



ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS



PRESS HIGHLIGHTS



REVIEWS

Tender trap

‘Robin and the 7 Hoods’ succeeds on its classic songs, but cramming a plot around them almost sends it up the river.

CHARLES McNULTY THEATER CRITIC REPORTING FROM SAN DIEGO >>> Something slightly felonious is happening with the goldmine of tunes by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen, the songwriting team that helped revitalize Frank Sinatra’s hip factor in the 1960s. The new musical “Robin and the 7 Hoods” has ransacked one of the great catalogs from the ring-a-ding era for a show that can’t figure out if it wants to be an honest-to-goodness book musical or a jukebox jamboree.

Right now the offering is a cross between a “Guys and Dolls” rip-off and a “Mamma Mia!”-style smorgasbord of hits. Yet the songs are so criminally entertaining — such a step up in originality and surprise from anything written for today’s cheesy Broadway — that Friday’s opening-night audience at the Old Globe didn’t seem to mind the shoddy construction of this Robin Hood revamp.

To make an insanely complicated story short: Chicago mobsters wage war over nightclub turf. A crusading TV anchorwoman named Marian (Kelly Sullivan) falls hard for Robbo (Eric Schneider), one of the embattled club owners, who’s ripe for romantic redemption. The names derive from the old English legend, but the stealing from the rich to give to the poor business is mostly a con that would require a flow chart to explain. (Trust me: You really don’t want to know.) [See ‘Robin,’ D4]

Story drags down songs

[**'Robin,'** from D1]

Fortunately, the effervescent bliss of "Call Me Irresponsible," "High Hopes," "(Love Is) The Tender Trap" and "Come Fly With Me" goes a long way toward excusing a plot that's mainly an excuse to squeeze in as many Cahn-Van Heusen ditties as possible. Music supervisor John McDaniel brings a deft touch to the vocal arrangements, Bill Elliott's orchestrations couldn't be smoother, and the orchestra, led by music director Mark Hummel, soars with the swagger of a golden age that sees no reason to concede that the jig is up. The overture alone casts a heady spell.

There's no competing with the star power of the 1964 Rat Pack film with Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. (The title and some of the character names are the same, but the story has been overhauled and several Sinatra standards have been shoehorned in along with additional songs.) The Old Globe's amiable ensemble is more confident in handling the musical numbers than the confused period patter (updated from the Prohibition days to the early '60s). But the performers shouldn't have to take the rap for the new work's shortfall.

Even if Harry Connick Jr. (rumored to be at the top of the producers' wish list) were to anchor a Broadway run, a new generation deserves the opportunity of countering Cahn and Van Heusen's streetwise genius in a sleeker vehicle. The paint job on this one is certainly snazzy, but the engineering reveals major flaws



CRAIG SCHWARTZ The Old Globe

DAME: Amy Spanger performs "Same Old Song and Dance" as Alana O'Dell in "Robin and the 7 Hoods."

— the biggest being the attempt to thread disparate songs into a consistent narrative. Why bog the celebration down with a cumbersome yarn when an artful revue would more or less do the trick?

The problem can't be laid entirely at the feet of book writer Rupert Holmes ("Curtains"), who has done his best to come up with a structure that can contain all of the loosely fitting parts. Yes, the majority of laugh lines are groaners and the plot points are designed around the songs rather than the other way around. But the job is an impossible one, demonstrating yet again that musical theater can't be ordered up in the same top-down, marketing-focused way that Detroit manufactures cars.

The production, directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw ("The Drowsy Chaperone"), rouses the crowd with its

tap-dancing and general swing. At times, it appears that Nicholaw wouldn't mind junking the whole convoluted tale and moving in a direction similar to "Come Fly Away," the Twyla Tharp ode to Sinatra on Broadway. Interestingly, when the caper's contrivances are at their most strained, even the choreography gets clichéd, with go-go arm jive suggesting an impromptu limbo at a Vegas disco.

The opening number, "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," sets the peppy tone if not the place. Scenic designer Robert Brill doesn't bother much about the Windy City — the location is first and foremost a stage, another hint that the production would rather be a spectacular than a musical saga. But the upside is that lighting designer Kenneth Posner has room to enhance the visuals with colorful effects.

It's not clear why Holmes

has transported the action to the now ubiquitous "Mad Men" era, but the slim cut suits (the dashing contribution of costume designer Gregg Barnes) look great on Robbo and his gangster friends and foes. The titular "hoods" are mostly undifferentiated types (the seven dwarfs would seem to have Chekhovian contours by comparison), but they handsomely fill the show's superficial bill.

Schneider is no Sinatra, but he has a driving voice and a sneaky urban appeal. Sullivan's commanding singing compensates for her sometimes underwhelming acting. The chemistry between the two is lukewarm, but they deliver sufficient heat in their joint numbers.

Of the supporting cast, Amy Spanger is the musical standout as the woman intent on marrying Robbo's best buddy, Little John (Will Chase). Rick Holmes makes only a wan impression as P.J. Sullivan, Robbo's supposedly fearsome rival. But Adam Heller, who plays corrupt Lt. Nottingham, steals the spotlight from everyone during his "High Hopes" reverie with Robbo.

As an entertainment, "Robin and the 7 Hoods" succeeds only if you agree to accept it on its own hare-brained terms. The film had the advantage of Ol' Blue Eyes, Dino and Sammy to get viewers over the hump of the screenplay. Here, Cahn and Van Heusen's music is the secret weapon. That's some pretty powerful artillery, but the fight shouldn't have to be so onerous.

charles.mculty
@latimes.com

THEATER REVIEW



CRAIG SCHWARTZ The Old Globe

ROBBO: Eric Schneider stars in the new musical of tunes by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen.

Los Angeles Times



Culture Monster

All the Arts, All the Time

Theater review: 'Robin and the 7 Hoods' at the Old Globe

August 1, 2010 | 5:32 pm



San Diego -- Something slightly felonious is happening with the goldmine of tunes by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen, the songwriting team that helped revitalize Frank Sinatra's hip factor in the 1960s. The new musical "Robin and the 7 Hoods" has ransacked one of the great catalogs from the ring-a-ding era for a show that can't figure out if it wants to be an honest-to-goodness book musical or a jukebox jamboree.

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Even if Harry Connick Jr. (rumored to be at the top of the producers' wish list) were to anchor a future Broadway run, a new generation deserves the opportunity of encountering Cahn and Van Heusen's streetwise genius in a sleeker vehicle. The paint job on this one is certainly snazzy, but the engineering reveals major flaws—the biggest being the attempt to thread disparate songs into a consistent narrative. Why bog the celebration down with a cumbersome yarn when an artful revue would more or less do the trick?

The problem can't be laid entirely at the feet of book-writer Rupert Holmes ("Curtains"), who has done his best to come up with a structure that can contain all of the loosely fitting parts. Yes, the majority of laugh lines are groaners and the plot points are designed around the songs rather than the other way around. But the job is an impossible one, demonstrating yet again that musical theater can't be ordered up in the same top-down, marketing-focused way that Detroit manufactures cars.

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-- Charles McNulty

twitter.com/charlesmcnulty

"Robin and the 7 Hoods," The Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego. 7 p.m. Tuesdays-Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Thursdays-Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays. Ends August 29. \$68 to \$89. (619) 234-5623 or www.theoldglobe.org Running time: 2 hours, 20 minutes

Photos: Top: Eric Schneider and Kelly Sullivan. Bottom: Adam Heller and Schneider. Credit: Craig Schwartz / The Old Globe



THEATER REVIEW

'Robin and the 7 Hoods' a caper filled with talent and fun

By James Hebert, THEATER CRITIC

So the Rat Pack meets "Robin Hood" on the musical-theater stage, and right away you're thinking: "Please God, no Sinatra wannabes feigning fights in green tights."

Instead, what the Old Globe's got — and ain't this a kick in the preconceptions? — is a canny, stylish new show that's a ton of frothy fun, if (no surprise) a little stingy on the intellectual riches.

The world premiere of the movie-inspired musical is also a wow of a homecoming for San Diego-bred director and choreographer Casey Nicholaw, returning to the theater where he got his first big acting break three decades ago in the weirdly "Robin"-related "The Robber Bridegroom."

Nicholaw's snazzy, imaginative dance sequences help drive this jukebox saga set to tunes from the matchless catalog of lyricist Sammy Cahn and composer Jimmy Van Heusen, the team behind such Sinatra hits as "Ain't That a Kick in the Head," "High Hopes" and "My Kind of Town (Chicago)."

Only that last song actually appeared in the lamentable 1964 Rat Pack movie that gives the musical its title.

DETAILS

"Robin and the 7 Hoods"

Old Globe Theatre

When: Tuesdays-Wednesdays, 7 p.m.; Thursdays-Fridays, 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 2 and 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 and 7 p.m., through Aug. 29.

Where: Old Globe Theatre, 1393 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

Tickets: \$68-\$89

Phone: (619) 234-5623

Online: theoldglobe.org

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The show's writer, Tony-winner Rupert Holmes (last at the Globe with "The First Wives Club"), uses about as much of the movie's story; he shifts the action from '30s speak-easies to early-'60s nightclubs, and crafts a clever, streamlined plot that riffs off the "Robin Hood" legend while winking at the contrivance of that idea.

While this romantic romp is nominally about mobsters, the lack of a credible sense of danger, or of anything that seems seriously at stake, makes the show about as filling as the olive at the bottom of a martini glass.

Still, "Robin" has plenty of other pleasures to drink in, from the catwalk-ready costumes by Gregg Barnes (another San

Diego-sprung artist and "Robber Bridegroom" alum), to the well-chosen and versatile cast of mostly Broadway veterans, to the crack, dozen-member band that sounds bigger under the conducting of music director Mark Hummel.

The first scene shows off not just the pillared, midcentury-modern set by Robert Brill (another local) but Barnes' sense of period style, as nattily clad performers pose like silhouetted mannequins.

This urban diorama morphs into Robbo's Chicago nightclub, run by Robbo Ortona (Eric Schneider), an up-and-coming hood with a heart. His top confidant is Little John Dante (Will Chase); his archenemy is the king mobster P.J. Sullivan (jauntily menacing Rick Holmes).

Robbo's place keeps getting shut down by (who else?) Lt. Nottingham, the sheriff-in-spirit who is Sullivan's police patsy (Adam Heller plays him with an appealing Jimmy Durante vibe).

The compact, sweet-voiced Schneider inhabits the hero with a hint of Sinatra swing, and Chase brings a breezy charm to Little John. Kelly Sullivan (as crusading TV host and Robbo's love interest Marian) and Amy Spanger (as John's

frustrated fiancé Alana) both match a talent for the comic with winning vocals.

Jukebox-style musicals can be hit-and-miss, but Nicholaw and Holmes have a knack for matching songs with scenes.

One oddity: While a huge numeral “7” is displayed at the show’s start, Robbo and John’s seven comrades seem almost afterthoughts (except for the excellent Jeffrey Schechter as Willie) until they’re unleashed for some rousing dance moves on “Come Blow Your Horn.”

Holmes’ book features some good gags, and if there’s any real crime here it’s in how some jokes are overexplained. When Sullivan leers at Marian, “Is there a Romeo in your future?” her tart reply — “No, but there’s a Joliet in yours” — can stand on its own, without the subsequent primer on the state prison.

It’s no secret “Robin” has Broadway aspirations — and Nicholaw has the Tony-nom track record. This new show is a crowd-pleaser, no doubt. Its staying power might depend on whether it can find more narrative depth, and whether audiences might soon OD on ’60s “Mad Men” chic and other retro pleasures.

But if the show’s impact is less substantial than a kick in the head, it’s plenty enough to put a smile on the face.



Eric Schneider (as Robbo Ortona) sings “(Love Is) The Tender Trap” in “Robin and the 7 Hoods” directed by Casey Nicholaw at The Old Globe.
Craig Schwartz

'[Robin](#) and the 7 Hoods' a fun-filled caper

By [James Hebert](#), UNION-TRIBUNE THEATER CRITIC

Sunday, August 1, 2010 at 9:06 p.m.



/ Craig Schwartz

Eric Schneider (as Robbo Ortona) sings "(Love is) The Tender Trap" in "Robin and the 7 Hoods" directed by Casey Nicholaw at The Old Globe.

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Posted: Sun., Aug. 1, 2010, 4:49pm PT

Robin and the 7 Hoods

(Old Globe, San Diego; 587 seats; \$89 top)

By [BOB VERINI](#)

An Old Globe presentation in association with the Seven Hoods Limited Partnership, produced with the permission of Warner Bros. Theatrical Ventures, of a musical in two acts with book by Rupert Holmes, lyrics by Sammy Cahn and music by Jimmy Van Heusen. Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw. Music supervision, vocal and incidental music arrangements, John McDaniel.

Robbo Ortona - Eric Schneider
Little John Dante - Will Chase
Marian Archer - Kelly Sullivan
Alana O'Dell - Amy Spanger
Lt. Nottingham - Adam Heller
Willie Scarlatti - Jeffrey Schechter
P.J. Sullivan - Rick Holmes

With: Timothy J. Alex, Clyde Alves, Graham Bowen, Andrew Cao, Cara Cooper, Page Faure, Lisa Gajda, Stephanie Gibson, Carissa Lopez, Vasthy Mompont, Beth Johnson Nicely, Aleks Pevec, Sam Prince, Tally Sessions, Brian Shepard, Anthony Wayne.

Much of the Old Globe's "Robin and the 7 Hoods," an adaptation of a clumsy 1964 movie musical, plays like a big fat hit. That hit is "Guys and Dolls," whose characters and tone are shamelessly mimicked -- until one particular Casey Nicholaw staging of a Sammy Cahn/Jimmy Van Heusen song starts to lend the tuner a distinctive glow, prominently visible thereafter.

Retained from the glum pic, which presented the Rat Pack at its most listless, are the title and premise of a latter-day Chicago scoundrel enriching the poor at fatcats' expense. The period has been pushed from Prohibition to 1962 in homage to "Mad Men," though that cynical smash's influence is less evident in ironic social satire than in designer Gregg Barnes' tie and lapel widths. (Robert Brill's grim set does evoke a Windy City skyscraper, but echoes of prison and conformity keep dampening the sense of tuner fun.)

The "Guys and Dolls" parallels are inescapable. After a "Runyonland"-like prelude set to the pic's hit "My Kind of Town," the "Robin" plot doles out a romance between a smoothie hood and an uptight reformer, kicked off by a wager; a raffish, henpecked lowlife resisting marriage to a nitery chantoosie; and a hard-boiled dick eyeballing mugs and molls running riot. And flying the comic couple, rather than the main lovers, off to a Latin American rendezvous doesn't qualify as a blow for originality.

Yet all the familiarity -- and pro forma squabbles of cafe owner Robbo (Eric Schneider, tinnily echoing Sinatra) and sworn enemy P.J. Sullivan (Rick Holmes) -- suddenly melt away when Robbo leads crusading telejournalist Marian (Kelly Sullivan) to the floor, each claiming "I Like to Lead When I Dance." Their turn becomes a three-act play with dozens of ploys to take command, like the compelling narratives always told by Fred and Ginger between the lines of a Continental or Carioca.

Thereafter the plot sputters through a wan "Ocean's 11" gambit as the gang rips Sullivan off, and the gags are groaners. (A flirting Marian, rebuffed, explains "It was an ice-breaker. But then so was the Titanic.") Both Sullivan and soubrette Amy Spanger apply relentless energy to roles lacking logic and consistency.

But the insouciant Van Heusen melodies and wicked Cahn wit lift the spirits as Nicholaw's dances reveal character and texture. This is a composer/lyricist catalog put to its canniest use and arranged by John McDaniel, Bill Elliott and David Chase with Nelson Riddle surely smiling down from jazz heaven.

Showstoppers emerge from unlikely sources. Gallant Jeffrey Schechter leads the grateful recipients of Robbo's largesse in a thrilling tap number to "Walkin' Happy," harkening back to Gower Champion's heyday.

"Come Blow Your Horn" has consigliere Little John (Will Chase) boosting the gang's morale in a burst of athleticism rivaling Bernstein's "Cool" for cool.

As far as development goes, fresher choices already lurk at the fringes. With Chase delightfully channeling Dean Martin in "You Can't Love 'Em All," surely Dino's carelessly boozy egotism would serve as a better obstacle to his fiancée's tender trap than John's current, lame "fear of commitment."

Similarly, Schneider occasionally drops his plastic ring-a-ding-ding veneer to reveal ambivalence about Robbo's shady past; his morality, only vaguely dealt with, is supposedly central to his dilemma. If we genuinely cared about his redemption, we could be made to cheer, from Adam Heller's Lt. Brannigan bolstering our hero (a terrific use of "High Hopes") right up to the trickily scripted finale.

Still, the 7 Dwarfs were nothing without a terrifying Wicked Witch, and "7 Hoods" won't hit its stride until there's menace at its core.

Despite, or maybe because of, what must be a world record for quips about violent death, we're never fearful of the consequences for kidnapped Marian or John, let alone for Chicago, should the bland, buffoonish P.J. reign triumphant. And with no fear, there's no emotional connection and no show. (The team might take another look at Peter Falk's over-the-top monster mobster, the '64 pic's most watchable element.)

Even if the "Guys and Dolls" specter doesn't recede, the writing and playing must go "all the way" to offer a hero to rally around and a villain to revile. Until then, "Robin and the 7 Hoods" will flash its grin and divert its audience for a while without truly hittin' 'em where they live.

Sets, Robert Brill; costumes, Gregg Barnes; lighting, Kenneth Posner; sound, John Shivers, David Patridge; orchestrator, Bill Elliott; music director, Mark Hummel; dance music arranger, David Chase; stage manager, Peter Wolf. Opened, reviewed July 30, 2010. Runs through Aug. 22. Running time: 2 HOURS, 25 MIN.

Musical numbers: "Overture," "My Kind of Town," "Come Dance with Me," "You Can't Love 'Em All," "Call Me Irresponsible," "What Makes It Happen," "I Like to Lead When I Dance," "Life Is For Livin'," "Walkin' Happy," "More Than Likely," "Same Old Song and Dance," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head," "Entr'acte," "The Tender Trap," "Come Fly with Me," "Come On Strong," "High Hopes," "Love Is a Bore," "Come Blow Your Horn," "Ring-a-Ding Ding."

THEATER REVIEW

Fine music, dancing lift weak book for Old Globe’s ‘Robin’

BY ANNE MARIE WELSH
For the North County Times

If music were all it took to make a show, the Sammy Cahn-Jimmy Van Heusen songs for “Robin and the 7 Hoods” would rocket the Old Globe’s “new” musical to the top. Just the brassy medley in the overture — “My Kind of Town (Chicago Is),” “High Hopes,” “Come Fly With Me” — brings back instant memories of the Rat Pack era of finger-snapping, Martini-swilling, pre-counter-culture cool. Add the bongos and saxophones in Bill Elliott’s orchestrations, and you’ve got a dream score for a Vegas show.

But this latest musical to premiere at the Old Globe never gets beyond the appeal of those songs. Despite some terrific dance numbers by director-choreographer Casey Nicholaw, who grew up in San Diego, and the energetic presentation by a game cast, this is yet another jukebox musical that leaves the talent literally tap-dancing over the void. As in the 2009 premieres “Sammy” and “The First Wives’ Club,” there’s just not enough there there to anchor an engaging show.

Rupert Holmes, who 25 years ago won Tony Awards for “Edwin Drood,” concocted the “Robin and the 7 Hoods” book, basing it very loosely on the Frank Sinatra-produced 1964 film. Holmes transposes the Prohibition-era story to the early ’60s, removing the machine guns and faux violence, while adding wonderful songs either dropped from or never meant for the film.

In the process, the writer kills the tongue-in-cheek tone that made the



One of the high-energy dance numbers in “Robin and the 7 Hoods.” Photo courtesy of Craig Schwartz

“Robin and the 7 Hoods – A New Musical”

WHEN 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; through Aug. 29
WHERE Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park, San Diego
TICKETS \$68-\$89
INFO 619-234-5623
www.theoldglobe.org

movie a light-yet-watchable star vehicle for Frankie, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr. and Bing Crosby, along with Edward G. Robinson in a self-mocking cameo that triggers the action. Oddly, the women’s roles (and many of their costumes) in the musical remain a crude throwback to the cardboard dames and molls of gangster lore; they’re nothing like the glorious bimbos of “Guys and Dolls.”

The show unfolds on Robert Brill’s soaring unit set, an evocation of muscular Chicagoland architecture against which the supposed mobster Robbo Ortone (Eric Schneider) doesn’t make much of an im-

pression. Schneider has a smooth and supple voice and apes the loose-limbed Sinatra manner credibly enough. As written, Robbo’s role is passive; it’s the crusading TV reporter and love interest, Marian, who decides to make him a Robin Hood hero, while throwing herself at him and eventually at his personal enemy No. 1, P.J. Sullivan.

Nonetheless, actor Kelly Sullivan manages to fire the part of Marian with confident singing and sparkling personality. Less so for Amy Spanger in the thankless role of Alana O’Dell, the second banana attempting to strong-arm her reluctant boyfriend, Little John, into proposing. It doesn’t help that this implausible manager of Robbo’s club gets costumed in unflattering Capri pants jumpsuits.

Dimpled cutie Will Chase makes a charming rascal of Little John, with Adam Heller turning in the show’s most convincing portrayal as Lieutenant Nottingham, a cop on the take whose rough demeanor hides the usual

‘Robin’

Continued from Page 21

heart of gold. Another good character turn comes from Jeffrey Schechter as the tap-dancing bag man, Willie Scarlatti; Schechter gets to wear suits in bold chartreuse and bright orange, the loudest of many wild outfits created by costume designer (and San Diego native) Gregg Barnes.

Nicholaw stretches his company into some fabulous rhythmic counterpoints in the tap-crazy “Walkin’ Happy” for Willie and the downtrodden, and in a deservedly showstopping “Come Blow Your Horn” for Little John and the Hoods. Robbo and Marian create a won-

drously detailed and original story in dance to “I Like to Lead When I Dance”; in many ways their duet is the most impressive, if least flashy, number in the show.

Ably assisted by Barnes’ over-the-top costumes, the choreographer pumps up the absurdities in the feline fantasy “Life is for Livin’,” the stewardess massages of “Come Fly With Me,” and the show-girls-in-wedding-veils finale, “Ring-a-Ding Ding.”

With nothing on its mind but Van Heusen’s familiar melodies and Cahn’s clever lyrics, “Robin and the 7 Hoods” will become another empty crowd-pleaser playing uneasily next to the substantial summer fare on the Globe’s outdoor stage.

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THEATER REVIEW: Weak book lifted by music, dance in Globe's 'Robin'

- Story
- Discussion

By ANNE MARIE WELSH - For the North County Times | Posted: August 4, 2010 10:00 am | No Comments
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[Buy this photo](#) Craig Schwartz Will Chase (as Little John Dante), Amy Spanger (as Alana O'Dell) and the cast perform "Come Fly with Me" in the World Premiere of Robin and the 7 Hoods - A New Musical directed by Casey Nicholaw with book by Rupert Holmes, lyrics by Sammy Cahn and music by Jimmy Van Heusen, at The Old Globe July 14 - Aug. 22, 2010. Photo by Craig Schwartz.

If music were all it took to make a show, the Sammy Cahn-Jimmy Van Heusen songs for "Robin and the 7 Hoods" would rocket the Old Globe's "new" musical to the top. Just the brassy medley in the overture ---- "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," "High Hopes," "Come Fly With Me" ---- brings back instant memories of the Rat Pack era of finger-snapping, Martini-swilling, pre-counter-culture cool. Add the bongos and saxophones in Bill Elliott's orchestrations, and you've got a dream score for a Vegas show.

But this latest musical to premiere at the Old Globe never gets beyond the appeal of those songs. Despite some terrific dance numbers by director-choreographer Casey Nicholaw, who grew up in San Diego, and the energetic presentation by a game cast, this is yet another jukebox musical that leaves the talent literally tap-dancing over the void. As in the 2009 premieres "Sammy" and "The First Wives' Club," there's just not enough there there to anchor an engaging show.

Rupert Holmes, who 25 years ago won Tony Awards for "Edwin Drood," concocted the "Robin and the 7 Hoods" book, basing it very loosely on the Frank Sinatra-produced 1964 film. Holmes transposes the Prohibition-era story

to the early '60s, removing the machine guns and faux violence, while adding wonderful songs either dropped from or never meant for the film.

In the process, the writer kills the tongue-in-cheek tone that made the movie a light-yet-watchable star vehicle for Frankie, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr. and Bing Crosby, along with Edward G. Robinson in a self-mocking cameo that triggers the action. Oddly, the women's roles (and many of their costumes) in the musical remain a crude throwback to the cardboard dames and molls of gangster lore; they're nothing like the glorious bimbos of "Guys and Dolls."

The show unfolds on Robert Brill's soaring unit set, an evocation of muscular Chicagoland architecture against which the supposed mobster Robbo Ortone (Eric Schneider) doesn't make much of an impression. Schneider has a smooth and supple voice and apes the loose-limbed Sinatra manner credibly enough. As written, Robbo's role is passive; it's the crusading TV reporter and love interest, Marian, who decides to make him a Robin Hood hero, while throwing herself at him and eventually at his personal enemy No. 1, P.J. Sullivan.

Nonetheless, actor Kelly Sullivan manages to fire the part of Marian with confident singing and sparkling personality. Less so for Amy Spanger in the thankless role of Alana O'Dell, the second banana attempting to strong-arm her reluctant boyfriend, Little John, into proposing. It doesn't help that this implausible manager of Robbo's club gets costumed in unflattering Capri pants jumpsuits.

Dimpled cutie Will Chase makes a charming rascal of Little John, with Adam Heller turning in the show's most convincing portrayal as Lieutenant Nottingham, a cop on the take whose rough demeanor hides the usual heart of gold. Another good character turn comes from Jeffrey Schecter as the tap-dancing bag man, Willie Scarlatti; Schecter gets to wear suits in bold chartreuse and bright orange, the loudest of many wild outfits created by costume designer (and San Diego native) Gregg Barnes.

Nicholaw stretches his company into some fabulous rhythmic counterpoints in the tap-crazy "Walkin' Happy" for Willie and the downtrodden, and in a deservedly showstopping "Come Blow Your Horn" for Little John and the Hoods. Robbo and Marian create a wondrously detailed and original story in dance to "I Like to Lead When I Dance"; in many ways their duet is the most impressive, if least flashy, number in the show.

Ablly assisted by Barnes' over-the-top costumes, the choreographer pumps up the absurdities in the feline fantasy "Life is for Livin'," the stewardess massages of "Come Fly With Me," and the showgirls-in-wedding-veils finale, "Ring-a-Ding Ding."

With nothing on its mind but Van Heusen's familiar melodies and Cahn's clever lyrics, "Robin and the 7 Hoods" will become another empty crowd-pleaser playing uneasily next to the substantial summer fare on the Globe's outdoor stage.

"Robin and the 7 Hoods ---- A New Musical"

When: 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; through Aug. 29

Where: Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park, San Diego

Tickets: \$68-\$89

Info: 619-234-5623

Web: theoldglobe.org

SAN DIEGO

Regional Reviews by Bill Eadie

Robin and the 7 Hoods

Old Globe

Jukebox musicals, defined as setting a story to a group of popular songs written for another purpose, are the bane of many serious theatregoers' existence. This type of show is reviled as being entertaining rather than artful, ultimately cheapening the theatrical experience for the sake of fast bucks from gullible audiences.

All the same, several jukebox shows have succeeded on Broadway by following one of three basic models. One is the *Jersey Boys*, or singers, model, where a group of terrific singers perform popular hits from a particular artist or group with enough of a storyline to move smoothly from one hit to the next. A second is the *Mamma Mia*, or book, model, where a storyline is built around the songs and much of the pleasure comes from seeing how the book's author moves the plot from one song to the next. Finally, there's the *Crazy for You*, or dance, model, where the story and the music serve as opportunities for a series of audience-pleasing production numbers.



Jeffrey Schechter and cast dance
"Walkin' Happy"

Robin and the 7 Hoods, a jukebox musical now in a pre-Broadway tryout at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre, tries to follow all three models for success simultaneously. Unfortunately, it's currently succeeding only with the dance model, and it could still use a bit of work on that front.

Essentially, the title, which references a 1964 musical film, is merely a shell for a new story and new songs. Of the songs in the original film, only the Sammy Cahn/Jimmy Van Heusen composition "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)" survives. The rest are drawn from the Cahn/Van Heusen catalog, however, and include such standards as "Call Me Irresponsible," "Walkin' Happy," "The Tender Trap," "All the Way," "Come Fly with Me" and "High Hopes."

The book, too, contains only an outline of the original film's story. The lead character is still called Robbo (Eric Schneider), his sidekick is still called Little John (Will Chase), and the story is still set in Chicago's gangster culture—but that's about where the similarities end. The time has been reset from the twenties to the Swingin' Sixties. Marian (Kelly Sullivan) is now a television talk show host who is crusading against mobsters, and Little John now has a love interest named Alana (Amy Spanger) whose struggles with her commitment-phobic man have been lifted directly from *Guys and Dolls* (a rather audacious steal by book author Rupert Holmes). There is still a rob-from-the-rich-and-give-to-the-poor component, but the revised plot follows the "caper" format favored in Rat Pack films such as *Ocean's 11*.

In fact, the book is currently the weakest element of the show. The story takes a long time to get started, and Mr. Holmes seems to have gone for riffing on period material, so old and stale are the jokes used to set it up. By act two, the jokes have become more organic to the storyline, and Mr. Holmes even gets in one very funny song lead-in (to "Come Fly with Me").

In terms of the songs, many of them belong to Mr. Schneider. His is a pleasing and

well-trained baritone, though at the performance I saw he had trouble getting started (which was too bad, because "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)" is the opening number), and he was straining some at the top of his range. Once he hit his stride, however, he phrased several of the songs in interesting ways. While he wisely steers clear of imitating the Sinatra sound, he could show that he is having a little more fun with the vocals, the way the Chairman so often did.

Mr. Chase does more imitating (his is the Dean Martin character) than Mr. Schneider, but then, Mr. Chase's voice seems to be more limited in range and ability. He manages to project the relaxed feel that characterizes Dean Martin's style quite well, though.

Both Ms. Spanger and Ms. Sullivan also have solo numbers. Of the two, Ms. Spanger has the stronger voice, but Ms. Sullivan has a nice way with a comic lyric.

Kudos especially in the music category to Bill Elliott's orchestrations, which were made for a twelve-piece big band, under the excellent direction of Mark Hummel. The band's sound is so tight that I wished I could have seen them playing, at least some of the time.

What keeps the musical performance from driving the audience enjoyment of the show is that so many of the songs feature Mr. Schneider, so there isn't enough variety. There are also long stretches in act one, particularly where the songs are not familiar ones, and the automatic connection of audience to song that drives the jukebox isn't always present.

That leaves dancing, and here we are in the more-than-capable hands of Director/Choreographer Casey Nicholaw. The plot is set mostly in nightclubs, so the stage can often be cleared for a dance number. Mr. Nicholaw obliges wherever possible, and his hardworking ensemble (featuring the acrobatic dancing of *A Chorus Line*'s Jeffrey Schecter) gamely hoofs throughout much of the show. Of the four leads, Ms. Spanger has a real flair for dancing, while the other three move well whenever necessary. At the performance I attended, the dancing in act one impressed but did not energize until the tap number "Walkin' Happy" nearly stopped the show about two-thirds of the way in. After that, the audience happily anticipated each succeeding dance number, and "Come Fly with Me" nearly stopped the show again.

With some additional work (and a larger stage—Mr. Nicholaw seems a bit hemmed in by the size of the space in the Old Globe's 650-seat theatre), *Robin and the 7 Hoods* could well succeed as a dance show. Revision of the early parts of act one would also make it a stronger piece.

The Old Globe run has been extended through August 29 on the Old Globe's Donald and Darlene Shiley Stage, 1363 Old Globe Way in San Diego's Balboa Park. Tickets (\$68-\$89) available by calling (619) 23-GLOBE [234-5623] or by visiting [The Old Globe's website](#).

The Old Globe presents *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, a new musical. Book by Rupert Holmes, Lyrics by Sammy Cahn, Music by Jimmy Van Heusen. In association with The Seven Hoods Limited Partnership. Produced with the permission of Warner Brothers Theatrical Ventures. Based on the original screenplay by David R. Schwartz. Directed and Choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, with Scenic Design by Robert Brill, Costume Design by Gregg Barnes, Lighting Design by Kenneth Posner, Sound Design by John Shivers and David Patridge, Orchestrations by Bill Elliott, Music Director Mark Hummel, Dance Music Arranger David Chase, Hair and Wig Design by Josh Marquette, and Casting by Tara Rubin Casting. Stage Manager Peter Wolf, Music Supervision, Vocal and Incidental Music Arrangements by John McDaniel.

The cast includes Will Chase (Little John Dante), Adam Heller (Lieutenant Nottingham), Rick Holmes (P.J. Sullivan), Jeffrey Schecter (Willie Scarlatti), Eric Schneider (Robbo Ortona), Amy Spanger (Alana O'Dell) and Kelly Sullivan (Marian Archer), with Timothy J. Alex, Clyde Alves, Graham Bowen, Andrew Cao, Cara Cooper, Paige Faure, Lisa Gajda, Stephanie Gibson, Carissa Lopez, Vasthy Mompont, Beth Johnson Nicely, Aleks Pevec, Sam Prince, Tally Sessions, Brian Shepard and Anthony Wayne (Ensemble).

[San Diego.com Arts](http://SanDiego.com/Arts)

ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS at the Old Globe Theatre

By Welton Jones

Posted on Sat, Jul 31st, 2010

Last updated Sat, Jul 31st, 2010

Remember the Age of Cool in the 1960s? Preceding the Summer of Love and ruled by Frank Sinatra? Smoking, drinking and finger-snapping. Las Vegas, not San Francisco. All the guys wore thin ties and the girls, plenty of underwear.

Sinatra cranked out albums of swingin' ballads, scored with television specials and made buddy movies with Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. Many of these featured songs by the crack team of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen, like "High Hope," "Come Fly With Me" and "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)".

Rupert Holmes, who had a minor hit in 1985 with an adaptation of Charles Dickens' unfinished "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" and who's been shopping for adaptable properties ever since, has banged together a serviceable framework for several of these Cahn-Van Heusen songs using some plot ideas from a Sinatra film based vaguely on the Robin Hood legends transferred to Prohibition Chicago.

And this is the package which will spend a few weeks this summer at the Old Globe Theatre as "a new musical" titled ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS.

The very best decision made by the packager was to hire a big-band arranger, Bill Elliott, to score the show for a husky 13-piece orchestra that music director Mark Hummel knows so well how to motivate. The songs sound mint-fresh, even without Sinatra to sing them, and the power of the arrangements drive the whole show to fairly skip down its path.

Holmes dumped the Roaring 20s, fortunately, in favor of the swinging 60s and his smug, ponderous wit actually fits the period, if you don't dwell too long on details. (Robin Hood becomes the vaguely ethnic Robbo Ortona and Maid Marian is TV news-hen Marian Archer. Willie Scarlatti, Police Lieutenant Nottingham and Alana O'Dell also show up.)

The plot is too complicated to bother with. Suffice to say it offers two pairs of squabbling lovers destined to merge at the end and a lot of toothless Damon Runyon-style gangster business. And Holmes has found better song-hooks than many scavengers of songwriters' trunks manage.

Director-choreographer Casey Nicholaw is almost as heroic an ingredient here as Bill Elliott's arrangements. True, Nicholaw fixates on time steps and grapevines like many another dancemaster. He just understands better than most how to use such tools with genial energy and stylish enthusiasm. His 15 tap dancers for "Walkin' Happy," his prancing stewardess platoon for "Come Fly With Me" and the scorching virility of many guys selling out for "Come Blow Your Horn" reach right out and zap an audience. It's the ensembles that sell this show, not the solos.

