances. Response to the musical was mostly negative. Only three out of the eleven reviews researched were supportive of the production. The critical responses included *The New York Times*, *New York Post*, Fifth Row Center: A Critic's Year On and Off Broadway, and many others. The critics who loved the show supported it with a cult-like infatuation that helped the show to run for over a year. There is no doubt that *Sunday in the Park with George* is something special and the positive critical responses were the reason why the show survived.

Frank Rich was the most influential and respected Broadway critic at the time *Sunday in the Park with George* was produced. Rich wrote for *The New York Times* from 1980 till 1993. A bad review from this critic could ruin a show. Even though Rich gave positive reviews for the musical, he did not always like what Sondheim produced.

I was and am a huge admirer of both Prince and Sondheim, but, with the single and major exception of Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George*, was often disappointed by their new shows during my years as drama critic (Rich, 113).

His backing of the show was very important to the run length of the production. Rich admits that his infatuation with the show probably gave it the crucial press coverage needed to survive. In fact, Rich's numerous articles incited rumors that he had a personal connection to the production or someone who was a part of the production.

I didn't understand everything that I had seen on stage that night. When all the reviews came out and were mostly hostile, I was full of self-doubt and shaken by the loneliness of my stand, especially since I couldn't articulate my response to *Sunday* to my own satisfaction. So I went back and saw it again and again and again-and kept being moved and kept writing about it until I felt I had made my case. One consequence of my obsession was to dramatize the *Times's* power, since my essays kept alive a production that many others deemed worthy of a quick death (Rich, 975).

Very few other critics appreciated the *Sunday in the Park with George* as much as Rich.

The other influential critic of the day was Clive Barnes from the *New York Post*. Barnes represents the major negative critical response from the New York media. He states in his opening sentence of review, "I was nonplussed, unplussed, and disappointed by *Sunday in the Park with George*, the new James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim musical that opened at the Booth Theater last night" (Barnes, 284). This opening statement was only further supported through the rest of the article. Barnes stated the musical was too ambitious and could not fulfill its intention. Like other critical responses, Barnes also questioned the inclusion of the second act. He, too, thought that the lengthy first act could stand by itself. Whether he was right or wrong, he concludes his critique with a sharp dig that hurt the show's ticket sales. "When all is said and sung, the spectacle appreciated, and the performers admired, it might be better to go to the park with anyone than to spend it boringly in the theater with George" (Barnes, 285).

Another negative critical response of the show can be found in Benedict Nightingale's Fifth Row Center: A Critics Year On and Off Broadway. This book reads as a narrative experience, and it seems as if Nightingale's was not positive. In this response Nightingale recalls the reaction from a fellow audience member when a woman asked if the show was over. This response at the end of Act I was "No, unfortunately" (Nightingale, 267). Nightingale also comments upon how the show was not a commercial success. This seems to be the mark of success throughout his book. To Nightingale, commercial success equals a successful production. He quotes,

It was always going to be difficult for *Sunday in the Park with George* to make back its \$2.1 million investment, since it's housed in one of the smaller Broadway theatres, the Booth; last night it looked as if the producers would have trouble filling even its 750-odd seats for so much as a couple of weeks (Nightingale, 267).

I do not share the same views as this book's author and believe that success was found in the show's originality. In fact, it turns out that Nightingale's prediction was wrong. The show remained open until October 1985.

Little of what the critics wrote about the production reflected directly upon the character of the Soldier. Instead, specific comments in response to the supporting roles are important to gaining critical insight of function for the secondary characters. Frank Rich delivered the most telling critical response.

Yet most of these people (the cast other than George and Dot) are little more than fleeting cameos. As is often the case in Sondheim musicals, we don't care about the characters—and here, more than ever, it's clear we're not meant to care. To Seurat, these people are just models for a meditative composition that's not intended to tell any story: In his painting, the figures are silent and expressionless, and even Dot is but fodder for dots. Mr. Lapine and Mr. Sondheim tease us with their character's various private lives—which are rife with betrayals—only to sever those stories abruptly the moment Seurat's painting has found its final shape. It's the authors' way of saying that they, too, regard their "characters" only as

forms to be manipulated into a theatrical composition whose content is more visual and musical than dramatic (Rich, 314).

This response is important to an actor's characterization because they must understand that the Soldier plays a secondary role to the lead George. The Soldier character is a reflection upon how George views the characters he sketched in the park. In other words, the role of the Soldier is not pivotal to the show's plot, and little weight should be placed upon furthering the plot through the actor's interpretation. The Soldier and his relationship to the two girls in the park is simply a subplot of the musical. In another critical response, Richard Corliss of *Time* magazine supports this concept. He writes, "No heart-pummeling sentiment: in fact, virtually no character, as Author-Director James Lapine follows Seurat's lead and dehydrates his actors into cardboard stereotypes" (Corliss, 287). This statement confirms that the Soldier should be played as that of a stereotype of the typical braggart soldier. These two critical responses are important to an actor's preparation.

Since the original production in 1984, there have been two other major revivals of *Sunday in the Park with George* in 1994 and 2006. The most current revival of *Sunday in the Park with George* opened in London's West End. It is important to note that research of the current revival's critical responses produce no new information about the Soldier figure. Instead, two changes associated with the production did contribute valuable information. First, the Soldier's companion, which was a cutout in the original production, is now a projection. This change is due to the technological advancements in theatre. Having a projection instead of a cutout greatly changes the actor's physicality, because he does not have to compensate for the cutout weight. It leaves him freer to gesture with both hands. Secondly, the cast recording includes an audio recording of the complete version of "The One on the Left." Unfortunately,

because of the complete version recording, future directors will try to add the song to their production. This complete version was cut from performance due to its unimportance to the plot's progression. This is an important point. An actor must know how the song or dialogue of their character furthers the story's plot. It is my belief that the complete version probably adds too much time to an already lengthy first act. Although I do not think the complete version of the song should be added, an awareness of these alternate lyrics gives the actor a deeper understanding of what the creators were thinking when they developed the character.

Knowledge of how a production or, more specifically, how a character is developed is always important to an actor's preparation. These two aforementioned precedents used in the revival version will most likely inspire future productions. Precedents of the past always influence the future. This is why it is important to research the past. For example, the use of projections in the London Revival was again attempted in the UCF production in which I played the Soldier. It is, therefore, important for the actor to research the production's history to prepare as a professional actor.

## CHAPTER FOUR: SONDHEIM'S ARCHETYPAL EVOLUTION

Exploring several key Stephen Sondheim musicals provides the necessary context to understand the role of Solider in *Sunday in the Park with George*. Like the historical playwrights discussed in Chapter Two, Sondheim also utilizes the archetypal braggart solider as a recurring character and plot device. This section will focus on four other Sondheim musicals: *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *A Little Night Music*, *Into the Woods*, and *Assassins*. Focus will be placed on how Sondheim and his collaborators utilized the archetypal character in each show's libretto. As discussed in Chapter Two, the playwrights utilized Plautus's original formula for the braggart solider and expanded it to meet the needs of the show's plot. The authors took the archetype and let it evolve to meet the expectations of their audience. They expanded on what previous authors had accomplished with the archetype and continued the expansion of the character. As the authors' societies became more complex, the literary canon responded. Sondheim is no exception to this statement. Sondheim not only utilizes the braggart solider, but he makes the archetype fit the world of the play. He also uses that character to affect the play's plot and meaning by mutating the formula. Within Sondheim's worlds, the solider evolves from Plautus' stock character to a complex essential figure in these four musicals.

### Miles Gloriosus in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to The Forum*

Ironically, the first example of the braggart solider in Sondheim's work is not, at first glance, a revolutionary use of the archetypal character. In fact, Miles Gloriosus in *Forum* is the quintessential braggart solider, but this use of the solider is the point and purpose of the musical.

The concept for *Forum* was to take the body of Plautus's work and combine them into a musical comedy. Virtually every aspect of *Forum* can be directly linked to Plautus's plays; characters, relationships, plot points, and even specific jokes are all taken from his works. Since I argue that Plautus is one of the first important playwrights in history to use the braggart soldier and since his works are the bases for many others throughout history, Captain Miles Gloriosus of *Forum* is nearly a mirror image of Plautus's invention.

The idea to write *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* was suggested by Burt Shevelove. Larry Gelbart, Stephen Sondheim, and Shevelove were the show's three main collaborators. It was Sondheim's first project writing both music and lyric. Previously, Sondheim had only contributed lyrics to *West Side Story* and *Gypsy*. The show took almost five years to write and underwent many revisions.

Our goal was not to modernize the master. That is an ongoing process we preferred to leave to others. What we hoped to prove was that Plautus's characters (always one-dimensional) and his style of plotting (which could be as complicated as a Rubik's cube) were timeless (Gelbart, 4).

Miles Gloriosus has the classic three fatal flaws of the braggart soldier. His boastfulness is displayed in abundance by the first line spoken after his fanfare, "Stand aside everyone! I take large steps" (Sondheim, 72)! Whether this assertion is true or not, Miles believes it so and brags about his size and presence. To illustrate Miles's boastfulness, many productions cast a man of smaller stature to further illumine his bragging abilities and to add a level of irony to the words. Moreover, after this opening line, Miles sings "Bring Me My Bride" in which Miles discusses not only his physical prowess but his military abilities as well.

MILES:

I, Miles Gloriosus,  
I, slaughterer of thousands,  
I, oppressor of the meek,

Subduer of the weak,  
Degrader of the Greek,  
Destroyer of the Turk,  
Must hurry back to work!

I, Miles Gloriousus,  
I, paragon of virtues,  
I, in war the most admired,  
In wit the most inspired,  
In love the most desired,  
In dress the best displayed,  
I am a parade (Sondheim, 74)!

Finally, the root of the character's name, Miles Gloriousus, signifies boastfulness. The Latin root of "glorious" is gloriosus.

Glorious, 1. possessing or deserving glory; 2. marked by great beauty or splendor" (Merriam-Webster,496).

The next character flaw, arrogance, is equally exemplified throughout *Forum*. The first sign of arrogance is displayed when Pseudolus welcomes Miles and tries to distract him with flattery. Miles looks down upon Pseudolus when he is greeted.

MILES:  
You are?

PSEUDOLUS:  
Marcus Lycus, sir. I am dazzled by your presence.