Charisma is in short supply among the principals, though everybody does fairly well. Eric Schneider singing the Sinatra songs takes getting used to, since the personality just isn't present. Same with Will Chase in the Dean Martin stuff. It's sweet to hear them both wield the familiar phrasing tricks like hitting a note with a glancing blow before settling into pitch. They're not just doing imitations but their own personas aren't vivid enough for the music. Yet.

Amy Spanger as a nightclub boss sings well and moves aggressively but her tough act isn't convincing. Nor are the various aspects of the TV reporter offered with much conviction by Kelly Sullivan, despite her sturdy song and dance work.

Adam Heller is fun as a sentimental cop on the take and Jeffrey Schecter dances like Nicholaw's pet demon. I'm still not sure about the "seven hoods" of the title. I count eight and they're pretty much interchangeable.

Robert Brill's set is functional in a sterile way, very dependent upon neon signs. Kenneth Posner's lighting is most of what could be desired but Gregg Barnes could have done more with the costumes even if it is an ugly look. And some of the choreography is really not happy with some of the girls' costumes.

Given the potent music and the sleek staging, it's probably just as well that the plot is mere gossamer fantasy.



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BWW Reviews: Broadway-Bound ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS



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Tuesday, August 3, 2010; Posted: 09:08 AM - by [Don Grigware](#)

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Based on the rat pack film of the 60s of the same title with [Frank Sinatra](#), [Dean Martin](#), [Sammy Davis, Jr.](#) and [Peter Lawford](#), *Robin and the 7 Hoods* is now a classy, sassy, jazzy musical, set in the early 60s... with all the glorious old standards by [Sammy Cahn](#) and [Jimmy Van Heusen](#), and helmed by the ingenious [Casey Nicholaw](#), whose staging and choreography send it soaring. There is something to please everyone: an engagingly upbeat gangster storyline, that includes not one but *two* love scenarios, the aforementioned sensational music and dance, and a fabulous *dream* cast that infuse the whole

proceedings with a winning team spirit.

It's the story of how crime bosses controlled and ran Chicago - including the police - and how one woman and one hood fought back and even managed to do a little economic good for mankind along the way. Remember Robin Hood and his merry handouts? You can't take it too seriously, though; it's tongue-in-cheek like religion in *Guys and Dolls*. You can pray a bit but just experiment, leaving plenty of room to laugh and enjoy what you see. Gangster themed *Guys and Dolls* and *Robin and the 7 Hoods* are both high on the entertainment scale. Whereas *G & D* has a cartoonish comic strip texture, *Hoods* is more grounded but, as with *film noir*, add in lots of stylish gloss. Nothing short of mesmerizing is the toe tapping in "Walkin' Happy", and other pulsating production numbers take off like "The Tender Trap", "Come Blow Your Horn" and "Ring-a-Ding Ding". Great tunes that were simply made to dance to!

Heading the snappy ensemble is [Eric Schneider](#) as Robbo Ortona, a little dynamo with a gigantic sex appeal. Filling the shoes of sidekick Little John Dante is magnetic [Will Chase](#). Both make a super pleasing duo that can joke, sing and dance with gusto. [Kelly Sullivan](#) is the beautiful and feisty heroine, TV reporter Marian Archer who falls head over heels in love with Robbo ("All the Way") and [Amy Spanger](#) is Alana O'Dell, Little John's gal, who calls to mind the gutsiness of Miss Adelaide from *Guys and Dolls*: sexy, brassy with a great set of pipes. [Rick Holmes](#) makes a rather dashing villain as P. J. Sullivan and [Adam Heller](#) is scene-stealingly infectious as Inspector Nottingham ("High Hopes"). [Jeffrey Schecter](#) shines as hood Willie Scarlatti in "Walkin' Happy". The entire ensemble simply dazzle.

Set by [Robert Brill](#) with its wide open quality, multiple levels and sliding panels is cinematic and works quite effectively to replicate the big city night life of that decade and [Gregg Barnes'](#) costumes are colorful and period attractive.

Make no mistake about it, this show has [Casey Nicholaw](#) written all over it. It sparkles, crackles and razzle dazzles from top to bottom thanks to his endearing genius. It should have legs and be an enormous hit wherever it sets up shop.

Robin and the 7 Hoods book by [Rupert Holmes](#); lyrics by [Sammy Cahn](#) & music by [Jimmy Van Heusen](#) directed & choreo-graphed by [Casey Nicholaw](#) *Old Globe Theatre*, San Diego through Augsut 29



Widow has a Cahn-do spirit

Lyricist's hits staged with Rat Pack flavor

Posted: 1:18 AM, August 4, 2010



Michael Riedel

Broadway Matinee

SAN DIEGO -- By now, most of the great songwriter catalogs have been strip-mined for Broadway jukebox musicals, with decidedly mixed results.

For every smash like "Crazy for You" (George and Ira Gershwin) and "Jersey Boys" (the Four Seasons), there have been misfires like "Dream" (Johnny Mercer), "Swinging on a Star" (Johnny Burke) and the criminal "Good Vibrations" (the Beach Boys).

But one catalog that avoided the jukebox lure (or trap) for a long time was that of the great lyricist Sammy Cahn, who died in 1993. He was Frank Sinatra's go-to guy for a phrase.



Joan Marcus

A stage version of "Robin and the 7 Hoods" is loosely based on the 1964 film starring Rat Pack regulars Frank Sinatra (from left), Sammy Davis Jr. and Dean Martin.

"Of all the writers, Sammy's words fit my mouth the best," Sinatra once said. Cahn's songs, written with composer Jimmy Van Heusen, defined the eras of Sinatra's creative life, from swinging Sinatra ("Ring-a-Ding Ding") to somber Sinatra ("Only the Lonely") to introspective Sinatra ("September of My Years").

This roster of hits has been zealously guarded all these [years](#) by Sammy's widow, **Tita Cahn**, who laughingly refers to herself as "the Wife That Roars."

When **Twyla Tharp** announced she was bringing a Sinatra show to Broadway called "Come Fly With Me," Tita roared. Ol' Blue Eyes may have made the song a standard -- and his estate blessed the musical -- but he didn't write it. Tharp had to take out the song, which at one point opened and closed the show, and change the title of the musical to "Come Fly Away."

"When Sammy died, **David Geffen** told me they'd be coming after the catalog," says Cahn. "And they did. They wanted to do a 'Three Coins in the Fountain' musical, but I thought it was hokey idea. And there were lots of proposals for revues. But I held back. I wanted a book musical, and I wanted to do it when the time was right."

Amid resurgent nostalgia for the Rat Pack -- Frank, Dino and Sammy -- and "Mad Men" unleashing a craze for all things early '60s, which Cahn's lyrics did so much to define, that time would be now.

The vehicle is "Robin and the 7 Hoods," which opened last week in San Diego at the Old Globe. All the songs -- including "My Kind of Town," "Call Me Irresponsible," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head," "All the Way" -- are by Cahn and Van Heusen.

Based on the 1964 Rat Pack movie, the musical is being directed and choreographed by **Casey Nicholaw** ("The Drowsy Chaperone"). The script is by **Rupert Holmes** ("The Mystery of Edwin Drood"). Formidable Broadway names, to be sure, but as one production source says: "Make no mistake. Tita is calling the shots."

She's also steamrolling to Broadway: "We don't have a theater yet. But we are coming. You can put that in your column."

She'll have to sort a few things out, however. The verdict, from the critics and theater insiders, is lukewarm.

While there's much to make you smile -- including zippy production numbers like "Come Fly With Me," which is performed by airline stewardesses wearing bright orange outfits -- the plot is a thicket of complications and, as several critics pointed out, a bit of a lift from "Guys and Dolls."

And not all the jokes are as snappy as, well, a [Sammy Cahn](#) lyric.

The San Diego Union Tribune called it a "canny, stylish new show that's tons of frothy fun." But the [Los Angeles Times](#) was cooler: "The show can't figure out if it wants to be an honest-to-goodness book musical or a jukebox jamboree."

"Robin and the 7 Hoods" is very loosely based on its namesake movie, which itself was little more than an excuse for Frank to be Frank, Dean to be Dean, and Sammy to be Sammy. The setting has been moved from Prohibition to the early '60s ("Mad Men" again), and the plot centers on a gangster with a heart of gold who, with his band of "seven hoods" and a cute TV reporter named Marian Archer, matches wits with a gangster with a heart of ice.

Privately, production sources say there should be some cast changes for Broadway. The Old Globe cast is perfectly fine for the regionals -- **Amy Spangler, Eric Schneider, Will Chase, Kelly Sullivan** are solid, second-tier Broadway hands. But star-wattage is a must for New York. At the opening-night performance, production sources were whispering the names **Harry Connick Jr.** and **Kelli O'Hara**.

Connick's expert with this sort of material. And, as anyone who saw "The Pajama Game" knows, the sparks between him and O'Hara are such that the fire department is on call to hose down any stage on which they appear.

As things stand, the stars of "Robin and the 7 Hoods" are the songs. The new arrangements, by **John McDaniel** and **Bill Elliott**, are as crisp and refreshing as Campari and soda on a sunny San Diego afternoon.

Now it's up to the Wife That Roars to make the rest of "Robin and the 7 Hoods" a Show That Swings.

theatre review

Music makes merry regardless of story

Cahn and Van Heusen's tunes make up for a soft book in the Broadway-bound production.

By Patricia Morris Buckley
SDUN Theatre Critic

"Robin and the 7 Hoods" is not unlike the drinks that its characters keep knocking back during the course of the show—one part TV's "Mad Men," one part Rat Pack and a twist of Robin Hood legend. The result is like a fizzy champagne cocktail that's fun and tasty, yet not very filling.

The show is based on the 1964 Rat Pack movie of the same name, but there's little of that original plot left. In this version we meet Robbo, a reformed crook who's trying to go legit as a nightclub owner in 1960s Chicago, only to be closed down by crime lords [J]. Sullivan ([J]), as in Prince John) and his police stooge, Lt. Nottingham, who want to own all the action themselves. So Robbo enlists the help of his seven merry men, especially best friend Little John, to bring down [J]. (although six of the merry men are just background).

There's a bit of female problems added to the mix. Will is trying not to get engaged to his lady, Alana O'Dell (the role echoes Miss Adelaide in "Guys and Dolls"). And Robbo falls hard for TV reporter Marian Archer. (The illusions to the original Robin Hood myth are deftly done, never going overboard, but laid on just enough for us to go, "I get it now.")

But most of the plot feels as if it's just an excuse to sing the frothy songs of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen. Songs such as "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," "Call Me Irresponsible," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head" and "All the Way" are tried and true hits. One has to wonder why the creative team even brought in Tony Award-winner Rupert Holmes to craft the musical's story when there's so little of it. At times, characters have four lines, then launch into yet another song. In fact, the show could lose two or three musical numbers without really suffering, as it is so musically overstuffed.

What makes this production so watchable is all the talent that went into making it. The cast is almost overflowing with Broadway veterans. The production elements are highly polished. But it's Tony Award-nominated director/choreographer Casey Nicholaw ("The Drowsy Chaperone") who is the real star of the show.

Nicholaw's direction is so crisp and fast paced, it takes a while for the lack of story to sink in. But the choreography is where he really shoots a bull's eye (a little Robin Hood humor there). It's different, yet familiar. And when the tap dancing in "Come Blow Your Horn" ends, you want it to start up again right away.

The four leads have amazing singing voices. Eric Schneider

"ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS"

Through Aug. 29
Old Globe Theatre
Tickets: \$68-\$89
234-5623
theoldglobe.org

(best known as Frankie Valli in Broadway's "Jersey Boys") channels his inner Frank Sinatra perfectly. Will Chase ("Billy Elliott") is pleasant as Little John, although the role is still rather undeveloped. As Alana, Amy Spanger ("Rock of Ages") has a powerhouse voice and presence, while Kelly Sullivan ("Young Frankenstein") taps more into the Maid Marian vibe than an ambitious TV reporter.

Two other standouts are Jeffrey Schechter ("A Chorus Line") as Willie Scarlati, whose dancing is as effervescent as his bubbly stage presence, and Adam Heller ("Caroline of Change") as Nottingham. Heller's best moment is singing "High Hopes," another song that feels shoehorned in, but is still great fun.

Robert Brill has designed a sleek set of boxes that easily

see Robin, page 22



Will Chase (as Little John Dante), Amy Spanger (as Alana O'Dell) and the cast perform "Come Fly with Me."



Kelly Sullivan (Marian Archer), Eric Schneider (Robbo Ortona), Will Chase (Little John Dante) and Amy Spanger (Alana O'Dell) lead the musical.

FROM PAGE 19 ROBIN

become a jail, a nightclub or a corporate office, and the use of neon makes it feel even jazzier. Gregg Barnes costumes are so period perfect and tailored looking that if they were a dessert, they'd be the best possible soufflé you could order at a high class restaurant. Kenneth Posner's lights are laser sharp and add that extra level of polish to the sets and costumes.

"Robin and the 7 Hoods" isn't meant to be heavy entertainment, and that's good because it doesn't even come close. But with so much talent on and off the stage, it's impossible not to enjoy—just like a glass of great champagne. ♦



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Music makes merry regardless of story

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By Patricia Morris Buckley
SDUN Theatre Critic



“Robin and the 7 Hoods” is not unlike the drinks that its characters keep knocking back during the course of the show—one part TV’s “Mad Men,” one part Rat Pack and a twist of Robin Hood legend. The result is like a fizzy champagne cocktail that’s fun and tasty, yet not very filling.

The show is based on the 1964 Rat Pack movie of the same name, but there’s little of that original plot left. In this version we meet Robbo, a reformed crook who’s trying to go legit as a nightclub owner in 1960s Chicago, only to be closed down by crime lords P.J. Sullivan (P.J., as in Prince John) and his police stooge, Lt. Nottingham, who want to own all the action themselves. So Robbo enlists the help of his seven merry men, especially best friend Little John, to bring down P.J. (although six of the merry men are just background).

There’s a bit of female problems added to the mix. Will is trying not to get engaged to his lady, Alana O’Dell (the role echoes Miss Adelaide in “Guys and Dolls”). And Robbo falls hard for TV reporter Marian Archer. (The illusions to the original Robin Hood myth are deftly done, never going overboard, but laid on just enough for us to go, “I get it now.”)

But most of the plot feels as if it’s just an excuse to sing the frothy songs of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen. Songs such as “My Kind of Town (Chicago Is),” “Call Me Irresponsible,” “Ain’t That a Kick in the Head” and “All the Way” are tried and true hits. One has to wonder why the

creative team even brought in Tony Award-winner Rupert Holmes to craft the musical's story when there's so little of it. At times, characters have four lines, then launch into yet another song. In fact, the show could lose two or three musical numbers without really suffering, as it is so musically overstuffed.

What makes this production so watchable is all the talent that went into making it. The cast is almost overflowing with Broadway veterans. The production elements are highly polished. But it's Tony Award-nominated director/choreographer Casey Nicholaw ("The Drowsy Chaperone") who is the real star of the show.

Nicholaw's direction is so crisp and fast paced, it takes a while for the lack of story to sink in. But the choreography is where he really shoots a bull's eye (a little Robin Hood humor there). It's different, yet familiar. And when the tap dancing in "Come Blow Your Horn" ends, you want it to start up again right away.



Kelly Sullivan (Marian Archer), Eric Schneider (Robbo Ortona), Will Chase (Little John Dante) and Amy Spanger (Alana O'Dell) lead the musical

The four leads have amazing singing voices. Eric Schneider (best known as Frankie Valli in Broadway's "Jersey Boys") channels his inner Frank Sinatra perfectly. Will Chase ("Billy Elliott") is pleasant as Little John, although the role is still rather undeveloped. As Alana, Amy Spanger ("Rock of Ages") has a powerhouse voice and presence, while Kelly Sullivan ("Young Frankenstein") taps more into the Maid Marian vibe than an ambitious TV reporter.

Two other standouts are Jeffrey Schecter (“A Chorus Line”) as Willie Scarlatti, whose dancing is as effervescent as his bubbly stage presence, and Adam Heller (“Caroline of Change”) as Nottingham. Heller’s best moment is singing “High Hopes,” another song that feels shoehorned in, but is still great fun.

Robert Brill has designed a sleek set of boxes that easily become a jail, a nightclub or a corporate office, and the use of neon makes it feel even jazzier. Gregg Barnes costumes are so period perfect and tailored looking that if they were a dessert, they’d be the best possible soufflé you could order at a high class restaurant. Kenneth Posner’s lights are laser sharp and add that extra level of polish to the sets and costumes.

“Robin and the 7 Hoods” isn’t meant to be heavy entertainment, and that’s good because it doesn’t even come close. But with so much talent on and off the stage, it’s impossible not to enjoy—just like a glass of great champagne.

“Robin and the 7 Hoods ”

Through Aug. 29

Old Globe Theatre

Tickets: \$68-\$89

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BACKSTAGE

THE ACTOR'S RESOURCE

Regional Review: 'Robin and the 7 Hoods'

at the Old Globe Theatre

Reviewed by Evan Henerson

August 02, 2010



Photo by Craig Schwartz

Who knew that a Rat Pack tale had the makings of a jukebox musical and that the Oscar-winning duo of Jimmy Van Heusen and Sammy Cahn would be just the fellas to stock it? The crafters of "Robin and the 7 Hoods" did, apparently. Out of a 1964 Robin Hood update, book writer Rupert Holmes and director Casey Nicholaw have built a Broadway-bound show that is every bit—as the saying goes—a "kick in the head."

Nicholaw, his music team, and his aces cast get much of the credit for this. The production is edge-free, full of bounce, and with more Van Heusen–Cahn standards than one could shake a martini at. The dancing (choreography Nicholaw) is joyous and occasionally muscular; this tale of Chicago mobsters defending their turf and falling for the wrong dames contains barely a whiff of danger. Conflict? When imprisoned club owner Robbo Ordoni (Eric Schneider) informs his radio-host flame Marian Archer (Kelly Sullivan) that they don't mix, she just sings away his objections—via the song "All the Way," thank you very much.

It seems Robbo had been trying to go legit, only to be constantly messed with by crime kingpin P.J. Sullivan (Rick Holmes). So Robbo and the boys decide to hit P.J. where he lives, clearing out his safe and anonymously giving the money away to those in need. Marian, who has been trying to bring down P.J., champions this mysterious new Robin Hood. Meanwhile Robbo's right-hand man Little John Dante (Will Chase) is still chasing skirts while his too-faithful fiancée Alana O'Dell (Amy Spanger) seems content to be Miss Adelaide. Caper, double cross, happy endings.

Schneider, slick but boyish of face, isn't trying to channel Sinatra. Chase makes the cowardly Little John a lovable lout. Sullivan's Marian wears the sexiest of Gregg Barnes' costumes and engages in a frisky duet with Robbo ("I Like to Lead When I Dance") and vamping solo with Holmes' P.J. ("Come on Strong"). Less well served is the usually wonderful Spanger, badly costumed and stuck with spurned gangster's-moll dialogue.

Deserving extra plaudits is Jeffrey Schechter as the quick-tapping Willie Scarlatti, the only one of Robbo's hoods who has a name (or an identity, barely). Schechter leads the cast in a show-stopping rendition of "Walkin' Happy" late in the first act.

After a couple of hours with these hoods, Globe audiences should be "walking happy" themselves.

Presented by and at the Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego.

July 30–Aug. 29. Tue.–Wed., 7 p.m.; Thu.–Fri., 8 p.m.; Sat., 2 and 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 and 7 p.m.

(619) 234-5623. www.theoldglobe.org.

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Published: Aug. 10, 2010

Updated: 12:41 p.m.

'Robin and the 7 Hoods' makes jukebox musicals look easy

By PAUL HODGINS

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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If all jukebox musicals could ransack a music library as gloriously rich as Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen's, they'd have a fighting chance to be more than mere window dressing for a greatest-hits parade.

That's the first impression you'll take away from "Robin and the 7 Hoods," the spirited and grandly entertaining new musical making its world premiere at San Diego's Old Globe. Thanks to a clutch of Cahn/Van Heusen classics, and a canny if corny book by Rupert Holmes, this "Mad Men"-era updating of the 1964 Rat Pack film musical is a pleasure to hum along to, though it's about as substantial as the smoke all the perpetually puffing characters keep blowing at each other.



Eric Schneider (center, as Robbo Ortona) and the cast perform "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)" in the World Premiere of "Robin and the 7 Hoods - A New Musical," directed by Casey Nicholaw with book by Rupert Holmes, lyrics by Sammy Cahn and music by Jimmy Van Heusen, at The Old Globe July 14 - Aug. 29,

[CRAIG SCHWARTZ,](#)
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Director Gordon Douglas' movie was set in Prohibition-era Chicago, the perfect time and place for its nightclubs-and-bootlegging story. Holmes brings the action forward to the early '60s, which makes less sense but allows costume designer Gregg Barnes to dress the men in terrific-looking, snug-fitting suits and hair designer Josh Marquette to give the women Jackie Kennedy 'dos. It's also a good era for the show-within-a-show nightclub scenes, which involve a lot of Sinatra/Martin-style wise guy banter and onstage drinking.

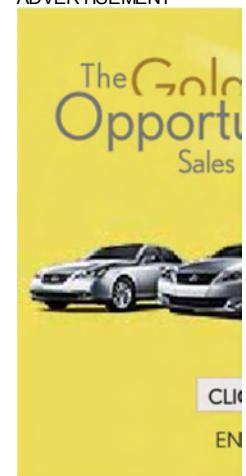
Holmes' story departs wildly from the movie's tale of tit-for-tat gangster wars.

Robbo Ortona (Eric Schneider), a fast-rising Chicago nightclub owner, is running afoul of his main rival, established mobster P.J. Sullivan (Rick Holmes). Robbo and his right-and man Little John Dante (Will Chase) devise a plan to rob Sullivan's club. Little John is a less than willing accomplice to the deed — he's a good timer whose pesky girlfriend Alana (Amy Spanger) wants him to stay

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'Robin and the 7 Hoods'

Where: Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego

When: Through Aug. 22. 7 p.m. Tuesdays-Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Thursdays-Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays

How much: \$68-\$89

Length: 2 hours, 15 minutes

Suitability: Older children and adults

Tickets: 619-234-5623

Online: www.theoldglobe.org

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the more successful portrayal. She plays the classic put-upon girlfriend and milks more laughs than expected as a not-so-silent sufferer of Little John's elusive commitment to a lasting relationship. Sullivan's Archer has a less fetching voice than her fellow leads, a shortcoming that gets in the way at crucial moments.

For all its flaws, "Robin and the 7 Hoods" seems closer to being a finished product than many world-premiere musicals I've seen at the Old Globe. Perhaps that's because director-choreographer Casey Nicholaw knows how to handle material that's half homage, half parody – he was Tony-nominated for his work on "The Drowsy Chaperone." With a little effort, this show could provide a similar level of fun, though Holmes' book, unfortunately, will never hold a candle to Bob Martin and Don McKellar's sublimely ridiculous "Drowsy" script.

"Robin" is what it is: an homage to a half-forgotten Rat Pack movie with a story that co-opts the popularity of the "Mad Men" era to make itself look good. Like most jukebox musicals, you'll enjoy it but forget all about its plot and other disposable elements the moment you leave the theater.

Contact the writer: 714-796-7979 or phodgins@ocregister.com

out of trouble and tie the knot.

Ambitious TV journalist Marian Archer (Kelly Sullivan) is convinced Robbo pulled off the heist to help Chicago's poor, but his plan is more cynical and complicated than that. Much more complicated.

If you find yourself drawing a series of flow charts on your program just to follow various plot twists and character motivations, then you've hit upon this show's major weakness. Holmes' story is needlessly convoluted and doesn't hang together. And Robbo's attempt to create an alibi – he and Little John manage to crack Sullivan's safe between numbers during a show they're headlining at Robbo's nightclub – strains credulity to the breaking point.

But with songs this good, who cares? You get to hear mid-century classics like "Come Fly With Me," "High Hopes" and "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)" sung by some very impressive talent, backed by a big-band orchestra that will make you feel like you're at a Vegas floor show back in the golden age (Bill Elliott's orchestrations are spectacular). If only Robert Brill's undernourished sets could have equaled the brilliance of the costumes and music, this debut production would have provided a complete aural and visual feast.

As with most Old Globe musicals, there's Broadway talent in the lead roles, and it pays off handsomely for the most part.

Schneider, who played Frankie Valli in "Jersey Boys" on Broadway, brings some of that audacious approach to Robbo, and he gives the role a snaky, Sinatra-esque charm. He also knows how to throw sparks when Robbo's relationship with Marian transforms from adversarial to something more friendly.

Chase's Little John is more of a charmer and ladies' man than Robbo, and the actor brings tremendous likability to the part. He conveys a Dean Martin-like combination of cheerful indifference and the mild annoyance that comes with being an unwilling second banana. His singing voice, like Schneider's, is well trained and perfect for this material.

Among the leading women, Spanger's Alana is

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Robin and his hoods hit on toe-tappin' tunes

Classic Hollywood and The Old Globe merge imaginations in the West Coast premiere and Broadway-bound musical "Robin and the 7 Hoods."

Let's Review

Diana Saenger
CRITIC



Updating the Warner Bros. 1964 film is a book by Tony

Award-winner Rupert Holmes, a toe-tapping score by James Van Heusen with lyrics by Sammy Cahn, and an impeccable direction and choreography by multi-Tony Award nominee Casey Nicholaw.

The audience sets upright in its seats the moment Robbo Ortona (Eric Schneider, Frankie Valli in "Jersey Boys") steps on stage and begins singing "My Kind of Town." Seconds later, when he's joined by the cast (and then the beautiful girls who perform their sexy number "Come Dance With Me")

'Robin and the 7 Hoods'

■ **When:** Matinees, evenings through Aug. 22
■ **Where:** The Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park
■ **Tickets:** \$69-\$89; (619) 23-GLOBE, www.TheOldGlobe.org

"Robin and the 7 Hoods" promises to be an exciting evening — and then delivers.

The story follows two Chicago gangsters in the 1960s and their turf wars. Robbo is trying to go straight. He's got two clubs going and business is good. But it would be better if his competitor P. J. Sullivan (Rick Holmes-Broadway, "Spamalot") wasn't paying off the cops to close Robbo down with preposterous code violation accusations.

The plot is thin — one that mirrors David R. Schwartz's



Little John Dante (Will Chase) and Alana O'Dell (Amy Spanger) amuse in the 'Come Fly with Me' scene in 'Robin and the 7 Hoods.' CRAIG SCHWARTZ

screenplay of the film starring Rat Packers Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis, Jr., but the rousing music from the Globe's incredible orchestra heightens the enjoyment of the show.

With his cigarette ever in hand and a great voice, Robbo somewhat reminds us of Sinatra — but this show is de-

signed to be its own. Robbo's second in command, Little John Dante (Will Chase, "Billy Elliott"), embodies many elements of Dean Martin's character but manages to make the part unique. He's gaga over all the girls in the club, while promising to someday tie the knot with Alana (Amy Spanger, "Chicago").

What's amusing is that dialogue lines are timed with the musical numbers; like when Little John is explaining his predicament to Alana and they break into song on "Call Me Irresponsible."

Cara Cooper (Broadway, "Legally Blonde") plays the lead gal, Marian. She's a TV show host who takes on both

gangsters in her coverage, but falls for Robbo. The duet they perform, "I Like to Lead When I Dance," sets the tone for their push/pull relationship.

A first peek at the tall, sleek set design (that looks like the exterior of a building) seems to offer little excitement. However, the designers created a working environment that not only fits the production, but easily suits the scenes where the huge ensemble sings and dances, Robbo's men pull off a heist, and romance swirls as the leads compete for who gets to be the boss.

Nicholaw's ("The Drowsy Chaperone") direction and enthusiastic choreography is spot on in this energetic production. The team of Van Heusen and Cahn is the pièce de résistance of this show. Each song brings a louder and livelier burst of applause — including from actor Dennis Farina ("Law and Order") who was in the audience and is a producer of the show. I have never heard so many high-pitched whistles in a show as well.

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Robin and his hoods hit on toe-tappin' tunes

Aug 5, 2010

By Diana Saenger

Classic Hollywood and The Old Globe merge imaginations in the West Coast premiere and Broadway-bound musical "Robin and the 7 Hoods." Updating the Warner Bros. 1964 film is a book by Tony Award-winner Rupert Holmes, a toe-tapping score by James Van Heusen with lyrics by Sammy Cahn, and an impeccable direction and choreography by multi-Tony Award nominee Casey Nicholaw.

The audience sets upright in its seats the moment Robbo Ortona (Eric Schneider, Frankie Valli in "Jersey Boys") steps on stage and begins singing "My Kind of Town." Seconds later, when he's joined by the cast (and then the beautiful girls who perform their sexy number "Come Dance With Me") "Robin and the 7 Hoods" promises to be an exciting evening - and then delivers.



Little John Dante (Will Chase) and Alana O'Dell (Amy Spanger) amuse in the 'Come Fly with Me' scene in 'Robin and the 7 Hoods.'

Photo: Craig Schwartz

The story follows two Chicago gangsters in the 1960s and their turf wars. Robbo is trying to go straight. He's got two clubs going and business is good. But it would be better if his competitor P. J. Sullivan (Rick Holmes-Broadway, "Spamalot") wasn't paying off the cops to close Robbo down with preposterous code violation accusations.

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Robin And The Seven Hoods

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Take a couple dozen songs written by multiple Oscar winners Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen, hire a couple dozen Broadway and regional theater triple-threats to perform them to Tony-winning director/choreographer Casey Nicholaw's fancy footwork, string them together with a plot suggested by a 1962 Frank Sinatra flick, call the confection Robin And The Seven Hoods—and you've got the thoroughly enjoyable World Premiere (and possibly Broadway-bound) new musical now delighting audiences at San Diego's Old Globe Theater.

Yes, Robin And The Seven Hoods is a jukebox musical, and the snootier of musical theater critics will doubtless dismiss it for no reason other than that, but theatergoers in search of two and a half hours of sensational singing and dancing—and considerable laughter to boot—will likely award Robin And The Seven Hoods the cheers and standing ovation that Sunday's matinee audience greeted it with.

A quick glance at Wikipedia reveals that little more than the title and cast of characters remains from the Sinatra flick. Like the original film, Robin And The Seven Hoods (The Musical) still centers on a 20th Century Robin Hood, but the 1930s setting has been moved forward to the early '60s, the era when the movie was made and Sinatra and his Rat Pack reigned as the Kings of Vegas (and the rest of the rest of show biz as well).

Lead character Robbo (Eric Schneider) is now the owner of Robbo's, a popular Chicago nightclub, constantly being shut down by Lieutenant Nottingham of the CPD (Adam Heller) on trumped up charges like violating City Ordinance #35—no water trough for horse drawn carriages. Nottingham is squarely in the pocket of mob boss P.J. Sullivan (Rick Holmes), who tells Robin in no uncertain terms, "Nobody operates independent in my town."

Robbo decides it's time for a counsel of war, so he visits best friend Little John (Will Chase) whose current job is helping his girlfriend Alana O'Dell (Amy Spanger) run Robbo's Colony Club—that is when he's not flirting with the club's leggy showgirls. Robbo explains his plan to Little John. They're going to break into P.J.'s vault and "relieve P.J. of the money he takes from us."

Meanwhile, beautiful Marian Archer (Kelly Sullivan), host of TV's Target Chicago, has as her current target none other than P.J. himself. She visits the mob boss in his high-rise office, accuses him of racketeering and extortion, then invites him to be a guest on her afternoon chat program. When Robbo arrives to complain about P.J.'s taking over the Flamingo Nightclub next door to the Colony ("You're on my turf now."), Marian is happy to see that she's not the only one with P.J. as her target. She invites Robbo to join her on her show to help "get P.J. a prison cell with his name on the door," and promises Robbo to use her connections to get his club reopened if he agrees to the appearance.

Robbo's plan is for his seven hoods to break into the Flamingo vault while he and Little John are making their nightclub singing debut (a la Ol' Blue Eyes and perennial sidekick Dean Martin, cocktails and cigarettes in hand). "It's so wonderful to have been here all night," he tells the SRO crowd at the end of their first song, "where you could see us."

The money now safely in Robbo's hands, Robbo instructs one of his hoods, Willie Scarlatti (Jeffrey Schecter), to spread it around and "tell folks it came courtesy of a crook named P.J. Sullivan." Despite orders not to reveal the actual source of the money, Willie blurts out, "I work for Rob..." then corrects himself, "...bin Hood," and the legend of this modern thief who steals from the rich and gives to the poor is born.

Soon everybody's got loads of dough and Marian, who's "gone after hoods, but never gone out with one," is dating Robbo. Unfortunately, Robbo's secret comes out on Target Chicago, and next thing you know, Robin Hood circa '62, finds himself wearing stripes in the Chicago City Jail. Act One Curtain.





Book writer Rupert Holmes has constructed this wisp of a plot with the primary goal of stringing twenty plus Cahn/Van Heusen tunes together, and it does its job quite nicely indeed, segueing cleverly from dialog to song cue to song. Here are few examples:

- When Robbo accuses Little John of spending more time with the Colony Club showgirls than running the club, his best friend protests, telling his buddy that having finally found the right girl, his hands are tied. After all, in the immortal words of Sammy Cahn, "You Can't Love 'Em All"—but you can try.

- Little John, who seem to be carrying on his long-term unmarried relationship with Alana in the tradition of Guys And Dolls' Nathan Detroit and Miss Adelaide, assures her that he's available to her anytime. "Anytime you can pick up the phone and call me ..." he begins, only to have Alana complete his sentence with, "Irresponsible," and the pair are soon duetting to the fourth of Cahn/Van Heusen's Oscar winners.

- When Marian shows up at Robbo's club in a sexy slinky evening dress and Robbo gets all flirty with her, she informs him in song that "I Like To Lead When I Dance."

With a cast headed sexy, smoky-eyed Schneider (one of Broadway's Frankie Vallis), Robin And The Seven Hoods scores high on the triple threat performance chart. Schneider's costars Chase, Heller, Holmes, Schechter, Spanger, and Sullivan simply could not be better, and the same goes for the hugely talented song-and-dance ensemble—Timothy J. Alex, Clyde Alves, Graham Bowen, Andrew Cao, Cara Cooper, Paige Faure, Lisa Gajda, Stephanie Gibson, Carissa Lopez, Vasthy Mompont, Beth Johnson Nicely, Aleks Pevek, Sam Prince, Tally Sessions, Brian Shepard, and Anthony Wayne. (It should be particularly satisfying for Angelinos to see stellar UCLA grad Pevek in his biggest assignment yet.)

Nicholaw's direction is snappy and his choreography has just the right '60s flair. The production's standout number is the show-stopping "Walking Happy," which has Schechter and the indefatigable ensemble tap, tap, tapping to the beat of a song inspired by Robbo's generosity with the greenbacks.

Speaking of songs, Holmes' book adroitly fits in three of Cahn/Van Heusen's four Oscar-winners—"All The Way," "High Hopes," and "Call Me Irresponsible" (guess he couldn't figure out a way to include "Three Coins In A Fountain") in addition to Oscar-nominated Sinatra hits like "(Love Is) The Tender Trap" and "My Kind Of Town" (the latter from the original Robin And The Seven Hoods). And what would a Cahn/Van Heusen show be without Frankie's "Come Fly With Me," sung here by Schneider surrounded by a bevy of sexy PanAm stewardesses?

Robin And The Seven Hoods gets its big band '50s/'60s Nelson Riddle-style zing from the talented team of John McDaniel (music supervision, vocal and incidental music arrangements), David Patridge and John H Shivers (sound design), Bill Elliott (orchestrator), Mark Hummel (music director), and David Chase (dance music arranger). It looks terrific too. Robert Brill's scenic design captures the granite high rise look of mid-20th Century Chicago, gorgeously lit by lighting designer Kenneth Posner. Gregg Barnes has designed hundreds of flashy period costumes, from street wear to mobster chic to glamorous evening wear to night club pizzazz. Thumbs up too to Josh Marquette's hair and wig design. Peter Wolf is stage manager, and Brian Bogin and Jess Slocum are assistant stage managers.

The last time Casey Nicholaw directed and choreographed a Broadway musical, it was The Drowsy Chaperone, which went on to win five Tonys and score Nicholaw nominations for both direction and choreography. While Robin And The Seven Hoods is not at that show's groundbreaking level, its entertainment value is high indeed. If Sunday's audience reaction was any indication, the show's cast and creative team may well be justified in their "high apple pie in the sky hopes" for Robin and his septet of hoods.

Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through August 29. Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:00, Thursdays and Fridays at 8:00, Saturdays at 2:00 and 8:00, Sundays at 2:00 and 7:00. Reservations: 619 234-5623 www.oldglobe.org

--Steven Stanley
August 8, 2010

Photos: Craig Schwartz

Tommy Guns and Classy Tunes

A 13-piece band makes familiar songs seem newly minted.

San Diegans hear a show's "Broadway bound" so much the tag has lost pizzazz. The Old Globe's recent musicals — *The First Wives' Club*, *Sammy*, and *The Whisper House* — came decked with Great White Way hype and crept away like a buck-naked Emperor. The Globe's current offering, the "Broadway bound" *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, isn't an embarrassment. In some ways it's an embarrassment of riches.

Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen wrote instant hits. It helped, of course, that Frank Sinatra sang "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)" and "High Hopes," and Dean Martin, "Ain't That a Kick in the Head." The combination made for an indomitable, "top of the heap" attitude. The songs aren't just upbeat, they're apple-pie-in-the-sky high — the opposite of the blues. When one of the Rat Pack sang a sad song, you knew it was temporary: Frank, Dean, or Sammy just couldn't stay down for long.

Robin unfolds like a Greatest Hits of Cahn (lyrics) and Van Heusen (music). Bill Elliott's fresh, savvy orchestrations — with splashy, intricate grace notes and riffs — and a 13-piece

band make familiar songs feel newly minted. Act 2, for example, goes from "(Love Is) The Tender Trap" to "All the Way" to "Come Fly with Me." Hit songs take off and soar like jets at O'Hare.

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Robin trades in bows and arrows for machine guns.

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Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park
Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw; cast: Eric Schneider, Adam Heller, Jeffrey Schecter, Sam Prince, Amy Spanger, Rick Holmes, Kelly Sullivan, Will Chase, Anthony Wayne, Aleks Pevec, Beth Johnson Nicely, Stephanie Gibson; scenic design, Robert Brill; costumes, Gregg Barnes; lighting, Kenneth Posner; sound, John Shivers, David Patridge; orchestrator, Bill Elliott; music director, Mark Hummel
Playing through August 29; Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. Thursday through Saturday at 8:00 p.m. Sunday at 7:00 p.m. Matinee Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. 619-234-5623.

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Calendar THEATER

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Rupert Holmes's book isn't bad. It's got banter and snappy one-liners (asked whose idea it was to rob from the rich and give to the poor, Willie replies, "Karl Marx?"). But it's based on showbiz personalities, not developed fictional characters. In effect, it requires the Rat Pack aura to pull it through. Mere mortals, even backed by top-notch direction and production numbers, pale in comparison.

Eric Schneider has a big voice (he played Frankie in *Jersey Boys*), but as Robbo he's more smiling nice guy — even when naughty — than head hood. Will Chase (Little John) has stellar chops, as does Amy Spanger, her Alana being a more arch Adelaide ("a poy-sun...could develop a code"). As Marian, Kelly Sullivan pushes vocally, at times coming up flat. Her and Sch-

neider's "I Like to Lead When I Dance," however, is one of the show's best numbers.

The Old Globe recently made costume designer Gregg Barnes an associate artist. Smart move: his work ranks with Old Globe mainstays Lewis Brown and Robert Morgan. For Robin, along with the thin ties and oil-slick suits from 1962, Barnes adds a real period touch: capri pants. Robert Brill's solemn box set, building façades, proves serviceable, especially when Kenneth Posner's lighting tweaks the basic gray.

Like *Boeing-Boeing*, also set in the early '60s (the Old Globe has a thing about the period), the characters' actions and attitudes are dated. Though Holmes has scrubbed the sexism from Frank's and Dino's personae, in every scene, someone is either lighting a cigarette or pouring a cocktail — the stimulants du jour of the *Mad Men* era. They smoke and swill so much in *Robin* they inspire not awe but thoughts of addictive personalities, desiccated livers, and lung cancer.

If you look past the spectacle, the show-stopping dance numbers in particular, *Robin* feels like an imitation. It relies on a bygone mystique it can't conjure. But the Cahn/Van Heusen parade of hits, and Elliott's orchestrations, almost carry the show, anyway. ■



Tommy Guns and Classy Tunes

By [Jeff Smith](#) | Published Wednesday, Aug. 11, 2010



San Diegans hear a show's "Broadway bound" so much the tag has lost pizzazz. The Old Globe's recent musicals — *The First Wives' Club*, *Sammy*, and *The Whisper House* — came decked with Great White Way hype and crept away like a buck-naked Emperor. The Globe's current offering, the "Broadway bound" *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, isn't an embarrassment. In some ways it's an embarrassment of riches.

Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen wrote instant hits. It helped, of course, that Frank Sinatra sang "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)" and "High Hopes," and Dean Martin, "Ain't That a Kick in the Head." The combination made for an indomitable, "top of the heap" attitude. The songs aren't just upbeat, they're apple-pie-in-the-sky high — the opposite of the blues. When one of the Rat Pack sang a sad song, you knew it was temporary: Frank, Dean, or Sammy just couldn't stay down for - long.

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Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park

Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw; cast: Eric Schneider, Adam Heller, Jeffrey Schechter, Sam Prince, Amy Spanger, Rick Holmes, Kelly Sullivan, Will Chase, Anthony Wayne, Aleks Pevec, Beth Johnson Nicely, Stephanie Gibson; scenic design, Robert Brill; costumes, Gregg Barnes; lighting, Kenneth Posner; sound, John Shivers, David Patridge; orchestrator, Bill Elliott; music director, Mark Hummel

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Hood ornaments

The Old Globe's *Robin and the 7 Hoods* and the rest of this week's theater listings

By [Martin Jones Westlin](#)



If Chicago is the greatest city in the nation (and it is), then it stands to reason it warrants a great stage biography (which The Old Globe Theatre's *Robin and the 7 Hoods* partially succeeds in becoming). Playwright Rupert Holmes drops the Robin Hood legend into 1960s gangland Chicago, wherein shady restaurateur Robbo Ortona (Eric Schneider) sets a local crime boss on his ear and wins the love of a good woman. It's all very schmaltzy and predictable— but music and dancing are what drive a piece like this, and this show is second to none. Classic Sammy Cahn and Jimmy van Heusen tunes like “All the Way” and “Call Me Irresponsible” dot the landscape, and director-choreographer Casey Nicholaw has lit up “Come Blow Your Horn” with some of the best dance moves I've ever seen. Through Aug. 29 at The Globe's Donald and Darlene Shiley Stage, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. \$68- \$89. oldglobe.org

CultureVulture

Robin and the 7 Hoods

Old Globe Theatre, San Diego

Book by Rupert Holmes

Lyrics by Sammy Cahn

Music by Jimmy Van Heusen

Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw

July 14 – August 29, 2010

www.theoldglobe.org/tickets/production.aspx?PID=7817

(see video clip below)



Eric Schneider and Kelly Sullivan in "Robin and the 7 Hoods"

at the Globe Theatre

Photo by Craig Schwartz

Set in Chicago in 1962, "Robin and the 7 Hoods" is a fun, safe romp down memory lane. Bound for Broadway, this world premiere combines the plot of the Frank Sinatra movie of the same name with the songs of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen. If you're older, you know every song by heart, and if you're younger you should at least recognize them.

Billed as a modern take on the Robin Hood legend, the show is more hood than Robin. Eric Schneider plays Robbo, a man with a criminal past who wants the world to believe he's going straight and has no intention of doing so. Robbo is being squeezed by big-time gangster P. J. Sullivan (Rick Holmes), who keeps sending Lieutenant Nottingham (Adam Heller) to shut down Robbo's club. To get back at Sullivan, Robbo devises an elaborate, perhaps farfetched, plan to (you guessed it) steal from Sullivan and give to the poor.

Meanwhile, muckraking television personality Marian Archer (Kelly Sullivan), who is on a crusade to take down P.J. Sullivan, meets Robbo and finds both love and the means to get rid of P.J. for good. Sullivan (the actress not the hoodlum) is outstanding as Archer, portraying an aggressive journalist suffering from in-over-her-head naivete.

A note on casting. The Globe seems eager to highlight that Robin shares the time period with the hit TV show "Mad Men." If so, Schneider's Robbo evokes Pete Campbell more than Don Draper.

Of course, the music is the real star. Standards like "High Hopes," "Come Fly With Me," "All the Way" and "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)" make you forget the wafer-thin storyline. However, the book by Rupert Holmes melds the action almost seamlessly with the music. The choreography is a bit pedestrian, with the exception of an outstanding tap number, and there are times when the Old Globe stage seems just a bit crowded, but with all those catchy tunes, I'm not sure any of that really matters.

The show is directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, who succeeds in making this a fun ride. There are times when the cast seem to be saying: "Wanna sing another song? Sure why not?" The show gets extra points for not taking itself too seriously.

The costume design by Gregg Barnes is mostly functional, and intentionally over-the-top at times. The set design by Robert Brill evokes the muscularity of Chicago architecture.

Bottom line: Who cares about the plot? What's not fun about lyrics and music by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen?

Joshua Baxt



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THEATER REVIEW: A little love for “Robin And The 7 Hoods: A New Musical”

Jean Lowerison - SDGLN Theater Critic | Sat, 08/07/2010 - 9:34am | [Login to bookmark or comment](#)

SAN DIEGO: Here's my rule for new musicals: If you can't write a good new plot, borrow enough great songs and get some kick-ass arrangements to make the story irrelevant. Then hire some good singers and a knockout pit orchestra.

That's what they've done for “Robin And The 7 Hoods,” running through Aug. 29 at the Old Globe Theatre. Casey Nicholaw directs and choreographs.

Though the title implies a remake of the 1964 Rat Pack film, it is not. Sammy Cahn's widow gave Nicholaw (“The Drowsy Chaperone”) access to her husband's songbook; Nicholaw picked 21 of the songs Cahn wrote with Jimmy Van Heusen and moved the time to the ring-a-ding ding era of the pre-radicalized '60s. He then realized the film's plot would no longer work.

So Rupert Holmes cobbled together a new book to fit around the songs – a complex story line based on a turf war between mob boss P.J. Sullivan (Rick Holmes), who owns Chicago, lock, stock and cops, and upstart entrepreneur Robbo Ortona (Eric Schneider), who spends much of the play trying to keep on-the-take cop Lt. Nottingham (Adam Heller) from closing down his Colony Club.

Of course, there are women: P.J.'s longtime girlfriend Alana (Amy Spanger), who like “Guys and Dolls” heroine Adelaide yearns for that little gold band, and TV talk show host Marian Archer (Kelly Sullivan), who falls for Robbo.

Bill Elliott's lush Big Band orchestrations and Nicholaw's peppy choreography (and no fewer than 10 big production numbers) are enough to make you forget that this isn't the Rat Pack. This show could easily stand alone as a nostalgic revue of Cahn-Van Heusen standards even without the plot.

Robert Brill's multilevel industrial-look set, all concrete girders and open “windows,” is particularly effective in the incongruous “(Love Is) The Tender Trap” number in which six hunky inmates do some ingenious pole dancing in those window spaces.

“Come Fly With Me” boasts a half dozen stewardesses in orange mini-skirts (ah, remember those great old PSA days?). And in the curiosity of the evening, Heller charms and amuses in the crooked cop's interpretation of “High Hopes.”

Schneider who opens the show with a socko interpretation of “My Kind Of Town (Chicago Is)” delivers the vocal goods throughout, as do all the principals. My favorite is Sullivan's Marian, with the nice mellow tone once de rigueur in musicals. Contrasting with Sullivan is Spanger's contemporary, brassy sound so in vogue these days.

But the hands-down stars of this show are the orchestra and those great songs. How often do you get to say that?

The details

“Robin And The 7 Hoods” plays through Aug. at the Old Globe's Harvey and Sheryl White Theatre in Balboa Park.

Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m.

[ENLARGE](#)



Photo credit: Carol Rosegg

From left, Eric Schneider, Kelly Sullivan, Amy Spanger and Will Chase.



VISIT O



REVIEW: Songs make Old Globe's 'Robin and the 7 Hoods' a crowd-pleaser

José A. López

Published 08/04/2010 - 9:03 p.m.

"Robin and the 7 Hoods," the new musical playing through Aug. 29 at the Old Globe Theatre, channels the spirit of the Rat Pack — if not the script of their critically panned 1964 movie of the same name.

The play — inspired by the movie that took the legend of Robin Hood, set it in 1930s Chicago, and cast Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. in starring roles — is a reboot, to borrow from the popular movie-making term.

Not much survives from the celluloid version in this production. All that remains are some characters' names, the Chicago location and two songs, one of which is the signature number, "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)."

The peppy production, which has its sights set on Broadway, is filled with beloved music, high-energy dance numbers and a '60s cool factor that is in vogue thanks to the television series "Mad Men."

The comedy won over the opening night crowd with the mix, and the demand for tickets already resulted in an extension of its engagement.

The production shines the spotlight on the music of lyricist Sammy Cahn and composer Jimmy Van Heusen, who were brought together by Sinatra and who gave "Ol' Blue Eyes" some of his biggest hits, many of which are included in musical.

The play features a new book by Tony-winner Rupert Holmes, and even more songs from the legendary pairing of Cahn and Van Heusen, including "Come Dance With Me," "Call Me Irresponsible," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head," and "High Hopes."

On song selection alone, the Old Globe's production easily bests its predecessor, which included songs such as "Style," "Don't Be a Do-Badder" and "Mr. Boozie."

The Old Globe's story follows Robbo Ortona (Eric Schneider), a small-time Chicago hood recently out of prison who is trying to carve a living for himself in the nightclub business in Chicago in 1962.

His plans run afoul of P.J. Sullivan (Rick Holmes) the big mob boss who has most of the city's heavy hitters in his pocket. Lt. Nottingham (Adam Heller) is among the officials on the take, and one of his biggest duties appears to be shutting down Ortona's nightclub, "Robbo's," by citing outdated code regulations, such as requirements for horse troughs.

In order to get back at his nemesis, Robbo dreams up a scheme designed to hit Sullivan where it hurts, in his pocketbook and ego.

He enlists his seven "hoods," including his best friend, Little John Dante (Will Chase) and Willie Scarlatti (Jeffrey Schecter) to rob the safe in Sullivan's club and then give the money out to those in need. It's not charity that drives the scheme, but the desire to make people believe that Sullivan's grip on the town is softening (or, as one character puts it, to hit him in the "PR department.")

Things hit a snag — and the gang's anonymity is quickly lost — with the arrival of Marian Archer (Kelly Sullivan), the hard-hitting reporter whose intent is to take down Sullivan with the resources of her television show, which apparently, can go from a watchdog-type news hour to a telethon at the drop of a hat.

Those expecting to find a nuanced piece — like, say, the aforementioned "Mad Men" — will not find it here.

There are implausible plot holes, but the key is that it's all done with a wink and a nod, as if Holmes knew he was building the musical around the songs. In some parts, it's easy to deduce what song is coming next based



"Robin and the 7 Hoods," a new musical playing through Aug. 29 at the Old Globe Theatre, is a new take on a 1964 movie that featured members of the Rat Pack.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



José A. López

Email:
sports@pomeradonews.com

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Overall, the production, which is directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw with music supervision, vocal and incidental music arrangements from John McDaniel, benefits from strong performances and spectacular dances.

Schneider and Sullivan are at their strongest in "I Like to Lead When I Dance," an entertaining number that has them vying for dominance in their first formal meeting. "Come Blow Your Horn," which features all of the hoods singing and dancing, is easily the show-stopper along with "Walkin' Happy," which features a tap dancing ensemble piece led by Schechter.

Vocally the entire cast is strong, but Amy Spanger and Alana O'Dell, Little John's long-suffering girlfriend, is a standout, as is Heller with his raspy voiced, boxing-stanced lieutenant, especially during his rendition of "High Hopes."

Tickets for "Robin Hood and the 7 Hoods" range from \$68-\$89. The Old Globe Theater is at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

For more information, go to www.TheOldGlobe.org or call 619-234-5623.

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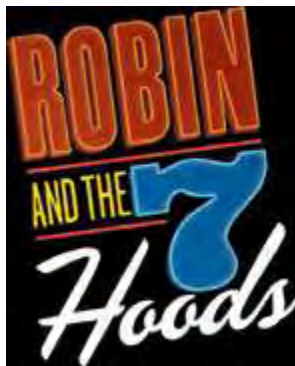


Broadway-Bound Musical Comedy Loaded With Zing And Pizzazz

**Monday, July 30, 2010
The Old Globe Theatre
San Diego, California**

Review by *Palm Springs Guides* Theatre & Cinema Critic/Reviewer Jack Lyons
Photos by Carol Rosegg

It was a memorable evening of theater in San Diego, as all three venues at the Old Globe complex were presenting productions. The Conrad Prebys plaza was a buzz with the hustle and bustle of patrons going to the world premiere of “Robin and the Seven Hoods” at the Shiley, with others attending the premiere of “The Last Romance” at the White arena stage and still others streaming into the Davies Outdoor Festival Theatre to catch a performance of “The Taming of the Shrew.”



San Diego’s Old Globe Theatre has an excellent track record when it comes to sending their world premiere productions off to Broadway. Most recent graduates of the venerable, 75-years-young, Tony-winning regional theater are “The Full Monty” and “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels.” Up next for a Broadway run is the Globe’s current musical comedy, “Robin and the 7 Hoods.”

The new musical comedy production with music by Jimmy Van Heusen, lyrics by Sammy Cahn and a book by Rupert Holmes, is a unique piece of work in that the show is lyric-driven. Tony-winning playwright Holmes crafted and shaped his book based on the lyrics of its 23 songs and musical numbers into a single book musical. That’s a 180-degree departure in traditional musical play construction.

Once the overture begins and we hear the sounds and the driving beat of the orchestra’s brass section as it fills the theater, the audience knows it’s in for something special. Under the deft and

innovative direction of Casey Nicholaw, who also choreographed the production, “Robin and the 7 Hoods” is a solid bet to open on New York’s “Great White Way” next year.

The story is set in Chicago during the freewheeling and swinging ’60s when everyone smoked, enjoyed a cocktail or two, winked when mobsters bought and ran nightclubs and “did business” with city officials. Robbo Ortona (wonderfully played by Eric Schneider) is a fast-talking, suave, nightclub owner who is beginning to feel the pressure of a takeover by shady operator P.J. Sullivan (Rick Holmes), a man with “excellent City Hall connections.” In order to save his club, Robbo comes up with a strategy and a plan to derail Sullivan’s gravy-train operations. Robbo and his boys will rob Sullivan’s safe and redistribute the cash to the poor people of the city who really need a break as well as to enjoy Sullivan’s ill-gotten cash. The legend of Robin Hood lives again!



Robbo’s right hand man, Little John Dante (Will Chase), is feeling pressure of his own in the form of girlfriend Alana O’Dell (Amy Spanger) who wants the two of them to marry. Dante, however, still enjoys his bachelor life with its obvious benefits in the form of the club’s chorines. But, I fear his days as a bachelor are numbered.



When local TV Host Marian Archer (Kelly Sullivan) and Robbo briefly meet in P.J.’s office, Robbo is captivated. However, Marian is too busy trying to entrap and take down Sullivan and his “City Hall connections” to take any notice of Robbo. The middleman between City Hall and the nightclub owners is Police Lt. Nottingham (nicely played with whimsy and great comedy timing by (Adam Heller). The main thrust of this lighthearted and entertaining show deals with the two camps and how they try to outwit one another.

In between the action, we get to enjoy the mating dances of Robbo and Marian, Little John and

Alana, as all four of these extremely talented singers and dancers finally get their acts together. (Remember the plot is driven by the lyrics of the songs they sing.) In the end, it's a case of the good guys (I figure that's Robbo and Marian) winning out over the bad guys (that's definitely P.J. Sullivan). The plot, such as it is, may not test the concentration powers of a brain surgeon but is extremely effective in showing-off the absolutely stunning dancing prowess of the entire company.



The catchy tunes and lyrics of Van Heusen and Cahn are brilliantly brought to life by its four principals and the ensemble with such numbers as: "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," "Call Me Irresponsible" (Chase and Spanger) and a very clever duet by Schneider and Sullivan combining song and dance in a ditty called "I like To Lead." Also, there is an absolutely electrifying ensemble dance number called "Walkin' Happy," led by Jeffrey Schecter that brings down the house in the first act. All of the show's dance movements by the ensemble literally soar with precision, and crispness throughout the entire evening.



The second act, not to be outdone by the first, features familiar favorites such as, "The Tender Trap," sung by Schneider who has a Robert Alda look and quality to him and a singing voice that Alda would have loved to possess. "Come Fly With Me" features Chase, Spanger and the high-kicking gals ensemble. Another audience favorite is the delightful "High Hopes" sung and danced by Heller and Schneider. The "Come Blow Your Horn" number by the guys is an adrenaline-infused dance trip that just blows away the audience (It stopped the show for almost a minute on opening night.) I haven't seen that many red-hot tap shoes on a stage since "42nd Street." It was both a visual and an audio delight. Director Nicholaw certainly knows how to get the most out of a wonderfully gifted group of dancers and singers. And, oh yes, did I mention they also sing in harmony while tripping the light fantastic? What a production number!

A great deal of the success of this show belongs, not only to Nicholaw, but also to his creative

team that includes: Scenic Designer Robert Brill, Costume Designer Gregg Barnes, Lighting Designer Kenneth Posner, Sound Designers John Shivers and David Patridge. Additional kudos to Orchestrator Bill Elliott for the terrific charts and arrangements, and to Music Director Mark Hummel, Dance Music Arranger David Chase and to John McDaniel, music supervisor/vocal and incidental music arranger.

“Robin and the 7 Hoods” is a glitzy, slick, fabulously produced show that is loaded with zing and pizzazz and should have no trouble winning over the hearts and minds of those parochial New Yorkers who tend to turn up their noses when the product isn’t home grown. Watch out New York! This snazzy show is coming your way next year.

The production at The Old Globe runs through Aug. 22.

For more [about The Old Globe](#), click here.

Songs make Old Globe's 'Robin and the 7 Hoods' a crowd-pleaser

BY JOSÉ A. LÓPEZ

"Robin and the 7 Hoods," the new musical playing through Aug. 29 at the Old Globe Theatre, channels the spirit of the Rat Pack — if not the script of their critically panned 1964 movie of the same name.

The play — inspired by the movie that took the legend of Robin Hood, set it in 1930s Chicago, and cast Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. in starring roles — is a reboot, to borrow from the popular movie-making term.

Not much survives from the celluloid version in this production. All that remains are some characters' names, the Chicago location and two songs, one of which is the signature number, "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)."

REVIEW

The peppy production, which has its sights set on Broadway, is filled with beloved music, high-energy dance numbers and a '60s cool factor that is in vogue thanks to the television series "Mad Men."

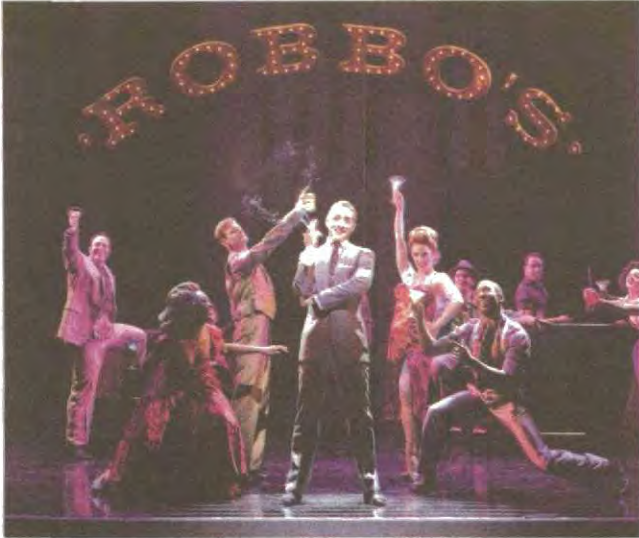
The comedy won over the opening night crowd with the mix, and the demand for tickets already resulted in an extension of its engagement.

The production shines the spotlight on the music of lyricist Sammy Cahn and composer Jimmy Van Heusen, who were brought together by Sinatra and who gave "Ol' Blue Eyes" some of his biggest hits, many of which are included in musical.

The play features a new book by Tony-winner Rupert Holmes, and even more songs from the legendary pairing of Cahn and Van Heusen, including "Come Dance With Me," "Call Me Irresponsible," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head," and "High Hopes."

On song selection alone, the Old Globe's production easily bests its predecessor, which included songs such as "Style," "Don't Be a Do-Badder" and "Mr. Booze."

The Old Globe's story follows Robbo Ortona (Eric Schneider), a small-time Chicago hood recently out of prison who



"Robin and the 7 Hoods," a new musical playing through Aug. 29 at the Old Globe Theatre, is a new take on a 1964 movie that featured members of the Rat Pack. PHOTO PROVIDED BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ

is trying to carve a living for himself in the nightclub business in Chicago in 1962.

His plans run afoul of P.J. Sullivan (Rick Holmes) the big mob boss who has most of the city's heavy hitters in his pocket. Lt. Nottingham (Adam Heller) is among the officials on the take, and one of his biggest duties appears to be shutting down Ortona's nightclub, "Robbo's," by citing outdated code regulations, such as requirements for horse troughs.

In order to get back at his nemesis, Robbo dreams up a scheme designed to hit Sullivan where it hurts, in his pocketbook and ego.

He enlists his seven "hoods," including his best friend, Little John Dante (Will Chase) and Willie Scarlatti (Jeffrey Schecter) to rob the safe in Sullivan's club and then give the

money out to those in need. It's not charity that drives the scheme, but the desire to make people believe that Sullivan's grip on the town is softening (or, as one character puts it, to hit him in the "PR department.")

Things hit a snag — and the gang's anonymity is quickly lost — with the arrival of Marian Archer (Kelly Sullivan), the hard-hitting reporter whose intent is to take down Sullivan with the resources of her television show, which apparently, can go from a watchdog-type news hour to a telethon at the drop of a hat.

Those expecting to find a nuanced piece — like, say, the aforementioned "Mad Men" — will not find it here.

There are implausible plot holes, but the key is that it's all done with a wink and a nod, as if Holmes knew he was building the musical around the songs. In some parts, it's easy to deduce what song is coming next based on the lead-in conversation, yet when the song comes the surprise remains.

Overall, the production, which is directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw with music supervision, vocal and incidental music arrangements from John McDaniel, benefits from strong performances and spectacular dances.

Schneider and Sullivan are at their strongest in "I Like to Lead When I Dance," an entertaining number that has them vying for dominance in their first formal meeting. "Come Blow Your Horn," which features all of the hoods singing and dancing, is easily the show-stopper along with "Walkin' Happy," which features a tap dancing ensemble piece led by Schecter.

Vocally the entire cast is strong, but Amy Spanger and Alana O'Dell, Little John's long-suffering girlfriend, is a standout, as is Heller with his raspy voiced, boxing-stanced lieutenant, especially during his rendition of "High Hopes."

Tickets for "Robin Hood and the 7 Hoods" range from \$68-\$89. The Old Globe Theater is at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

For more information, go to www.TheOldGlobe.org or call 619-234-5623.



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[Broadway Bound Robin & 7 Hoods Opening Night Review](#)

Robin and Hoods Hit Big at Old Globe



Review by Linda Hodges, *Broadway Magazine*

Just as the great Sammy Cahn wrote, “Love is lovelier the second time around,” the 1963 Rat Pack film “Robin and the 7 Hoods” is so much lovelier its second time around as the stage musical of the same name by Rupert Holmes. This show dazzles.

The film was a prop piece with a collapsible plot trumped up for Sinatra and the gang to have an excuse to work and play together. But this new musical spin is another story altogether. Literally. Holmes kept the Robin Hood theme, the rat pack cool, and the swinging sounds of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen – and nothing else – creating a story and a show that is entertainment at its freshest, funniest and most spectacular.

Summoning the chic, the swagger and the swing of the early 60’s, the show opens with Chicago

club and restaurant owner Robbo (Eric Schneider), singing the classic song, “My Kind of Town (Chicago is).” You simply couldn’t ask for a classier opening number. Taking a drag from his cigarette, Schneider delivers the piece with an easy pizzazz as the ensemble joins him to finish out the tune. Fully clad in the sophisticated fashion of the day the costumes alone (Gregg Barnes) are enough to make you nostalgic for that smooth and sultry time.

Robbo is a somewhat reformed hood, now trying to make good by going legit, but having a little trouble with the transition. He and his boys, including second-in-command Little John (played to absolute comedic and charming, bad-boy perfection by Will Chase), are confounded in this effort time and time again by police lieutenant Nottingham (Adam Heller) who continually trumps up charges as an excuse to shut down Robbo's club and force him out of business. The lieutenant is on the payroll of one P.J. Sullivan (Rick Holmes), another club owner and local gangster boss who runs the town and is willing to do whatever it takes to run Robbo and his merry men *out* of town!

Enter local TV anchor, and crusader against crime and corruption, Marian Archer (Kelly Sullivan). Determined to expose Sullivan for the hood he really is, Marian uses her television show, Target Chicago, and her connections, in her effort to put the boss behind bars. Seizing on Sullivan's next target – Robbo – she works to get him on her show. Robbo would like P.J. out of the way as well – but chooses more nefarious means at his disposal. He and Little John hatch a heist, robbing P.J.'s club (located directly behind Robbo's) and then giving away the loot so the crime can't be traced back to them - and in the process becoming unwitting local heroes promptly compared to the legendary Robin Hood.

What follows is a terrific tap dance number, lead by hood Willie Scarlatti (flawlessly and amazingly played by Jeffrey Schecter), who has been instructed to walk the streets of Chicago dispensing the dough.

In these tough economic times there was something very satisfying about seeing money handed out to the working stiffs on the street and something even sweeter about knowing that it was taken from toadies who take advantage of the poor. As money rained down like confetti in a ticker-tape parade the audience flipped over this show-stopping number.

The talented, Tony nominated director and choreographer Casey Nicholaw outdid himself in both of these roles giving direction and focus to actors and dancers alike and creating a synergy that was nothing less than theater magic.

Love and romance, intrigue and incomparable music abound, as the story continues. Amy Spanger is positively marvelous as Alana O'Dell, the long-suffering, longing-for-a-ring girlfriend of Will Chase's Little John. Their tottering romance is played for laughs as the at-odds couple sing "Call Me Irresponsible" – but her slow and angst-ridden reprise reveal her emotional depth and passion for this man with a wandering eye. Kelly Sullivan is also particularly good as the do-good Marian whose emotions are also taken for a ride by the charming, ready-to-reform Robbo.

In a Broadway-bound show of this caliber, the whole production team deserves credit for creating the magic that happens on stage. Sound Design by John Shivers was a joy; clear and balanced. Lighting design by Kenneth Posner was inspired and scenic design by Robert Brill could not have been more creative. The versatile set made good use of the space, while the colors, textures and fabrics of the sets worked together to enhance the show. Costume design by Greg Barnes captured the era but went several steps further with its whimsical quality and fun interpretations. The 60's stewardess costumes alone were worth the price of admission.

John McDaniel (Music supervisor/Vocal and Incidental Arrangements), Bill Elliott (Orchestrator) Mark Hummel (Music Director) and David Chase (Dance Music Arranger) all deserve credit for adapting the superb Cahn/Van Heusen songbook to the theatrical stage.

Tony award winning book writer Rupert Holmes seamlessly melded the music to the story and made it seem as if it was always meant to be that way.

The legend of Robin Hood lives on in this swank and swinging show. For those too young to know the songs first-hand, you're in for a treat! And for those for whom these songs are old nostalgic friends, I'm here to tell you that Sammy Cahn was right. Love (as well as this book and score) are lovelier the second time around.

Robin and the 7 Hoods

Wednesday, July 14 - Sunday, August 29

[OLD GLOBE THEATRE](#)

Book by Rupert Holmes
 Lyrics by Sammy Cahn
 Music by Jimmy Van Heusen
 Directed and Choreographed
 by Casey Nicholaw
WORLD PREMIERE MUSICAL

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RANCHO SANTA FE REVIEW

August 5, 2010

Robin and his hoods hit on toe-tappin' tunes

By Diana Saenger
REVIEW

Classic Hollywood and The Old Globe merge imaginations in the West Coast premiere and Broadway-bound musical "Robin and the 7 Hoods." Updating the Warner Bros. 1964 film is a book by Tony Award-winner Rupert Holmes, a toe-tapping score by James Van Heusen with lyrics by Sammy Cahn, and an impeccable direction and choreography by multi-Tony Award-nominee Casey Nicholaw.

The audience sets upright in its seats the moment Robbo Ortona (Eric Schneider, Frankie Valli in "Jersey Boys") steps on stage and begins singing "My Kind of Town." Seconds later, when he's joined by the cast (and then the beautiful girls who perform their sexy number "Come Dance With Me") "Robin and the 7 Hoods" promises to be an exciting evening – and then delivers.

The story follows two Chicago gangsters in the 1960s and their turf wars. Robbo is trying to go straight. He's got two clubs going and business is good. But it would be better if his competitor P. J. Sullivan (Rick Holmes-Broadway, "Spamalot") wasn't paying off the cops to close Robbo down with preposterous code violation accusations.

The plot is thin – one that mirrors David R. Schwartz's screenplay of the 1964 film starring Rat Packers Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis, Jr., but the rousing music from the Globe's incredible orchestra heightens the enjoyment of the show.

With his cigarette ever in hand and a great voice, Robbo somewhat reminds us of Sinatra – but this show is designed to be its own. Robbo's second in command, Little John Dante (Will Chase, "Billy Elliott"), embodies many elements of Dean Martin's character but manages to make the part unique. He's gaga over all the girls in the club, while promising to someday tie the knot with Alana (Amy Spanger, "Chicago").

What's amusing is that dialogue lines are timed with the musical numbers; like when Little John is explaining his



Little John Dante (Will Chase) and Alana O'Dell (Amy Spanger) amuse in the "Come Fly with Me" scene in "Robin and the 7 Hoods." Photo/Craig Schwartz

predicament to Alana and they break into song on "Call Me Irresponsible."

Cara Cooper (Broadway, "Legally Blonde") plays the lead gal – Marian. She's a TV show host who takes on both gangsters in her coverage, but falls for Robbo. The duet they perform, "I Like to Lead When I Dance," sets the tone for their push/pull relationship.

A first peek at the tall, sleek set design (that looks like the exterior of a building) seems to offer little excitement. However,

the designers created a working environment that not only fits the production, but easily suits the scenes where the huge ensemble sings and dances, Robbo's men pull off a heist, and romance swirls as the leads compete for who gets to be the boss.

Nicholaw's ("The Drowsy Chaperone") direction and enthusiastic choreography is spot on in this energetic production. The team of Van Heusen and Cahn is the pièce de résistance of this show. Each song brings a louder and livelier burst of applause — including from actor Dennis Farina ("Law and Order") who was in the audience and is a producer of the show. I have never heard so many high-pitched whistles in a show as well.

'Robin and the 7 Hoods':

When: Matinees, evenings through Aug. 22

Where: The Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

Tickets: \$69-\$89, (619) 23-GLOBE or www.TheOldGlobe.org

Robin and his hoods hit on toe-tappin' tunes

Classic Hollywood and The Old Globe merge imaginations in the West Coast premiere and Broadway-bound musical "Robin and the 7 Hoods."