MILES:  
Everyone is (Sondheim, 73).

The three soldiers who accompany him also help to display Miles' arrogance. Their primary duty is to boost his arrogance. In "Bring Me My Bride," they act as backup singers who flatter Miles by acknowledging his physical attributes.

SOLDIERS:  
Look at those arms!  
Look at that chest!  
Look at them!

MILES:

Not to mention the rest!  
Even I am impressed (Sondheim, 73).

SOLDIERS:

Look at that foot!  
Look at that heel!  
Mark the magnificent muscles of steel!

MILES:

I am my ideal (Sondheim, 74)!

As previously eluded, the three soldiers' character motivation might or might not be truthful. Whether or not the characters are sincere, their purpose is to enable Miles' arrogance. Lastly, arrogance is proven when Miles sings the "Funeral Sequence." Miles cannot simply allow his bride to die; he is so pompous that he must have a great funeral and dirge for his glory—not hers. This act is an outward display that bolsters his arrogance. It, once again, takes the attention off of Philia's death and places it upon himself.

The final flaw, lechery, is clearly demonstrated by the many vulgar statements made by Miles. His intentions are clear in lyric when singing "Bring Me My Bride." He mentions a plan to continue his sexually deviant behaviors while away on business.

MILES:

Convey the news,  
I have no time to lose!  
There are towns to plunder,  
Temples to burn  
And women to abuse (Sondheim, 74)!

While preparing for his wedding, he is already thinking of his next sexual escapade. Another example of lechery is displayed by the fact that Miles purchased a courtesan to be his bride. In addition, he also purchases Philia for a "bargain" (Sondheim, 76). Miles clearly perceives women as objects to fulfill his desires and does not see value in their self worth. The last

example of his lechery is shown by how he emotionlessly drops his desire for Philia at the end of the show. When it is discovered that Philia is his sister, he quickly finds a replacement and gladly settles for the Gemini Twins. Only a truly lecherous personality could move from one relationship to another with such ease. This is proof of his lecherous past.

Miles possesses all of the typical functions of the archetypal character except in two ways. First, Miles acts as a blocking figure between the two lovers—Hero and Philia. Miles perpetually upsets Hero's plans to escape with Philia. However, Sondheim does make one change to the formula of this archetype. In most plots involving a braggart soldier, the character ends in devastation and defeat. This could also be said for Miles, because Pseudolus stops Miles's original goal to marry Philia. Instead, Miles gets a happy ending. He discovers that Philia is his long-lost sister, and Miles receives the Gemini Twins as payment for his troubles with Philia. So, in the end, Miles does not get his bride; he gets two. Secondly, Miles is unlike other braggarts because the audience does not ridicule him and enjoys his decline. This is usually caused by the character's role of blocking figure for the lovers. The tone for which Sondheim writes Miles is silly. Therefore, the audience sees him as a silly character and not as a villain. In addition, the situation is turned into a joke because Philia turns out to be his sister. With playful lyrics, Miles is a comedic villain at his worst, and so Miles cannot be the object of ridicule like other braggarts. This tone and happy ending makes Miles atypical.

*Forum* virtually steals Plautus's material, and so it would seem that Plautus's braggart soldier would be Sondheim's braggart soldier. But since *Forum's* sole objective is to entertain, and since that evening is only to be comprised of "Comedy Tonight," Sondheim makes Miles loveable and allows him to have a happy ending. Like the musical, Miles is purely comedic.

The character's function had to be changed to fit the mood of the play. Even in his early years, Sondheim used that braggart soldier to illustrate the meaning of the play.

### Carl Magnus in *A Little Night Music*

Sondheim changes and advances his use of the braggart soldier archetype with Count Carl Magnus in *A Little Night Music*. The change in this archetypal character is inevitable due to the subject matter of this operetta. The character type, which is typically used in a comedic play, is now thrust into a dramatic storyline. As a result, the archetype is forced to evolve from a one-dimensional character to a multi-dimensional personality. This convolutes the clear characteristics of the archetype but allows the character to evolve to meet the needs of the operetta's subject matter. Still in every way a braggart soldier, Magnus breaks from the established mold through his actions driven by jealousy. Sondheim uses Magnus and his actions to exemplify the foolishness of those in love.

*A Little Night Music* is another example of how Stephen Sondheim and his collaborators attempt to redefine the musical genre. Harold Prince, Hugh Wheeler, and Sondheim collectively agreed to adapt Ingmar Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night* into a new musical. What they didn't realize at the beginning of the project was that the musical was going to evolve into an operetta. Sondheim pushed the limits of the genre so that he created a show that was a more complex version of the older operetta genre. The difference between the two styles is found in the complex characters that drive *A Little Night Music*. As a result, the show's plot is driven by multiple love triangles that set a dramatic tone.

Building from his first braggart soldier, Miles Gloriosus, Sondheim creates Magnus in the image of braggart. Not only does Magnus have the stature of a soldier, but he also is obsessed

with military regiment and weapons. He is literally a royal braggart whose boastfulness and arrogance abound. The character trait that overshadows all others is lechery. This is due to the love triangles established by the show's libretto. Very few blatant examples of boastfulness and arrogance are written in word. Instead, they are inferred in the libretto's subtext. The first character trait, boastfulness, is used by Magnus as a scare tactic. In fact, most of Magnus' boasting is derived from the idea that he is physically dominant to all other characters in the show. Magnus becomes jealous when he arrives at Desiree's, his lover, and finds Fredrik in a nightshirt. As a result, he exerts his physical dominance over Fredrik.

CARL-MAGNUS:

Are you fond of duels, sir?

FREDRIK:

I don't really know. I haven't ever tried.

CARL-MAGNUS:

I have dueled seven times. Pistol, rapier, foil. I've been wounded five times. Otherwise fortune has been kind to me (Sondheim, 225).

Another boastful threat follows as Magnus picks up a fruit knife and hurls it across the room to pierce its target. This action is that of a boastful threat. Magnus knows he is physically superior and exhibits this in order to degrade Fredrik at every meeting.

Arrogance is displayed by Magnus through his uninvited entrances throughout the play. He is never once invited to Desiree's home but arrogantly arrives as if she was waiting on him. The same can be said for his relationship with his wife, Charlotte. Both women are approached and spoken too in an arrogant manner. He expects everyone in the show to follow his schedule. In addition, his tone of address is selfish throughout the show. Another proof of arrogance comes from Magnus convincing himself that Fredrik could not be a threat to his relationship with

Desiree. When Magnus discovers Desiree with Fredrik, Magnus denies that they are capable of an affair. Magnus states this in song.

MAGNUS:

She doesn't...  
God knows she needn't...  
Therefore it's not.  
He'd never...  
Therefore they haven't (Sondheim, 226).

Translating Magnus's stunted speech, he believes Desiree would never cheat on him because she does not need another man with Magnus around. Magnus does not believe Fredrik to be a worthy opponent compared to him, and so Fredrik could never be with Desiree. Even though the evidence surrounding Magnus proves that Desiree and Fredrik are again lovers—"The papers...He mentioned papers" (Sondheim, 229)—Magnus's arrogance does not allow him to see the truth. And repeatedly claims that "The woman's [Desiree is] mine" (Sondheim, 229).

Lechery is the most overbearing characteristic of the Magnus character. This is primarily due to the show's main theme. It is filled with love triangles between the four main couples. Magnus is a unique representation of the braggart soldier archetype because of his immense lechery. Not only is Magnus possessive of Desiree, but she is also his mistress. This is unusual for the braggart character. The archetype does not usually return to the same woman other than his wife or betrothed. Each of his sexual escapades is seen as a conquest and is abandoned after he has conquered the woman. In addition, Magnus sees no issue with openly discussing his adulterous affair with his lover or wife. To Desiree, he mentions his timeline for his trip home. "I have twenty hours leave. Three hours coming here, nine hours with you, five hours with my wife and three hours back" (Sondheim, 223). He also blatantly speaks of his lover to his wife. "She had a visitor. A lawyer in a nightshirt" (Sondheim, 228). Moreover, Magnus makes his

wife, Charlotte, subservient to him even in his adulterous state. He allows Charlotte to become a pawn in his plans to win back Desiree. This also provides Charlotte a false sense of hope.

Charlotte admits to Anne, “He [Magnus] smiles sweetly / Strokes my hair / Says he misses me” (Sondheim, 237). Then Magnus will immediately switch his attentive and charming tone and discuss his “whores” with Charlotte. Truly, few men are as lecherous as Magnus.

In its most succinct form, *A Little Night Music* is about the folly of lovers, and Magnus’ function is at the heart of the show’s meaning. The show rests on the fate of Desiree and Fredrik. Their love and destiny is the central force of the show. In this setup, Magnus embodies the typical function of the braggart in that he is the blocking figure. Arguably, within the classical formula, they are the young lovers, and Magnus is the obstacle. Sondheim takes the traditional formula and changes it. Instead of young lovers, Desiree and Fredrik are middle-aged. Also, instead of a braggart soldier who is unwelcome by the female, Desiree initially invited Magnus into her bed. Only once Desiree invites Fredrik to the country does Magnus take on the true braggart soldier role and act as the non-invited blocking point for the pair.

Like Miles, Magnus breaks the original formula for a braggart soldier since he does not end in devastation. For the majority of the story, Magnus’s primary interest is only with Desiree. However, when Charlotte begins to show an interest in Fredrik, Magnus’ feelings for Charlotte are reinvigorated. Ironically, this change could be for two reasons. The simple answer is that Magnus discovers he truly loves his wife. In opposition, the more interesting answer is that Magnus’s pride draws him to Charlotte. He does not want Fredrik to have anything else of his. He knows that Fredrik has already won Desiree. Magnus’ truly selfish and arrogant qualities make him take Charlotte and leave the country. In whatever case, Magnus is not merely a device used to stop the two lovers from wedding. He also plays a role in exploring the meaning of love

within the context of the story. Magnus is a complicated character that reveals the harsh reality and foolishness of love.

### Cinderella's Prince in *Into the Woods*

Developing from earlier forms, Cinderella's Prince is one of the most complex of Sondheim's braggart soldier archetypes because his intentions and true character motivations are discovered as the musical progresses. At first glance, Cinderella's Prince lives up to the standards of the fairytale prince, but soon he is disclosed as a braggart. In a story about what it means to wish, Cinderella's Prince becomes a shocking example of how people are not always what you think they are.