Let's Review



Diana Saenger
CRITIC

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• **“Robin and the 7 Hoods” – The Old Globe & “The Seven Year Itch” – New Village Arts**

Local theaters rolled the dice and came up with lucky 7 – a revival of “The Seven Year Itch” and a world premiere of “Robin and the 7 Hoods.” Forget the old films and their iconic stars. There may be a whiff of Sinatra here, an essence of Marilyn, Dino or Sammy there. But these are very different animals from the movies that bear their names. “The Seven Year Itch” was, in fact, watered down by the censors from the original George Axelrod play. And “The 7 Hoods” are now singers and dancers in a Broadway-bound musical.

Once again, the Old Globe is the launching pad for a big nostalgic hit -- superbly directed and choreographed by former San Diegan Casey Nicholaw and sleekly designed by UCSD alum and Sledgehammer Theatre co-founder Robert Brill. Roughly based on the Robin Hood myth, re-set in the swingin’ ‘60s, the new show is big, brash and slick, filled with wisecracks written by Rupert Holmes that lead into fabulous songs by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen. The dancing is terrific, especially on the guy-side. The central performances are good but not great; there’s no charismatic standout in this story of two couples that are seriously reminiscent of the duos in “Guys and Dolls”: a charming gangster who’s reformed by an honest woman, and a dance-hall girl who can’t get her long-term beau to commit. The real star of the show is the music, and the killer arrangements and orchestrations, robustly played by a dozen brassy instruments.

The story isn’t rock-solid or rocket science, but it works fine, better than most jukebox musicals. Mostly, the minimal dialogue serves as intro to 20 super songs, including “All the Way” and “Call Me Irresponsible.” The voices are pleasant, if not stellar, so cast changes are likely before the show hits the Great White Way. But this is another great opportunity for San Diegans to say ‘I saw it here first.’

• © 2010 Pat Launer

Broadway is in for a rockin' treat



CUAUHTÉMOC KISH
THEATRESCENE

The show is a world premiere, directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, who was raised in San Diego. The first note has Eric Schneider (Robbo) snapping his fingers to the beat of one of lyricist Sammy Cahn and composer Jimmy Van Heusen's popular catalog, which includes the hits, "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," "Come Blow Your Horn" and "Come Fly With Me."

Writer Rupert Holmes' stage book is borrowed from the movie of the same name; he just advances the time period to the '60s and infuses it with mobster gangs who are constantly battling one another for territory.

Adding to the impeccable jukebox sounds are Gregg



Eric Schneider (center, as Robbo Ortona) and cast perform "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)" in the world premiere of "Robin and the 7 Hoods," a new musical at The Old Globe. [Courtesy Craig Schwartz]

Barnes' costumes that shout out "style," along with a great band, conducted by Mark Hummel, that belies its diminutive size.

The modern set features stacked rows of square spaces that frame individual actors or pairings, capturing them like an album of treasured family photos.

Schneider sings well—and with a touch of Sinatra—with his sidekick, Little John Dante (Will Chase), and even better when he's crooning with Kelly Sullivan (Marian Archer), who plays a TV host and his love interest, constantly pushing Robbo toward

the good side of life.

Adam Heller's Lieutenant Nottingham does especially fine work on "High Hopes," while Amy Spanger (Alana O'Dell) makes very pretty music throughout the production. And it doesn't hurt that she's a "looker" as well. Apart from their winning vocals, these two show a comedic side that adds another dimension, with sporadic gags that run throughout the show.

The ingredients are all here: voices that make Cahn and Van Heusen proud, distinctive choreography, actors who know

how to strut their stuff (including tap-dancing), music that swings nicely, and a story that sets up the material in a smooth, straightforward manner. It may (or may not) be enough to get this one to Broadway, but right now you'd be foolish to pass up an opportunity to see this entertaining and highly-polished production in your own backyard.

Robin And the 7 Hoods
Through August 29
Old Globe Theatre
theoldglobe.org
(619) 234-5623
Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
Thursdays & Fridays, 8 p.m.
Saturdays, 2 & 8 p.m.
Sundays, 2 & 7 p.m.



Eric Schneider as Robbo Ortona and Kelly Sullivan as Marian Archer singing "I Like to Lead When I Dance." [Courtesy Craig Schwartz]



Amy Spanger (as Alana O'Dell) sings "Same Old Song and Dance" (with Andrew Cao, Aleks Pevac and Brian Shepard) in the world premiere of "Robin and the 7 Hoods," a new musical at The Old Globe. [Courtesy Craig Schwartz]

Broadway is in for a rockin' 'Robin' treat

Posted by [admin](#) on 8/16/10 • Categorized as [Arts & Entertainment](#), [Theater](#)



Amy Spanger (as Alana O'Dell) sings "Same Old Song and Dance" (with Andrew Cao, Aleks Pevec and Brian Shepard) in the world premiere of "Robin and the 7 Hoods" at The Old Globe. (Courtesy Craig Schwartz)

Robin And the 7 Hoods *Through August 29*

Old Globe Theatre

theoldglobe.org

(619) 234-5623

Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 7 p.m.

Thursdays and Fridays, 8 p.m.

Saturdays 2 and 8 p.m.

Sundays 2 and 7 p.m.

By Cuauhtémoc Kish/theatre critic

"Robin And The 7 Hoods" is Broadway-bound, but San Diego audiences can catch this new musical in their own backyard, long before the next Tony nominations are even announced.

The show is a world premiere, directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, who was raised in San Diego. The first note has Eric Schneider (Robbo) snapping his fingers to the beat of one

of lyricist Sammy Cahn and composer Jimmy Van Heusen's popular catalog, which includes the hits, "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," "Come Blow Your Horn" and "Come Fly With Me."

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Fine music and dance times 7

THE SHOW: *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, a new musical, staged at the Old Globe by director/choreographer **Casey Nicholaw** with music by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen, with book by Rupert Holmes. Interpret the other title page information (on an insert printed after the program), as you will: "In association with The Seven Hoods Limited Partnership/Produced with the permission of Warner Brothers Theatrical Ventures/Based on the original screenplay by David R. Schwartz."

THE STORY: Set in 1962 Chicago, when the mob still ran the nightclubs.

THE PERFORMERS: As nightclub owner Robbo Ortona, **Eric Schneider** is most appealing. As his love interest Marian Archer, **Kelly Sullivan** possesses the most legit singing voice, reminding this listener of Jo Stafford, even when she's daring a "bad" mobster to "Come on Strong." She is best heard in "What Makes It Happen"; her endearing "I Like to Lead When I Dance," deliciously performed with grand frisson between her and Schneider. It's one of the show's best numbers. The other dynamite number is a tappy "Walking Happy," performed by Willie Scarlatti (**Jeffrey Schecter**) and the "boys." As comic relief, the show presents Robbo's second in command, Little John (**Will Chase**) and his fiancée, Alana O'Dell (**Amy Spanger**). Though redolent of Miss Adelaide and Nathan Detroit, these two are much more serious.



Eric Schneider and Kelly Sullivan Photo: Craig Schwartz

Due to these gangsters' precise speech (few contractions) one is reminded of Damon Runyan and therefore *Guys and Dolls*, to which the show has been compared frequently. One thing is certain: Trying too hard to apply the Robin Hood myth to this show is an exercise in futility. It's merely a sketch of an idea used as surround for all the marvelous Cahn and Van Heusen songs.

THE PRODUCTION is a slick entertainment that looks more like it's headed to Las Vegas than to Broadway as purported. In many ways, it reminds me of 1991 Broadway hit, *The Will Rogers Follies*, in which one saw lots of scantily attired dance chorines. After all, they were Ziegfeld Girls (1907-1931) and therefore had an excuse for wearing those cow costumes. In an endless parade of showgirl get-ups, *Robin's* chorines become the cutest little Sherwood Forest sprites and even cavort as orange-clad stewardesses when Robin's second, Little John Dante, goes on the lam ("Come Fly With Me"). It has to be a purposeful excess, like Holmes' lame song lead-ins. God, so many groaners (our personal favorite: "What to do?"... "Come Fly With Me"). The men's dancing/singing ensemble is staggeringly talented. In "Come Blow Your Horn" they perform Nicolaw's intricate, jaw-dropping, gymnastic choreography like to the manner born, and they sound as good as the students in *Les Misérables*.

There are so many songs (19, plus reprises) and so little book that the leading actors, Robbo (**Eric Schneider**), Little John (**Will Chase**), Marian (**Kelly Sullivan**) and Alana (**Amy Spanger**), are challenged to come up with consistent and believable characters. The most challenged is Marian, the host of "Target Chicago," which pillories opposing mob boss P.J. Sullivan (**Rick Holmes**). In a scene at Sullivan's office Marian establishes herself as a tough, independent woman, and then sings "What Makes it Happen," with a soapy lyric that asks when romantic love will happen to her. It soon does in the form of Robbo ("More Than Likely"), who she makes into a modern-day Robin Hood on her show. He steals receipts from other mob clubs and gives them to the needy. Then, in a complete reversal of type--one supposes out of love for Robbo--Marian offers herself to P.J. in exchange for Robbo, who's in jail with no hope of bail thanks to crooked police (What? In Chicago?). Tired of the system, the on-the-take Lieutenant Nottingham (**Adam Heller**), who heretofore closed Robbo's club frequently, comes over to Robbo and Marian's side; Marian fools P.J. into confessing nefarious deeds on television; and P.J. goes to the big slammer in Joliet. The bad bad guys are locked up and the good bad guys and their molls sing "Ring-a-Ding Ding."

THE LOCATION: Old Globe Theatre Tuesdays through Sundays through August 15, www.theoldglobe.com or (619) 239-2255

BOTTOM LINE: Best Bet

MUSICALS IN LA

Robin and the 7 Hoods Hits San Diego



Eric Schneider and the cast of Robin and the 7 Hoods

Robin and the 7 Hoods has just opened at the venerable [Old Globe](#) in San Diego and has already extended its run due to packed houses and high demand. The twist on the traditional Robin Hood story (which takes none of its plot from the Rat Pack film of the same name) is that bookwriter **Rupert Holmes** has now set the action in 1960s Chicago with rival mob bosses fighting to control the city...a perfect fit for the **Sammy Cahn/Jimmy Van Heusen** catalogue of songs featured in the show.

Following a slick 1960s Runyonland opening we learn that mobster Robbo Ortona (**Eric Schneider**) has a problem. Now that he's running a "legitimate" night club, his rival PJ (**Rick Holmes**) keeps paying off the cops to shut him down. Determined to end it, Robbo, Little John (**Will Chase**) and the rest of the hoods stage a robbery at PJ's, spreading the rumor that it's been done by a secret third party who gives away all the money...a modern day Robin Hood of sorts. Word gets out that it was actually Robbo, however, and he soon falls into the reluctant role of bad guy turned good guy hero.

The women in the story are Little John's girlfriend Alana O'Dell (**Amy Spanger**) who runs one of Robbo's nightclubs for him and wants nothing more than to marry Little John, and TV crusader Marian Archer (**Kelly Sullivan**), the gorgeous blonde who initially knocks heads with Robbo but eventually falls for him anyway. (No, Alana doesn't develop a cold and Marian doesn't end up in Cuba, but one of them does fly the friendly skies to a warmer destination).



Amy Spanger as Alana O'Dell

Spanger has great pipes and an earthy way with a torch song that always leaves us wanting more. It's no surprise that she's appeared on Broadway in a long list of shows that includes *Rock of Ages*, *The Wedding Singer*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Urinetown* and *Sunset Boulevard*.

Charismatic bad boy Eric Schneider is smooth, sexy and cool as can be, oozing sophistication in his starched white shirt and designer threads. (The outstanding costume design for the show is by **Gregg Barnes**). Schneider has appeared on Broadway as Franki Valli in *Jersey Boys* and proves once again that he can command the stage with his polished vocals.



Will Chase and Eric Schneider

Will Chase plays lovable cad Little John, who always seems to sidestep the question of marriage as only a rogue can. Also no stranger to Broadway (his credits include *Billy Elliot*, *The Story of My Life*, *The Full Monty* and *Miss Saigon*) Chase has a never-ending supply of boyish charm and even his own set of “gold diggers.” With a gleam in his eye, he’s irresistible.

Put them together with a fantastic ensemble of dancers, singers and character actors, and this is one great good time for the audience.

Go for the music – because with Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen you’re already starting with the best. Songs like “My Kind of Town (Chicago Is),” “Call Me Irresponsible,” “(Love Is) The Tender Trap” and “Come Fly With Me” soar to life in the hands of musical director/conductor **Mark Hummel** and his orchestra, with lush vocals from the cast.

Go for the dance – because once director/choreographer **Casey Nicholaw** has his way with the musical numbers, you’re hooked. Whether it’s Willie (Jeffrey Schechter) doling out stolen cash to the street folk of Chicago during tap extravaganza “Walkin’ Happy” or Little John and the Hoods featured in the testosterone pumping showstopper “Come Blow Your Horn, the sheer amount of energy and athleticism alone will make your blood race.

I always find it interesting how an original musical comes to be and in an article by [North County Times](#) writer **Pam Kragen**, director Casey Nicholaw talks about how he became involved with the musical, “...three years ago when Cahn’s widow Virginia, began shopping around his songbook to producers for a jukebox musical. Nicholaw -- a Tony nominee for directing/choreographing *The Drowsy Chaperone* and choreographing *Spamalot* -- was tracked down, and producers mailed him four CDs of Cahn’s music.

Nicholaw decided to narrow the canon to just those songs Cahn wrote with composer Van Heusen, and then work with Holmes to craft a musical around the numbers they liked best.

Nicholaw says, ‘We listened to all the songs and picked the ones we wanted in the show. I told Rupert, ‘These are the ones I really liked and could picture as dance numbers,’ and he wedged them in. Then we went looking for songs that the characters needed for certain moments in the story. At that point there was nothing left but love songs, so it was a tall order, but we did it.”

By limiting the show to a particular set of songs (and believe me, they’re terrific) it makes the book writer’s job that much more difficult to construct a story that pulls them all together. Holmes has done it, although it’s the music that really makes this show spring to life.

Robert Brill’s smart set and **Kenneth Posner**’s seductive lighting complete the sleek, stylish look of the

60s.

Robin and the 7 Hoods runs through August 29th at The Old Globe in San Diego. Tickets are available at www.theoldglobe.org/.

SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

August 15, 2010

Tom Blair



The critic in me: As a kid in the '60s, I was nuts about the Rat Pack gangster-movie musical "Robin and the 7 Hoods." And so I was prepared to be unimpressed by the stage-musical update at the Old Globe. How do you top Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr., and the music of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen? Well, you don't. You add more music and rewrite the book. This version of "Hoods" is only vaguely reminiscent of the original; just two of the movie songs remain — and one had been cut before the film's release. But the producers have cherry-picked a fat handful of other Cahn/Van Heusen hits, and, with more great music and dance than dialogue, "Hoods," closing Aug. 29, is a delight. The Globe team hopes it will become a Broadway smash. And well it might — with some tweaking and the recasting of a couple of lead roles. Just don't cut a single one of the 19 Cahn/Van Heusen songs.

Tom Blair: (619) 293-1715;
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Uh, hello, anybody out there?

BY [TOM BLAIR](#), UNION-TRIBUNE COLUMNIST

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14, 2010 AT 8:45 P.M.

After picking up a silent alarm, a sergeant with a local police department (we withhold the names to protect the innocent) surrounded a bank by himself last week. Before moving in, the sergeant radioed for backup units, but got no response. He kept radioing, but his frustration mounted as not a single cop car responded. Later, he found out why. The sergeant was at the wrong bank. The one being robbed was a block away — and surrounded by so many responding police units the crook immediately surrendered.

Writing lesson: On a West Coast book tour for his newest work, Russian expatriate Gary Shteyngart ("Absurdistan") signed copies of his "Super Sad True Love Story" Wednesday night at Warwick's in La Jolla. In the process, he said much about the art of writing. His Russian grandmother was a novelist, Shteyngart said. When Gary was 4, she told him to write a novel. He did, and she paid him with a tiny piece of cheese for each page. "Still," he sighed, "I keep Gouda by my bedside." Though critical of his homeland, his books have been reviewed in Russia, he said, recalling one headline: "Balding Traitor Betrays Motherland." It sold about 80 copies, he quipped. On a recent return trip to Russia, he discovered a restaurant called "1913." Why 1913, he asked the proprietor? "That was Russia's only good year," was the reply.

San Diego shuffle: Salima Din Ruffin, who earned her concierge stripes some 30 years ago as the Westgate Hotel's "Lady Westgate, is still in the biz. Her own concierge service, Creations, is thriving. But she's diversifying. After establishing yoga shalas in [Florida](#) and [Sydney](#), Australia, she and partner Sonia Jones will have the grand opening Wednesday for their new Jois Yoga Shala & Boutique in Encinitas — where you might persuade Ruffin to make you a post-workout dinner reservation. ... UCSD history professor Michael Parrish has penned a biography of Joe Rauh, the famed civil rights/civil liberties lawyer who represented playwrights [Arthur Miller](#) and [Lillian Hellman](#) during the McCarthy era. The book, "Citizen Rauh: An American Liberal's Life in Law and Politics," is due Aug. 28 from [University of Michigan](#) Press. Parrish's research goes deep: A [Washington Redskins](#) fan, Rauh was an old buddy of the club's [GM](#), Bobby Beathard — before Beathard defected to the Chargers.

The critic in me: As a kid in the '60s, I was nuts about the Rat Pack gangster-movie musical "Robin and the 7 Hoods." And so I was prepared to be impressed by the stage-musical update at the Old Globe. How do you top [Frank Sinatra](#), [Dean Martin](#) and [Sammy Davis Jr.](#), and the music of [Sammy Cahn](#) and Jimmy Van Heusen? Well, you don't. You add more music and rewrite the book. This version of "Hoods" is only vaguely reminiscent of the original; just two of the movie songs remain — and one had been cut before the film's release. But the producers have cherry-picked a fat handful of other Cahn/Van Heusen hits, and, with more great music and dance than dialogue, "Hoods," closing Aug. 29, is a delight. The Globe team hopes it will become a Broadway smash. And well it might — with some tweaking and the recasting of a couple of lead roles. Just don't cut a single one of the 19 Cahn/Van Heusen songs.

Tom Blair: (619) 293-1715; tom.blair@uniontrib.com



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Robin and the 7 Hoods

“The choreography is brilliant! From the opening scene you know that you are going to be witness to something special. Robin and the 7 Hoods is sure to be a Broadway sensation!” - Performing Arts LIVE



A world premiere, Broadway-bound musical comedy, featuring classic songs by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen, that takes us back to that sexy era in pop culture where "Mad Men" reigned supreme, martinis flowed freely, and Sinatra and Martin ruled the night.

Our review of Robin and the 7 Hoods:

We saw this in previews on July 20th, 2010

“Were do I begin. Lot’s of praise is to be spread around for this Broadway bound musical. This new musical is loaded with classics from Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen that are presented and performed masterfully by Orchestrator, Bill Elliot and Music Director, Mark Hummel.

The choreography is brilliant! Casey Nicholaw, choreographer and director really knows how to tell the story and keep you engaged until the end. The big dance numbers; “Walkin’ Happy”, “Come Fly with Me” and “Come Blow Your Horn” are the best that I have seen in many years. For me the standout in this amazing ensemble cast is Kelly Sullivan who plays Marian Archer the love interest of Robbo.

Extraordinary attention is paid to the sets, lighting and costumes as is expected of the high quality productions at The Old Globe. From the opening scene you know that you are going to be witness to something special. Robin and the 7 Hoods is sure to be a Broadway sensation!” - Performing Arts LIVE (mn)



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Behind the scenes of 'Robin and the 7 Hoods,' a swinging new musical at the Old Globe

July 24, 2010 | **2:03 pm**



A new musical opening Friday at the Old Globe theater in San Diego arrives with an old name.

As a story in Sunday's Arts & Books section explains, 19 songs from the celebrated Oscar-winning songwriting team of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen -- including such Rat Pack anthems as "Come Fly With Me," "The Tender Trap," "High Hopes" and "All The Way" -- have been used to provide the backbone of "Robin and the 7 Hoods."

The title itself comes from the 1964 Frank/Dino/Sammy comedy about feuding gangsters in '30s Chicago, but the new story, written by Tony Award winner Rupert Holmes, is set in the early '60s, around the time period that the songs were written in.

Find out more about the work and the man driving the creative process, director Casey Nicholaw, by reading the story [here](#).

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BACKSTAGE

SWINGIN' BACK IN

A songwriting duo finally gets its due in 'Robin and the 7 Hoods.' Ain't that a kick in the head?

CHRISTOPHER SMITH
REPORTING FROM SAN DIEGO

Of the following fabled songwriting teams of the 20th century, which won three Oscars, garnered 11 Oscar nominations, but never won a Tony?

A) Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II.

B) George and Ira Gershwin.

C) Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe.

D) Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen.

If you picked "D," well done!

For all their accolades, Cahn and Van Heusen lack a Broadway hit — their "Skyscraper" (1965) and "Walking Happy" (1966) faded fast — that showcases their sassy lyrics and engaging pop melodies.

Until now.

"Robin and the 7 Hoods," opening Friday at the Old Globe, is a celebration of Cahn and Van Heusen at their catchiest, the score a late '50s- [See 'Robin,' E4]



CRAIG SCHWARTZ The Old Globe Theatre

'COME FLY WITH ME': Will Chase, Amy Spanger and fellow cast members perform the song in "Robin and the 7 Hoods" at the Old Globe.



GLENN KOENIG Los Angeles Times

DO IT LIKE THIS: Director-choreographer Casey Nicholaw leads his "Robin and the 7 Hoods" cast members through a dance routine at the Old Globe.

A new tack on the Rat Pack

[‘Robin,’ from E1] early ’60s swing-a-thon. “Come Fly With Me,” “(Love Is) The Tender Trap,” “Come Blow Your Horn,” “My Kind of Town (Chicago Is),” “All the Way,” “High Hopes,” “Ain’t That a Kick in the Head” and more — a veritable soundtrack for the Rat Pack of the early 1960s: Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Joey Bishop and Peter Lawford.

Of course, songs alone do not a good musical make. A story that entertains, acting that engages, and dancing that leaves ’em gasping in the aisles would be helpful.

The man for the job

Enter Casey Nicholaw. The 48-year-old director-choreographer of “Robin and the 7 Hoods” is the man charged with generating all those components and bringing them together with the music.

To that end, he and his 23-member cast have been working hard since June 1 in basement rehearsal space at the Old Globe complex. Spend time there and good luck keeping up as Nicholaw darts into a line of dancers to tweak a step that wasn’t quite there or hurries off to block a scene so an actress’ shrieks will work to peak comic effect.

He caps off each creative interaction by saying a variation on “OK, that was great — I have just a couple of notes to go through with you,” and then the work busily resumes.

In the last few years, this focus and energy — manifestations of a confident creative sensibility — has propelled Nicholaw onto the short list kept by the theater management set who evaluate directing and choreographing skills. At the Ahmanson, during the run-up to “The Drowsy Chaperone” (2005) and “Minsky’s” (2009), Center Theatre Group Artistic Director Michael Ritchie got a close-up look and admired what he saw.

“At the early meetings and first rehearsal, Casey articulated absolute clarity of vision,” said Ritchie. “And then, as the work went forward, I witnessed someone who was never negative or a martinet — he generated an atmosphere of openness and collegiality in the



CRAIG SCHWARTZ The Old Globe Theatre

NEW ERA: Will Chase and Amy Spanger lead a dance.

room, and built on that to set a high level of expectation for those working for him.

“As long as I’m in this job, the Center will be happy to be part of any project Casey wants to work with us on.”

Theatrical upbringing

Nicholaw was born in Santa Monica in 1962, but grew up in the San Diego area.

His early theater interests sprouted from familiar sources: a household with played-to-death cast albums of “My Fair Lady” and “The Music Man” (“I remember, too,” Nicholaw said, “being allowed to stay up late this one time to watch ‘Gypsy’ with Rosalind Russell on TV. A racy treat!”); a decade of youth theater involvement (“my first role I was a dancing Indian”); and seeing a life-altering performance (“Mom took me and a friend out of school on a Wednesday to the Shubert in Century City for a matinee of ‘A Chorus Line.’ That was huge!”).

At 16 — too young by the theater’s regulations back then, but he fudged his age, claiming 18 — he won a role in an Old Globe production of “The Robber Bridegroom,” starring Brian Stokes Mitchell. “I was ‘Goat,’ and I had two songs,

‘Poor Tied Up Darlin’ and I can’t recall the other.” (Credit sheets indicate Goat also sings in “Once Upon the Natchez Trace.”)

In 1981, after a year and a quarter at UCLA, Nicholaw headed to New York. The do-everything ethos of a season of summer stock in New Hampshire saw him choreograph as well as dance and act; a decade or so worth of parts later, his first Broadway break came when choreographer Susan Stroman hired him into the corps of the splendid 1992 adaptation of Gershwin songs, “Crazy for You.” Nicholaw danced in seven Broadway shows, among them “Thoroughly Modern Millie” and “Victor/Victoria.”

All the time he paid attention. “I’m not the big planner, I was just happy to get those jobs,” said Nicholaw. “But my whole life in shows, I kept watch on the choreographers and directors — what they did, what worked, what didn’t, what I would have done if I was them.”

In 2005 he choreographed on Broadway for the first time for “Monty Python’s Spamalot,” directed by Mike Nichols. A Tony nomination ensued. In 2006 he choreographed and also directed on Broadway for the first time, with

‘Robin and the 7 Hoods’

Where: The Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego
When: July 30 through Aug. 22
Admission: \$68 to \$89
Contact: (619) 234-5623 or www.theoldglobe.org

“The Drowsy Chaperone.” Tony nominations for choreographer and director ensued.

Nicholaw’s assessment of choreographing dance for a musical is tactical: “Examine the steps, keep in mind what the dance needs to say, then fix the steps. Over all, I like dancing [in my shows to be] a little athletic, a little comedic and I really shoot for telling a story through the dancing.”

He describes his approach to directing in more strategic terms: “It’s being creatively critical all the time, through every detail, while never losing sight of the show’s bigger goals. I like doing the creative work more than the paperwork, but both is what the job takes. I think I’m best at urging talented people on and I never resent having to hold their hand sometimes.”

Lou Spisto, executive producer of the Old Globe, has a canny eye for talent and he appreciated Nicholaw’s longtime roots with the theater. So when the project became available, he was happy for the theater to present its first developmental run.

“Casey’s a homegrown guy and a top musical theater maker,” said Spisto. “We typically have one to two musically driven pieces a year here, ideally new works. With these songs and Casey, who really can drive a show, I felt it would be right for our audiences.”

Wary of source material

Like any other, this musical presents challenges. For instance, mention the source material from the original movie to the show’s principals and the responses vary from a shrug to a wince.

A 1964 Frank-Dino-Sammy ve-

hicle, “Robin and the 7 Hoods” is short on “ring-a-ding-ding.” It’s two hours of stodgy gags, Chicago gangsters unaccountably speaking in New Yawk dese-dem-dose accents and the kind of wrong-headedness that sees Peter Falk given a livelier tune to sing than any that are going Bing Crosby’s way.

Cahn and Van Heusen have to shoulder some of the blame — although there are only six of their songs in the movie (the new musical has 19), they actually add to the torpor rather than peppering things up. Only one, “My Kind of Town (Chicago Is),” remains in the new project, and it’s arranged at a noticeably brisker tempo.

Swings in a new way

As for the new story, “we’ve basically kept the title and the rogues with names from the Robin Hood tale, but that’s about all,” said Tony Award winner Rupert Holmes, who wrote the book for the musical.

Now the characters live in the early ’60s and the men sport “Mad Men”-style suits instead of Depression-era fedoras. The costume design from Tony winner Gregg Barnes (another Old Globe alumnus from childhood on) shoots for sleek and snappy à la the early Kennedy/Camelot period.

“The story’s target is to serve the tone and style of these great songs,” said Holmes. “They’re breezy, upbeat. I promise this will not be a story with weighty insights into the inner psyches of Chicago mobsters — we’re here for a good time.”

“But not a cartoon-y thing,” chimed in Nicholaw, during a separate chat. “I want it to be buoyant. And sexy, it has to feel sexy. And have a musical theater quality to it, not just be a musical comedy.”

He laughed at the high bar he was setting, both during the conversation and in the rehearsals. “I know, I know, that’s a tough and narrow thing to find. Hopefully, we find it.

“The songs really cook,” Nicholaw said. “We’re aiming to cook too.”

calendar@latimes.com

A celebration of Jimmy Van Heusen’s melodies

CHRISTOPHER SMITH

Among other things, the new musical “Robin and the 7 Hoods” is a love letter to composer Jimmy Van Heusen.

On first glance it might seem an homage to Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack in their heyday, but it’s Van Heusen’s infectious melodies, found in “Come Fly With Me,” “The Tender Trap,” “Ain’t That a Kick in the Head,” “High Hopes” and 15 other tunes, that are the lifeblood of the effort.

The show’s music supervisor and vocal arranger, John McDaniel, listens to Van Heusen with an

admiring ear. “His uptempo songs have a harmonic jazz beat,” he said. “These are intricate chords, influenced by swing band orchestrations from the generation a decade or so earlier.”

It’s also noteworthy to McDaniel what these songs are not.

“This music isn’t rooted in classical construction, what you hear in shows from Richard Rodgers or Cole Porter. They’re also not defined by the 4/4 rhythms of rock, which was just on the verge of dominating popular music. But this window in the late ’50s and early ’60s finds lots of brisk, inviting pop ... you hear it in Nat King Cole or Henry Mancini.”

There’s reason to believe that Van Heusen’s good-time tunes were a product of his lifestyle. Born Chester Babcock — two-thirds of his pen name came from seeing a Van Heusen shirt ad — by the late ’50s he’d been in Hollywood for a decade and living life as the quintessential ring-a-ding-ding swinger that Sinatra was eager to professionally and personally become.

Sinatra recorded more songs by Van Heusen — 85 — than by any other composer he worked with. That reflects not just Van Heusen’s prolific skills, but the output that Sinatra, Bing Crosby and others required of him and, in the ’50s and ’60s, his lyricist partner Sammy

Cahn. When asked which came first in their songwriting, the lyrics or the music, Cahn famously replied: “The phone call.”

By the mid-1960s, with rock taking over popular music, the phones stopped ringing. He and Cahn split in 1967 and around then dedicated bachelor Van Heusen threw in the lifestyle towel — he married, albeit to a woman who reportedly carried a gold-plated derringer in her purse.

Van Heusen died in 1990 and is buried near Palm Springs; a few feet away lies Sinatra. Their music, however, still hums along.

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COMPOSER: Van Heusen, left, with Frank Sinatra.

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'Robin and the 7 Hoods' revives Cahn and Van Heusen tunes

The duo's collaborations come swinging back in the new musical directed by Casey Nicholaw at the Old Globe. Don't worry: It's not too much like the movie.



Director Casey Nicholaw works with the cast of "Robin and the 7 Hoods" in San Diego. (Glenn Koenig / Los Angeles Times / June 30, 2010)

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By Christopher Smith, Special to the Los Angeles Times
July 25, 2010

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Of the following fabled songwriting teams of the 20th century, which won three Oscars, garnered eight Oscar nominations,

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but never won a Tony?

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C) Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe.

D) Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen.

If you picked "D," well done!

For all their accolades, Cahn and Van Heusen lack a single Broadway hit -- their "Skyscraper" (1965) and "Walking Happy" (1966) faded fast --that showcases their sassy lyrics and engaging pop melodies.

Until now.

"Robin and the 7 Hoods," opening Friday at the Old Globe, is a celebration of Cahn and Van Heusen at their catchiest, the score a late '50s-early '60s swing-a-thon. "Come Fly With Me," "(Love Is) The Tender Trap," "Come Blow Your Horn," "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," "All the Way," "High Hopes," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head" and more — a veritable soundtrack for the Rat Pack of the early 1960s: Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Joey Bishop and Peter Lawford.

Of course, songs alone do not a good musical make. A story that entertains, acting that engages, and dancing that leaves 'em gasping in the aisles would be helpful.

Enter Casey Nicholaw. The 48-year-old director-choreographer of "Robin and the 7 Hoods" is the man charged with generating all those components and bringing them together with the music.

To that end, he and his 23-member cast have been working hard since June 1 in basement rehearsal space at the Old Globe complex. Spend time there and good luck keeping up as Nicholaw darts into a line of dancers to tweak a step that wasn't quite there or hurries off to block a scene so an actress' shrieks will work to peak comic effect.

He caps off each creative interaction by saying a variation on "OK, that was great — I have just a couple of notes to go through with you," and then the work busily resumes.

In the last few years, this focus and energy — manifestations of a confident creative sensibility — has propelled Nicholaw onto the short list kept by the theater management set who evaluate directing and choreographing skills. At the Ahmanson, during the run-up to "The Drowsy Chaperone" (2005) and "Minsky's" (2009), Center Theatre Group Artistic Director Michael Ritchie got a close-up look and admired what he saw.

"At the early meetings and first rehearsal, Casey articulated absolute clarity of vision," said Ritchie. "And then, as the work went forward, I witnessed someone who was never negative or a martinet — he generated an atmosphere of openness and collegiality in the room, and built on that to set a high level of expectation for those working for him.

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"As long as I'm in this job, the Center will happy to be part of any project Casey wants to work with us on."

Theatrical upbringing

Nicholaw was born in Santa Monica in 1962, but grew up in the San Diego area.

His early theater interests sprouted from familiar sources: a household with played-to-death cast albums of "My Fair Lady" and "The Music Man" ("I remember, too," Nicholaw said, "being allowed to stay up late this one time to watch 'Gypsy' with Rosalind Russell on TV. A racy treat!"); a decade of youth theater involvement ("my first role I was a dancing Indian"); and seeing a life-altering performance ("Mom took me and a friend out of school on a Wednesday to the Schubert in Century City for a matinee of ' A Chorus Line.' That was huge!").

At 16 — too young by the theater's regulations back then, but he fudged his age, claiming 18 — he won a role in an Old Globe production of "The Robber Bridegroom," starring Brian Stokes Mitchell. "I was 'Goat,' and I had two songs, 'Poor Tied Up Darlin' and I can't recall the other." (Credit sheets indicate Goat also sings in "Once Upon the Natchez Trace.")

In 1981, after a year and a quarter at UCLA, Nicholaw headed to New York. The do-everything ethos of a season of summer stock in New Hampshire saw him choreograph as well as dance and act; a decade or so worth of parts later, his first Broadway break came when choreographer Susan Stroman hired him into the corps of the splendid 1992 adaptation of Gershwin songs, "Crazy for You." Nicholaw danced in seven Broadway shows, among them "Thoroughly Modern Millie" and "Victor/Victoria."

All the time he paid attention.

"I'm not the big planner, I was just happy to get those jobs," said Nicholaw. "But my whole life in shows, I kept watch on the choreographers and directors — what they did, what worked, what didn't, what I would have done if I was them."

In 2005 he choreographed on Broadway for the first time for "Monty Python's Spamalot," directed by Mike Nichols. A Tony nomination ensued. In 2006 he choreographed and also directed on Broadway for the first time, with "The Drowsy Chaperone." Tony nominations for choreographer and director ensued.

Nicholaw's assessment of choreographing dance for a musical is tactical: "Examine the steps, keep in mind what the dance needs to say, then fix the steps. Over all, I like dancing [in my shows to be] a little athletic, a little comedic and I really shoot for telling a story through the dancing."

He describes his approach to directing in more strategic terms: "It's being creatively critical all the time, through every detail, while never losing sight of the show's bigger goals. I like doing the creative work more than the paperwork, but both is what the job takes. I think I'm best at urging talented people on and I never resent having to hold their hand sometimes."

Lou Spisto, executive producer of the Old Globe, has a canny eye for talent and he appreciated Nicholaw's longtime roots with the theater. So when the project became available, he was happy for the theater to present its first developmental run.

"Casey's a homegrown guy and a top musical theater maker," said Spisto. "We typically have one to two musically driven pieces a year here, ideally new works. With these songs and Casey, who really can drive a show, I felt it would be right for our audiences."

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Wary of source material

Like any other, this musical presents challenges. For instance, mention the source material from the original movie to the show's principals and the responses vary from a shrug to a wince.

A 1964 Frank-Dino-Sammy vehicle, "Robin and the 7 Hoods" is short on "ring-a-ding-ding." It's two hours of stodgy gags, Chicago gangsters unaccountably speaking in New Yawk dese-dem-dose accents and the kind of wrongheadedness that sees Peter Falk given a livelier tune to sing than any that are going Bing Crosby's way. Cahn and Van Heusen have to shoulder some of the blame — although there are only six of their songs in the movie (the new musical has 19), they actually add to the torpor rather than peppering things up. Only one, "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," remains in the new project, and it's arranged at a noticeably brisker tempo.

As for the new story, "we've basically kept the title and the rogues with names from the Robin Hood tale, but that's about all," said Tony Award winner Rupert Holmes, who wrote the book for the musical.

Now the characters live in the early '60s and the men sport "Mad Men"-style suits instead of Depression-era fedoras. The costume design from Tony winner Gregg Barnes (another Old Globe alumnus from childhood on) shoots for sleek and snappy a la the early Kennedy/Camelot period.

"The story's target is to serve the tone and style of these great songs," said Holmes. "They're breezy, upbeat. I promise this will not be a story with weighty insights into the inner psyches of Chicago mobsters — we're here for a good time."

"But not a cartoon-y thing," chimed in Nicholaw, during a separate chat. "I want it to be buoyant. And sexy, it has to feel sexy. And have a musical theater quality to it, not just be a musical comedy."

He laughed at the high bar he was setting, both during the conversation and in the rehearsals. "I know, I know, that's a tough and narrow thing to find. Hopefully, we find it.

"The songs really cook," Nicholaw said. "We're aiming to cook too."

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Director Casey Nicholaw: "We basically took the title and made up our own story." *Nelvin C. Cepeda / U-T*

The cast of merry men and women: Kelly Sullivan (left, top photo), Eric Schneider, Will Chase and Amy Spanger star in "Robin and the 7 Hoods" *Carol Rosegg*

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Old Globe Theatre

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Phone: (619) 234-5623

Online: theoldglobe.org

By James Hebert
THEATER CRITIC

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The practice has churned out a long list of movie-based musicals over the years, from "Legally Blonde" to "The Lion King" to "The First Wives Club," which was staged at the Old Globe Theatre last summer.

In the case of the Globe's newest movie-derived show, though, the film being borrowed from didn't turn out to have a whole lot to offer. In fact, about all that remains of the 1964 Rat Pack film in the musical it inspired is the name: "Robin and the 7 Hoods."

"There's not even a plot line still existing," says Casey Nicholaw, the San Diego-raised director and choreographer who is heading up the production. "We basically took the title and made up our own story. And there's only one song from the movie in the show."

That one song, though — "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)" — is a classic, and its mention gets at the real attraction of "Robin," which begins previews this week with hopes of eventually landing on

Destined for greatness Director was part of a 1978 Globe staging jammed with notables-to-be. E7

SEE 'Robin,' E6

'ROBIN'

CONTINUED FROM E1

Creating a story from scratch is a 'liberating feeling'

Broadway.

The musical draws from the broader song catalog of composer Jimmy Van Heusen and lyricist Sammy Cahn, the team who wrote the score to the "7 Hoods" movie but are probably best remembered for standards made famous by Frank Sinatra — "Come Fly With Me," "High Hopes" and "Ain't That a Kick in the Head" among them.

Those songs are all part of the new show, along with many more — 20-plus numbers in all, "which is a lot for a musical," says Nicholaw. "But they're fantastic numbers. Amazing, amazing music."

Nicholaw and book writer Rupert Holmes, a Tony-winning writer-lyricist-composer ("Curtains," "The Mystery of Edwin Drood"), are building a show that not only has a different story line than its source, but also takes place in a very different time period.

The movie, which starred Rat Pack regulars Sinatra, Dean Mar-

tin and Sammy Davis Jr. (himself the subject of an Old Globe musical, "Sammy," last year), is set amid mob intrigue in the speak-easy era of the 1920s. Nicholaw says that while the film had its moments, "it doesn't really hold up for me," he says.

Holmes notes that the mystique of the Rat Pack was fading by the time the film came out, and says the movie has the indulgent, somewhat bloated whiff of "too many people (having) too much fun making it."

The musical keeps a bit of the mob angle but moves the action to the 1960s, the general period when the songs were actually written. It follows the adventures of Robbo, a fast-living Chicagoan trying to become a big wheel in the nightclub business.

An admirer named Marian, though, misconstrues Robbo's power plays as acts of selfless generosity, and he becomes a reluctant (and conflicted) hero.

"I felt that the '20s setting (of the movie) didn't seem to jibe with the swinging music," says Nicholaw, who earned two Tony nominations for directing and choreographing "The Drowsy Chaperone" (2006) and another for choreographing "Spamalot" (2005).

"That's why I thought, 'Let's make this the early 1960s, when the Rat Pack was in its heyday.'"

Even though it's not about the Rat Pack at all.

What remained, though, was the task of putting the songs together in a way that could help tell a coherent story. As Nicholaw says, "It's difficult to do a jukebox-type musical where you're putting in songs that people know. I think Rupert has done a good job of integrating them so that they don't feel just smashed in."

Holmes, who also wrote the book for last year's "The First Wives Club" — and had a moment for the pop-culture ages three decades ago with his radio hit "Escape (the Pina Colada Song)" — says the vibe of the show's era has become his guide to devising the story.

"It's funny, but it's a story that's based on a score," Holmes says. "The story is based on the spirit of the time in which these songs were popular" — that fleeting era between JFK's election and the height of Beatlemania when the members of the Rat Pack were "the coolest people in the world to be."

Holmes, whose recording career included numerous collaborations with Barbra Streisand, considers Cahn a mentor. The lyricist, who died in 1993, once recruited Holmes to serve on the board of the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Holmes recalls telling Cahn's widow, as they were discussing

"Robin," that "one of the things I want to come out of this show is to have people experience for two hours what the style of Cahn and Van Heusen was all about."

The fact he's writing a story essentially from scratch is a welcome development, he says. "The First Wives Club" was based on the popular 1996 movie of the same name, and Holmes sensed he didn't have the leeway to make wholesale changes without alienating its original audience.

"This is a much more liberating feeling, because I don't have the obligation to preserve a beloved classic," he says.

Although the creative team has had open access to the Van Heusen/Cahn catalog, they haven't had the advantage of the songwriters' own counsel (Van Heusen died in 1990). That has proved a mixed blessing.

"I always say that one of the best things is that our composer and lyricist are not around, and it's also one of the hardest things," Nicholaw says. "It's great that you don't have to deal with two more people, but at the same time, if you want to rewrite a song for a certain moment, you don't have that luxury."

"But Rupert's really musical, and that's very helpful."

John McDaniel, the show's musical director and vocal arranger (his recent credits include

last year's "Bonnie & Clyde" at La Jolla Playhouse), also was brought in early on. The Globe production's cast includes such Broadway veterans as Will Chase ("Billy Elliot"), playing Little John Dante; Eric Schneider ("Jersey Boys") as Robbo; Amy Spanger ("Rock of Ages") as Alana; and Kelly Sullivan ("Young Frankenstein") as Marian.

Louis G. Spisto, the Globe's CEO/executive producer, negotiated the deal to bring "Robin" to the theater; he says the production has financial support from undisclosed producers who are interested in the prospect of taking it to Broadway. Right now, though, there are no definite plans beyond San Diego. Much of it depends on how the show comes together here, and how audiences take to it.

Nicholaw is joined by two other locally bred theater artists on the creative team: costume designer (and fellow San Diego Junior Theatre alum) Gregg Barnes, who won a Tony for "The Drowsy Chaperone" and partnered with Nicholaw at the Globe in 2004 on "Lucky Duck"; and designer Robert Brill, a UCSD grad and two-time Tony nominee ("Assassins," "Guys and Dolls").

The director is happy to be doubling as choreographer: "There's more control — I'm bossy," he says with a laugh during a rehearsal break. "And this has songs that dance really well. It has a lot more dancing than other shows I've done, which I'm really excited about."

On a late-June afternoon at the Globe, the cast gives a taste of the show's flavor as they do a rehearsal run-through of "Come Fly With Me." The dancing

morphs from slinky 1960s cool to peppy salsa moves as Little John and Alana wing from Chicago to a Mexico getaway.

For the most part, says Nicholaw, the show "is based in that cool, traditional kind of dance. Really masculine from the guys, and even the girls' stuff is kind of masculine, which I like. It's not just like '42nd Street' girly-girls. It's a very different feel. It's a little sexier, a little hotter."

And a long way from Nicholaw's introduction to stage choreography, when he was cast as a dancing Indian in a Junior Theatre production of "Annie Get Your Gun" — his very first show.

"I was pretty terrible, I think," recalls Nicholaw, a 1980 graduate of Clairemont High (he also attended Mission Bay). "But I loved doing it."

You won't see Nicholaw getting up onstage much these days: "I can't stand it," he admits. "I have no desire to do that. This cast is working their (rear ends) off. I don't ever need to wake up one morning and have to warm up (vocally) in the shower. I'm so happy I don't have to do that — check my voice, make sure it's there."

All he has to worry about is shepherding a brand-new, closely watched, music-stuffed, 21-actor musical with high hopes (to borrow from the songwriters) for a life beyond the Globe.

"Hopefully, we'll get to New York soon after this, but you never know," Nicholaw says, shrugging off the inevitable question. "That's what this whole time is about — discovering what works, what doesn't, how the book goes with the music, how integrated the numbers feel."

And how generous in its gifts this "Robin" proves to be.

James Hebert: (619) 293-2040; jim.hebert@uniontrib.com; blog, houseseats.uniontrib.com; Twitter, jimhebert

SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

July 11, 2010

The 'Robin' chronicles start with the 'Robber' chronicles

Robin and the 7 Hoods" director and choreographer Casey Nicholaw is no stranger to the Old Globe; he was last at the theater in 2004 to choreograph "Lucky Duck." But the San Diego Junior Theatre alum's Globe debut actually came clear back in 1978, and it was in a show that proved full of theater notables-to-be: the Jack Tygett-directed production of Alfred Uhry and Robert Waldman's "The Robber Bridegroom."

Here's a look at some others involved in "Robber," and where they went from there:

- **Brian Stokes Mitchell:** The actor who played the lead in "The Robber Bridegroom" went on to a major Broadway career and a Tony Award in 2000 for "Kiss Me Kate." He also has had a busy TV career, and continues to perform.

- **Gregg Barnes:** The onetime actor is now a top Broadway costume designer and a frequent collaborator of Nicholaw's (they did "The Drowsy Chaperone" and "Lucky Duck" together, and are teaming on the Broadway production of "Elf" this fall). Barnes won a Tony in 2006 for "Chaper-



Casey Nicholaw (left) works with Kelly Sullivan (playing the character of Marian Archer) and Eric Schneider (Robbo) during rehearsal for "Robin and the 7 Hoods." *Nelvin C. Cepeda / Union-Tribune*

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JAMES HEBERT

They've got high hopes for the "7 Hoods"

Globe's 'Robin and the 7 Hoods' has little in common with the movie, and that's a good thing. Now, all the creators have to do is build a show

By [James Hebert](#), UNION-TRIBUNE THEATER CRITIC

Originally published July 10, 2010 at 10 p.m., updated July 11, 2010 at 12:02 a.m.



The cast of merry men and women: Kelly Sullivan (left, top photo), Eric Schneider, Will Chase and Amy Spanger star in "Robin and the 7 Hoods" Carol Rosegg



Photo by Nelvin C. Cepeda

Director Casey Nicholaw: “We basically took the title and made up our own story.” Nelvin C. Cepeda / U-T

Who's the hoods

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John McDaniel, the show’s musical director and vocal arranger (his recent credits include last year’s “Bonnie & Clyde” at La Jolla Playhouse), also was brought in early on. The Globe production’s cast includes such Broadway veterans as Will Chase (“Billy Elliot”), playing Little John Dante; Eric Schneider (“Jersey Boys”) as Robbo; Amy Spanger (“Rock of Ages”) as Alana; and Kelly Sullivan (“Young Frankenstein”) as Marian.

Louis G. Spisto, the Globe's CEO/executive producer, negotiated the deal to bring "Robin" to the theater; he says the production has financial support from undisclosed producers who are interested in the prospect of taking it to Broadway. Right now, though, there are no definite plans beyond San Diego. Much of it depends on how the show comes together here, and how audiences take to it.

Nicholaw is joined by two other locally bred theater artists on the creative team: costume designer (and fellow San Diego Junior Theatre alum) Gregg Barnes, who won a Tony for "The Drowsy Chaperone" and partnered with Nicholaw at the Globe in 2004 on "Lucky Duck"; and designer Robert Brill, a UCSD grad and two-time Tony nominee ("Assassins," "Guys and Dolls").

The director is happy to be doubling as choreographer: "There's more control — I'm bossy," he says with a laugh during a rehearsal break. "And this has songs that dance really well. It has a lot more dancing than other shows I've done, which I'm really excited about."

On a late-June afternoon at the Globe, the cast gives a taste of the show's flavor as they do a rehearsal run-through of "Come Fly With Me." The dancing morphs from slinky 1960s cool to peppy salsa moves as Little John and Alana wing from Chicago to a Mexico getaway.

For the most part, says Nicholaw, the show "is based in that cool, traditional kind of dance. Really masculine from the guys, and even the girls' stuff is kind of masculine, which I like. It's not just like '42nd Street' girly-girls. It's a very different feel. It's a little sexier, a little hotter."

And a long way from Nicholaw's introduction to stage choreography, when he was cast as a dancing Indian in a Junior Theatre production of "Annie Get Your Gun" — his very first show.

"I was pretty terrible, I think," recalls Nicholaw, a 1980 graduate of Clairemont High (he also attended Mission Bay). "But I loved doing it."

You won't see Nicholaw getting up onstage much these days: "I can't stand it," he admits. "I have no desire to do that. This cast is working their (rear ends) off. I don't ever need to wake up one morning and have to warm up (vocally) in the shower. I'm so happy I don't have to do that — check my voice, make sure it's there."

All he has to worry about is shepherding a brand-new, closely watched, music-stuffed, 21-actor musical with high hopes (to borrow from the songwriters) for a life beyond the Globe.

"Hopefully, we'll get to New York soon after this, but you never know," Nicholaw says, shrugging off the inevitable question. "That's what this whole time is about — discovering what works, what doesn't, how the book goes with the music, how integrated the numbers feel."

And how generous in its gifts this "Robin" proves to be.

Old Globe premieres swingin' 'Robin and the 7 Hoods' musical

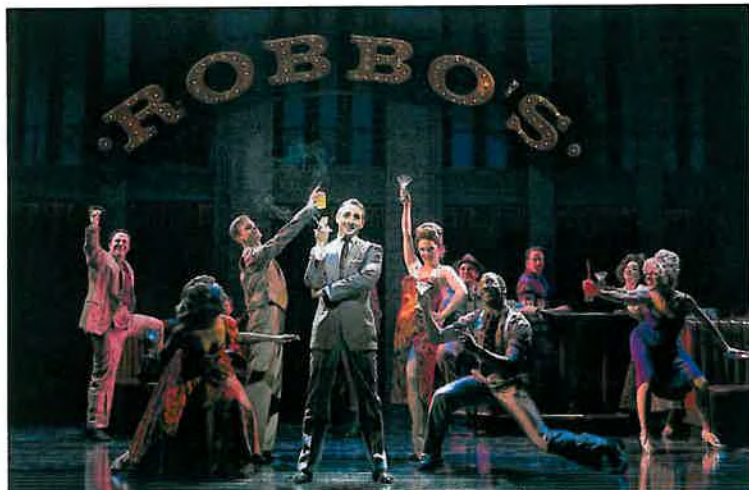
BY PAM KRAGEN
pkragen@nctimes.com

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Only one of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen's songs from the film ("My Kind of Town") and virtually none of the story have survived the show's adaptation to the stage by bookwriter Rupert Holmes. And that's a good thing, said Nicholaw.

"The more we looked at it, the more we wanted to change," said Nicholaw, who grew up in San Diego and at 16 made his professional debut at the Globe in 1979's "The Robber Bridegroom."

"From what we first did two years ago to now, it's completely unrecognizable. A good example is the role played by Amy Spanger. In



Eric Schneider, center, stars in the Old Globe's "Robin and the 7 Hoods — A New Musical." Photo courtesy of Craig Schwartz

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"Robin" started its creative life

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WHERE Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park, San Diego

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Nicholaw said there's a trick to making the show's 21 songs fit into a show they weren't written for.

"The secret is to first let people hear the song as they remember it, and then take it somewhere else," he said. "What's really cool, and I hope we accomplish it, is to have the audience say, 'I didn't know that song was from this show!'"

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See 'Robin,' 22

'Robin'

Continued from Page 13

Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr. — seemed best suited to a different environment and time period. So Holmes ("Curtains," "The First Wives Club") was given carte blanche to create a new script from scratch, with only the rough outlines of Rat Pack-style characters.

"What we wanted was for the show to be all about fun," Nicholaw said. "Rupert and I agreed that the book has to stay out of the way of the music. We don't want the story to get so complex you can't fit 21 songs into it."

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Old Globe premieres swingin' 'Robin and the 7 Hoods' musical

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By PAM KRAGEN - pkragen@nctimes.com | Posted: July 21, 2010 10:00 am | No Comments Posted | [Print](#)

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Craig Schwartz Eric Schneider (center, as Robbo Ortona) and the cast perform "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)" in the World Premiere of Robin and the 7 Hoods - A New Musical directed by Casey Nicholaw with book by Rupert Holmes, lyrics by Sammy Cahn and music by Jimmy Van Heusen, at The Old Globe July 14 - Aug. 22, 2010. Photo by Craig Schwartz.



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Tickets: \$68-\$89

Info: 619-234-5623

Web: theoldglobe.org

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Broadway Bound?

"Robin and the 7 Hoods" hopes to continue San Diego's Broadway tradition

By STEVE LUKE

Updated 1:31 PM PDT, Thu, Aug 19, 2010

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Will Chase loves sold-out theaters and standing ovations, but like everyone else associated with the musical "Robin and the 7 Hoods" -- making its world premiere at the Old Globe Theater -- what the actor really wants is to take the show home to New York.

"I have a gut feeling about this show, absolutely," said Chase, a seasoned Broadway actor who plays the role of Little John in the show. "There is no reason why it wouldn't do well -- and why wouldn't audiences come to see it? The music is so infectious."

"Robin and the 7 Hoods," an updating of the traditional story of "Robin Hood," is set in 1960s Chicago with big dance numbers and familiar music featuring the songs of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen, including ("My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head" and "Call Me Irresponsible and many more).

The musical's producers are hoping it will be the next show to ride the San Diego-to-New York connection. If the path seems like a familiar script, that's because it is. Dozens of shows that premiered in San Diego have gone on to the bright lights of Broadway, including "Jersey Boys," "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels," "Damn Yankees" and, most recently, the La Jolla Playhouse's "Memphis."

"In New York City, it's a known thing that coming to the Old Globe means something special," Stephanie Gibson, who plays in the ensemble and is also married to Chase.

"It's a big deal to be coming out here. It's a big deal because they know they're serious about getting that show to New York."

Like most everyone else associated with the show, Chase and Gibson are from the Big Apple, and while their bank accounts hope they return to New York with the show, they say it's been very nice to spend the summer in San Diego.

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Work Continues on Broadway Rat Pack Musical

Rupert Holmes Joins The Hoods



[BROADWAY MAGAZINE](#) – As this season lines up on Broadway, word is that work continues on the new Rat Pack musical based on the film Robin and the 7 Hoods. We've been keeping our eye on this for [some time](#).

[David Rooney of Variety](#) is reporting that the new musical has added Rupert Holmes to write the book. With songs like "My Kind of Town," "Come Fly With Me," "All the Way" and "Ain't That a Kick in the Head," the musical already packs a punch. The 1964 musical had Frank Sinatra...could this one have George Clooney in the title role?

Holmes has been quite busy. He's working on both The First Wives Club musical, and the new Jerry Lewis musical adaptation of The Nutty Professor. Let's hope he doesn't get the projects all mixed up... or maybe that would be fun too. Join us on [Twitter](#) to see which Rupert Holmes book sets a Broadway date first. Photo not from the production, but from a Rat Pack tribute show in London. WireImage.com.

Tags: [Frank Sinatra](#), [George Clooney](#), [Jerry Lewis](#), [Nutty Professor](#), [Rat Pack](#), [Robin and the 7 Hoods](#), [Rupert Holmes](#)

This entry was posted on Monday, July 27th, 2009 at 9:36 am and is filed under [Broadway Magazine](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

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REIMAGINING by jeff chandler

Robin and the Seven Hoods

WITH ACTOR ERIC SCHNEIDER
AND DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER CASEY NICHOLAW



(l to r) Eric Schneider stars as Robbo and Will Chase as Little John in the World Premiere of *Robin and the Seven Hoods - A New Musical*. Photography by Carol Rosegg.



Director and Choreographer Casey Nicholaw. Photography courtesy of The Old Globe

The film version of *Robin and the Seven Hoods* starred Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis Jr. These three men were affectionately known as part of the “Rat Pack.” They made several films together in the 1960s. The film was set in the 1930s and contained seven songs written by the long-standing songwriters of note, Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen. Fast forward to 2010 and the premise of the movie is now a new musical presented by The Old Globe Theatre. However, just the title, two songs (“My Kind of Town” and one number cut from the original film) and a bit of the original plot of the film remain.

Robin and the Seven Hoods now takes place in the Chicago of the 1960s. The place...a nightclub that still has mob connections and a rivalry between gangs. *Robin and the Seven Hoods* is also chock full of 20 songs and they represent the finest work of Cahn/Van Heusen. “Ring-a-Ding Ding” is right! But, let’s let star Eric Schneider and director and choreographer Casey Nicholaw flesh out the details. Why the time period change for the stage musical? Eric explains, “Basically it takes away some

of the 1930s Zoot Suit stuff. We’re going more for a slick early 1960s kind of *Mad Men* kind of look. My character Robbo runs a couple of nightclubs. He is a nightclub owner and a big celebrity in the neighborhood. He’s a gangster. He does some things on the side. But, he’s a good dude with a heart of gold who loves giving back to his neighborhood. There’s Robin and the seven hoods and then a bigger crime boss named T.J. Sullivan. Sullivan basically runs Chicago. He’s trying to muscle Robbo

out of his turf. Sullivan wants Robbo gone!” Casey elaborates, “We’ve seen so many 1920s musicals...*Thoroughly Modern Millie* and all this stuff. Let’s set it in the 1960s...I think it will be a lot more fun. 1960 through 1962, right at the height of swing. This music is so timeless. Every time one of these songs come on, you want to just get up and start dancing. Everyone thinks of the Rat Pack as cool. I think it’s about cool. It’s cool but you want to get a laugh too. There is also so much dance in it, which has really been fun for me.”

Eric Schneider is familiar that his role of “Robbo” was originally played by old blue eyes himself...Frank Sinatra. What sort of interpretation does Schneider look forward to presenting in this role? “A lot of these songs people know because of Frank Sinatra and the way that he did them. I think that would be a slippery slope to try to climb [to match Sinatra’s delivery]. It’s cool because the story is different. It’s adapted from the Rat Pack movie but it’s so different that I feel like I can completely create a new character. I can sing the songs with a nod to Sinatra because I know why people loved these songs and why they became so famous. But really...to make them Robbo’s songs as opposed to Frank’s songs you know. There’s definitely a style thing, the way these guys sang is something we’re definitely incorporating.”

This new musical, *Robin and the Seven Hoods*, sounds really hot and something which audiences should enjoy seeing. Director Casey Nicholaw explains his excitement about the upcoming production. “The most fun right now is just the style and the music and the buoyancy of the piece. Also, I love solving problems so it’s about figuring out the right balance of song and book and tone. It’s always going to be about getting the tone right.”

Eric talks about the incredible batch of songs utilized in the musical. “A lot of the musical numbers take place in the nightclub. We have unbelievable showgirls who come out and do numbers for the crowd at the nightclub. There are over 20 songs...it’s a big musical production. Songs like ‘Ain’t That a Kick in the Head,’ ‘Come Fly With Me’ and the show opens with ‘My Kind of Town.’ There is some really cool stuff.” Rupert Holmes (book) really did an amazing job of connecting the dots and making these songs work for the show.” Director Casey Nicholaw also shared with us what he enjoys about the book adaptation for the new musical stage version. “Rupert has the job of trying to wedge all these great songs into the show, weaving them together and developing characters based on who would sing what song. He’s taking this great music and making a story out of it all. I’m really excited about presenting our work.”

Robin and the Seven Hoods

The Old Globe Theatre

July 14-August 22

619.234.5623

oldglobe.org

EAST COUNTY GAZETTE

June 24, 2010

Spotlight on community theatre

Previews by Diana Saenger

Old Globe Theatre

The Globe's Shakespeare Festival is here. *King Lear* runs June 12 - September 23 and is one of the most powerful dramas in western literature. *Lear* wants to divide his kingdom between his three daughters – each to receive land and wealth in proportion to their declaration of love for him. Two compete to flatter their father, while one refuses to play the game. *The Taming of the Shrew* runs June 16 - September 26 and is the quintessential battle-of-the-sexes comedy! Baptista has two daughters that need to be married off. One docile, beautiful and much sought after by the noble men of the town, and the other ill-tempered and shrewish, with an acid tongue that no man can tame. What's a father to do? *The Madness of King George III* runs June 19 - September 24 and is a masterpiece of royal intrigue. In the years immediately following the American Revolutionary War, this powerful play explores the court of England's King, his deterioration into madness and his determination to hold on to political power from those around him.

Robin And The 7 Hoods, a world premiere, Broadway-bound musical comedy takes us back to that sexy era when martinis flowed freely and the songs of Sammy Cahn and



Eric Schnelder stars as Robbo and Will Chase as Little John in the World Premiere musical of *Robin and the 7 Hoods*

Jimmy Van Heusen ("My Kind of Town (Chicago is)," ruled the night. The new musical takes the Robin Hood legend and gives it an early sixties spin as Robbo, a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene, finds himself wanted by both

sides of the law. The play runs July 14 – August 22.

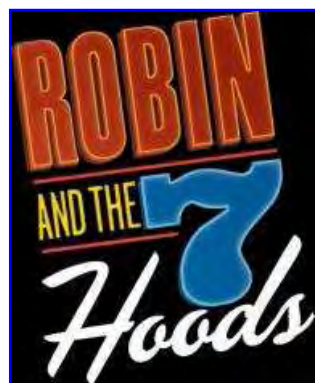
Marion Ross (*Happy Days*), America's favorite mother, returns to The Globe to star with her life partner, Paul Michael in this new romantic comedy. On an ordinary day, Ralph decides to take a different path on his daily walk – one that leads him to an unexpected second chance at love. Ralph attempts to woo the elegant, but distant, Carol but her reticence – and his lonely sister's jealousy – sends Ralph on the trip of a lifetime. *The Last Romance* is a heart-warming comedy that plays July 30 – Sept. 5. For more information call (619) 23-GLOBE, www.TheOldGlobe.org.

[On The Entertainment Beat](#)

Audra Stafford's Guide To San Diego Entertainment



[“Robin And The 7 Hoods” In Previews At The Old Globe](#)



Robin and the 7 Hoods- A New Musical, based on the classic Rat Pack film, is now in previews at the [Old Globe Theatre](#). The Broadway-bound musical takes the Robin Hood legend and gives it an early-sixties spin. The musical features such classic Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen tunes as “My Kind of Town (Chicago Is),” “Call Me Irresponsible” and “All the Way.”

I’ll soon be interviewing director/choreographer (and San Diego native) Casey Nicholaw (*The Drowsy Chaperone*). In the meantime, here’s a peek at some production stills from the show!

Photos by Craig Schwartz.



~ by audrastafford on July 16, 2010.

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Legit

Posted: Tue., Aug. 3, 2010, 4:00am PT

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Verdict mixed on 'Robin and the 7 Hoods'

Production, choreography get high marks

By VARIETY STAFF

Producers of "Robin and the 7 Hoods" (Old Globe Theater, San Diego), the new tuner incorporating familiar tunes by Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen, have made no secret of its Broadway intentions. With a book by Rupert Holmes (based on the Rat Pack pic of the same name) and direction and choreography by Casey Nicholaw ("The Drowsy Chaperone"), the show's world preem at San Diego's Old Globe Theater has always been considered the first step on the road to Broadway.

The Verdict looks at critical reaction to key productions opening Off Broadway, regionally and abroad that appear likely candidates for further life on Broadway and/or elsewhere.

The production -- with a cast that includes Eric Schneider, Will Chase, Kelly Sullivan and Amy Spanger -- came away from its recent opening at the Old Globe with a mixed bag of reviews.

Here's what the critics said:

- In the San Diego Union-Tribune, James Hebert gave the musical a thumbs-up, calling it "a canny, stylish new show that's a ton of frothy fun, if (no surprise) a little stingy on the intellectual riches." He also gives high marks to the cast and the production elements, but he's hoping the "crowdpleaser" can find a little more heft on its way to New York.

- Charles McNulty in the Los Angeles Times argued "Robin" doesn't yet know what it wants to be. He wasn't a fan of the book, but acknowledged the songs are "criminally entertaining," singling out the band and the orchestrations for praise. He wrote of the overall production, "The paint job on this one is certainly snazzy, but the engineering reveals major flaws -- the biggest being the attempt to thread disparate songs into a consistent narrative."

- Longtime area critic Welton Jones, writing for Sandiego.com, was largely mixed on the entire endeavor. He enjoyed the songs and orchestrations but said of the leads that charisma "is in short supply." Still, he appreciated other elements of the production, noting that "Nicholaw is almost as heroic an ingredient" as the orchestrations.

Contact the Variety newsroom at news@variety.com.

*'Robin and the 7 Hoods'*

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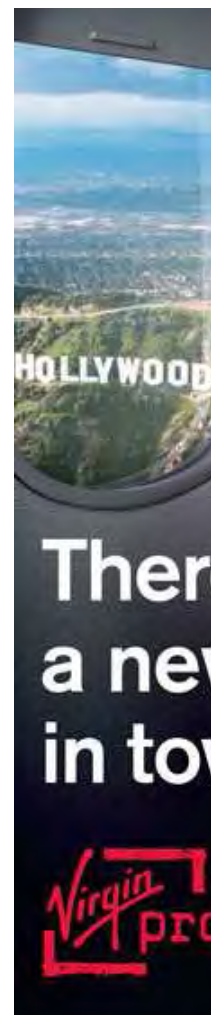
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MY TOP 15 IN 2010 THEATER

By Rob Stevens

It's that time of year again. All the Christmas presents have been opened (and some returned) and for critics/reviewers it is time to jog the memory and come up with a "Best Of" list for what was seen in the past year. Most keep their list to 10, but after nearly 3 decades of Robby Awards (where the Best Musical Production category alone usually numbered 16 nominees a year and when you added in the Comedy and Drama productions there were usually 30 or more that were deemed Best of the Year), I just couldn't stop at such a low number. Since I am not seeing 250 shows a year, or even 150 anymore, I have kept the number reasonable. So here are the Top 15 productions I saw in Southern California during 2010. Not all of them were seen for review, several I actually paid cash to see just because the theater bug in me is viral. Since I am no longer in the award-giving business, I have not listed them in order of excellence or enjoyment, or even alphabetically. The following productions are listed in the order that they were viewed.



BOEING BOEING

The Old Globe Theatre, San Diego

I'll never forget the two-line review by the eminent critic Viola Heigi-Swisher in AFTER DARK magazine shortly after I began reviewing in the mid 1970s. "There were five doors on stage. It MUST have been a farce." Well there were more than five doors in Rob Howell's set design on the Old Globe's stage, but this really WAS A FARCE. I don't think I laughed louder or longer or more all year than I did watching director Mark Schneider propel his sextet of actors in and out of those doors in this French sex farce by Marc Camoletti and Beverly Cross.



GOLDA'S BALCONY

The Old Globe Theatre, San Diego

William Gibson's one-woman play about Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir was one of the most informative, thrilling and thought-provoking shows of the year. Tovah Feldshuh gave a tour-de-force performance--precisely the kind of performance that deserves a standing ovation. I couldn't wait to jump out of my seat and start applauding and that is something I rarely do, no matter what the crowd around me is doing.



ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS

The Old Globe Theatre, San Diego

Another jukebox musical but "Ring-a-Ding Ding," this one had such a pedigree. The songs were from the team of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen and most of them were originally hits for Frank Sinatra. Based on the Rat Pack film of the same title, this show had pizzazz and style to spare. The cast was fabulous, giving us a taste of Frank, Dean, Sammy and the gang without pushing it. The chorus energetically performed the show-stopping choreography of Casey Nicholaw. Light and frothy and oh so delightful.

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This was a great theater year for women, teens and one-person shows.

Plays like "Eurydice," "Private Lives," "Ghosts" and "Ruined" gave women a chance to shine, as did three terrific one-person shows featuring women: the Old Globe's "Golda's Balcony," Broadway Vista's "Shirley Valentine" and Broadway San Diego's "An Evening of Classic Lily Tomlin."

Meanwhile, teenage favorite Austyn Myers flexed his dramatic and comedic muscles in "Lost In Yonkers" at the Old Globe, while 14-year-old newcomer Dylan Hoffinger proved an actor wise beyond his years in Diversionary's "Anita Bryant Died For Your Sins."

Hannah Rose Kornfeld was terrific as Little Red Riding Hood and seemed to easily conquer Stephen Sondheim's tricky score for "Into The Woods." And pint-sized Victoria Matthews from the School for Creative and Performing Arts demonstrated her huge voice and fine acting chops as Little Inez in "Hairspray" at San Diego Repertory Theatre.

Here's the best of what I saw in 2010. I include shows seen in Los Angeles and even toss in two shows I saw in Chicago during the summer. The winners are listed in random order.

Drama: Particularly fine were "Summer And Smoke" at New Village Arts; Moxie's stunning "Eurydice" and the thought-provoking classic "The Crucible;" Mo'olelo's "Yellow Face;" ion's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (which broke all attendance records there); Lamb's Players' enigmatic "An Inspector Calls;" North Coast Rep's "Ghosts;" Geffen Playhouse's "Ruined" and the Mark Taper Forum's rerun of my pick for best play of the last decade, "Bengal Tiger At The Baghdad Zoo."

Comedy: San Diego Rep's quirky, futurist "boom;" ion's "Frankie And Johnny In The Clair De Lune;" Christopher Ashley's novel take on "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at La Jolla Playhouse; Cygnet's pitch-perfect "Private Lives" and three-part "The Norman Conquests;" the always-reliable (and goofy) Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo at Broadway San Diego; "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" at North Coast Rep; Scripps Ranch Theatre's wonderfully oddball "Deathtrap;" and two from New Village Arts: "Seven Year Itch" at their downtown theater and "As You Like It" at the Moonlight Amphitheatre.

Musical: North County gets the gold star here. All three of Moonlight Stage Productions' summer shows ("Crazy For You," "Oklahoma!" and "Miss Saigon") were exceptional; New Village Arts did a fine job on its first musical, "Into The Woods" and Welk Resorts Theatre did a delightful "Footloose." Here in town, Calvin Manson's Ira Aldridge Repertory Players did an excellent "Nina" (a tribute to Nina Simone); Cygnet gave us a smashing "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber Of Fleet Street;" and Old Globe offered the pleasure of Sammy Cahn's songs in "Robin And The Seven Hoods."

One-Person Shows: The men got into the one-person show sweepstakes with Culture Clash's Herbert Siguenza was fascinating in "A Weekend With Pablo Picasso," and Ed Harris riveting in Neil LaBute's "Wrecks" at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles; James Knight's harrowing interpretation of Yuri Kladiev's meditation on war, "I Am The Machine Gunner" at New Village Arts and Brian Bielawski's hilarious portrayal of a compulsive computer gamer in "Gam3rs."