*Into the Woods* was, yet again, another attempt by Stephen Sondheim and his collaborators to impose a new conceptualization upon a well-known story. In this case, James Lapine and Sondheim teamed up, for a second time, to create a story that combines recognizable childhood fairy tales with an original tale of a Baker and his childless wife. The hook to the story is that things are not always as they seem, even in a fairy tale. Act One addresses each of the character's journeys to obtain "happily ever after." Act Two, though, addresses what happens after "happily ever after" is achieved. This turned out to be an interesting assignment for the collaborators. They started by using the stereotypical interpretations of each fairytale character but allowed each character to fall victim to their own flaws in the second act. This second act clarifies how Cinderella's Prince is the braggart soldier within the show.

Unlike Miles and Magnus, Cinderella's Prince is a hidden braggart soldier; he always hints at certain attributes of a braggart but is not fully revealed in his character until later in the story. Like the braggarts before him, the Prince is boastful, arrogant, and equally as lecherous.

Boastfulness is clearly represented in his first entrance. The Prince sings “Agony” with his brother, and he cannot understand why a woman would refuse his advances.

CINDERELLA’S PRINCE:

Am I not sensitive,  
Clever,  
Well-mannered,  
Considerate,  
Passionate,  
Charming,  
As kind as I’m handsome  
And heir to a throne (Sondheim, 48)?

It sounds as if the Prince is merely running of a laundry list of all the things he is supposed to be. This is the first example of the Prince’s boastful and self-absorbed personality. Of course, in most fairytales, the prince rarely speaks and simply rescues the princess and rides off into “happily ever after.” This is the function of the fairytale prince.

In continuation with the above song “Agony,” it is apparent that the Prince is also arrogant.

RAPUNZEL’S PRINCE:

You are everything maidens could wish for.

CINDERELLA’S PRINCE:

Then why no--?

RAPUNZEL’S PRINCE:

Do I know?

CINDERELLA’S PRINCE:

The girl must be mad (Sondheim, 48)!

The Princes are truly conceited. Throughout the entirety of Act One, the arrogant quality of Cinderella’s Prince seems to be his dominating feature. He pompously enters the stage with an air of importance. In fact, in this song, “Agony,” the two brothers are so arrogant that they feed off each other and try to out do one another. Their own self-importance is sickening. They are

drawn to their ladies because the women are difficult to attain. This becomes a running theme in both the first and second acts, “The harder to get, the better to have” (Sondheim, 40) in Act One, and “The harder to wake, the better to have” (Sondheim, 133) in Act Two.

The idea that Cinderella’s Prince is acting as a braggart solid figure does not enter the forefront during the first act because the libretto gives no reason for the Prince to share his lecherous thoughts at all. His goal is only that of Cinderella. Cinderella’s Prince seems to truly desire Cinderella and, once he has her, the story invites the audience to believe that the Prince will be truly content. However, the use of the Wolf in Little Red Riding Hood’s story foreshadows the Prince’s role as a braggart. In the original Broadway casting, and in the majority of subsequent productions, the same actor playing the Prince is also double cast as the Wolf. The tale of Little Red in *Into the Wood* follows suit with the original Grimm’s tales. The wolf seduces Red, eats her, and then the wolf is destroyed. This story is a metaphor for the loss of childhood innocence and most scholars argue that Little Red’s story is a warning for girls to keep their virginity. Therefore, casting the actor who plays the Prince as the Wolf alludes to the fact that the Prince’s intentions will be like those of the Wolf. He will want to seek out and “eat” as many women as possible. Indeed, in this case, the Prince is a wolf in sheep’s clothing.

In Act Two, the Prince finds two other women whom he wishes to woo that establish his lechery like all the braggarts before him. At the beginning of the act, the Prince sings another version of “Agony” describing his new desired love.

CINDERELLA’S PRINCE:

High in a tower--  
Like yours was, but higher--  
A beauty asleep.  
All ‘round the tower,  
A thicket of briar  
A hundred feet deep (Sondheim, 96).

Of course, this description leads the audience to believe that this new lady “out of reach” is none other than Sleeping Beauty. This song ends with both the princes saying, “Ah well, back to my wife” (Sondheim, 98). The characters reveal their lechery by wishing for more women.

Therefore, it is apparent that the character has now revealed his attributes of a braggart. Not only does the Prince want Sleeping Beauty, but he also wants to have sex with another character in the show, the Baker’s Wife. In the song, “Any Moment,” the Prince makes sexual advances on the Baker’s wife. When they meet in the woods, he takes advantage of her in a similar way the Wolf lures Little Red. The Prince sings, “Anything can happen in the woods / May I kiss you” (Sondheim, 108)? He plays on the Baker’s Wife’s innocence to get her in bed, and eventually he does. Later, in the same song, he runs off and leaves the Baker’s wife with little excuse for his behavior.

CINDERELLA’S PRINCE:

This was just a moment in the woods...  
Our moment,  
Shimmering and lovely and sad.  
Leave the moment, just be glad  
For the moment that we had.  
Every moment is a moment  
When you’re in the woods (Sondheim, 111)...

This alludes to the cold and heartless intentions of a braggart. The Baker’s wife is merely a conquest in the line of many. Cinderella’s Prince is truly a lecher.

In this musical, the Prince, acting as the braggart figure, adds to the complexity of the plot. Cinderella’s Prince fulfills his function as the braggart archetype. He does not attempt to block any lovers like most braggarts do, but the Prince does block Cinderella from being happy. *Into the Woods* explores the meaning and cost of “happily ever after.” The Prince is directly related to that meaning, because he destroys Cinderella’s ideas of happiness. Unlike most

braggarts who do not break up the young couple, the Prince does demolish his relationship with Cinderella and acts as the braggart to block his own young lover relationship.

Another level of irony is found in the fact that the Prince is one of the characters to end the story happily. He eventually couples with Sleeping Beauty and gives the impression he is once again fulfilled in a relationship. In this, the Prince goes against the classical braggart that should end in devastation. With this ending, Cinderella's Prince illustrates a dominant theme in the musical: life is not always as fair as it seems.

#### John Wilkes Booth in *Assassins*

John Wilkes Booth's role in *Assassins* is the most complex of all of the Sondheim braggart soldiers. While his role and characterization are archetypal, nothing about his function in the play is formulaic. Like all Sondheim braggarts, Booth adds significant meaning to the work as a whole. Booth fights for his beliefs to the death. He becomes the archetypal figure for every assassin who follows him. He is introduced as every other assassin's "Pioneer" (Sondheim, 10).

*Assassins* provides a revolutionary look into the minds of the men and women who plotted to kill our nation's Presidents. The show's collaborator's, John Weidman and Stephen Sondheim, provide a partially fictional but mostly factual interpretation of why these individuals either succeed or attempt assassination. The show opened at Playwrights Horizons during the middle of the Persian Gulf War. It ran only seventy-three performances. The reason for such a short run is simple; it is easily deduced that the timing of the show's creation hurt its transfer to Broadway. Producers were possibly scared to invest in a full Broadway transfer even though audiences actively sought tickets. "We were surprised and heartened by the enthusiasm of

audiences and by the long lines of people waiting for ticket cancellations every night” (Bishop, vii). All in all, *Assassins* is a show composed of “a series of vignettes, sketches, set pieces and ballads” (Bishop, xi), which allows the audience to witness the humanization of these misguided and self-proclaimed patriotic individuals.

Like the Sondheim braggarts before him, Booth possesses the three fatal flaws: boastfulness, arrogance and lechery. However, while all other braggarts’ flaws revolve around loving women, Booth’s flaws revolve around loving ideals. Booth loves the ideal of the old South, and he believes assassinating Lincoln will start the pendulum on the South’s rise. Booth’s boastful characteristics as a braggart expose themselves in his drive to state his case. When Booth’s assistant begs Booth to run away instead of writing down his reasons for assassination, Booth screams, “He [Lincoln] was a bloody tyrant and we brought him down! And I will not have history think I did it for a bag of gold or in some kind of rabid fit!” (Sondheim, 17). Booth does not just want to kill Lincoln; he wants to make sure that America knows that Booth did it, and he wants America to know his reasons.

Booth reveals his arrogance when he refuses to accept any of his own faults. Booth blames Lincoln for every problem with America and with his own life. Booth’s life is on a downward spiral, but Booth still refuses to see anything beyond Lincoln. As Booth tries to write down his case against Lincoln, the Balladeer tries to point out Booth’s flaws:

BALLADEER:

They say you're ship was sinking, John...

BOOTH:

One: That you did ruthlessly provoke a war between the States, which cost some six hundred thousand of my countrymen their lives. Two:

BALLADEER:

You'd started missing cues...

BOOTH:

Two: That you did silence your critics in the North, by hurling them into prison without benefit of charge or trial. Three-

BALLADEER:

They say it wasn't Lincoln, John.

BOOTH:

Shut up! Three-

BALLADEER:

You'd merely had a slew of bad reviews—(Sondheim, 18).

Booth is blindsided by his own rage and arrogance. Even though he is truly convinced that Lincoln destroyed the South, Booth will not allow himself to see anything that might be wrong in his own life.

BALLADEER:

Johnny Booth was a headstrong fellow,  
Even he believed the things he said.  
Some called him noble, some said yellow.  
What he was was off his head (Sondheim, 22).

As a result of Booth's arrogance of personal belief, he also appears to other assassins to help them to realize their own futures. In scene three, he suggests assassination to Giuseppe Zangara, and, in scene sixteen, he approaches Lee Harvey Oswald (Sondheim, 24 and 90). This arrogance to approach future assassins is his attempt to justify his actions in the past.

For the fatal flaw of lechery, Booth lusts after his vision of the old South. Booth has an ideal of how the South was before Lincoln, and he wants that false reality so much, he kills for it. As Booth begs the Balladeer to tell his story, Booth dreams of his ideas.

BOOTH:

Tell them: How the country is not what it was,  
Where there's blood in the clover,  
How the nation can never again  
Be the hope that it was" (Sondhiem, 20);

BOOTH:

I did it to bring down the government of Abraham Lincoln and to avenge the ravaged South (Sondheim, 79).