Most Unusual Show: Victoria Thierree Chaplin's delightful "Aurelia's Oratorio," a wacky and whimsical combination of vaudeville, burlesque, circus and dance, at La Jolla Playhouse.

Director: Glenn Paris did a fine job on the Hollywood satire "Hurlyburly;" Delicia Turner Sonnenberg conquered the nearly impossible demands of "Eurydice;" Tom Dugdale, a third-year directing student at UCSD, did lovely work on Chekhov's "The Seagull;" Christopher Ashley gave us a stunning "A Midsummer Night's Dream;" Jessica John showed a fine comedic touch

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Justin Lang and Jennifer Eve Thorn star in Moxie's "Eurydice."



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with "Deathtrap;" Kim Strassburger gave us a brilliant "Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde" at ion, and Seema Sueko did fine work on the complex "Yellow Face."

Actor: Fran Gercke, for ion's "Hurlyburly;" Jason Maddy, for both North Coast Rep's "The Voice Of The Prairie" and Stone Soup's "Miss Julie;" Paul Michael, for the Globe's "The Last Romance;" Diep Huynh, for ion's "Song of Extinction;" Richard Baird, for North Coast Rep's "Ghosts;" and David Cochran Heath, for Lamb's Players' "Harvey."

Actress: Jennifer Eve Thorn, in Moxie's "Eurydice;" DeAnna Driscoll, for ion's "Frankie And Johnny In The Clair De Lune;" Jo Anne Glover, in New Village Arts' "Summer And Smoke;" Rosina Reynolds and Aimee Burdette, for North Coast Rep's "Ghosts;" Rachael VanWormer, for three shows: San Diego Repertory's "boom," ion's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and Diversionary's "Speech and Debate," and Tovah Feldshuh for her stunning portrayal in "Golda's Balcony" at the Old Globe.

Ensemble Cast: Ion's "Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde;" Cygnet's "Sweeney Todd" and "Private Lives;" UCSD's fine student production of "Joe Turner's Come And Gone;" the Mark Taper Forum's revival of "The Subject Was Roses."

Best New Find: The 14-year-old Dylan Hoffinger, absolutely stunning in his professional debut at Diversionary in "Anita Bryant Died For Your Sins."

Best Singer: Baritone Joshua Jeremiah, providing gorgeous incidental operatic music in the Old Globe's "The Last Romance."

Set design: Jennifer Brawn Gittings for Moxie's breathtaking "Eurydice;" Sean Fanning's dark, foreboding set for Cygnet's "Sweeney Todd;" Giulio Cesare Perrone, for his wonderfully detailed set for "The Road To Mecca" at San Diego Rep; Rob Howell for the handsome set of "Boeing-Boeing," and Andrew Hull's elegant set for Cygnet's "Private Lives."


Costumes: Shirley Pierson, for her elegant costumes for Cygnet's "Private Lives" and grungier ones for "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber Of Fleet Street."

College Productions: MiraCosta, for their lovely "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" and their co-production with the Old Globe of "The Tempest;" the USD/Old Globe production of "The Winter's Tale," and UCSD's fine "The Seagull" and "Joe Turner's Come And Gone."

Way Out of Town: In Chicago, Steppenwolf impressed with its production of Bruce Norris' enigmatic "A Parallelogram" and Lookingglass mounted a terrific Cirque du Soleil-type treatment of my favorite Lewis Carroll book in its "Lookingglass Alice."

On The Big Screen: National Theatre (of London) has jumped on the Met Live bandwagon to present plays from England at downtown's Reading Gaslamp Cinemas. So far this year they've offered a replay of last year's "Phèdre" with Helen Mirren (who can do no wrong), Alan Bennett's "The Habit Of Art" and a stunning production from Complicite in Plymouth called "A Disappearing Number."

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Rupert Holmes to Craft Libretto for Musical *Robin and the 7 Hoods*

By Kenneth Jones
July 27, 2009

Tony Award winner Rupert Holmes, who currently has his hands full as librettist of the new Broadway-aimed musical *The First Wives Club*, has joined the creative team of the new musical, *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, its producers announced July 27.

As previously announced, Tony nominee Casey Nicholaw (*The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Spamalot*) will direct and choreograph the musical in which "the swinging '60s will meet Broadway."

Prior to its 2010-11 season launch on Broadway, the show will premiere on the West Coast in summer 2010. The producers are Dennis Mastro, Bruce Charet, Billy Campbell, Dennis Farina; and Barry Brown, executive producer.

Holmes (*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*) will write the book for *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, a property widely known as a 1964 film vehicle for Frank Sinatra and his Rat Pack pals. *Robin and the 7 Hoods* will celebrate songs by the iconic Sammy Cahn & James Van Heusen whose body of work includes "My Kind of Town," "Come Fly with Me," "All The Way," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head" and many more (to be included in the stage score).

Holmes was last represented on Broadway with his book for the Kander and Ebb musical, *Curtains* (for which he received a Tony Award nomination). Other Broadway writing credits include *Say Goodnight, Gracie* (Tony Award nomination, Best Play) and the Tony Award-winning Best Musical *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (for which he received Tony Awards for Best Book and Best Score). In addition, he has written the book for the new musical *The First Wives Club* which is now playing at The Old Globe in San Diego. He's also writing lyrics to Marvin Hamlisch's music for the new stage musical *The Nutty Professor*.

Producer Mastro stated, "Rupert Holmes is one of the savviest writers in the business. His understanding of the world of *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, and his extraordinary wit make Holmes the perfect 'partner' for Cahn & Van Heusen. We're thrilled he's on board."

Billed as a "re-thinking of the classic 1964 Warner Brothers film of the same name," *Robin and the 7 Hoods* "will shine a Broadway light on that sexy, swinging era, where the old culture meets the sexual revolution."

In addition to a book by Holmes and a score by Sammy Cahn

and James Van Heusen, *Robin and the 7 Hoods* will feature musical supervision by John McDaniel, costume design by Tony Award-winner Gregg Barnes, lighting design by Tony Award-winner Natasha Katz, hair and wig design by Josh Marquette and casting by Tara Rubin. Ken Denison/Aruba Productions is general manager.

Casting and additional *Robin and the 7 Hoods* news will be announced soon.

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Rupert Holmes Joins Creative Team For 'ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS' Musical

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by BWW News Desk



Tony Award-winner Rupert Holmes has joined the creative team of the new musical, Robin and the 7 Hoods, it was announced today by the show's producers (Dennis Mastro, Bruce Charet, Billy Campbell, Dennis Farina;

Barry Brown, executive producer). As previously announced, the swinging '60's will meet Broadway when this brand new musical comedy opens in New York during the 2010-11 season. Prior to its Broadway run, the show will premiere on the west

coast next summer.



Holmes, who will write the book for Robin and the 7 Hoods, was last represented on Broadway with his book for the Kander and Ebb musical, Curtains (for which he received a Tony Award nomination). Other Broadway writing credits include Say Goodnight, Gracie (Tony Award nomination, Best Play) and the Tony Award-winning Best Musical, The Mystery of Edwin Drood (for which Mr. Holmes received Tony Awards for Best Book and Best Score). In addition, he has written the book for the new musical The First Wives Club which is now playing at The Old Globe in San Diego.

Producer Mastro said, "Rupert Holmes is one of the savviest writers in the business. His understanding of the world of Robin and the 7 Hoods, and his extraordinary wit make Holmes the perfect 'partner' for Cahn & Van Heusen. We're thrilled he's on board."

Robin and the 7 Hoods will celebrate songs by the iconic Sammy Cahn & James Van Heusen whose body of work is one of the true treasures of the Great American Songbook. Songs such as "My Kind of Town," "Come Fly with Me," "All The Way," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head," and many more will comprise the musical's score.

A re-thinking of the classic 1964 Warner Brothers film of the same name, Robin and the 7 Hoods

will shine a Broadway light on that sexy, swinging era, where the old culture meets the sexual revolution.

In addition to a book by Mr. Holmes and a score by Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen, Robin and the 7 Hoods will feature musical supervision by John McDaniel, costume design by Tony Award-winner Gregg Barnes, lighting design by Tony Award-winner Natasha Katz, hair and wig design by Josh Marquette, casting by Tara Rubin, and will be directed and choreographed by multi-Tony Award-nominee Casey Nicholaw. Ken Denison/Aruba Productions is General Manager.

Casting and additional Robin and the 7 Hoods news will be announced soon.

Rupert Holmes is a playwright, composer, lyricist, arranger, screenwriter, conductor, novelist and singer-songwriter. To date, he has authored (and composed the music for) five Broadway shows: The Mystery of Edwin Drood (Tony award-winner for Best Musical); the Tony nominated play Say Goodnight Gracie (about the life of George Burns); the Edgar award winning comedy-thriller Accomplice; the tour-de-force for actor Stacy Keach, Solitary Confinement; and, in collaboration with the legendary songwriting team of Kander and Ebb, the recent hit musical Curtains, starring David Hyde Pierce. He has himself won Tony awards as an author, composer and lyricist and received four additional Tony nominations. He has won five New York Drama Desk awards, including Best Orchestration and, for Curtains, the 2007 award for Best Book of a Musical.

His love for both story-telling and music initially found outlet within the framework of story songs, leading him to a career as a pop singer-songwriter of the seventies, when he wrote, arranged, and conducted Barbra Streisand's platinum album Lazy Afternoon and contributed songs to the Golden Globe-winning score A Star is Born as well as arranging for Streisand's Back to Broadway album. His pop tunes have since been recorded by many of the leading vocalists of our time including Britney Spears, Cleo Laine, Barry Manilow, Patti LuPone, Melissa Manchester, Dolly Parton, Rita Coolidge, Dionne Warwick, Judy Collins and opera star Renee Fleming. In 1979 and 1980, he himself topped the Billboard charts as both a singer, songwriter, and arranger with his own iconic hit "Escape (The Pina Colada Song)," a number one record in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Japan, and heard most recently in such movies as Wanted, Shrek, Bewitched, The Sweetest Thing, American Splendor and How Stella Got Her Groove Back. He followed this with several more top ten hits (including the chart-topping ballad by the Jets, "You Got It All Over Him" and his own recordings of "Him" and "The People that You Never Get To Love") and has performed in every kind of venue from The Bottom Line to Carnegie Hall, from The Today Show to The Tonight Show and his own hour-length PBS Soundstage special. In the nineties, he created and wrote AMC's critically-acclaimed, Emmy Award-winning television "dramedy" Remember WENN. With the millennium, his first novel, Where the Truth Lies, was a Booklist Top Ten Debut Crime Novel, nominated for a Nero Wolfe award for Best American Mystery, and made into a film by Atom Egoyan and starring Kevin Bacon and Colin Firth. His second novel Swing reached #24 of all books on Amazon. His short story "Monks of the Abbey Victoria" is part of the prestigious anthology Best American Mystery Stories 2008.

Forthcoming musicals include the books for First Wives Club with Motown legends Holland-Dozier-Holland, Marty with Charles Strouse and Lee Adams, a new stage musical of Secondhand Lions for Warner Brothers, My Man Godfrey with Urinetown's Mark Hollmann. Holmes is also writing the book and lyrics for the musical of The Nutty Professor with Jerry Lewis and Marvin Hamlisch and his own book and score for The Picture of Dorian Gray. Additionally, he is writing a crime novel for Twelve Publishing (the first entry in his McMasters Guide to Homicide series, entitled Murder Your Employer).



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Headlines: Rupert Holmes to Write Book for Rat Pack Musical *Robin and the 7 Hoods*

by Broadway.com Staff

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Tony winner Rupert Holmes has signed on as book writer of *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, a new musical adaptation of the 1964 movie that starred Rat Pack members Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. Holmes replaces previously announced book writer Peter Ackerman on the show, which is aiming for a pre-Broadway West Coast tryout in the summer of 2010, directed by Casey Nicholaw.

The film transported the Robin Hood legend to Chicago during Prohibition, with Sinatra as Robbo, a racketeer modeled on Robin Hood, and Martin as his sidekick Little John. The proposed musical, set in Chicago at the time the movie was filmed, will be built around standards by Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen, including "My Kind of Town," "Come

Fly With Me," "All the Way" and "Ain't That a Kick in the Head." An earlier statement by producer Bruce Charet had described the musical as capturing "a fascinating little moment in history when the old culture met the sexual revolution...this very attractive, sexy period when all people were interested in doing was getting laid and drinking martinis."

Holmes, who won Tonys for the book and score of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, was most recently represented on Broadway with *Curtains*. He wrote the book for *The First Wives Club*, currently playing at the Old Globe in San Diego, and is working with Marvin Hamlisch on a musical adaptation of *The Nutty Professor* to be directed by Jerry Lewis, also aiming for the 2010-2011 season.

In addition to Charet, lead producers on *Robin and the 7 Hoods* include Dennis Mastro, Billy Campbell and Dennis Farina, with Barry Brown as executive producer. John McDaniel will be musical supervisor, Gregg Barnes will design costumes, and Natasha Katz is the lighting designer.



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Rupert Holmes
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Rupert Holmes to Craft Libretto for Musical *Robin and the 7 Hoods*

Tony Award winner Rupert Holmes, who currently has his hands full as librettist of the new Broadway-aimed musical *The First Wives Club*, has joined the creative team of the new musical, *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, its producers announced July 27.

John Cudia Slips Into Broadway's *Phantom Mask* July 27

John Cudia, an actor with a long association with Harold Prince's production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*, takes over the title role on Broadway July 27.

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'ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS' Will 'Swing' at San Diego's Old Globe in Summer 2010



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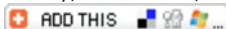
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Sunday, November 1, 2009; Posted: 12:11 PM - by [BWW News Desk](#)

The swinging '60's meets Broadway pizazz when Robin and the 7 Hoods, a brand new musical comedy, makes its debut at San Diego's [Old Globe Theatre](#) this summer. Robin and the 7 Hoods will play at [The Old Globe](#) from July 14th through August 22nd, 2010.

The production will feature a score by [Sammy Cahn](#) and [James Van Heusen](#) and will be directed and choreographed by multi-Tony Award-nominee [Casey Nicholaw](#).

Tony Award-winner [Rupert Holmes](#) has also joined the creative team of the new musical, Robin and the 7 Hoods, as book writer.

Robin and the 7 Hoods will be produced by Dennis Mastro, Bruce Charet, Billy Campbell, [Dennis Farina](#); and [Barry Brown](#) as executive producer. As previously announced, the comedy is set to also open in New York during the 2010-11 season.

Robin and the 7 Hoods will celebrate songs by the iconic [Sammy Cahn](#) & [James Van Heusen](#) whose body of work is one of the true treasures of the Great American Songbook. Songs such as "My Kind of Town," "Come Fly with Me," "Call Me Irresponsible," "All The Way" and many more will comprise the musical's score.

A re-thinking of the classic 1964 [Warner Brothers](#) film of the same name, Robin and the 7 Hoods will shine a Broadway light on that sexy era in pop culture that ushered in the 1960's and whose hold remains firm on the American psyche – where James Bond reigned supreme, martinis flowed freely, and Sinatra and Martin ruled the night.

Producer Charet said in an earlier statement that, "The intersection of the sexual revolution and the Camelot years will come to life every night on our stage. That moment in time, which personifies "cool" is at the heart of our show and, thankfully, we have the wonderful songs by Cahn and [Van Heusen](#) which so eloquently express all that make that period unique."

Robin and the 7 Hoods will feature musical supervision by [John McDaniel](#), costume design by Tony Award-winner [Gregg Barnes](#), lighting design by Tony Award-winner [Natasha Katz](#), hair and wig design by [Josh Marquette](#) and casting by [Tara Rubin](#). [Ken Denison/Aruba Productions](#) is General Manager.

Casting and additional Robin and the 7 Hoods news will be announced soon. For more information visit, www.theoldglobe.org.

[The Old Globe](#) is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. There are numerous free parking lots available throughout the park. Valet parking is also available (\$10). For additional parking information visit www.BalboaPark.org.

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Chase & Spanger to Lead ROBIN & THE 7 HOODS at Old Globe



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Thursday, June 3, 2010; Posted: 01:06 PM - by [BWW News Desk](#)

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Executive Producer Lou Spisto today announced the cast and creative team for the World Premiere of Robin and the 7 Hoods - A New Musical featuring a book by Tony Award winner Rupert Holmes and songs by four-time Academy Award winners Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen. Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, with musical supervision and vocal and incidental arrangements by John McDaniel, the Broadway-bound musical comedy will run in the Old Globe Theatre July 14 - August 22. Previews run July 14 - July 29. Opening night is Friday, July 30 at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are currently available to subscribers only. Single tickets go on sale June 5 at 10:00 a.m. and can be purchased online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the Box Office.

Based on the classic Rat Pack film, Robin and the 7 Hoods takes the Robin Hood legend and gives it an early-sixties spin. Set in Chicago, when "Mad Men" reigned supreme and martinis flowed freely, the musical features such

classic Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen tunes as "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," "Call Me Irresponsible" and "All the Way." When Robbo, a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene, tries to re-organize organized crime, he finds himself wanted by both sides of the law. He and his merry band quickly learn that a few wrongs - and a few songs - could make things right.

The cast of Robin and the 7 Hoods features Will Chase (Little John), Adam Heller (Lieutenant Nottingham), Rick Holmes (P.J. Sullivan), Jeffrey Schechter (Willie Scarlatti), Eric Schneider (Robbo), Amy Spanger (Alana O'Dell) and Kelly Sullivan (Marian Archer) with Timothy J. Alex, Clyde Alves, Graham Bowen, Andrew Cao, Cara Cooper, Paige Faure, Lisa Gajda, Stephanie Gibson, Carissa Lopez, Vasthy Mompont, Beth Johnson Nicely, Aleks Pevec, Sam Prince, Tally Sessions, Brian Shepard and Anthony Wayne (Ensemble).

The creative team includes Robert Brill (Scenic Design), Gregg Barnes (Costume Design), Kenneth Posner (Lighting Design), John Shivers and David Patridge (Sound Design), Josh Marquette (Hair and Wig Design), Bill Elliott (Orchestrator), Mark Hummel (Music Director), David Chase (Dance Music Arranger), Tara Rubin Casting (Casting) and Peter Wolf (Stage Manager).

Robin and the 7 Hoods is based on the original screenplay by David R. Schwartz and is produced with the permission of Warner Brothers Theatrical Ventures.

Will Chase (Little John) appeared on Broadway as Tony in Billy Elliot: The Musical. He has starred on Broadway in The Story of My Life, High Fidelity, Lennon, Aida, The Full Monty, Miss Saigon and as Roger in the final cast of Rent. His Off Broadway credits include The Burnt Part Boys (Vineyard Theater) and Don't Quit Your Night Job (Ha! Comedy Club).

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Chase's regional credits include Valentin in Kiss of the Spiderwoman (Helen Hayes Nomination, Signature Theatre), Curly in Oklahoma! (Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma), Sid in The Pajama Game (The MUNY) and Mame (Jeff Award nomination). His film credits include Four Single Fathers, Rent: Filmed Live on Broadway, Everyday People (HBO Films) and Shaft. On television, Chase currently plays Pat Mahoney on FX's "Rescue Me."

Eric Schneider (Robbo) performed the role of Frankie Valli in Jersey Boys on Broadway as well as Danny Zuko in the national tour of Grease. His Off Broadway credits include Altar Boyz, The Full Monty and the original cast of Happy Days as Chachi. Schneider's recent television roles are Sixtus D'Alessio in HBO's "Boardwalk Empire" for executive producer Martin Scorsese and Officer Eddie Nelson in this year's season finale of "Law & Order: SVU" with Sharon Stone. His first film role was in Loverboy directed by Kevin Bacon and he most recently filmed Goat, to be released later this year.

Amy Spanger (Alana O'Dell) originated the roles of Sherrie in Rock of Ages, Holly in The Wedding Singer (Drama Desk nomination), Bianca/Lois in Kiss Me Kate and appeared as Roxie Hart in Chicago, Hope Cladwell in Urinetown and Betty Schaeffer in Sunset Boulevard (Broadway). Spanger's Off Broadway credits include the role of Susan in Jonathan Larson's tick, tick...BOOM! Her tours include Maureen in the first National Tour of Rent and Roxie in Chicago. Spanger's film and television credits include "Royal Pains," "Michael and Michael Have Issues," Law & Order: SVU, "Six Feet Under," Reefer Madness (Showtime) and Synecdoche, New York.

Kelly Sullivan (Marian Archer) was most recently seen as Claire De Loone in On the Town (Paper Mill Playhouse). Her Broadway credits include Young Frankenstein, Contact and Bells Are Ringing. Her television and film credits include "Law and Order: Criminal Intent," "One Life to Live," "As the World Turns," The Producers, Winter of Frozen Dreams, Meet Pete, Greta and the upcoming My Father's Will and Ice Grill U.S.A. Her Off Broadway and regional credits include Burleigh Grimes (New World Stages), Enter Laughing (York Theatre Company), City Center Encores!, Steel Magnolias and The Full Monty (Paper Mill Playhouse), world premiere of Carter's Way (Kansas City Repertory Theatre), Chicago (Pioneer Theatre Company), The Importance of Being Ernest and Private Lives (Great Lakes Theater Festival) and The Mystery of Edwin Drood (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis).

Rupert Holmes returns to The Old Globe after writing the book for last year's sell-out run of the musical The First Wives Club. He is a playwright, composer, lyricist, arranger, screenwriter, conductor, novelist and singer-songwriter. To date, he has authored (and composed the music for) five Broadway shows: The Mystery of Edwin Drood (Tony Award-winner for Best Musical); the Tony-nominated play Say Goodnight Gracie (about the life of George Burns); the Edgar Award winning comedy-thriller Accomplice; the tour-de-force for actor Stacy Keach, Solitary Confinement; and, in collaboration with the legendary songwriting team of Kander and Ebb, the recent hit musical Curtains, starring David Hyde Pierce. He has solely won Tony Awards as an author, composer and lyricist and received four additional Tony nominations. He has won five New York Drama Desk Awards, including Best Orchestration and, for Curtains, the 2007 award for Best Book of a Musical. In the nineties, he created and wrote AMC's critically-acclaimed television "dramedy" Remember WENN. With the millennium, his first novel, Where the Truth Lies, was a Booklist Top Ten Debut Crime Novel, nominated for a Nero Wolfe award for Best American Mystery, and made into a film by Atom Egoyan starring Colin Firth and Kevin Bacon. His second novel Swing reached #24 of all books on Amazon. His short story "Monks of the Abbey Victoria" is part of the prestigious anthology Best American Mystery Stories 2008. His current non-musical theatre projects include the first stage adaptation of a John Grisham novel, A Time to Kill, which will premiere in 2011 at Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage. He has also completed a new stage version of Agatha Christie's Witness for the Prosecution with the approval of Dame Agatha's estate. He has recently finished stage musicals of the beloved screwball comedy My Man Godfrey with Urinetown's Mark Hollmann; book and lyrics for the Jerry Lewis comedy classic The Nutty Professor, with Marvin Hamlisch as composer; and Secondhand Lions with the songwriting team of Alan Zachary and Michael Weiner.

The songs of lyricist Sammy Cahn have been recorded by virtually every major singer of the 20th Century and are firmly ingrained in the American Songbook. He was nominated for more than 30 Academy Awards, and won four times. With Saul Chaplin, Cahn began writing numbers for vaudeville acts and had his first success in 1935-36 with "Rhythm is Our Business" and "Until the Real Thing Comes Along," written for the Jimmy Lunceford Band, and 1937's "Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen," a huge hit recorded by The Andrews Sisters. In 1942, Cahn joined with Jules Styne in Hollywood and together they wrote songs for 19 films (winning the Academy Award for "Three Coins in the Fountain") and the Broadway musical, High Button Shoes. Frank Sinatra introduced Cahn to composer Jimmy Van Heusen in 1955, and together they wrote the title song for the 1955 Sinatra film The Tender Trap and a TV musical version of Our Town that included the Emmy Award-winning

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"Love and Marriage." Their long association with Frank Sinatra led to Sinatra's recording 89 of Cahn's songs, including "Come Fly with Me," "Only the Lonely," "All the Way" (Academy Award), "High Hopes" (Academy Award), "Call Me Irresponsible" (Academy Award), "The Second Time Around" and "My Kind of Town." Cahn and Van Heusen also collaborated on the Broadway shows, Skyscraper and Walking Happy. He was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1972. In 1974, Cahn performed a one-man show on Broadway called Words and Music and toured with the show numerous times in the years that followed. Sammy Cahn died on January 15, 1993.

Composer Jimmy Van Heusen was one of the most accomplished songwriters in the history of American popular music. He received 14 Academy Award nominations over the course of his 40-year career, and won four times. Van Heusen began writing songs while still in high school. In 1933, he took a job as a staff pianist with Remick Music Publishing in New York City and was soon put under contract as a songwriter. Collaborating with lyricist Eddie De Lange, he produced nearly 20 hit songs. By 1939, Van Heusen had started working with another lyricist, Johnny Burke. Together, the two began their own publishing firm and collaborated on the Broadway shows Nelly Bly and Carnival in Flanders, as well as over 30 films. Under contract with Paramount Studios, Van Heusen and Burke moved to Hollywood in 1940 and together they wrote many hit songs for Bing Crosby, including the Academy Award-winning "Swinging on a Star." In 1956, Burke semi-retired from songwriting and Van Heusen started another successful partnership with lyricist Sammy Cahn. Their catalog includes "Come Fly with Me," "Only the Lonely," "All the Way" (Academy Award), "High Hopes" (Academy Award), "Call Me Irresponsible" (Academy Award), "The Second Time Around" and "My Kind of Town." Cahn and Van Heusen also collaborated on the Broadway shows, Skyscraper and Walking Happy. Frank Sinatra recorded 85 of Van Heusen's songs, more than any other composer. He was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1971. Jimmy Van Heusen died on February 7, 1990.

Raised in San Diego, Casey Nicholaw made his acting debut at 16 years old in The Robber Bridegroom and later returned to choreograph the Globe's production of Lucky Duck. Nicholaw directed and choreographed The Drowsy Chaperone, for which he received Tony, Olivier, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle nominations. He also choreographed Monty Python's Spamalot, for which he received Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle nominations. Most recently, Nicholaw directed the world premiere of the new musical Minsky's at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles. Nicholaw directed and choreographed the highly-acclaimed productions of Anyone Can Whistle and Follies for City Center Encores! His choreography and musical staging work includes Bye Bye Birdie for City Center Encores!, Candide for the NY Philharmonic (also on "PBS Great Performances"), South Pacific at Carnegie Hall (also on "PBS Great Performances"), Can-Can (City Center Encores!) and Sinatra: His Voice, His World, His Way at Radio City Music Hall. Nicholaw is currently developing Elf: The Musical for Warner Brothers.

John McDaniel (Music Supervisor and Vocal/Incidental Arrangements) has worked on television shows such as "The Rosie O'Donnell Show" (two Emmy Awards), Friar's Roasts '99-'02, Tony Awards '97-'00 as arranger, "A Rosie Christmas" and "A Family is a Family" (HBO). His Broadway credits include Brooklyn, Annie Get Your Gun, Taboo, Chicago, Grease and Patti LuPone on Broadway. Recordings as Producer: Annie Get Your Gun (Grammy Award), The Maury Yeston Songbook, Brooklyn, Taboo, The Journey Home (Malcolm Gets), John McDaniel at the Piano (Broadway, Christmas, Compositions and Live at Joe's Pub). His recent credits include Catch Me If You Can (Seattle), Happy Days (National Tour), Bonnie & Clyde (La Jolla Playhouse), Pirates! (Goodspeed Musicals, Paper Mill Playhouse and Huntington Theatre Company), music director/arranger for Tyne Daly nightclub act, NYC, Los Angeles and San Francisco, and Guest Conductor at San Francisco Symphony and St. Louis Symphony. His upcoming projects include Daughter of the Regiment (Opera Theatre of St. Louis).

TICKETS to Robin and the 7 Hoods are currently available by subscription only. Single tickets go on sale on June 5 at 10:00 a.m. and can be purchased online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the box office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. Performances begin on July 14 and continue through August 22. Ticket prices range from \$68 to \$89. Performance times: Previews: Wednesday, July 14 at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, July 15 at 8:00 p.m., Friday, July 16 at 8:00 p.m., Saturday, July 17 at 8:00 p.m., Sunday, July 18 at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 20 at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, July 21 at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, July 22 at 8:00 p.m., Friday, July 23 at 8:00 p.m., Saturday, July 24 at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., Sunday, July 25 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 27 at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, July 28 at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, July 29 at 8:00 p.m. Regular Performances: Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m., and Sunday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Discounts are available for full-time students, patrons 29 years of age and under, seniors and groups of 10 or more.

Associated events taking place during the run of Robin and the 7 Hoods include:

POST-SHOW FORUMS: Robin and the 7 Hoods

Tuesday, August 3 & 10 and Wednesday, August 4 FREE

Discuss the play with members of the Robin and the 7 Hoods cast and crew at post-show discussions led by the Globe's creative staff after the August 3, 4 and 10 performances.

INSIGHT SEMINAR: Robin and the 7 Hoods Monday, July 26 at 7:00 p.m. FREE

Insight Seminars are a Monday night series of informal presentations of ideas and insights to enhance the theater-going experience. The seminars feature a panel selected from the artistic company of each production and take place in the theater where the production is performed. Reception, 6:30 p.m. Seminar, 7:00 p.m. Admission is free and reservations are not required.

OUT AT THE GLOBE Thursday, August 12 at 6:30 p.m. \$20

An evening for gay and lesbian theater lovers and the whole GLBT community, Out at the Globe includes a hosted wine and martini bar, appetizers, door prizes and a pre-show mixer. \$20 per person. RSVP at (619) 23-GLOBE. (Tickets to Robin and the 7 Hoods and the Shakespeare Festival are sold separately.)

THANK GLOBE IT'S FRIDAY Friday, August 6 and 13 at 6:30 p.m. \$20

Kick off the weekend with the Globe's Friday pre-show bash. TGIF includes a hosted wine and martini bar, appetizers and dessert, and live music from a local San Diego artist. \$20 per person. RSVP at (619) 23-GLOBE. (Tickets to Robin and the 7 Hoods and the Shakespeare Festival are sold separately.)

LOCATION: The Old Globe is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. There are numerous free parking lots available throughout the park. Valet parking is also available (\$10). For additional parking information visit www.BalboaPark.org.

The Tony Award-winning Old Globe is one of the country's leading professional regional theaters and has stood as San Diego's flagship arts institution for 75 years. Under the direction of Executive Producer Louis G. Spisto, The Old Globe produces a year-round season of 15 productions of classic, contemporary and new works on its three Balboa Park stages: the 600-seat Old Globe Theatre, the 250-seat Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre and the 612-seat outdoor Lowell Davies Festival Theatre, home of its internationally renowned Shakespeare Festival. More than 250,000 people attend Globe productions annually and participate in the theater's education and community programs. Numerous world premieres such as The Full Monty, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, A Catered Affair, and the annual holiday musical, Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!, have been developed at The Old Globe and have gone on to enjoy highly successful runs on Broadway and at regional theaters across the country.

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Will Chase, Amy Spanger, Eric Schneider & More to Headline *Robin and the 7 Hoods* at Old Globe

NEWS By Broadway.com Staff

June 3, 2010 - 12:13PM

Conceived, choreographed and directed by FRANK FABELLO
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Eric Schneider, Kelly Sullivan, Amy Spanger and Will Chase

The legend of Robin Hood gets a 'Mad Men'-era update in Robin and the 7 Hoods.

Will Chase (*Billy Elliot*, *High Fidelity*, *The Story of My Life*), Amy Spanger (*Rock of Ages*, *Kiss Me Kate*) and Eric Schneider (*Jersey Boys*, *Altar Boyz*) are among the cast set for the previously announced world premiere of *Robin and the 7 Hoods* at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego. The Broadway-bound musical will begin performances on July 14 and open on July 30, directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw. The limited engagement is set to continue through August 22.

Joining Chase (who will play Little John), Spanger (as Alana O'Dell) and Schneider (as Robbo) are Kelly Sullivan (Marian Archer), Adam Heller (Lieutenant Nottingham), Rick Holmes (P.J. Sullivan) and

Jeffrey Schecter (Willie Scarlatti). Rounding out the cast are Timothy J. Alex, Clyde Alves, Graham Bowen, Andrew Cao, Cara Cooper, Paige Faure, Lisa Gajda, Stephanie Gibson, Carissa Lopez, Vasthy Mompont, Beth Johnson Nicely, Aleks Pevec, Sam Prince, Tally Sessions, Brian Shepard and Anthony Wayne.

Based on the classic Rat Pack film, *Robin and the 7 Hoods* features a book by Rupert Holmes and songs by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen, including “My Kind of Town (Chicago Is),” “Call Me Irresponsible” and “All the Way.” When Robbo, a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago’s sophisticated nightclub scene in the early 1960s, tries to re-organize organized crime, he finds himself wanted by both sides of the law. He and his merry band quickly learn that a few wrongs—and a few songs—could make things right.

Robin and the 7 Hoods will have musical supervision and vocal and incidental arrangements by John McDaniel. The creative team includes Robert Brill (scenic design), Gregg Barnes (costume design), Kenneth Posner (lighting design), John Shivers and David Patridge (sound design), Josh Marquette (hair and wig Design), Bill Elliott (orchestrator), Mark Hummel (music director) and David Chase (dance music arranger).

Robin and the 7 Hoods is based on the original screenplay by David R. Schwartz and is produced with the permission of Warner Brothers Theatrical Ventures.

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Will Chase, Eric Schneider Amy Spanger, et al. Set for *Robin and the 7 Hoods* Musical at Old Globe

By: **Dan Bacalzo** · Jun 3, 2010 · San Diego

Casting has been announced for the world premiere of *Robin and the 7 Hoods - A New Musical*, to play the Old Globe Theatre, July 14-August 22, with an opening on July 30. Casey Nicholaw will direct and choreograph this musical comedy, which is aiming to go on to Broadway.

Based on the classic Rat Pack film of the same name, the show features a book by Tony Award winner Rupert Holmes and songs by four-time Academy Award winners Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen. In it, Robbo, a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene, tries to re-organize organized crime, and finds himself wanted by both sides of the law.

The cast will feature Will Chase (Little John), Adam Heller (Lieutenant Nottingham), Rick Holmes (P.J. Sullivan), Jeffrey Schechter (Willie Scarlatti), Eric Schneider (Robbo), Amy Spanger (Alana O'Dell) and Kelly Sullivan (Marian Archer) with Timothy J. Alex, Clyde Alves, Graham Bowen, Andrew Cao, Cara Cooper, Paige Faure, Lisa Gajda, Stephanie Gibson, Carissa Lopez, Vasthy Mompont, Beth Johnson Nicely, Aleks Pevec, Sam Prince, Tally Sessions, Brian Shepard and Anthony Wayne (Ensemble).

The creative team will include Robert Brill (scenic design), Gregg Barnes (costume design), Kenneth Posner (lighting design), John Shivers and David Patridge (sound design), Bill Elliott (orchestrator), and Mark Hummel (music director).

For more information, visit www.TheOldGlobe.org.



Eric Schneider and Will Chase
star in *Robin and the 7 Hoods*
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Schneider Snags Sinatra Role in *Robin and the 7 Hoods* Musical; Old Globe Announces Cast

By [Kenneth Jones](#)

03 Jun 2010

Will Chase, Adam Heller, Jeffrey Schechter, Eric Schneider, Amy Spanger and Kelly Sullivan are among troupers to star in the world premiere stage musical *Robin and the 7 Hoods – A New Musical* at The Old Globe this summer.

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Inspired by the Frank Sinatra movie of the same name, the production — with book by Tony Award winner Rupert Holmes and songs by four-time Academy Award winners Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen — will be directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw (*The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Minsky's*).