Another repeated occurrence supports Booth's lechery of ideal is found in his obsession with the murder of Caesar. There are four separate occurrences where Booth represents his connection with Brutus. First, represented in the first words spoken after Booth shoots Lincoln. "Sic Semper Tyrannis" (Sondheim, 14)! These were the supposed words spoken by Brutus when he killed Caesar. Second, the words spoken right before Booth kills himself in a barn in Virginia.

BOOTH:

What I did was kill the man who killed my country.  
Now the Southland will mend,  
Now this bloody war can end,  
Because someone slew the tyrant  
Just as Brutus slew the tyrant—"(Sondheim, 20).

Third, the words spoken to Leon Czolgosz before the attempted assassination of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

BOOTH:

Men at some time are masters of their fates:  
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
But in ourselves, that we are underlings" (Sondheim, 28).

Fourth, the words spoken to Oswald to convince Oswald to assassinate John F. Kennedy.

BOOTH:

Lee, when you kill a President, it isn't murder. Murder is a tawdry little crime; it's born of greed, or lust, or liquor. Adulterers and shopkeepers get murdered. But when a President gets killed, when Julius Caesar got killed...he was assassinated. And the man who did it...

OSWALD:

Brutus.

BOOTH:

Ah! You know his name. Brutus assassinated Caesar, what?, two thousand years ago, and here's a high school drop-out with a dollar twenty-five an hour job in Dallas, Texas who knows who he was. And they say fame is fleeting...(Sondheim, 95).

These references support how Booth uses Brutus as a role model for his own assassination attempt. These four separate occasions speak for how Booth is a lecher for this idea. He does not have love for a woman but has love for the ideal of assassination.

Booth's functional role as a braggart is complex because *Assassin's* structure is complex and atypical. *Assassins* has a non-linear plot, which offers various vignettes. Since each vignette tells a different U.S. Presidential assassin's story and since Booth is the first assassin, his vignette is first. Booth does not block lovers; he does the reverse. Booth inspires other assassins. As the first to kill a President, other assassins look to him.

PROPRIETOR:

Hey, gang,  
Look who's here.  
There's our  
Pioneer (Sondheim, 10).

The final scene also proves Booth's influence when he appears to Lee Harvey Oswald. Booth becomes the spokesmen of the other assassins and convinces Oswald to pull the trigger.

BOOTH:

It's in your grasp, Lee. All you have to do is move your little finger—you can close the New York Stock Exchange.

...

You have the power of Pandora's Box, Lee. Open it" (Sondheim, 101).

Therefore, in a musical about finding your own American dream, Booth becomes the spokesman for his American dream. As a braggart and as a leader, Booth is able to secure his own legacy;

he is able to support his ideals. For these reasons Booth is the perfect complex archetype of the braggart. Booth embodies and executes the scary ideas presented in *Assassins*.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SHOW AND CHARACTER ANALYSIS

In analyzing the character of the Solider, one needs to delve into several key subjects. First, focus must be placed on *Sunday in the Park with George* as an entire piece without specifically isolating the Soldier character. In a musical where this character is so specifically woven into the work, a look at the larger scope of the libretto is important to understand the character's particular function. Secondly, the structure of the piece and the larger themes of the play are important to understanding the character's purpose. Thirdly, building from the analysis in Chapter Four of this Thesis, the Soldier's place in the Sondheim canon of braggart soldiers will reveal how the Solider also adds to Sondheim's innovation with the braggart archetypal character. Finally, this discussion segues into a musical analysis of Soldier's the sung material, which ultimately culminates into an examination of the personal acting choices made in performance.

### The Larger Scope of *Sunday in the Park with George*

In order to properly prepare for the role of the Solider, an overall understanding of the entire work of *Sunday in the Park with George* is imperative. An actor cannot truly grasp a character until he or she comprehends the piece as a whole. From this information, the actor gains an understanding of how his or her character fits into the larger scope of the musical.

The story of *Sunday in the Park with George* centers on the main character of George. It is important to mention that George Seurat, the painting's creator, is the only character present in the musical that does not appear in the painting, *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. This point deifies George and makes all of the other characters pawns in the telling of his

story. All the other characters except for one, Dot, play a secondary role in the life of this artist. Dot, George's lover and mother of future child, Marie, represent the story's central romantic relationship. This relationship is the center of George's struggle. He does not know how to balance real-life and his artistic-life. *Sunday* explores the journeys of real-life painter, George Seurat, and later his fictional great grandson, George, as they attempt to "connect" (Sondheim, 640 and 697) with themselves, the world around them, and their artistic endeavors. Most succinctly put, *Sunday* is a generational examination of the artist's struggle.

The inspiration for the musical comes from Seurat's masterwork painting *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. Act One centers on the painting's creation while Act Two centers on the artist's legacy. Taken from the painting, the musical is also built upon Seurat's original post-impressionistic ideas of pointillism. Applied to Seurat's visual art, pointillism is "the theory or practice in art of applying small strokes or dots of color to a surface so that from a distance they blend together (Merriam-Webster, 899). The musical takes this idea and applies it to virtually every aspect of the piece. The most obvious example of this notion is the musical score. Composed with many dissonant and staccato sounds, the music, at times, literally mirrors Seurat's painting style.

GEORGE (*Sings in a mutter, trancelike, as he paints*):

Blue blue blue blue  
Blue still sitting  
Red that perfume  
Blue all night  
Blue-green the window shut  
Dut dut dut  
Dot Dot sitting  
Dot Dot waiting  
Dot Dot getting fat fat fat  
More yellow  
Dot Dot waiting to go  
Out out out but

No no no George  
Finish the hat finish the hat  
Have to finish the hat first  
Hat hat hat hat  
Hot hot hot it's hot in here...(Sondheim, 595).

But this pointillism idea also applies to the structure of the piece. The various scenes and character vignettes act like juxtaposing dots of meaning. Isolated, they seem unrelated, but viewed as a whole, the scenes, like the painting itself, is put together meticulously to create a multi-century story.

Thematically, the musical also relates to pointillism through George's journey. Like his dots, George is alone, and he struggles to "connect." This paramount word is often repeated throughout the piece, and it refers to George's ultimate desire to connect to himself. However, in order to do that, George must connect to the world around him and to his art. To use a visual metaphor, George wants to be purple, and, in order to do that, he must connect with both the red and blue dots. How that connection is defined and what that connection finally means is different for the two Georges in the play. The first act George is so focused on his art that he loses connection with his personal life. He fails to recognize that he shuts out all others because he is so focused on his own work. The second act George is so concentrated on the business aspect of his artwork that he loses his own artistic voice. Both of them represent different concepts of conflict often encountered by an artist.

#### Structure: Looking at the Work as a Whole

As previously stated, the structure of *Sunday in the Park with George* is atypical to most dramatic works. Even though the play is broken into two different stories because the storyline contains two different Georges, the piece does have a near linear structure. Each act of the

musical follows the artist's journey toward connection. More tangibly, the play is built from small chunks of semi-isolated scenes. Serving as a metaphor for Seurat's pointillism, these scenes make up the structure of the play. Their individual parts and juxtaposition form the larger whole, just as the visual world does in the literal painting *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. The smaller units, the dots, form a whole. The two largest "dots" or sections of the musical are the two different acts. In the entire piece, these two acts form the greatest juxtaposition of units to create meaning. However, only after examining each act individually can this meaning be derived.

Act One centers on George Seurat's journey in the creation of his new method for painting. The opening scene between George and his mistress, Dot, introduces George's personal isolation. The tension between the two lovers is palpable.

DOT:

George.

*(Chord)*

Why is it you always get to sit in the shade while I have to stand in the sun?

*(Chord. No response)*

George?

*(Still no response)*

There is someone in this dress!

*(Twitches slightly, sings to herself)*

A trickle of sweat.

*(Twitch)*

The back of the—

*(Twitch)*

—head.

He always does this.

*(Hiss)*

Now the foot is dead.

Sunday in the park with George.

One more Su—

*(Twitch)*

The collar is damp,

Beginning to pinch.

The bustle's slippin—  
    *(Hiss and twitch)*  
I won't budge one inch.  
    *(Undulating with some pleasure, mixed with tiny twitches of vexation)*  
Who was at the zoo, George?  
Who was at the zoo?  
The monkeys and who, George?  
The monkeys and who?

GEORGE:  
    Don't move!

DOT *(Still)*:  
    Artists are bizarre. Fixed. Cold.  
    That's you, George, you're bizarre. Fixed. Cold.  
    I like that in a man. Fixed. Cold.  
    God, it's hot out here (Sondheim, 580).

The next scene introduces Jules and his wife who criticize George's painting.

YVONNE:  
    So drab, so cold.

JULES:  
    And so controlled.

BOTH:  
    No life.

JULES:  
    His touch is too deliberate, somehow.

YVONNE:  
    The dog.  
    *(They shriek with laughter)*

JULES:  
    These things get hung—

YVONNE:  
    Hmm.

JULES:  
    And then they're gone.

YVONNE:  
Ahhh...  
Of course he's young—  
(JULES *shoots her a look. Hastily*)  
But getting on.

JULES:  
Oh...  
All mind, no heart.  
No life in his art.

YVONNE:  
No life in his *life*—  
(JULES *nods in approval*)

BOTH:  
No—  
(*They giggle and chortle*)  
Life (Sondheim, 587-588).

This scene establishes George's struggle to have his art understood by others in his world. Already, George's two greatest struggles are presented: he tries to connect personally and professionally with the people outside his artistic world. However, George is unable to negotiate both of these problems at the same time. George and Dot's conversation and fight while George works on his painting illustrates this struggle.

GEORGE (*At his work table*):  
It's going well...

DOT:  
Should I wear my red dress or blue?

GEORGE:  
Red.  
(*Beat*)

DOT:  
Aren't you going to clean up?

GEORGE:  
Why?

DOT:  
The Follies, George!  
(*Beat*)

GEORGE:  
I have to finish the hat.  
(*He returns to his work. DOT slams down her brush and stares at the back of the canvas. She exits*) (Sondheim, 598).

George wants to connect with Dot, but even early in the piece, George chooses his work over personal relationships.

The following scene takes place on the island while George observes the subjects of his painting. This interaction represents George's attempt to connect with the world around him. He observes their interactions with him and, almost more importantly, he observes their interactions with each other. Even so, George views all these people through his work. He is unable to approach any of them to converse on a personal level. Interestingly, none of the people on the island are happy. On the outside, all of the people are enjoying a lovely day in the park. As George observes them all, he sees the struggles in their lives: some are lonely, some are jealous, some are adulterous, etc... Just as their lives get more complicated, so does George's. At the end of the act, George's relationship with Dot implodes, and George is left alone. However, he ends the act by assembling the final tableaux from the painting he has been working on, *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. Even though this creation is beautiful, this ending signifies that George gains the "order, design, tension, balance, and harmony" (Sondheim, 645) he is after, but only through his work.

Since Act One explores George's creation of art, then Act Two focuses on the pragmatic side of art and the artist. In this vein, the act opens with the number "It's Hot Up Here," which

humorously allows the characters in the painting to give their opinions on a work of art. However, their humor masks the theme they introduce for Act Two: all aspects of life have good and bad sides, and merging them is difficult. The characters in the painting have the beauty of the art they are in, but they must deal with the tangible problems of being a painting. Their problem mirrors the problem of George's in Act Two. He must remain true to his artistic self while negotiating the business world to maintain self-satisfaction through his work.

At the end of the song, "It's Hot Up Here," the characters announce the death of George Seurat. It is in these short remembrances that a eulogy of George Seurat is formed. The characters finally acknowledge the way in which he changed their lives. Once again, the duality between love and hate is present. The Boatman supports this statement very simply:

BOATMAN:

They all wanted him and hated him at the same time. They wanted to be painted—splashed on some fancy salon wall. But they hated him, too. Hated him because he only spoke when he absolutely had to. Most of all, they hated him because they knew he would always be around (Sondheim, 667).

After the painting's characters make their exit, George of the 1980s displays his newest work, which has difficulty getting started, and he attends his show's after party. In this scene, taking up the bulk of the act, this George proves, in the after party, he is a master of the social and the business world.

GEORGE:

Link by link,  
Making the connections...  
Drink by drink,  
Fixing and perfecting the design.  
Adding just a dab of politician  
(Always knowing where to draw the line),  
Lining up the funds but in addition  
Lining up a prominent commission,  
Otherwise your perfect composition

Isn't going to get much exhibition.

Art isn't easy.

Every minor detail

Is a major decision.

Have to keep things in scale,

Have to hold to your vision—

*(Pauses for a split second)*

Every time I start to feel defensive,

I remember lasers are expensive.

What's a little cocktail conversation

If it's going to get you your foundation,

Leading to a prominent commission

And an exhibition in addition (Sondheim, 682-683)?

The twentieth-century George is the complete opposite of his great-grandfather. This present-day George can easily connect to the world around him, but he has difficulty finding inspiration for his work. Like Seurat, George's work is criticized, but while Seurat was criticized for being too inventive, George is criticized for being too stagnant. George, however, learns that he can connect to both the world around him and to his own artistic inspirations when he examines Seurat's legacy through Seurat's painting. At the end of the musical, George meets Dot in a moment of muddy metaphysics. Dot's presence in Act Two is not necessarily a dream or reality. Nevertheless, she appears in a moment for George as the means for him to reach both into the past and into himself. She reminds George to creatively "keep moving on" (Sondheim, 705). Then the characters of the painting materialize to punctuate this point as twentieth-century George finds "design, tension, composition, balance, light, and harmony" (Sondheim, 706) in his own life. This ending provides the road towards connection. The libretto does not mention the future for George but, hopefully, he will be able to reach the dual connection between the two worlds in his art that George Seurat could not. This ending is just like two dots on a pointillism canvas. The dots are unclear and clear at the same time. From a distance, the dots blend

together. To use George Seurat's masterwork as an example, when looking at two dots of red and blue up close, the colors remain separate, but when examined from far away, they appear as the color purple. When looking at the show's ending in specific terms, Act Two really has no precise definite ending, but when looking at the musical as a whole, the end of act two does give the appearance of resolution or, at least, the hope for a resolution.

### The Solider in the Sondheim Canon

Like all other Sondheim braggarts, the Soldier character is also unique. Since the musical focuses on George's journey, everything in the world of the musical relates to George, and the Soldier is no exception. The Soldier is one of the many characters George observes while sketching on the island. Like the other braggarts before him, the Solider possesses the similar character traits of boastfulness, arrogance and lechery. The Soldier wastes no time in displaying his boastful attitude towards the Celestes.

SOLDIER AND GEORGE:

Mademoiselles,  
I and my friend,  
We are but soldiers!

SOLDIER:

Passing the time  
In between wars  
For weeks at an end (Sondheim, 621).

In the Soldier's first sung lines, he announces his position and uses the fact that he sees combat as a means to impress the girls. He knows this line is a way to make an instant impression. Later in the show, the Soldier also boasts to Celeste 2 through the possibility of his actions. As they enter the stage arm-in-arm, they catch Frieda placing Jules's hand on her breast. He uses this opportunity to impress by acting like a hero. He states, "Do you suppose there is a violation

being perpetrated by that man” (Sondheim, 641)? This statement alludes to the fact that he is ready to save this damsel in distress. He is boastful of his ability to apprehend criminals. Of course, he had no plans to bother himself with such a task. He simply wanted to look good without the obligation of having to back up his words.

Next, as the Soldier first speaks to the Celestes, he also displays his arrogance.

CELESTE #1:

Do you have a name?

SOLDIER:

I beg your pardon. Napoleon. Some people feel I should change it.  
*(The CELESTES shake their heads no)*

CELESTE #2:

And your friend?

SOLDIER:

Yes. He is my friend.

CELESTE #1(*Giggling, to SOLDIER*):

He’s very quiet.

SOLDIER:

Yes. Actually he is. He lost his hearing during combat exercises.

CELESTE #1:

What a shame.

SOLDIER:

He can’t speak, either.

CELESTE #2:

Oh. How dreadful.

SOLDIER:

We have become very close, though (Sondheim, 620-621).

The Soldier shows his arrogance by trying to avoid introducing the Companion. Throughout the entire musical he never once mentions the Companion’s name. The Soldier needs to be the

center of attention. This is why he introduces the Companion as “my” friend. He also shows arrogance by pairing himself with a deaf and silent partner. This is a way to boost his ego. By partnering himself with someone who is deaf and silent, the Soldier is guaranteed to appear the best. Next, the Soldier’s arrogance is displayed through the conceited way he talks to the Celestes. He never earnestly listens to what either of the girls says unless it is about himself.

SOLDIER (*Noticing his* COMPANION):  
I am glad to be free of him.

CELESTE #2:  
Friends can be so confining.

SOLDIER:  
He never understood my moods.

CELESTE #2:  
She only thought of herself.

SOLDIER:  
It felt as if I had this burden at my side.

CELESTE #2:  
She never really cared about me.

SOLDIER:  
We have very different tastes (Sondheim, 637).

Conceit is the first major sign of arrogance. Lastly, the Soldier’s arrogance is shown by his belief that the two Celestes are fighting over him. He assumes there is no other reason to fight.

CELESTE #1:  
I don’t want to say hello to her. Cheap Christmas wrapping.

CELESTE #2:  
Cheap! Look who is talking. You have the worst reputation of anyone in Paris.

CELESTE #1:  
At least I have a reputation. You could not draw a fly to flypaper!

SOLDIER:

Ladies, you mustn't fight (Sondheim, 643).

Lechery is the most prominent of the Soldier's three traits. At first sight of the two Celestes, the Soldier chooses his first victim. After a simple glance, the Soldier jumps to the conclusion that the women want him. He quickly decides, "I like the one in the light hat" (Sondheim, 611). He assumes that the only reason why women look at him is to flirt. Next, after exchanging only very few words with the girls, he proudly proclaims, "We may get a meal and we might get more" (Sondheim, 622). This quick and conceited assumption shows he would like to have romantic and/or sexual relations with one of these two women. This is proof of the Soldier's lechery. From the moment that Soldier enters the scene, his first and only desire is to woo the girls. Since the Soldier says the girls are "perfectly fine for Sunday," he admits that these women are not objects for relationships. They are merely a sexual game for the day. The entire notion that the Celeste tries to catch her man by pretending to catch a fish also infers that both the Celestes and the Soldiers desire to catch someone sexually, if not only for the moment. During the play, the Soldier appears with each of the Celestes. First, he is seen with Celeste #1 and then he is with Celeste #2. In fact, there is nothing in the libretto validating the proof of a sexual encounter until Celeste #1 mentions the Soldier having "Disgusting sores everywhere" (Sondheim, 644).

The Soldier is unique from the other braggarts because he has the Companion. Pragmatically, the Companion accompanies the Soldier because the painting has the two soldiers standing uncommonly close to one another. However, in the world of the play, the Soldier and the Companion are together because they are friends. In fact, in the trunk song, "The One on the

Left,” the Soldier reveals that his friend is with him because the Soldier is helping a friend in need.

SOLDIER:

And after a week  
Spent mostly indoors  
With nothing but soldiers,  
Ladies, I and my friend  
Trust we will not offend,  
Which we’d never intend,  
By suggesting we spend— (Sondheim, 622).

This friendly attachment is uncharacteristic for a braggart. After further observation, though, the Soldier’s motives for having the Companion around are not purely altruistic. The Companion and the Soldier act as a team as they try and find women. Even though Soldier asks his friend’s opinion, “What do you think?” (Sondheim, 611), the Soldier does not truly care what his friend thinks. In fact, he knows the Companion cannot answer him. The Soldier is simply using the Companion.

The function of the Soldier is atypical to the original archetype of the braggart. Despite the Soldier’s intense sexual drive, he ironically does not serve as a blocking figure between the young lovers, in this case, George and Dot. In fact, the Soldier is not involved in their story at all. Instead, the Soldier, like all the characters in the park, represents the outside world to George. The Soldier and the other characters only reveal that George has a difficult time socially relating to others. Throughout the sequences on the island, George consistently sings dialogue with characters but does not directly address the character. He never talks directly to the Soldier but sings with him. Arguably, each of the island characters represents an aspect of George’s personality and/or one of his inward struggles. For example, the Boatman represents George’s anger at being alone; Jules represents George’s struggles to join the art world; and the Nurse and

Old Lady represent George's battle with his family and past. In this line of thinking, the Soldier represents George's sexual desires. The Soldier possesses the sexual confidence that George cannot show due to his inability to socially interact. The Soldier easily communicates with women, and the women desire him. By observing the Soldier, George lives vicariously through the Soldier, even though he has difficulty revealing this side of himself.