Schneider — who will play the Sinatra role of Robbo — played Frankie Valli in *Jersey Boys* on Broadway as well as Danny Zuko in the national tour of *Grease*. His Off-Broadway credits include *Altar Boyz*, *The Full Monty* and the original cast of *Happy Days* as Chachi.

Musical supervision and vocal and incidental arrangements are by John McDaniel. The Broadway-aimed musical comedy will run in the Old Globe Theatre July 14–Aug. 22. Opening night is July 30.

According to Old Globe, "Based on the classic Rat Pack film, *Robin and the 7 Hoods* takes the Robin Hood legend and gives it an early-'60s spin. Set in Chicago [at a time] when 'Mad Men' reigned supreme and martinis flowed freely, the musical features such classic Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen tunes as 'My Kind of Town (Chicago Is),' 'Call Me Irresponsible' and 'All the Way.' When Robbo, a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene, tries to re-organize organized crime, he finds himself wanted by both sides of the law. He and his merry band quickly

1 of 3

6/3/2010 10:32 AM

learn that a few wrongs — and a few songs — could make things right."

The cast, announced on June 3, includes Will Chase (Little John), Adam Heller (Lieutenant Nottingham), Rick Holmes (P.J. Sullivan), Jeffrey Schecter (Willie Scarlatti), Eric Schneider (Robbo), Amy Spanger (Alana O'Dell) and Kelly Sullivan (Marian Archer) with Timothy J. Alex, Clyde Alves, Graham Bowen, Andrew Cao, Cara Cooper, Paige Faure, Lisa Gajda, Stephanie Gibson, Carissa Lopez, Vasthy Mompount, Beth Johnson Nicely, Aleks Pevec, Sam Prince, Tally Sessions, Brian Shepard and Anthony Wayne.

The creative team includes Robert Brill (scenic design), Gregg Barnes (costume design), Kenneth Posner (lighting design), John Shivers and David Patridge (sound design), Josh Marquette (hair and wig design), Bill Elliott (orchestrator), Mark Hummel (music director), David Chase (dance music arranger), Tara Rubin Casting (casting) and Peter Wolf (stage manager).

Robin and the 7 Hoods is based on the original screenplay by David R. Schwartz and is produced with the permission of Warner Brothers Theatrical Ventures.

Tickets are currently available to subscribers only. Single tickets go on sale June 5 and can be purchased online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the box office.

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Rue McClanahan

Rue McClanahan, Star of Stage and Television, Dies at 76

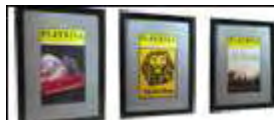
Rue McClanahan, who gained fame as the star of two long-running sitcoms, "Maude" and "Golden Girls," died June 3 of a massive stroke, People reported. She was 76.

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PHOTO CALL: Chase and Cast Ready Robin and the 7 Hoods for Old Globe

By [Matthew Blank](#)

04 Jun 2010

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According to Old Globe, "Based on the classic Rat Pack film, *Robin and the 7 Hoods* takes the Robin Hood legend and gives it an early-'60s spin. Set in Chicago [at a time] when 'Mad Men' reigned supreme and martinis flowed freely, the musical features such classic Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen tunes as 'My Kind of Town (Chicago Is),' 'Call Me Irresponsible' and 'All the Way.' When Robbo, a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene, tries to re-organize organized crime, he finds himself wanted by both sides of the law. He and his merry band quickly learn that a few wrongs — and a few songs — could make things right."

With Schneider in the Sinatra role of Robbo, the cast includes Will Chase (Little John), Adam Heller

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Here are the first promo shots of the central four:

View the Entire Photo Gallery



Eric Schneider and Will Chase
Photo by Carol Rosegg

Tickets are currently available to subscribers only. Single tickets go on sale June 5 and can be purchased online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, by phone at

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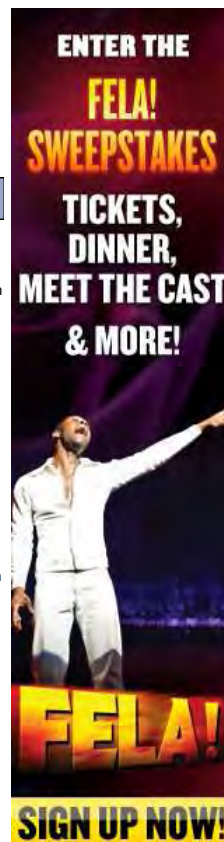
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Wednesday, July 14, 2010; Posted: 12:07 AM - by [Marivic Tagala](#)

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The Old Globe announces their schedule for July through October. It includes the conclusion of the 2010 Shakespeare Festival, the world premiere of *ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS*, the west coast premiere of *THE LAST ROMANCE* and *WELCOME TO ARROYO'S*, and Neil Simon's plays, *BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS* and *BROADWAY BOUND*. There also will be several educational programs for children.

Ticket range between \$29 and \$89. Discounts available for patrons 29 and under, full-time students, seniors and groups of 10 or more. (Contact Dani Meister at 231-1941 x2408 for group information.) American Express, Discover, MasterCard and VISA accepted. The box office is open Tuesday - Sunday, noon to final curtain. Call (619) 23-GLOBE or purchase tickets online at www.TheOldGlobe.org. The Old Globe is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. Free parking is available throughout the park. Valet parking is also available (\$10). For parking information visit www.BalboaPark.org.

The Shakespear Festival 2010, which began in June, will conclude in September. *KING LEAR* opened on June 12 and closes September 23rd. *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW* opened June 16th and will close on September 26th. *THE MADNESS OF GEORGE III* opens on June 19th and closes September 24th. There is also a performance of *TWELFTH NIGHT & AS YOU LIKE IT* on August 16th as part of the Summer Shakespeare Intensive for High School Students. All of these productions will be at the Lowell Davies Festival Theatre.

From July 14th to August 22nd, the Old Globe Theatre will host *ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS* - A NEW MUSICAL. This is the world premiere of a Broadway-bound musical comedy that takes the audience back to that sexy era in pop culture where "Mad Men" reigned supreme, martinis flowed freely and the songs of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen ("My Kind of Town Chicago Is)," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head," "Call Me Irresponsible" and many more) ruled the night. Take the writer of *CURTAINS* (Rupert Holmes), add the director of *THE DROWSY CHAPERONE* and taught Monty Python how to dance in *SPAMALOT* (Casey Nicholas), and top it off with a sexy, soaring score of classic Cahn and Van Heusen songs and you get *ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS*, a new musical that takes the Robin Hood legend and gives it an early-sixties spin. When Robbo, a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene, finds himself wanted by both sides of the law, he and his merry band quickly learn that a few wrongs - and a few songs - could make things right.

Marion Ross ("Happy Days," "The Drew Carey Show," "Brothers & Sisters") returns to the Globe to star with her life partner, Paul Michael, in Joe DiPietro's *THE LAST ROMANCE*. The play runs from July 30th to September 5th at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre. A crush can make anyone feel young again - even a widower named Ralph. On an ordinary day in a routine life, Ralph decides to take a different path on his daily walk...one that leads him to an unexpected second chance at love. Relying on a renewed boyish charm, Ralph attempts to woo the elegant, but distant, Carol. Defying Carol's reticence - and his lonely sister's jealousy - Ralph embarks on the trip of a lifetime, and regains a happiness that seemed all but lost. *The Last Romance* is a heart-warming comedy about the

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transformational power of love.

Starting September 14th and through November 7th, Neil Simon's BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS and BROADWAY BOUND will be performed in a rotating repertory schedule. In BRIGHTON BEACH MEMORIS, meet Eugene Morris Jerome: he's 15, living in late-1930s Brooklyn, and thinks of little else but playing for the Yankees and girls. But he's more suited to being a writer than a shortstop, and the girl of his dreams could never be the girl of his reality. His witty, perceptive commentary about his life, and the struggles of his overworked father, overbearing mother, overconfident brother, overcrowded house, and overly-gorgeous cousin, make this journey through puberty poignant, insightful and delightful. In BROADWAY BOUND, Eugene Morris Jerome ponders on if he could put family ahead of career. The career path he's on is writing rather than baseball; but he is still obsessed with un-gettable girls - and what were once the innocent musings of a teenage boy are now the bread and butter of his writing career. When he and his brother Stanley get their big break as radio writers, and their family's struggles become writing-fodder for anyone to hear, he is forced to face the reality that even while living at home, with adulthood, comes consequences.

2010 Pulitzer Prize-finalist Kristoffer Diaz's WELCOME TO THE ARROYO'S will run at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre from September 25th to October 31st. In the play, a brother and sister search for their respective places in the world after the death of their mother. Alejandro is desperate to make Arroyo's the hottest lounge in New York to honor the memory of his mother, while Molly's desire to make her "mark" as a talented graffiti artist is at odds with her new infatuation with a rookie cop. Their struggle to move forward is made even more uncertain as they discover what might be a secret about their mother that could change the very foundation of their lives and, possibly, the history of hip hop music. WELCOME TO THE ARROYO'S will also be performed at Lincoln High School Center for the Arts in November as part of the Globe's Southeastern San Diego Residency Project. This production contains strong language.

For schedules, ticket prices, and other information, please visit The Old Globe's website at www.oldglobe.org.

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New Musical *Robin and the 7 Hoods* Begins Old Globe Run July 14

By [Andrew Gans](#)
and Kenneth Jones
14 Jul 2010



Robin and the 7 Hoods stars Eric Schneider and Will Chase
photo by Carol Rosegg

Will Chase, Adam Heller, Jeffrey Schechter, Eric Schneider, Amy Spanger and Kelly Sullivan are among troupers in the world premiere stage musical *Robin and the 7 Hoods – A New Musical*, which begins previews July 14 at The Old Globe in San Diego.

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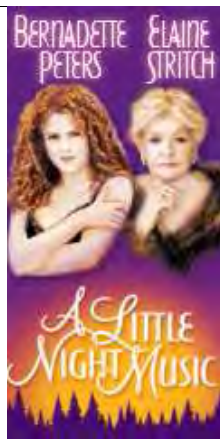
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Tickets can be purchased online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the box office.



Robin and the 7 Hoods stars Kelly Sullivan, Eric Schneider, Will Chase and Amy Spanger
photo by Carol Rosegg

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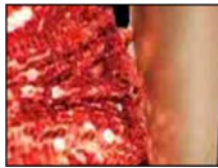


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By Irina Khodorkovsky
16 Jul 2010

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Here is a first look at the production:

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July 19, 2010 - 5:07PM



Will Chase & Eric Schneider in 'Robin and the Seven Hoods'

'Robin and the Seven Hoods' get ready to steal hearts (and more) onstage.

PHOTO GALLERY

Rob from the rich, give to the poor and do it all with signature Rat Pack style? That's the premise of new tuner *Robin and the Seven Hoods*, which began previews at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre on July 14 in preparation for a July 30 opening. Now, from the West Coast, come photos of the stylish cast in action, channeling the sexily criminal vibe. Here's a little backstory to go with the visual aids: *Robin and the 7 Hoods* features a book by Rupert Holmes and songs by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen, including "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," "Call Me Irresponsible" and "All the Way." The story picks up when Robbo (Eric Schneider), a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene in the early



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Adam Heller as Lieutenant Nottingham

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1960s, tries to re-organize organized crime, landing himself on both sides of the law. The show also stars Will Chase (Little John), Amy Spanger (Alana O'Dell), Kelly Sullivan (Marian Archer), Adam Heller (Lieutenant Nottingham), Rick Holmes (P.J. Sullivan) and Jeffry Schecter (Willie Scarlatti), with an ensemble featuring Timothy J. Alex, Clyde Alves, Graham Bowen, Andrew Cao, Cara Cooper, Paige Faure, Lisa Gajda, Stephanie Gibson, Carissa Lopez, Vasthy Mompont, Beth Johnson Nicely, Aleks Pevec, Sam Prince, Tally Sessions, Brian Shepard and Anthony Wayne. Since the show's reportedly eyeing a Broadway run, you'll want to check out these shots for sure.

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THEATER NEWS

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Old Globe Extends *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, *The Last Romance*

 By: **Dan Bacalzo** · Jul 27, 2010 · San Diego

The **Old Globe Theatre** has announced extensions of two of its current productions.

The world premiere musical ***Robin and the 7 Hoods - A New Musical***, featuring a book by Tony Award winner Rupert Holmes and songs by four-time Academy Award winners Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen, will now play an extra week, closing on August 29. Based on the classic Rat Pack film of the same name, the cast includes Will Chase (Little John), Adam Heller (Lieutenant Nottingham), Rick Holmes (P.J. Sullivan), Jeffrey Schechter (Willie Scarlatti), Eric Schneider (Robbo), Amy Spanger (Alana O'Dell) and Kelly Sullivan (Marian Archer) with Timothy J. Alex, Clyde Alves, Graham Bowen, Andrew Cao, Cara Cooper, Paige Faure, Lisa Gajda, Stephanie Gibson, Carissa Lopez, Vasthy Mompont, Beth Johnson Nicely, Aleks Pevec, Sam Prince, Tally Sessions, Brian Shepard and Anthony Wayne (Ensemble).

The West Coast premiere of ***The Last Romance***, written by 2010 Tony Award winner Joe DiPietro, has also extended a week, and will now close on September 12. The play is about an 80-year-old widower who gets an unexpected second chance at love, and stars Marion Ross, Paul Michael, Patricia Conolly, and Joshua Jeremiah.

For more information, visit www.TheOldGlobe.org.



Eric Schneider (center) and company
in *Robin and the 7 Hoods*
(© Craig Schwartz)



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Old Globe Extends ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS Thru 8/29 And ROMANCE Thru 9/12



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Tuesday, July 27, 2010; Posted: 03:07 PM - by [BWW News Desk](#)[Share](#) |

Executive Producer [Lou Spisto](#) today announced that the World Premiere of *Robin and the 7 Hoods* - A New Musical and the West Coast Premiere of Tony Award winner [Joe DiPietro's](#) *The Last Romance* will each receive a week of additional performances due to popular demand.

Originally set to close on Aug. 22, *Robin and the 7 Hoods* will now run through Sunday, Aug. 29. *The Last Romance* was originally set to close on Sept. 5 and will now run through Sunday, Sept. 12. Tickets may be purchased online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the box office.

The 2010 Shakespeare Festival, also part of the theater's Summer Season, is being hailed by both audiences and critics as the Globe's strongest showing in years and a fitting way to celebrate its 75th Anniversary. Led by acclaimed director [Adrian Noble](#), the *Wall Street Journal*

called the Festival "a theatrical event of which San Diego should be proud." Currently playing, the Noble-directed *King Lear* runs through Sept. 23 and *The Madness of George III* through Sept. 24. Presented in repertory, the Festival also includes *The Taming of the Shrew* (through Sept. 26) directed by [Ron Daniels](#).

Robin and the 7 Hoods features a book by Tony Award winner [Rupert Holmes](#) and songs by four-time Academy Award winners [Sammy Cahn](#) and [Jimmy Van Heusen](#). Directed and choreographed by [Casey Nicholaw](#), with musical supervision and vocal and incidental music arrangements by [John McDaniel](#), the Broadway-bound musical comedy is currently in previews and runs in the [Old Globe Theatre](#) through August 29. Opening night is Friday, July 30 at 8:00 p.m. The cast of *Robin and the 7 Hoods* features [Will Chase](#) (Little John), [Adam Heller](#) (Lieutenant Nottingham), [Rick Holmes](#) (P.J. Sullivan), [Jeffrey Schecter](#) (Willie Scarlatti), [Eric Schneider](#) (Robbo), [Amy Spanger](#) (Alana O'Dell) and [Kelly Sullivan](#) (Marian Archer) with [Timothy J. Alex](#), [Clyde Alves](#), [Graham Bowen](#), Andrew Cao, [Cara Cooper](#), [Paige Faure](#), [Lisa Gajda](#), [Stephanie Gibson](#), Carissa Lopez, [Vasthy Mompoint](#), [Beth Johnson Nicely](#), [Aleks Pevec](#), [Sam Prince](#), [Tally Sessions](#), [Brian Shepard](#) and [Anthony Wayne](#) (Ensemble).

The Last Romance stars Globe Associate Artist and television icon [Marion Ross](#) and her longtime partner [Paul Michael](#). The new romantic comedy was written for them by DiPietro. [Patricia Conolly](#) and Joshua Jeremiah complete the cast. Directed by [Richard Seer](#), *The Last Romance* runs in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre July 30 - Sept. 12. Previews run July 30 - Aug. 4. Opening night is Thursday, Aug. 5 at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are currently available by subscription only. Single tickets go on sale Friday, July 30 at noon.

LOCATION: [The Old Globe](#) is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. There are numerous free parking lots available throughout the park. Valet parking is also available (\$10). For additional parking information visit www.BalboaPark.org.

CALENDAR: *King Lear* (6/12-9/23), *The Madness of George III* (6/19-9/24), *The Taming of the Shrew* (6/16- 9/26), *Robin and the 7 Hoods* - A New Musical (7/14-8/29), *The Last*

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Romance (7/30-9/12), Brighton Beach Memoirs and Broadway Bound (9/14 - 11/7), Welcome to Arroyo's (9/25 -10/31).

The Tony Award-winning Old Globe is one of the country's leading professional regional theaters and has stood as San Diego's flagship arts institution for 75 years. Under the direction of Executive Producer [Louis G. Spisto](#), [The Old Globe](#) produces a year-round season of 15 productions of classic, contemporary and new works on its three Balboa Park stages: the 600-seat [Old Globe Theatre](#), the 250-seat Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre and the 612-seat outdoor Lowell Davies [Festival Theatre](#), home of its internationally renowned Shakespeare Festival. More than 250,000 people attend Globe productions annually and participate in the theater's education and community programs. Numerous world premieres such as The Full Monty, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, A Catered Affair, and the annual holiday musical, [Dr. Seuss'](#) How the Grinch Stole Christmas!, have been developed at [The Old Globe](#) and have gone on to enjoy highly successful runs on Broadway and at regional theaters across the country.

Photo credit: [Craig Schwartz](#)

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All The Stage Is Our World

Ain't That a Kick in the Head? *Robin and the 7 Hoods* Gets Extra Week at Old Globe

By [Kenneth Jones](#)

27 Jul 2010

The Old Globe's world-premiere run of *Robin and the 7 Hoods* – A New Musical and the West Coast premiere of Tony Award winner Joe DiPietro's play *The Last Romance* will each receive a week of additional performances.

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Originally set to close on Aug. 22, *Robin and the 7 Hoods* — inspired by the Rat Pack movie, and fueled by a Sammy Cahn-Jimmy Van Heusen score — will now run through Aug. 29.

The Last Romance, a tale of late-December love, starring Marion Ross, was originally set to close on Sept. 5 and will now run through Sept. 12.

Tickets may be purchased online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the box office in San Diego.

Robin and the 7 Hoods features a book by Tony Award winner Rupert Holmes (*Curtains*, *Drood*) and songs by four-time Academy Award winners Cahn and Van Heusen. Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, with musical supervision and vocal

and incidental music arrangements by John McDaniel, the Broadway-aimed musical comedy is currently in previews. Opening night is July 30.

The Last Romance stars Globe associate artist and television icon Ross and her longtime partner Paul Michael. The new romantic comedy was written for them by DiPietro (a recent Tony winner for *Memphis*). Patricia Conolly and Joshua Jeremiah complete the cast. Directed by Richard Seer, *The Last Romance* begins July 30 in The Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre. Opening night is Aug. 5.

The Old Globe is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way.

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Will Chase and Eric Schneider
Credit: Craig Schwartz

Call Them Irresponsible: Broadway-Aimed *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, the Musical, Opens in San Diego July 30

Will Chase, Adam Heller, Jeffrey Schechter, Eric Schneider, Amy Spanger and Kelly Sullivan are among troupers in the world premiere stage musical *Robin and the 7 Hoods – A New Musical*, opening July 30 at The Old Globe in San Diego.

Dee Hoty, Mamie Parris and Diana DeGarmo to Head Cast of National Tour of *9 to 5*



Complete casting has been announced for the national tour of Dolly Parton's Broadway musical *9 to 5*, which opens Sept. 21 at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center in Nashville.



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Call Them Irresponsible: Broadway-Aimed *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, the Musical, Opens in San Diego July 30

By [Kenneth Jones](#)
and Andrew Gans
30 Jul 2010



Amy Spanger and Will Chase
photo by Craig Schwartz

Will Chase, Adam Heller, Jeffrey Schechter, Eric Schneider, Amy Spanger and Kelly Sullivan are among troupers in the world premiere stage musical *Robin and the 7 Hoods* – *A New Musical*, opening July 30 following previews from July 14 at The Old Globe in San Diego.

Inspired by the Frank Sinatra movie of the same name, the production — with book by Tony Award winner Rupert Holmes and songs by four-time Academy Award winners Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen — is directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw (*The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Minsky's*).

Schneider — who plays the Sinatra role of Robbo — played Frankie Valli in *Jersey Boys* on Broadway as well as Danny Zuko in the national tour of *Grease*. His Off-Broadway credits include *Altar Boyz*, *The Full Monty* and the original cast of *Happy Days* as Chachi.

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Musical supervision and vocal and incidental arrangements are by John McDaniel. The Broadway-aimed musical comedy will run in the Old Globe Theatre through Aug. 29, representing a recent one-week extension.

According to Old Globe, "Based on the classic Rat Pack film, *Robin and the 7 Hoods* takes the Robin Hood legend and gives it an early-'60s spin. Set in Chicago [at a time] when 'Mad Men' reigned supreme and martinis flowed freely, the musical features such classic Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen tunes as 'My Kind of Town (Chicago Is),' 'Call Me Irresponsible' and 'All the Way.' When Robbo, a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub

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scene, tries to re-organize organized crime, he finds himself wanted by both sides of the law. He and his merry band quickly learn that a few wrongs — and a few songs — could make things right."

The cast includes Will Chase (Little John), Adam Heller (Lieutenant Nottingham), Rick Holmes (P.J. Sullivan), Jeffrey Schecter (Willie Scarlatti), Eric Schneider (Robbo), Amy Spanger (Alana O'Dell) and Kelly Sullivan (Marian Archer) with Timothy J. Alex, Clyde Alves, Graham Bowen, Andrew Cao, Cara Cooper, Paige Faure, Lisa Gajda, Stephanie Gibson, Carissa Lopez, Vasthy Mompont, Beth Johnson Nicely, Aleks Pevec, Sam Prince, Tally Sessions, Brian Shepard and Anthony Wayne.

The creative team includes Robert Brill (scenic design), Gregg Barnes (costume design), Kenneth Posner (lighting design), John Shivers and David Patridge (sound design), Josh Marquette (hair and wig design), Bill Elliott (orchestrator), Mark Hummel (music director), David Chase (dance music arranger) and Peter Wolf (stage manager).

Robin and the 7 Hoods is based on the original screenplay by David R. Schwartz and is produced with the permission of Warner Brothers Theatrical Ventures.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the box office.



Eric Schneider and company
photo by Craig Schwartz

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PLAYBILL.COM'S BRIEF ENCOUNTER With Rupert Holmes

By *Kenneth Jones*

14 Aug 2010

Rupert Holmes
Photo by Aubrey Reuben

Rupert Holmes, the Tony Award-winning songwriter, librettist and orchestrator of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, is solving a new mystery this summer: the puzzle of putting together a new Broadway-bound musical.

*

Robin and the 7 Hoods is the latest musical from the Renaissance-man writer who is a novelist ("Swing," "Where the Truth Lies"); librettist and contributing lyricist for Broadway's *Curtains*; playwright of *Accomplice* and Best Play Tony nominee *Say Goodnight, Gracie*; and creator of TV's "Remember WENN."

Need we mention his pop hit "The Pina Colada Song" (also known as "Escape")? (For the record, our favorite Holmes song is "Answering Machine." Google it.)

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In recent weeks, Holmes has been at The Old Globe in San Diego, CA, working on refinements to the extended (to Aug. 29) run of *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, a show inspired by the 1964 Frank Sinatra/Rat Pack film of the same name. ("My Kind of Town" was a hit from the mostly non-musical picture.)

Casey Nicholaw (*The Drowsy Chaperone*) directs and choreographs. For the stage, the score has been expanded to include songs from the catalog of lyricist Sammy Cahn and composer Jimmy Van Heusen. We caught up with Holmes between rewrites.

I have a confession. I have never seen the movie "Robin and the 7 Hoods." But I do know (obviously) that it was a vehicle for Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., and that it was a Chicago-set Prohibition-era

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gangster comedy. How intimate with the movie were you?

Rupert Holmes: I saw the movie at the Skouras Rockland Theatre in Nyack, NY, when I was in junior high, in that time when Frank, Dean and Sammy were still officially the coolest guys in the universe, and were not yet forced to share that title with John, Paul and George.

What was the mandate when you took this job: Were you expected to honor the film completely, or to honor its spirit?

RH: The mandate was to create a musical that celebrated not only the spirit, swagger and soulfulness of the "Robin" songwriting team (Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen) but also the period in which they were the unofficial poet laureates for Sinatra. With Casey [Nicholaw] in the driver's seat, we knew it should be a big-song-and-dance story centered around the kinds of characters Frank, Dean and their crew might easily have portrayed in the late '50s and early '60s.

Does the stage show still follow the basic plot?

Honestly, no. The movie was set in the Prohibition era, its minimal plot centering around rival speakeasies. Frank looked as out of place in his Roaring Twenties suits as he had portraying a cowboy in "Johnny Concho."

The film of "Robin" had no romantic ballad for either Dean or Frank, no love interest to speak of, and a strange, downbeat ending that left its characters (and audience) in a glum final fade. I think the movie is remembered most fondly by those who only saw its trailer. For the rest of us who sat through it with great expectations, it seemed a disappointing farewell to the Rat Pack movies.

On the other hand, our producers acquired the right for Casey and me to pick from the entire Cahn and Van Heusen song catalog, which means our score is rich with songs that catapult the audience into the early, scintillating '60s: "Ring-a-Ding-Ding," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head," "The Tender Trap," "All the Way," "Call Me Irresponsible." None of these titles evoke the Prohibition era, of course, and once we eliminated speakeasies, flappers, and temperance rallies, there wasn't much left of the movie's story. So from the outset, we knew we would have to invent a new plot line more compatible with our score, using Cahn and Van Heusen's classic tunes as touchstones for our tale.

You are known for shows that are filled with passionate characters, from *Drood* to *Curtains*. What makes *Robin and the 7 Hoods* a Rupert Holmes show?

RH: I've always been a total mark for any story about an otherwise invulnerable rogue who takes a great fall, all for the love of a good woman. I made the unprincipled Scott Sherwood's rocky romance with the ethical Betty Roberts a centerpiece of my AMC series "Remember WENN." With *Robin*, we go a step further when an out-and-out hood named Robbo crosses paths with a crime-fighting female journalist.

Additionally, one characteristic of my work as a librettist, screenwriter and novelist has been an immense admiration and affection for other eras. (The phrase "No time like the present" was never coined by me.) The Victorian



Poster art for the film version of "Robin and the 7 Hoods"

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music hall of *Edwin Drood*, the Broadway of the 1950s in *Curtains*, the golden age of radio in "Remember WENN," and the vaudevillian setting for much of *Say Goodnight, Gracie* are only a few examples. With *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, I get to view the early '60s through rose-colored martini glasses.

My parallel career as a mystery writer also comes into play at one or two points in the story. But mainly, I think what makes *Robin* totally consistent with my prior work is that I love these characters dearly, and regard everyone from the devoted heroine to the despicable villain with equally unabashed affection.

"My Kind of Town" was an Oscar-nominated song from the picture, and the stage musical version borrows from the Cahn-Van Heusen trunk. Can you talk about the process of incorporating songs into the plot? Was it a collaboration between you and director Casey Nicholaw?

RH: Absolutely. I've been fortunate to work closely with many brilliant directors and it's always a highly-collaborative process, none more so than with Casey, who actually preceded me by a year on this project.



Will Chase and Eric Schneider in the Old Globe's *Robin and the 7 Hoods*
photo by Craig Schwartz

In a sense, is the creation of this show a kind of puzzle, or a collage — fitting existing pieces together?

RH: Yes, but keep in mind this is not such an unusual challenge for anyone who, like myself, is also a lyricist. Constructing a tightly rhymed lyric is a bit like creating a crossword puzzle from scratch, and it's no surprise that Sondheim is masterful at both crafts. With lyric writing, you are always having to rendezvous in rhyme with a pre-existing word or phrase. Doing that invisibly, and giving it a sense of inevitability, is not very different from mapping out a story so that the audience arrives at certain predetermined musical landmarks as if that were the only way to travel.

Were you prompted to write emotional high points to scenes so a song would naturally "fit," or is the experience more loose and "showbizzy" — pure fun?

RH: I've tried very hard to make *Robin and the 7 Hoods* feel like a book musical rather than a jukebox musical, with the songs appearing as if they were truly the logical next beat of the story. From the feedback we've been getting from audiences and professionals alike, I think Casey and I have managed to accomplish this. [Sammy Cahn's widow] Tita Cahn and our producers have all expressed that feeling as well.

Was there a research period where you listened to all the Cahn-Van Heusen songs you could get your hands on?

RH: Yes, and that research period began when I was 12. The first stereo album my parents bought was Sinatra's "Ring-a-Ding-Ding," and I played the record every day. I also had the joy of knowing Sammy Cahn and calling him both a mentor and a friend. That informed my research as well.

Are there any lesser-known gems that will strike American pop fans as real discoveries?

RH: I'm particularly pleased that we've given new life to a song that was cut from the film itself, a real find entitled "I Like to Lead When I Dance," that Casey has turned into an absolutely winning *pas de deux* that would do Fred

and Ginger proud. There are also two very lovely Cahn and Van Heusen ballads that will be new to most listeners' ears: "What Makes It Happen?" and "More Than Likely," both of which are entitled to their time in the spotlight. And I'm very pleased that the song "Walking Happy" (which I saw British song-and-dance man Norman Wisdom perform on the Ed Sullivan show in the early '60s) has been given the absolutely show-stopping treatment by Casey that it has always deserved.

I am a big fan of Rupert Holmes the lyricist. Is there an opportunity for you to create some new lyrics? Some specificity?

RH: First of all, let me say that among this country's lyricists, Sammy Cahn will always be an undefeated heavyweight champ in my books. The jauntiness and open-heartedness of his precise, nimble words, his impeccable rhyme schemes, and his puckish wit all put him in the same league as Porter and Hart. I'm so pleased to witness how ingratiatingly his lyrics are falling on the lucky ears of our audiences.

In less than a handful of instances, we found a word or a line of Sammy's original lyric clashed with the song's new theatrical context. So, with Tita Cahn's gracious permission, I've made one or two changes to bring the line into the fold. When I do take such liberties, I try to emulate the lyricist's style, adhere to their rhyme scheme, and perhaps land them an extra inner rhyme in the process.

With *Robin*, there are two such replacement lines that no one but Tita Cahn has caught in "Walking Happy." However, my favorite lyrical contribution is in the song "Life Is for Living" for which Sammy had written the line "[I wish you] Mike Todd for a relative." Few people know who Mike Todd [the extravagant producer and one-time husband of Elizabeth Taylor] is these days. I sought a substitute name and struggled for weeks until one morning I awoke and heard Sammy's distinctive voice berating me: "Dummy, use 'Rockefeller'...but pronounce it as 'Rocke fellah' so 'fellah' is an inner rhyme with 'rela-tive!!'"

As of this conversation, you're still in previews and we all know that things change. When a book writer is in previews, what is his primary role?

RH: To listen to all input with maximum patience and minimum ego, to flawlessly decipher what the audience is feeling at every moment of the show by accurately interpreting the backs of their heads, and to know the location of the "Delete" key on your laptop.

(Kenneth Jones is managing editor of Playbill.com. Write him at kjones@playbill.com.)

Footage from *Robin and the 7 Hoods*:



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The World Premiere of Robin and the 7 Hoods - A New Musical featuring a book by Tony Award winner [Rupert Holmes](#) and songs by four-time Academy Award winners [Sammy Cahn](#) and [Jimmy Van Heusen](#). Directed and choreographed by [Casey Nicholaw](#), with musical supervision and vocal and incidental arrangements by [John McDaniel](#), the Broadway-bound musical comedy will run in the [Old Globe Theatre](#) through August 29. For more information, visit www.TheOldGlobe.org.

Based on the classic Rat Pack film, Robin and the 7 Hoods takes the Robin Hood legend and gives it an early-sixties spin. Set in Chicago, when "Mad Men" reigned supreme and martinis flowed freely, the musical features such classic [Sammy Cahn](#) and [Jimmy Van Heusen](#) tunes as "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," "Call Me Irresponsible" and "All the Way." When Robbo, a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene, tries to re-organize organized crime, he finds himself wanted by both sides of the law. He and his merry band quickly learn that a few wrongs - and a few songs - could make things right.

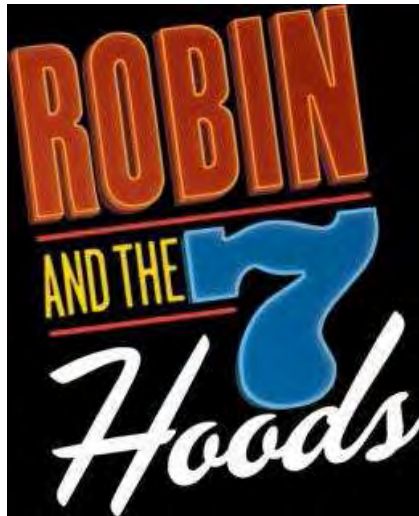
The cast of Robin and the 7 Hoods features [Will Chase](#) (Little John), [Adam Heller](#) (Lieutenant Nottingham), [Rick Holmes](#) (P.J. Sullivan), [Jeffrey Schechter](#) (Willie Scarlatti), [Eric Schneider](#) (Robbo), [Amy Spanger](#) (Alana O'Dell) and [Kelly Sullivan](#) (Marian Archer) with [Timothy J. Alex](#), [Clyde Alves](#), [Graham Bowen](#), Andrew Cao, [Cara Cooper](#), [Paige Faure](#), [Lisa Gajda](#), [Stephanie Gibson](#), Carissa Lopez, [Vasthy Mompont](#), [Beth Johnson](#) Nicely, [Aleks Pevec](#), [Sam Prince](#), [Tally Sessions](#), [Brian Shepard](#) and [Anthony Wayne](#) (Ensemble).



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Loain

Old Globe Announces Cast of Robin and the 7 Hoods



Casting has been announced for the Old Globe's world premiere musical ***Robin and the 7 Hoods – A New Musical*** featuring a book by Tony Award winner Rupert Holmes and songs by four-time Academy Award winners Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen. Directed and choreographed by **Casey Nicholaw**, with musical supervision and vocal and incidental arrangements by **John McDaniel**, the Broadway-bound musical comedy will run in the Old Globe Theatre July 14 - August 22.

Based on the classic Rat Pack film, *Robin and the 7 Hoods* takes the Robin Hood legend and gives it an early-sixties spin. Set in Chicago, when "Mad Men" reigned supreme and martinis flowed freely, the musical features such classic Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen tunes as "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," "Call Me Irresponsible" and "All the Way." When Robbo, a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene, tries to re-organize organized crime, he finds himself wanted by both sides of the law. He and his merry band quickly learn that a few wrongs – and a few songs – could make things right.



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Broadway bound Robin and the 7 Hoods to premiere at The Old Globe

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The Old Globe presents the World Premiere of Robin and the 7 Hoods – A New Musical featuring a book by Tony Award winner Rupert Holmes and songs by four-time Academy Award winners Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen. Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, with musical supervision and vocal and incidental arrangements by John McDaniel, the Broadway-bound musical comedy will run in the Old Globe Theatre July 14 – August 22. Previews run July 14 – July 29. Opening night is Friday, July 30 at 8:00 p.m.