Like the other Sondheim braggarts, the Soldier also contributes to the grand meaning of the piece through his inclusion in the painting's tableau. The Soldier, like the other island characters, is intricately woven into the thematic meaning of the musical because of their presence. The Soldier acts as the medium from which George lives as a social and sexual extravert.

Lastly, in *Sunday in the Park with George*, the Soldier does not end in ridicule and devastation. Instead, George placing him in the painting bestows honor to the Soldier. The Soldier provides a way for George to connect to his art, and at the end of Act Two, the Soldier becomes a means for twentieth-century George to connect both to his artistic past and the future.

#### Additional Lyric and Music Analysis

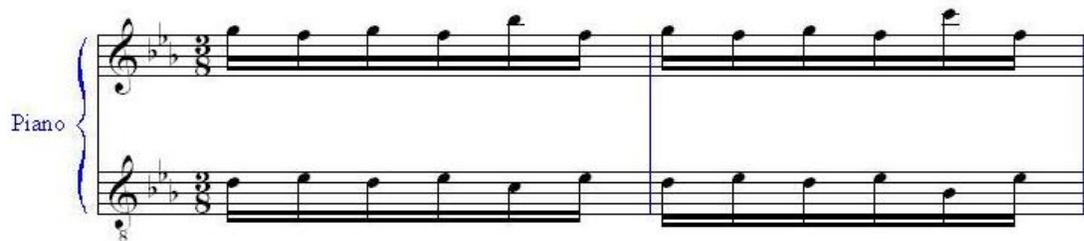
When analyzing the lyric and music for the Soldier, one has to take into account not only the material included from the final incarnation of the show but also the cut material. The 2006 London Cast Recording includes a full version of "The One on the Left." Like the original production at Playwrights Horizon, the Soldier had extended material that was cut before transfer to Broadway. This was also the case for the 2006 London Cast Recording. Fortunately, in the case of the 2006 cast album, the song was preserved through recording. Appendix One includes additional lyrics that can be used for additional research. While these additional lyrics do not

directly apply to the show's performance, their existence reveals supplemental information to help clarify the collaborators intent for the characters. In the case of the UCF performance of *Sunday in the Park with George*, the additional material was not included.

Within both forms of the Soldier's lyric and music, all ideas still stem from the military archetype theme. In every production, the Soldier's music is themed to announce the character's appearance. Just like all of the show's characters, the Soldier has a melodic theme. Every time the Soldier enters a scene, this thematic music is present. The twelve-note phrase is repeated as the Soldier's Theme.

## The One on the Left--Soldier's Theme

Stephen Sondheim



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**Figure 7: “The One on the Left,” Soldier’s Theme**  
**Stephen Sondheim. Sunday in the Park with George. 1984. New York: New York, 1987: 87.**

In a complicated mix between dialogue and musical phrasing, the Soldier's music expands as the encounter progresses. The song “The One on the Left” has two main musical statements. The first statement is a proclamation. “Mademoiselles, / I and my friend, / We are but soldiers” (Sondheim, 621)! This statement is characterized as a musical fanfare to introduce the Soldier's importance. Underscored by the horn section, this statement is meant to be the grandest

introduction possible as Solider tries to get the girl's attention. The large percussion hits during these opening lines also add to Soldier's boastfulness and pride.

After this opening proclamation, the Celestes interject their thoughts through their own flighty underscoring. Their conversation with the Solider mimics their accompaniment. As the Solider begins to speak again, the music transitions into a near military march, which continues through the end of the character's exit. This represents the Soldier's military conquest of the two women.

SOLDIER:

And after a week  
Spent mostly indoors  
With nothing but soldiers,  
Ladies, I and my friend  
Trust we will not offend,  
Which we'd never intend,  
By suggesting we spend-

CELESTES:

Oh, spend-

SOLDIER:

-this magnificent Sunday-

CELESTES:

Oh, Sunday-

SOLDIER:

-With you and your friend (Sondheim, 622).

To clarify, the beginning of this passage of music is not a full military march. It has the clean four/four feeling of a march, but the phrases are long and expansive. This musical choice allows the Soldier to act between the lines to woo the girls. However, at "this magnificent Sunday," the music becomes a clear march, which includes snare drum in the orchestration to provide the truest march feeling. This musical march even dominates the Celestes music to follow; they no

longer possess their own underscoring. This musical transition provides substantiation that the Soldier's lecherous intentions have taken control over the Celestes. The underscoring foreshadows the sexual conquest of both Celestes.

The final Broadway production of the Soldier's music is actually a cutting from the original full version of the song while the show was being workshopped. Entitled "The One on the Left," this full song has virtually the same structure as the cut song: the Soldier opens with his fanfare, he woos the girls, and, finally, the march begins as he escorts the ladies off, meanwhile the Celestes interject their comments. However, in the full song, the march proper is vastly extended. As in the cut version, the girls take on Soldier's musical march motif, but in the extended version, the Celestes relationship and Soldier's relationship with his companion are more specifically defined by the musical underscore. In the 2006 recording, Soldier clearly shows he is the dominant person in his friendship, and Celeste 1 shows she can bully Celeste 2.

SOLDIER AND CELESTE #1:

My only advice  
Is don't think twice.

SOLDIER (*to* CELESTE #1):

Would you care for an ice?

THE CELESTES:

Oh, an ice would be nice!

CELESTE #2 (*to* CELESTE #1):

Will they buy us a drink?

SOLDIER (*to* COMPANION):

Are they virgins, you think?

ALL:

It's certainly fine for Sunday!

CELESTE #2 (*to* CELESTE #1, *referring to* COMPANION):

Is that a mustache

Or just a gash?

CELESTE #1 (*to* CELESTE #2):  
But just look at the sash!

SOLDIER (*to* Companion):  
Did you bring any cash?

CELESTE #1:  
The buckles and braid —

CELESTE #2:  
The gold brocade —

CELESTE #1:  
The boots —

CELESTE #2:  
The blade —!

SOLDIER:  
Shall we head for the glade?

CELESTE #1:  
Heading for the shadows —!

CELESTE #2:  
Anything can happen —

CELESTE #1:  
Wonder what they're planning (Sondheim, [psclassics.com](http://psclassics.com)).

Both Soldier and Celeste #1 want each other, and they both are willing to sacrifice their friends to get to one another. This additional material more clearly defines the Celestes' relationship, but it also helps to define the Soldier as well. With this new material, the Soldier is more clearly a braggart since he is more obviously conceited. Any doubt of his friendly affection for his companion is squashed when the Soldier puts his own gain in front of his friend's. In addition, this material also makes the Soldier more of a traditional, buffoon-like braggart because it shows that he is not as smooth in wooing the girls. He confides more in his companion. After offering

ice and other objects of affection to the girls, the Soldier has to ask his companion if he has any money. This is a small point of interest, but it proves that Soldier is not as suave and gallant as he appears in the final Broadway version. This point is more appropriately in the vein of the historical braggarts. So, while the new music does not change Soldier's character greatly, it does open up character nuances that are beneficial to acting choices.

#### Analysis Turned Into Objectives and Physicalization

The Soldier and all of the island characters operate on two different levels. They operate in the real world of La Grande Jatte, with their own ideas and objectives, and they operate in George's metaphysical world and mind.

In the real world of the park, the Soldier's super-objective is to live the life of a grand warrior. So, attempts to achieve this super-objective were done by focusing on the minor objectives of getting as close to the Celestes as possible. Ultimately, he would like to sleep with each of them, and this minor objective can be reached through numerous levels of interaction. The obstacles in this minor objective are the Celestes themselves. The Soldier's target tactic is to impress the girls with his militaristic position and with what he can provide the girls on their Sunday outing. On the whole, these tactics are largely successful since the girls do go with the Soldier. Through the play he is seen entering or exiting the stage with both of the Celestes. This is proof that he obtains his goal. However, a secondary obstacle exists in the Soldier's companion. The companion is both a friend and a burden to the Soldier, and all of the tension between the men and the girls comes from the pairing between them.

Secondly, the Soldier also exists in George's world. The objectives, obstacles, and tactics mentioned above are not fully developed on stage because the entire play is viewed only through George's eyes. The resolutions to the Soldier's goals are inferred with the pairing of the

two couples, but the characters are not important enough to demand stage time to further this subplot. Simply put, the Soldier and Celeste subplot should exist only to serve George's purposes. George merely observes moments of the Soldier's life. George does not see the entirety of who the character is. Therefore, at the moment of chaos when George brings "Order" (Sondheim, 645) to the park, the Soldier and all the island characters stop existing in their own world, and they start living in George's tableau. Therefore, much of Soldier's time on stage should be broken down into two sections: the super and minor objectives of the character as it exists in the park, and the Soldier's existence for the purpose of being George's marionette.

The physical manifestation of the Soldier is very specific and stems from the idea that the braggart soldier is represented in George's mind. The most important physical attribute was posture. As a literal soldier, proper alignment and prostrate posturing is of paramount importance. Physical carriage is of utmost importance. This manifested itself through a heightened chest and dominant, purposeful, and powerful movements. All movement was characterized by a deliberate and linear fashion. If the Soldier had to change direction, it was accomplished through a sharp and clean change in direction.

In addition, the braggart characteristics were acknowledged through eye contact and focus. Boastfulness was exhibited through slightly eschewed eye contact that purposefully inflates the Soldier's chest. Arrogance was exhibited through a direct aside towards the audience without any direct eye contact. Also, the nose is slightly raised in a pompous fashion. This posturing presents the Soldier as the center of attention. Lechery was exhibited through the purposeful lustful glare at each of the Celestes. The Soldier deliberately checked out every inch of the Celestes' bodies in order to convey the lecherous subtext.

When existing within George's mind, the aforementioned physical posturing should not be compromised. For example, in the Act One finale, "Sunday," and the "Sunday—Finale," the only change in movement was specified by the production's director. In the UCF production, a slow, dream-like, and stylized movement that supported George's dream-like reality characterized these finale moments. Other than this single stylized change, the Soldier's physical movement remained true to the braggart posturing.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This Thesis traverses through four main sections that help an actor to prepare for the role of the Soldier in *Sunday in the Park with George*. The information contained within directly relates to how the Braggart Soldier was developed throughout the literary canon, the show's production research, Stephen Sondheim's literary canon, and a script and score analysis of *Sunday in the Park with George*. First, the Braggart Soldier archetype is defined by the reoccurring character traits associated with the character type. Second, production research of *Sunday in the Park with George* provides information that helps to understand the show's inception. Third, a look at Sondheim's use of similar archetypal characters throughout his canon aids in interpreting the author's intent for the character type. Finally, a look at the larger scope of the script and score reveals insight into the characterization appropriate to the Soldier's portrayal within the boundaries established by the show's authors. All of this information leads to a more informed and developed performance.

Chapter Two establishes the inception and evolution of the archetype Braggart Soldier. The five plays from different literary periods referenced are: *The Swaggering Soldier*, by Plautus, *Taming of the Shrew*, by William Shakespeare, *The Scams of Scapin*, by Moliere, *The Recruiting Officer*, by George Farquhar, and *Arms and the Man*, by George Bernard Shaw. They provide a chronological view of how the braggart archetypal character was formulated throughout the literary canon. There are a myriad of other plays and authors that could have provided suitable examples of the archetypal character, but these five plays were chosen because of their historical popularity and significance to the canon. In addition, these authors showed

that they are masters at allowing the character type to evolve to suit the current issues of the audience from each time period.

The braggart archetype is first found in the character of Pyrgopolynices. Plautus' character is used to example the archetype's character flaws and function. The three character flaws used to evaluate all other braggarts herein are boastfulness, arrogance, and lechery. These flaws progress from their use in, Pyrgopolynices, and evolve into a more complex version of the braggart, Saranoff. The repetitiousness of the character flaws exhibited provides examples to the typical archetypal response to similar situations. Even though each character type faces different situational circumstances, his responses remain consistent. The braggart is a self-seeking character that wishes to increase his riches, virility, and social status. In addition, it was observed that the character type functions as the blocking figure for the two young lovers and ultimately suffers from humiliation and social devastation in the end. Typically the figure does originate from a militaristic background but due to a play's subject matter this can be altered. Each plays spotlights how the character type faces different journeys due to the popular topics of the day. By following the evolution of the braggart, a pattern is established and the character's typical traits and functions are exhibited. Dependent on the story line, certain of the three flaws are accentuated or diminished but, ultimately, the archetype remained consistent.

Chapter Three delves into production research for *Sunday in the Park with George*. Focus is placed on the painter and painting, the preliminary sketches of the Soldier, the collaborative process, and the critical response to the original production. Each section of research unlocks valuable information that is directly applicable to the role of the Soldier.

First, it is important to focus on the musical's inspiration, *A Sunday on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. This work of art represents a new method for painting, described as pointillism.

George Seurat was consumed by the task of creating a new painting style combining science and technique to produce fixed laws for color. The painting was a social observation recorded by George Seurat and is a snapshot in time. In the case of the soldier, there was a preliminary sketch entitled *Cadet from Saint-Cyr*.

*Cadet from Saint-Cyr* produced the much useful information towards the role of the Soldier. The research reveals that the Soldier was not a cadet at all. The Soldier was actually a cuirassier from a mounted unit, and the Companion was a part of the French Infantry of the Line. The second figure was added after Seurat spent a month's military duty at Laon in late summer 1885 (Herbert, 95). Although there is a discrepancy in the sketch's title, this is not the focus of research. It is more important to acknowledge the fact that these two soldiers function similarly as members of the French military. For the purpose of this thesis, the relationship between the two soldiers merely provides interesting information that leads to a myriad of possible acting choices and interactions.

Next, a look at the history behind Sondheim's collaborative process provides information to how the show was created. *Sunday in the Park with George* was Sondheim's response to the artistic failure that was *Merrily We Roll Along*. This failure almost caused Sondheim to quit writing for the theatre entirely. Fortunately, the success of *Sunday in the Park with George* reinvigorated Sondheim's artistic life.

The final point in Chapter Three is found by observing the critical responses to the show. Critical evaluation is the best way to study a third-person response to a production. Critical response also supplies valuable information to how the show was accepted by its audience. According to most of the major reviews, the critics did not receive *Sunday* very well. Their major critique was for the show's second act because it did not congruently unite with the first

act. Although the show had a loyal fan base, it could not produce enough money to sustain an extended run and closed with financial loss. For this reason, *Sunday* is remembered as a financial failure.

Chapter Four is similar to Chapter Two in which it follows the evolution of the braggart soldier. One major exception separates Chapter Four though; it provides exclusive focus on a single author, Stephen Sondheim. By focusing on Sondheim it is possible to follow this author's intent and development of the braggart. Four shows from his canon were referenced: *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *A Little Night Music*, *Into the Woods*, and *Assassins*. Each of these shows also exhibits the same character traits and function of the braggart archetype. By following how this author allows the archetype to develop it is seen how the character is also structured to fit the world of the musical.

In *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, the original archetype figure is used without alteration. It was not Sondheim's intent to progress the braggart character but to represent it in a musical form. As a result, Plautus's true intention was recreated in original form. Miles Gloriosus possesses every trait and function as was intended for the original archetype. In *A Little Night Music*, *Into the Woods*, and *Assassins* the braggart figure is altered to meet the demands of a more complex dramatic plot. As Sondheim matured as a writer, his tendency was to let the figure evolve into a more specific character. This was a reaction to the audience's demand for realism.

When looking at the various Sondheim musicals, Sondheim's ability to use and change a commonly accepted formula and archetype becomes clear. Sondheim takes the established idea of a braggart soldier and turns it on its head. He uses the character to strengthen plot and he uses the character to uphold each play's meaning. In Sondheim's hands, the braggart soldier is a

complex figure—not a stock device. The archetype progresses from a one-dimensional figure, Miles Gloriosus, into a complex character, John Wilkes Booth. The characters still possess similar character traits, but their functions are altered to suit each musical’s subject matter. Understanding the braggart in Sondheim’s canon of work allows me to put the Soldier in its context as I analyze the role for *Sunday in the Park with George*.

Chapter Five does not act as background research but functions as direct analysis of the Soldier in *Sunday in the Park with George*. Five sections make up this analysis of the braggart: the larger scope, the overall structure, the Soldier in the Sondheim canon, lyric and musical analysis, and analysis turned into objectives and physical attributes. These five sections unify all previous research and represent the process for character preparation.

To better understand the Soldier’s function, an overview of the musical’s main character and themes are discussed. George Seurat is the central figure in *Sunday in the Park with George*. Every character in the musical exists to serve a specific purpose for George. The Soldier should act as a medium for George to express his uninhibited sexual urges. This is the reason why George is drawn to observing him. As a result, the Soldier is classified as a secondary character in the musical. He is included in the musical because he is a figure in Seurat’s masterwork.

A look at the overall show structure is also important to understanding the purpose of the Soldier. It provides information to how the Soldier relates to George and the show’s theme of pointillism. George never directly approaches the Soldier. Instead he observes the Soldier and sings with him as a representation of his empathy with the character. The Soldier acts as a figurative and literal dot in the show’s structure.

The third section focuses on the continued inclusion of the Soldier as a braggart in the Sondheim canon. The musical was written after *A Little Night Music* and displays an

increasingly complex characterization of the braggart. The Soldier exhibits all three traits of boastfulness, arrogance, and lechery but functions differently than previous braggarts. He is not used as a blocking figure and does not end the show in devastation. For this reason, Sondheim uses this braggart as a function driven irregularity within the musical's subplot. The Soldier's character is developed through very limited text. He should not dramatically affect the show's plot because he is simply an inhabitant of the painter's final masterpiece. Only when George sings with the Soldier is it revealed that George is actually making connection with the Soldier. In addition, the braggart also functions on two levels: that of the character within Seurat's painting and as a representation of George's undeveloped primal desires. This helps to clarify every action taken by the Soldier. Physicalization should mirror that of a soldier and should function only to progress the musical's subplot.

A look at the musical's cut lyrics and music is also important to understanding the Soldier. When a show is created there are often songs and dialogue cut from the show because it is seen as extraneous material. This is done to clarify and streamline the show's purpose. Ultimately, an actor should only play what is represented in the text but an awareness of the materials discarded can be informative to the character's subtext. These additional lyrics should only be used as clues to better discern the author's original intent for the Soldier.

The information discussed in all previous chapters and sections should culminate into an informed actor's portrayal. The research herein is an example of how an actor should prepare for the role of a braggart soldier. It enlivened my performance and taught me how to better prepare myself for all future roles. In professional theatre, an actor does not have the luxury of time to research to the depths of this paper. What should be taken from this thesis is the importance of research.

## APPENDIX: CUT SONGS

“Soldiers and Girls” (Song Cut From Original Production, 1884)

SOLDIER: (*Sudden and loud*):

Mademoiselles,  
I and my friend  
We are but soldiers—  
*(Listens to sidekick)*

Passing the time  
In between wars,  
However we may.

CELESTE #2:

Careful, he's peculiar?

CELESTE #1:

Soldiers are peculiar.

SOLDIER:

And after a week spent  
Mostly indoors  
With nothing but soldiers,  
May we venture to say:  
*(Softening his ardor at a nudge from the other soldier)*  
It's a glorious day.

CELESTE #2:

Wasn't that peculiar?

CELESTE #1:

No, it's not peculiar

CELESTE #2:

Something is peculiar.  
Shouldn't we be going?

CELESTE #1:

No, will you be quiet?

SOLDIER:

Sundays were made for soldiers and girls,  
Don't you agree?  
Sundays were made for medals  
And ribbons arrayed with red sashes,  
Buckles and braid,

And sabres—  
And girls.

Sundays were meant for helmets and plumes,  
Mademoiselles,  
Meant for salutes  
And epaulettes,  
Glistening boots,  
The heady perfumes  
Of horses and grooms—  
And beautiful girls!

*(Very loud)*

Mademoiselles!  
I and my friend  
Have a suggestion!

CELESTE #2:

Anyone can see that  
That man is peculiar.

SOLDIER:

I and my friend  
Wish to be friends  
With you and your friend.

CELESTE #1:

See, he's very friendly.

CELESTE #2:

Yes, he's very friendly.  
That's what is peculiar.

SOLDIER:

Only just now  
I said to my friend  
Of you and your friend,  
"I suspect they are friends."