World Premiere of Robin and the 7 Hoods - A New Musical

Based on the classic Rat Pack film, Robin and the 7 Hoods takes the Robin Hood legend and gives it an early-sixties spin. Set in Chicago, when "Mad Men" reigned supreme and martinis flowed freely, the musical features such classic Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen tunes as "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," "Call Me Irresponsible" and "All the Way." When Robbo, a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene, tries to re-organize organized crime, he finds himself wanted by both sides of the law. He and his merry band quickly learn that a few wrongs – and a few songs – could make things right.

RUNS: July 14 – August. 22, 2010, Old Globe Theatre

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» STAGE | by Don Braunagel



WASHINGTON HEIGHTS is a multicultural, ever-changing New York neighborhood that, a few years back, was notorious for high crime and crack cocaine. But that's not the focus of *In the Heights*, the Tony-winning musical Broadway/San Diego is bringing to the Civic Theatre July 27–August 1. Lin-Manuel Miranda, who conceived the show and wrote its music, aimed to create a valentine to the environs and memories of his youth. He succeeded sensationally.

Heights opened off-Broadway in February 2007, running for 200 performances and winning numerous awards. The following February, it moved to Broadway, where it enchanted critics and audiences and continues to attract full houses. The show was nominated for 13 Tony Awards and won four: outstanding musical, Miranda's score, Andy Blankenbuehler's choreography and the Alex Lacamoire–Bill Sherman orchestrations. The cast recording also took the 2008 Grammy for musical show album, and a film based on the musical is in the works.

Miranda's music and Blankenbuehler's dance numbers were especially hailed for their rhythms and variety, combining styles that include salsa, merengue, hip-hop, rap, jazz, pop and soul. The Tony-nominated book is by Quiara Alegria Hudes (whose play, *Eliot*,

a *Soldier's Fugue*—a Pulitzer Prize finalist—was presented here by Ion Theatre in March). The script covers three days in the Dominican-American section of Washington Heights, centered on the bodega where neighbors gather over coffee and discuss their problems, hopes and dreams.

Although the play is set in a specific New York locale, the characters' concerns—romantic and financial troubles, generational differences, handling the unexpected—give *In the Heights* its universal appeal, as does the overall theme of how to retain family ties and cultural traditions.

IN THE EARLY 1960S, Frank Sinatra and his buddies, famously dubbed the Rat Pack, made some movies to entertain themselves as much as audiences. That didn't hold true, however, for the last Rat Pack film, *Robin and the 7 Hoods*. During its filming, President John F. Kennedy—a friend of Sinatra—was assassinated, and Frank Sinatra Jr. was kidnapped, then ransomed. Those troubles, plus growing tension among the pals, almost scuttled the movie.

Still, its release in 1964 proved popular and profitable, partly because of its stars—Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Dean Martin, Bing Crosby and Peter Falk—but largely because

of its score. With lyrics by Sammy Cahn and music by Jimmy Van Heusen, its songs included “Style” and the classic “My Kind of Town (Chicago Is).”

Accordingly, *Robin* seems a natural for a stage musical, and the Old Globe is obliging with a Broadway-targeted world debut (July 14–August 22), supplementing the movie score with other Cahn–Van Heusen hits like “Ain’t That a Kick in the Head” and “Call Me Irresponsible.” Rupert Holmes, who did the book for last year’s Globe musical *The First Wives Club*, is reshaping the film’s Robin Hood spoof. In this modernized version, a Chicago gangster becomes a hero by donating a chunk of ill-gotten change to an orphanage.

Robin’s director is Casey Nicholaw, who got two Tony nominations in 2006 for helming and choreographing *The Drowsy Chaperone* and one in 2005 for choreographing *Spamalot*. Nicholaw, a 1980 graduate of Mission Bay High School, had his stage debut at 13 in San Diego Junior Theatre and appeared in the Globe’s 1978 production of *The Robber Bridegroom*.

ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS movie stills ever was from *The Seven Year Itch*: Marilyn Monroe’s gorgeous gams exposed as her dress billowed in a sudden gust from a subway grate. (Only her husband, Joe DiMaggio, wasn’t pleased with it.) The film was based on a racier play of the same title by George Axelrod, and Carlsbad’s New Village Arts Theatre is kicking off its 10th season with that comedy (July 29–August 22).

NVA regular Daren Scott plays the ad man who sends his wife and son to a midsummer beach getaway while he stays in the city to work; Jacque Wilke is the glamorous neighbor who inspires the man’s reveries of adulteries. Amanda Sitton, one of our town’s best actors, who made her directorial debut in March with NVA’s *The Heidi Chronicles*, helms *Itch*.

No word yet on whether they’ll replicate the upswept dress.

OTHER noteworthy productions: La Jolla Playhouse debuts *Surf Report* (through July 11), another Southern California dramedy by Del Mar native Annie Weisman, who authored the hit 2001 Playhouse world premiere *Be Aggressive*. The San Diego Rep and the San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts team high school students with pro actors to present Southern California’s first regional production of the hit musical comedy *Hairspray* (July 17–August 15). And Cygnet does *The Norman Conquests*, Alan Ayckbourn’s clever six-character trilogy (*Table Manners*, *Round and Round the Garden*, *Living Together*), in repertory (July 28–November 7). ■

RANCH & COAST MAGAZINE

July 2010

attend

(WHERE TO GO, SEE & BE SEEN)

Eric Schneider (Robbo),
Kelly Sullivan (Marian
Archer), Amy Spanger
(Alana O'Delland), and Will
Chase (Little John) star in
Robin and the 7 Hoods



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CAROL ROSEGG

2010 Globe Gala On Saturday, July 31, the 2010 Globe Gala will celebrate the 75th anniversary of The Old Globe. The black-tie event, co-chaired by Karen Cohn, Valerie Cooper, Deni Jacobs, Sandy Redman, and Debbie Turner, will feature a reception and silent auction in the Alcazar Garden, followed by a the world premiere performance of *Robin and the 7 Hoods*. Attendees will then enjoy dinner and dancing. Individual tickets are \$750 and \$1,000; underwriting begins at \$4,500 per couple and includes an exclusive private party on July 19. Ticket prices include both show and party. For more information please contact Eileen Prisby. (619/231-1941, ext. 2303, www.theoldglobe.org) **MASTEFANNO**

WHAT'S

GOIN'

ON?

**a time for museum hopping
and performance watching**

by eileen sondak • nsondak@gmail.com

THE TEMPERATURE IS HEATING up this month, and so is the vast and varied entertainment scene. Summer-only theaters are performing under the stars, while year-round stages continue their busy seasons around town.

The Old Globe's 75th summer season is sizzling with Shakespeare's powerful drama, "King Lear," alternating in repertory with "The Taming of the Shrew" and the only non-Shakespeare Festival offering, "The Madness of George III." Both "King Lear" and "George III" are directed by Adrian Noble, the Globe's new festival director. Ron Daniels stages "Taming of the Shrew."

The three outdoor productions are diverse in tone and content and are delivering a lively dose of summer entertainment to Festival-goers. "King Lear" is a family drama told against a background of fierce political intrigue. "Shrew" is a comedy about a hot-tempered girl subdued into domesticity by a husband determined to snare her fortune. "George III" (adapted from an Academy Award-nominated film) is about the King who ruled England in the years immediately following the American Revolution.

Among the stellar cast for these three repertory shows are Robert Foxworth (playing King Lear) and Miles Anderson (handling the title role in "George III"). Take your pick, or better yet, savor them all. You have until Sept. 26 to catch up with all three alfresco productions.

The Globe's Main Stage is putting the final touches on the world premiere musical "Robin and the Seven Hoods." The lightweight story borrows from the Robin Hood legend but sets it in the pop culture of the early 1960s. That's when Sinatra and Martin ruled the night and martinis flowed like water. The show's "hero" is a suave businessman who thrives on the Chicago nightclub scene (and is wanted by both sides of the law). With

lyrics by Sammy Cahn, this Broadway-bound musical (due to open July 14) sounds like a must-see, especially if you miss songs like "My Kind of Town," and "Call Me Irresponsible." "Robin" will remain in town through Aug. 22.

The West Coast premiere of "The Last Romance," a heartwarming comedy about the transformational power of love, arrives at the Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre July 30. Local favorite Marion Ross (the beloved mother from "Happy Days") stars in this delightful play about a second chance at love. Her real-life partner Paul Michael will join her on stage for this little gem.

Summer Pops plays on at Embarcadero Marina Park South. Marvin Hamlisch makes his welcome return to Pops July 2-4, with a star-spangled program of Broadway hits to celebrate Independence Day. Grammy-winning

PHOTO BY CAROL ROSEGG



The world premiere musical of "Robin and the Seven Hoods" will grace the Old Globe's Main Stage July 14-Aug. 22.

Kool and the Gang comes our way July 9-10, with their greatest jazz, funk and pop hits. Pops features The Flying Karamazov Brothers July 11, with their kooky brand of juggling, music and comedy.

Mariachi music from south of the border is next on the roster. "Viva Mariachi!" will join the orchestra July 15 with soprano Monica Abrego. "Abba Mania" takes over July 16-17 with songs the likes of "Mamma Mia," "Dancing Queen" and "Fernando." "Distant Worlds: Music from Final Fantasy" will be the centerpiece July 22 (just in time for Comic-Con).

The Music of Elton John (sung by Michael Cavanaugh) is on tap July 23-24. The Elton salute will include "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" and "Bennie and the Jets," among other standards. "Sha Na Na — a 40th Anniversary Celebration" is making a one-night appearance July 29 with '50s rock classics. "Motown's Greatest Divas" arrives July 30-31, starring Radiance in homage to Motor City divas like Diana Ross. How's that for a hearty and musically diverse mix?

The San Diego Rep has a surprise in store for musical theater buffs this month. The troupe is teaming up with the San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts to stage the first regional production of "Hairspray." This partnership is a first as well, since no other local professional theater troupe has ever worked in collaboration with a performing arts high school — and what could be more appropriate than high school kids playing high school kids? This production of the multi-award-winning '50s-style musical will light up the Lyceum Theatre July 17-Aug. 15. What a windfall for audiences looking for family fare!

The La Jolla Playhouse is taking a turn at Shakespeare (July 20-Aug. 22), but don't expect a typical staging of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" from this organization. Director Christopher Ashley set the classic comedy in its traditional Victorian period, but this avant-garde version of the Bard's work features an on-stage orchestra, aerial acrobatics and puppetry, along with a talented cast of live actors. The production is slated for the Potiker Theatre.

The Playhouse continues its world premiere of Annie Weisman's "Surf Report." The comic drama dominates the Mandell Weiss Forum through July 11. "Surf Report" centers on Judith, an assistant and caretaker for a demanding venture capitalist in Southern California. The show is funny and poignant. You might remember Weisman (a San Diego playwright) from her 2001 Playhouse offering, "Be Aggressive."

Starlight will wind down its season-opening production of the rollicking '60s musical, "Suds," July 4. Next at the Starlight Bowl is "Pajama



PHOTO BY KEN JACQUES

You can still catch the Lamb's Players Theatre's "Smoke on the Mountain," which will extend its run in Coronado through mid-July.

Game," a vintage musical to open July 15. The show will remain at Starlight's outdoor bowl through Aug. 1.

Moonlight joins the summer-only roster July 14 when the troupe unveils its production of the musical classic, "Oklahoma." The Rodgers and Hammerstein masterpiece will continue at Moonlight's outdoor amphitheater through July 31.

The Welk Resort Theatre has responded to popular demand by increasing its focus on concerts and variety shows. The theater will kick off the month with a July 4 weekend music festival, featuring local bands followed by other concerts and week-long variety shows. Welk will cap off the month with five performances by the legendary Debbie Reynolds. The longtime star of stage and screen will do "An Evening of Music and Comedy" July 28-Aug. 1.

The Lamb's Players in Coronado is having a ball with "Harvey," a send-up of psychiatry, conformity and the frantic pace of modern life. You can see the comedy through July 18. The Lamb's production of "Smoke on the Mountain" was slated to end its run at the Horton Grand Theatre in June, but at press time, plans were in progress to extend its run through mid-July.

Christian Community Theater will be back atop Mt. Helix with a production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat" July 23. The East County-based troupe will perform the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical at its outdoor amphitheater until Aug. 8. This is a family-oriented show that will delight even the small-fry set. The company is celebrating its 30th anniversary with a special show at Mt. Helix July 17. The one-night event will feature CCT

favorites performing popular show tunes.

The San Diego Natural History Museum features "Fossil Mysteries" (from dinosaurs to mammoths) on permanent exhibition. "Dinosaurs: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries" will offer the most up-to-date look at the way scientists are reinterpreting many of the mysteries of dinosaurs. This fascinating traveling show will stay put through Sept. 5. "Intimate Landscapes," a photographic exhibition, remains at the museum through Aug. 15.

The Natural History Museum also offers "Dinosaurs Alive!" — a 3D film experience that takes audiences on a global adventure through the entire age of dinosaurs. Narrated by Michael Douglas, the film is a marvel of computer animation. "Ocean Oasis," a giant-screen film, continues to offer up-close encounters in Mexico's beautiful Sea of Cortez and the Baja California desert. You can check out the eye-popping "All That Glitters: The Splendor and Science of Gems and Minerals" show as well. This exhibition includes a selection of exquisite jewelry and works of art, and it will make its home at the museum through April 2012.

Birch Aquarium at Scripps brings us a close encounter with seahorses, with more than a dozen species of seahorses on display. You can even see a special seahorse nursery as part of this unique exhibit. Happily, "There's Something About Seahorses" will be entrenched at the Birch until 2011. Birch Aquarium at Scripps' Summer Concert Series continues July 21 with singer/songwriter Shawn Mullins. Audiences can listen to live music and savor Happy Hour favorites during these summer events. ☆

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Robin and the Seven Hoods, San Diego**Date:** 14 Jul 10 - 22 Aug 10

World premiere of this Broadway-bound musical comedy that gives the Robin Hood legend an early '60s spin within Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene; featuring classic songs by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen.

Takes us back to that era in pop culture where "Mad Men" reigned supreme, martinis flowed freely and the songs of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen ("My Kind of Town (Chicago is)," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head," and "Call Me Irresponsible and many more) ruled the night. Take the writer of Broadway's murderously giddy musical Curtains, add the director who intoxicated us with The Drowsy Chaperone and taught Monty Python how to dance in Spamalot, and top it off with a sexy, soaring score of classic Cahn and Van Heusen songs and you get ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS, a new musical that takes the Robin Hood legend and gives it an early sixties spin. When Robbo, a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene, finds himself wanted by both sides of the law, he and his merry band quickly learn that a few wrongs and a few songs could make things right.

Visit website to purchase your tickets.

Location: The Old Globe**Address:** 1363 Old Globe Way
San Diego, California 92101-1696[Get driving directions »](#)**Website:** <http://www.oldglobe.org>**E-mail:** tickets@TheOldGlobe.org**Phone:** 619-234-5623[print](#) [add to quick list](#) [email to](#)[Home](#) | [Business Directory](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [List with us](#) | [Articles](#) | [Events Calendar](#) | [Coupons](#)[FAQs](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Success Stories](#) | [About Us](#) | [Contact us](#)

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By Linda Hodges, Broadway Magazine



Ain't it a kick in the head! Excitement is in the air and on the stage as the much anticipated world premiere of "Robin and the 7 Hoods" prepares to open at San Diego's Old Globe Theater on Friday, July 30th – with previews starting July 14th.

The new musical, by Tony-award winner Rupert Holmes, summons the chic, the swagger and the cool of the early swinging 60's by reimagining the Robin Hood theme in a timeframe that pays tribute to the Rat Pack and the classic Cahn and Van Heusen songs that defined that smooth and sultry time. The score features such Sinatra standards as "My Kind of Town (Chicago is)," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head," and "Call Me Irresponsible," along with many other well-known Cahn and Van Heusen favorites.

Set on the cusp of all that was to come, when swinging bachelors and the sexy babes they adored were sipping dry martinis in dark, back-corner booths, Robbo, a suave, fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene, finds himself wanted by both sides of the law. But he and his

merry band quickly learn that a few wrongs - and a few songs - could make things right.

The Old Globe engagement gives the west coast crowd a chance to be part of a top-notch world premiere before this show is singing and swinging its way into the hearts of Broadway audiences next season. So light up a Lucky Strike and toss back a 7 & 7 and get ready for "Robin and the 7 Hoods" in its pre-Broadway run.

Robin and the 7 Hoods - WORLD PREMIERE MUSICAL

- o Previews, Wednesday, July 14 – July 29th
- o Opening Night, Friday, July 30th, running through August 22
- o OLD GLOBE THEATRE

Book by Rupert Holmes

Lyrics by Sammy Cahn

Music by Jimmy Van Heusen

Directed and Choreographed
by Casey Nicholaw



Adam Heller (Lt. Nottingham) and Eric Schneider (Robbo Ortana) have 'High Hopes' in the world premiere of 'Robin and the 7 Hoods — A New Musical.' CRAIG SCHWARTZ

Musical debuts at Globe gala

The Old Globe will host its annual gala on July 31, marking its 75th anniversary and the world premiere of "Robin and the 7 Hoods — A New Musical." The event is co-chaired by Karen Cohn, Valerie Cooper, Deni Jacobs, Sandra Redman and Debra Turner.

The soiree will begin at 5 p.m. with a reception and

silent auction in Balboa Park's Alcazar Garden. The curtain will rise at 7 p.m. on the Broadway-bound "Robin and the 7 Hoods" on the Donald and Darlene Shiley Stage. At 9:30 p.m., dinner and dancing will take place on the Copley Plaza. Tickets are \$750 and \$1,000 at (619) 231-1941, ext. 2303, or events@TheOldGlobe.org.

SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

August 1, 2010

THEATER NEWS

Globe extends 'Hoods' and 'Last Romance'

The Old Globe Theatre has invited its two season-closing shows to stick around a little longer: The theater has announced it is extending both "Robin and the 7 Hoods" and "The Last Romance" by one week.

"Robin," the movie-based musical that opened Friday, now will run through Aug. 29. "Romance," the gentle comedy (starring Globe associate artist Marion Ross) that began previews Friday, will continue through Sept. 12.

The news comes on the heels of the Globe's announcement about its previously unidentified final production of the 2010-11 winter season. That show will be "Jane Austen's Emma — A Musical Romantic Comedy."

The work is by composer-writer-lyricist Paul Gordon, who was Tony-nominated for writing the score to "Jane Eyre," a show that had its American premiere at La Jolla Playhouse in 2000. "Emma" goes up at the Globe beginning Jan. 15 under the direction of Jeff Calhoun.

The musical is based on Austen's 1815 story of a self-styled matchmaker whose real skill seems to be in making dates with disaster. The novel has been adapted for film several times, including dueling 1996 versions (starring Gwyneth Paltrow and Kate Beckinsale) and 1995's "Clueless," a modern-day riff starring Alicia Silverstone.

Gordon's adaptation premiered at TheatreWorks in Palo Alto three years ago, and has had a couple of other regional productions since then. It fills the last remaining gap in the Globe's winter lineup, which opens Sept. 14 with the repertory productions of Neil Simon's "Brighton Beach Memoirs" and "Broadway Bound."



Eric Schneider (as Robbo Ortona) and Kelly Sullivan (as Marian Archer) in "Robin and the 7 Hoods." *Craig Schwartz*



NIGHT AND DAY

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THEATER NEWS

Globe extends 'Hoods' and 'Last Romance'

BY [JAMES HEBERT](#), UNION-TRIBUNE THEATER CRITIC

TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2010 AT 11:40 A.M.

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Other local theater developments

- La Jolla Playhouse has announced a Page to Stage production of "Cankerblossom," a family-minded show that riffs off Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (now getting an eye-catching production under the direction of Playhouse artistic director [Christopher Ashley](#)). The workshop staging runs Aug. 12-15.

- Speaking of the Playhouse: The La Jolla theater will team with [San Diego Rep](#) and [Vantage Theatre](#) for a

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Culture Monster

ALL THE ARTS, ALL THE TIME

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Monster Mash: Philadelphia Orchestra's money problems; Bolshoi Theatre gets new leader

August 4, 2010 | 8:20 am



-- **Financial woes:** The Philadelphia Orchestra faces red ink and declining audiences. ([Philadelphia Inquirer](#))

-- **New leadership:** The Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow has named Russian conductor Vassily Sinaisky as musical director. ([Agence France-Presse](#))

-- **Sentenced:** Lawrence Salander, the New York art dealer convicted of stealing from his clients, has been sentenced to six years in jail. ([New York Daily News](#))

-- **Broadway bound:** The musical "Wonderland: A New Alice" will open on Broadway in March 2011 following an engagement in Florida. ([Playbill](#))

-- **Fund-raising:** The Utah Natural History Museum is asking local voters for \$15 million to complete its new home. ([Salt Lake Tribune](#))

-- **Cultural destination:** A new "arts playground" rises in the city of Guangzhou, China. ([International Herald Tribune](#))

-- **Visiting the provinces:** New York theater gossip columnist Michael Riedel travels to San Diego for the new musical "Robin and the 7 Hoods" at the Old Globe. ([New York Post](#))

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Thomas Gaetgens is involved | [August 4, 2010, 5:00 am](#) »

Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' is a favorite for

In Focus: ARTS

BY EDWIN RENDÓN

The Old Globe: *Robin and the 7 Hoods* - A New Musical



1. 1960's is the scene and things are swingin' in Chicago with martinis clinking high! 2. The musical duo of lyricist Sammy Cahn and composer Jimmy Van Heusen rule the night courtesy of Sinatra and Bing Crosby. 4. "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," "Ain't That a Kick in the Head" and "Call Me Irresponsible" fills the air in this sexy era of pop culture. 5. Sophisticated nightclub entrepreneurs like suave Robbo are trying to re-organize organized crime in a Robin Hood-esque moxie. 6. There's a merry band of *associates* that also soon find themselves wanted by both sides of the law. 7. Robbo and the boys quickly learn that a few wrongs - and a few songs - could make things right. This train is Broadway-bound and world premiering at the Old Globe, catch it! July 14th - August 22nd

SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

July 11, 2010

BRIGHT & EARLY

AN OPENING TAKE
ON YOUR DAY



Making a musical

The Old Globe's "Robin and the 7 Hoods" production has little in common with the 1964 Rat Pack movie – and that's a good thing. The creators basically developed a new story and used only one song from movie in the show, the classic "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)." **Arts, E1**

NORTH COUNTY TIMES

July 11, 2010

 **Check
it out...**

⌘ THEATER



"ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS"

Previews begin

Wednesday in San Diego

The Old Globe presents the world premiere of Rupert Holmes' swinging '60s "Rat Pack" film-inspired musical, featuring classic songs by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen; preview performances run through July 29 with an official opening July 30. Showtimes are 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, through Aug. 22; Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park, San Diego; \$68-\$89; 619-234-5623 or theoldglobe.org.

Calendar

July 29–August 4

Your Week
AND WELCOME TO IT

Saturday | 31

ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS

The Old Globe Theatre presents this Sammy Cahn/Jimmy Van Heusen musical (book by Rupert Holmes) about Robbo, a sophisticated entrepreneur who is wanted by both sides of the law. Directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw.

See [THEATER](#), page 113.



SATURDAY, JULY 31: ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS

THEATER REVIEW: ‘Robin and the 7 Hoods’ fully loaded with song and dance at The Old Globe. **E4**

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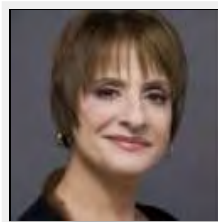
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BWW TV: Inside ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS Opening Night!



TV: RENT in Rehearsal at the Hollywood Bowl!



LCT Announces Roles for WOMEN ON THE VERGE!



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Last Update: 8/5 at 1:58 PM

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR AUGUST

FOR ADDITIONAL EVENTS, VISIT LIFEAFTER50.COM

PHOTOGRAPHING THE AMERICAN WEST



Selections from the permanent collection offers a comparative view of the American West from 1866 to the present by examining the role of photography as it popularized divergent ideas and documented the changing visions of the West. The exhibition includes more than 45 photographs by nearly 40

artists focusing on recent acquisitions to the museum's growing photography collection. Palm Springs Art Museum, 101 Museum Dr., Palm Springs. Aug. 10 through Jan. 2, 2011. \$11-\$13. (760) 322-4800. psmuseum.org.

ENTERTAINMENT

TUESDAY, AUGUST 10

ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS



When Robbo, a fast-rising entrepreneur in Chicago's sophisticated nightclub scene, finds himself wanted by both sides of the law, he and his merry band quickly

learn that a few wrongs – and a few songs – could make things right. **The Old Globe Theatre**, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through Aug. 22. \$68-\$89. (619) 234-5623. theoldglobe.org.

PAGEANT OF THE MASTERS: EAT, DRINK & BE MERRY

This year's uniquely theatrical celebration of the art of tableaux vivants (living pictures) is a jubilant exploration of our collective capacity for seizing the moment, letting our hair down and raising a heartfelt toast to the good life. **Pageant of the Masters, Irvine Bowl**, 650 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach. Through Aug. 31. \$25-\$70. (800) 487-3378. (949) 497-6852. foapom.com.

SAWDUST ART FESTIVAL

Experience the creative wonders of nearly 200 Laguna Beach artists in an enchanting outdoor canyon paradise adorned with waterfalls, eucalyptus trees and the best hand-crafted art in California. 935 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach. Through Aug. 29. \$7-\$8. (949) 494-3030. sawdustartfestival.org.

BLAST FROM THE PAST CAR SHOW

Classic cars, live music, and food vendors. Third Ave. between E and G Streets, downtown Chula Vista. Tuesdays through Aug. 31. southbaycruisers.org.

IN THE HEIGHTS

This 2008 Tony Award winner is about chasing your dreams and finding your true home. **Orange County Performing Arts Center, Segerstrom Hall**, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa. Through Aug. 15. \$20-\$75. (714) 556-2787. ocpac.org.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11

LIFE COULD BE A DREAM

The Crooning Crabcakes get one more chance at fame and fortune as Denny, Eugene, Skip and Wally form a singing group to enter and win the local radio contest and realize their dreams of making it to the big time. **The Laguna Playhouse, Moulton Theatre**, 606 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach. Tues.-Sun. through Aug. 29. \$30-\$70. (949) 497-2787. lagunaplayhouse.com.

TWILIGHT IN THE PARK

Summertime concert series featuring the Corvelles (Motown). Balboa Park, Spreckels Organ Pavilion, San Diego. Tues.-Thurs. through Aug. 26. Free. (619) 239-0512. balboapark.org.

SINATRA FOREVER

Listen to standard, classic Frank Sinatra as Rick Michel and his 12-piece big band swing their way through the best of Sinatra. **Welk Resorts Theatre**, 8860

Lawrence Welk Dr., Escondido. Through August 15. \$65 (888) 802-7469. welktheatre.com.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 12

A MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM

Shakespeare's classic story of true love. **La Jolla Playhouse, UCSD Campus, Mandell Weiss Forum**, 2910 La Jolla Village Dr., La Jolla. Through Aug. 22. \$31-\$66. (858) 550-1010. lajollaplayhouse.org.

ART, JAZZ, WINE & CHOCOLATE: WHAT COULD BE BETTER?



Ramon Banda, with vocalist Coral MacFarland Thuet. Combine the sensuous sounds of

jazz with a casual outdoor setting, wine, good friends and art for an ideal evening. **Festival of the Arts**, 650 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach. Thursdays through Aug. 26. \$16-\$19. (800) 487-3378. (949) 494-1145. lafestivalofarts.org.

JAZZ AT THE MERC

Sherry Williams. **The Mercantile**, 42051 Main St., Temecula. \$15. (866) 653-8696. temeculatheater.org.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 13

ALL I REALLY NEED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten takes a funny, insightful, heartwarming look at what is profound in everyday life. It's an evening of theatrical storytelling in revue format, with monologues, dialogues, and scenes that are both touching and humorous. **Lewis Family Playhouse**, 12505 Cultural Center Dr., Rancho Cucamonga. Also Aug. 14. \$13. (909) 477-2752. lewisfamilyplayhouse.com.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 15

CLASSICS AT THE MERC

Hattie Hedrick – Harpsichord. **The Mercantile**, 42051 Main St., Temecula. \$11. (866) 653-8696. temeculatheater.org.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 17

TWILIGHT IN THE PARK

Summertime concert series featuring the Moonlight Serenade (big band).

Balboa Park, Spreckels Organ Pavilion, San Diego. Tues.-Thurs. through Aug. 26. Free. (619) 239-0512. balboapark.org.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18

GREEN FLASH CONCERT SERIES

Steve Poltz. The clever, creative and humorous songs of local powerhouse Steve Poltz make for an unforgettable evening of great music and great fun.

Birch Aquarium at Scripps, 2300

Expedition Way, La Jolla. \$40. (858) 534-3474. aquarium.ucsd.edu.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 19

2010 SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

The Old Globe's annual Shakespeare Festival Globe associate artist Robert Foxworth plays the title role in "King Lear" and Dr. Willis in "The Madness of George III." "King Lear" (through Sept. 23). Other performances include: "The Taming of the Shrew" (through Sept. 26). "The Madness of King George III" (through Sept. 24). The three productions are performed in nightly rotation. **The Old Globe, Lowell Davies Festival Theatre (outdoors)**, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through Sept. 26. \$35-\$78. (619) 234-5623. theoldglobe.org.

JAZZ AT THE MERC

Guitarist Patrick Berrogan's Hot Club Combo. **The Mercantile**, 42051 Main St., Temecula. \$15. (866) 653-8696. temeculatheater.org.

MOZU

Set in the Shiga Heights of Japan, this musical is inspired by the life of an actual Japanese macaque, or snow monkey, named Mozu. **Diversionsary Theatre**, 4545 Park Blvd., San Diego. Through Sept. 12. \$18-\$30. (619) 220-0097. diversionary.org. taffe.org.

GET THE WORD OUT.

E-mail your calendar of events announcements to **Claire Fadden**, cfadden@lifeafter50.com. Include a brief description, location, date, time, cost, phone and Web site. Submission does not guarantee publication. Deadline for the September issue is August 9.

LA JOLLA LIGHT

August 12, 2010



'ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS'

Robbo Ortona (Eric Schneider) pours his heart out in the song 'Love is the Tender Trap.' The madcap musical plays matinees and evenings through Aug. 29. The Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. \$69-\$89. (619) 23-GLOBE, www.TheOldGlobe.org. CRAIG SCHWARTZ

CARMEL VALLEY NEWS

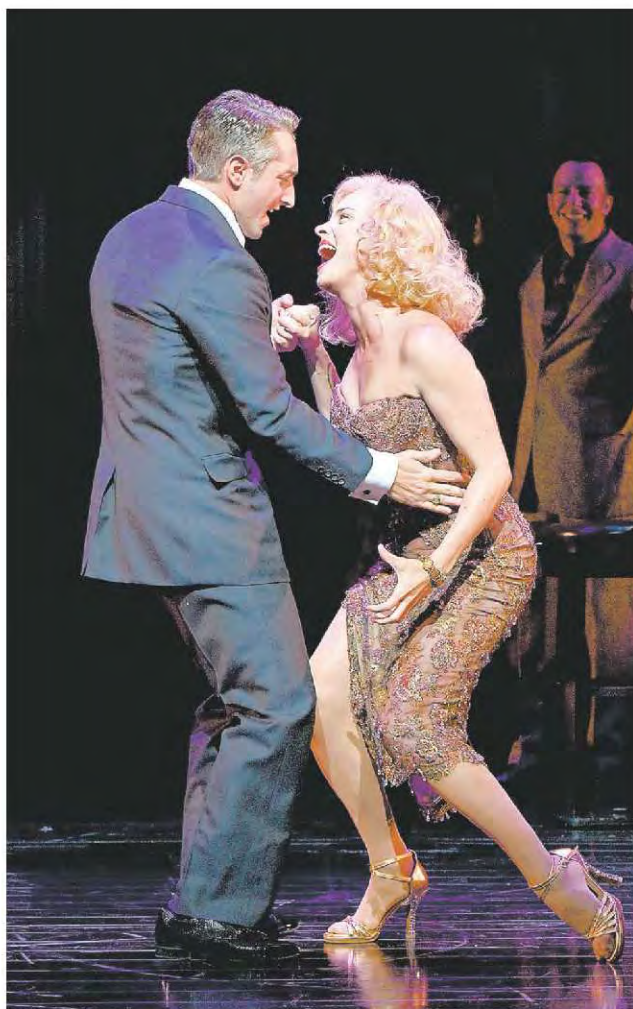
August 12, 2010



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PLAYBILL



Eric Schneider and Kelly Sullivan sing "I Like to Lead When I Dance" in "Robin and the 7 Hoods" at The Old Globe. CRAIG SCHWARTZ

SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

August 22, 2010

SPOTLIGHT

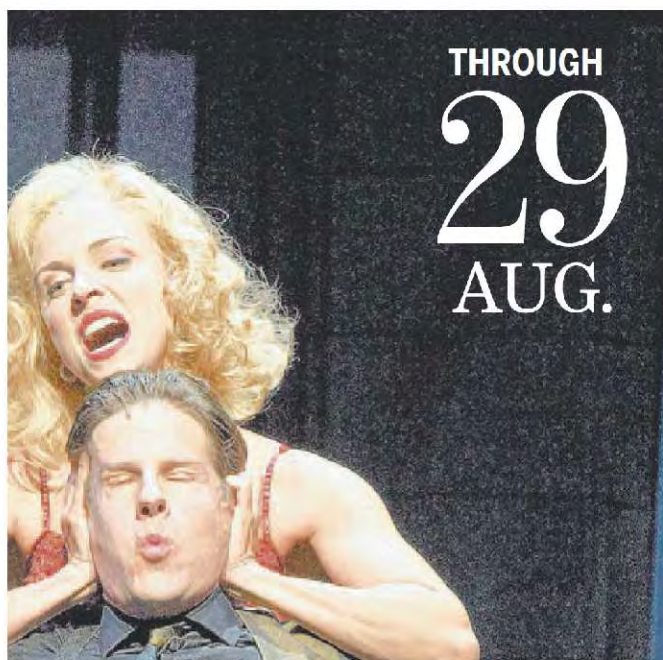
"Robin and 7 Hoods"

Old Globe Theatre

1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

(619) 234-5623; theoldglobe.org

The effervescent musical "Robin and the 7 Hoods" continues its Globe run (through next Sunday); the potentially Broadway-bound show boasts plenty of '60s style and a string of songs ("High Hopes" and "Ain't That a Kick in the Head" among them) that Sinatra made famous.



SAN DIEGO READER

August 19, 2010

CALENDAR

Calendar
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THEATER
LISTINGS



Robin and the 7 Hoods: Mere mortals pale in comparison.

Robin and the 7 Hoods

This new musical unfolds like the greatest hits of Sammy Cahn (lyrics) and Jimmy Van Huesen (music). Bill Elliott's fresh, savvy orchestrations and a 13-piece band make familiar songs feel newly minted (act 2, for example, goes from "The Tender Trap" to "All the Way" to "Come Fly With Me"). Songs take off and soar like jets at O'Hare. The musical's based, in part, on the 1964 movie (Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy

D.), in which mobsters move in on rival territory and recriminations abound. Rupert Holmes's book isn't bad. It's got banter and snappy one-liners (asked whose idea it was to rob from the rich and give to the poor, Willie replies, "Karl Marx?"), but it's based on showbiz personalities, not developed fictional characters. It requires the indomitable, "top of the heap" Rat Pack aura to pull it through. Mere mortals, even backed by first-rate direction and spectacular bursts of choreography, pale in comparison. Look past surface pizzazz, and *Robin's* feels like an imitation. The Cahn/Van Huesen parade of hits make it enjoyable nonetheless.

Worth a try.

OLD GLOBE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK. 619-234-5623. 8PM THURSDAYS, 8PM FRIDAYS, 2PM AND 8PM SATURDAYS, 2PM AND 7PM SUNDAYS, 7PM TUESDAYS, 7PM WEDNESDAYS, THROUGH AUGUST 29.