CELESTE #1:

Both of them are perfect.

CELESTE #2:

You can have the other.

CELESTE #1:

I don't want the other.

CELESTE #2:

I don't want the other either.

SOLDIER:

And, see, you are friends!

CELESTE #1 and #2:

What can be the harm in  
Strolling in the park with  
Soldiers even if they are peculiar?

SOLDIER:

And we shall be friends.

SOLDIER, CELESTE #1, CELESTE #2:

Sundays were made for soldiers and girls.

SOLDIER:

Mademoiselles,  
Sundays were made for medals—  
*(Look expectantly at CELESTE #1, who picks up her cue)*

CELESTE #1:

And ribbons arrayed with red sashes—  
*(Nudges CELESTE #2)*

CELESTE #2:

Buckets and braid—

CELESTE #1: *(Whispers)*

Buckles!

SOLDIER:

And sabres—  
*(Looks at sidekick, who apparently conveys something; speaks)*

Right!

*(Sings)*

Sundays were made for banners and bells,  
Don't you agree?  
Made for whatever sparkles,  
*(With meaning)*  
Whatever is fresh and sweet,

(CELESTES *giggles*)  
Everything casting colorful spells:  
For beaches and shells  
(CELESTES *hum*)  
And scarlet lapels  
(*Inhales*)  
And vigorous smells—  
And soldiers!  
(*At a nudge from the sidekick*)  
And mademoiselles! (Sondheim, 724-727)

“The One on the Left” (Lyrics Cut From Original Production, 1884)

CELESTE #1:  
Both of them are perfect.

CELESTE #2:  
You can have the other.

CELESTE #1:  
I don't want the other.

CELESTE #2:  
I don't want the other either.

SOLDIER:  
Mademoiselles,  
I and my friend,  
We are but soldiers—  
(*Rumble from his COMPANION; SOLDIER raises hand to quiet him*)  
Passing the time  
In between wars  
For weeks at an end.

CELESTE #2: (*aside*)  
Shouldn't we be going?

CELESTE #1:  
No, will you be quiet?

CELESTE #2:  
Something is peculiar—

SOLDIER:

And after a week  
Spent mostly indoors  
With nothing but soldiers,  
Ladies, I and my friend  
Trust we will not offend,  
Which we'd never intent,  
By suggesting we spend—

BOTH CELESTES: (*Excited*)

Oh, spend—

SOLDIER:

--This magnificent Sunday—

BOTH CELESTES (*A bit defeated*):

Oh, Sunday—

SOLDIER:

--With you and your friend.

SOLDIER:

--With you and your friend.

CELESTE #2 (*Aside, to CELESTE #1*):

The one on the right seems quite attached.

CELESTE #1 (*Looking over, then back*):

As well as scratched.

SOLDIER (*Aside to COMPANION*):

Admit it, old man, we're not badly matched.

ALL (*To themselves, shrugging*):

It's certainly fine for Sunday.

SOLDIER (*To COMPANION*):

The one on the left seems quite subdued.

CELESTE #2 (*As CELESTE #1 tries to elbow her over to the other side*):

I'm not in the mood.

CELESTE #1 (*To CELESTE #2*):

You're ruining things and we're being rude—

ALL (*Enthusiastically, to each other*):

It's certainly fine for Sunday!

*(During the next section, as they all march around, both CELESTES fight for position)*

SOLDIER and CELESTE #1 (*Aside, to their partners*):

My only advice

Is don't think twice.

SOLDIER (*To CELESTE #1*):

Would you care for an ice?

BOTH CELESTES:

Oh, an ice would be nice!

CELESTE #2 (*To CELESTE #1*):

Will they buy us a drink?

SOLDIER (*To COMPANION*):

Are they virgins, you think?

ALL (*To each other*):

It's certainly fine for Sunday!

CELESTE #2 (*To CELESTE #1, referring to COMPANION*):

Is that a mustacher

Or just a gash?

CELESTE #1 (*To SOLDIER*):

What a beautiful sash!

SOLDIER (*To COMPANION*):

Did you bring any cash?

CELESTE #1 (*To CELESTE #2*):

The buckles and braid—

CELESTE #2:

The gold brocade—

CELESTE # 1:

The boots—

CELESTE # 2:

The blade--!

SOLDIER:

Shall we head for the glade?

CELESTE #1:

Heading for the shadows--!

CELESTE #2 (*Also excited, but wary*):

Anything can happen—

CELESTE #1:

Wonder what they're planning.

CELESTE #2 (*Alarmed*):

What they're planning?

CELESTE #1:

What they're planning later on!

SOLDIER (*To COMPANION*):

The one on the right gave you a look—

Let's hope she can cook.

BOTH CELESTES (*Aside*):

Taking us to dinner—

Maybe to the Follies--!

Anyhow, it's certainly fine for Sunday!

CELESTE #1:

The one on the right is odd, it's true,

But what can we do?

SOLDIER (*To COMPANION*):

The one on the left—

CELESTE #1:

You're as odd as he—

SOLDIER:

-Has great esprit—

CELESTE #2:

I don't agree—

SOLDIER and CELESTE #1:

The one on the left is right for me—

*(The switch positions so that CELESTE #2 has the COMPANION)*

So the one on the right is left for you! (Sondheim, 728-731)

“The One on the Left” (Lyrics Cut from Revival Production, 2006)

SOLDIER *(to his COMPANION)*:

The one on the left is nice and pink.

I'll tip her a wink.

The one on the right seems charming, too,

Although she does look rather blue ...

Well, what shall we do?

CELESTE #2:

They're not paying the least bit attention to us.

CELESTE #1:

You really should try using that pole.

SOLDIER:

The one on the left is awfully bold —

I wonder how old.

The one on the right is more demure —

Or less mature,

You can't be sure.

She isn't much over seventeen.

She looks pretty clean...

I see what you mean.

CELESTE #2:

I told you this would make no difference.

CELESTE #1:

Oh! Oh! ...

CELESTE #2:

What's wrong?

CELESTE #1:

Just sit there.

SOLDIER:

May we be of some service, Madame?

CELESTE #1:

Mademoiselle.

CELESTE #2:

She has a fish.

CELESTE #1:

He knows.

SOLDIER:

Allow me.

CELESTE #1:

Oh. It tugged so...

SOLDIER:

There's no sign of a fish here.

CELESTE #1:

Oh me. My name's Celeste. And this is my friend.

CELESTE #2:

Celeste.

*(Aside, to CELESTE #1)*

I don't think he likes me.

CELESTE #1:

Certainly he likes you.

You take the other one...

CELESTE #2:

That one is peculiar —

CELESTE #1:

How is he peculiar?

CELESTE #2:

Why's he so qui —

CELESTE #1 *(to SOLDIER)*:

Do you have a name?

SOLDIER:

I beg your pardon. Napoleon. Some people feel I should change it.

CELESTE #2:

And your friend?

SOLDIER:

Yes. He is my friend.

CELESTE #2:

Why is he so quiet?

CELESTE #1:

He's very quiet.

SOLDIER:

Yes. Actually he is. He lost his hearing during combat exercises.

CELESTE #1:

Oh. What a shame.

SOLDIER:

He can't speak, either.

CELESTE #2:

Oh. How dreadful.

SOLDIER:

We have become very close, though.

CELESTE #1:

So I see.

Both of them are perfect.

CELESTE #2:

You can have the other.

CELESTE #1:

I don't want the other.

CELESTE #2:

I don't want the other either.

SOLDIER:

Mademoiselles,  
I and my friend,  
We are but soldiers!  
Passing the time  
In between wars  
For weeks at an end.

CELESTE #2:

Shouldn't we be going?

CELESTE #1:

No, will you be quiet?

CELESTE #2:

Something is peculiar —

SOLDIER:

And after a week  
Spent mostly indoors  
With nothing but soldiers,  
Ladies, I and my friend  
Trust we will not offend,  
Which we'd never intend,  
By suggesting we spend —

THE CELESTES:

Oh, spend —

SOLDIER:

— this magnificent Sunday —

THE CELESTES:

Oh, Sunday —

SOLDIER:

— with you and your friend.

CELESTE #2:

The one on the right seems quite attached.

CELESTE #1:

As well as scratched.

SOLDIER:

Admit it, old man, we're not badly matched.

ALL:

It's certainly fine for Sunday

SOLDIER (*to* COMPANION):

The one on the left seems quite subdued.

CELESTE #2:

I'm not in the mood.

CELESTE #1 (*to* CELESTE #2):

You're ruining things and we're being rude —

ALL:

It's certainly fine for Sunday!

SOLDIER, CELESTE #1:

My only advice  
Is don't think twice.

SOLDIER (*to* CELESTE #1):

Would you care for an ice?

THE CELESTES:

Oh, an ice would be nice!

CELESTE #2 (*to* CELESTE #1):

Will they buy us a drink?

SOLDIER:

Are they virgins, you think?

ALL:

It's certainly fine for Sunday!

CELESTE #2 (*to* CELESTE #1, *referring to* COMPANION):

Is that a mustache  
Or just a gash?

CELESTE #1 (*to* CELESTE #2):

But just look at the sash!

SOLDIER (*to* COMPANION):  
Did you bring any cash?

CELESTE #1:  
The buckles and braid —

CELESTE #2:  
The gold brocade —

CELESTE #1:  
The boots —

CELESTE #2:  
The blade —!

SOLDIER:  
Shall we head for the glade?

CELESTE #1:  
Heading for the shadows —!

CELESTE #2:  
Anything can happen —

CELESTE #1:  
Wonder what they're planning.

CELESTE #2:  
What they're planning?

CELESTE #1:  
What they're planning later on!

SOLDIER (*to* COMPANION):  
The one on the right gave you a look —  
Let's hope she can cook.

THE CELESTES:  
Taking us to dinner —  
Maybe to the follies —!  
Anyhow, it's certainly fine for Sunday!

CELESTE #1:  
The one on the right is odd, it's true,  
But what can we do?

SOLDIER (*to* COMPANION):

The one on the left —

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You're odd as he —

SOLDIER:

— has great esprit —

CELESTE #2:

I don't agree —

SOLDIER, CELESTE #1:

The one on the left is right for me —

So the one on the right is left for you.

(Sondheim, <[http://www.psclassics.com/cd\\_sunday.html](http://www.psclassics.com/cd_sunday.html)>)

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