

THE SINGING FOREST



Written by **CRAIG LUCAS**
Directed by **MARK WING-DAVEY**

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Being Audrey, the Musical, Gives a Whiff of Hepburn, Opening Off-Broadway April 5

By *Kenneth Jones*
05 Apr 2009

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Being Audrey star Cheryl Stern
photo by Carol Rosegg

Transport Group, the Off-Broadway company that doesn't shy away from developing new musicals, opens the world-premiere of *Being Audrey*, about a wife who slips into a fantasy world in which she takes on the personae of Audrey Hepburn characters, April 5.

Previews began March 28 on East Fourth Street in the East Village. Among past eclectic works, the troupe staged the new musicals *Crossing Brooklyn* and *The Audience*.

With music and lyrics by Ellen Weiss, book by James Hindman and additional book and lyrics by Cheryl Stern, *Being Audrey* focuses on Claire Stark (played by Stern, of Broadway's *The Women* and *Laughing Room Only*), a New York woman who has it all: "a fabulous life, the husband of her dreams, and a view of Tiffany's from her Fifth Avenue apartment."

According to Transport notes, "When calamity strikes and her fairytale world threatens to collapse, Claire seeks refuge in her imagination, where she embarks on a hilarious, romantic adventure inspired by the films of her heroine, Audrey Hepburn. ...Claire's fantastical escape appears complete until she must confront the reality of what she stands to lose. *Being Audrey* celebrates the variety of life and the themes embodied by one of America's most beloved and enduring movie stars."

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The cast includes Brian Sutherland (*1776, Steel Pier*); Stephen Berger (*Into The Woods, The Dinner Party*); Andrea Bianchi (*The Cocoanuts, Italian-American Reconciliation*); Valerie Fagan (*Forbidden Broadway*); Michael Maricondi (NJ Rep's *Cupid and Psyche*); Mark Ledbetter (*Mary Poppins, The Drowsy Chaperone* tour); and Blair Ross (*42nd Street*).

Being Audrey was developed with Transport Group artistic director Jack Cummings III (who also directs) and Adam R. Perlman. Musical direction, arrangements and orchestrations are by Lanny Meyers. Musical staging and choreography are by Scott Rink.

Performances will play to April 26 at 220 East 4th Street, between Avenues A and B.

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The production team includes set designer Sandra Goldmark, costume designer Kathryn Rohe, lighting designer R. Lee Kennedy, sound designer Michael Rasbury and production stage manager is Theresa Flanagan.

In 2006, Ellen Weiss wrote the original vocal and harmonica score for Transport Group's revival of the play *All The Way Home*. In 2005 she was one of the writers for the company's production of *The Audience*, nominated for a Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Musical. A member of the BMI Advanced Musical Theatre Workshop and a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University Drama Dept., her other works include *Memorable, The Little Match Girl*, Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree, Requiem for William*. Her songs have been recorded and performed by Donna Murphy, Daisy Egan, Barbara Walsh, Brent Barret, Stephen Bogardus, Danny Burstein, Sarah Uriarte Berry and the late Laurie Beechman.

James Hindman is currently performing on Broadway in *Mary Poppins*. He wrote and conceived *Pete 'n' Keely* which received an Outer Critics Circle Award nomination (Best Off-Broadway Musical) and two Drama Desk nominations. He also received a Drama Desk nomination for his contribution to the Off-Broadway musical, *The Audience*. He co-wrote *A Christmas Survival Guide* and *Heaven Help Us* which premiered at Florida Stage (Carbonell Award nominee) and The Denver Theatre Center. He co-wrote *I Love New York* (Bistro Award). His plays *Incubus* (Riverside Theatre Award) and *Mercada* are currently being developed at The Lark Play Development Center. He also co-wrote *Are We There Yet?* which has been performed around the country including productions at Westchester Broadway Theatre and Queens Theatre In The Park. He's currently working on a new musical *Coming To America* which had its first production at Kalliope Stage in Cleveland, OH.

As a writer, Cheryl Stern's credits include Transport Group productions of *Normal* (starring Barbara Walsh), *The Audience* and *Requiem for William*. Other writing credits include *Are We There Yet?*, a new revue written with Jim Hindman, Ray Roderick and John Glaudini which had its New York area premiere at the Westchester Broadway Theatre and is now being performed regionally; *The Gene Game* (EST), *That's Life!* (contributing writer of the Off Broadway revue), *Buffalonia* (solo performance, EST), *Carnival of the Animals* (new verses for Cleveland Orchestra), *In the Cracks* (Triad), *Littlest Light on the Christmas Tree* (Vital Theatre), and *A Christmas Survival Guide* (contributing lyricist; Samuel French).

Being Audrey plays Thursday and Friday at 8 PM; Saturday at 2 PM and 8 PM; Sunday at 3 PM, and Monday at 7 PM through April 26 at 220 East 4th Street, between Avenues A & B.

Tickets, which are \$38-\$45, are available at www.transportgroup.org or by phoning (212) 564-0333 or TheaterMania at (212) 352-3101. For more

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information about Transport Group, visit www.transportgroup.org.

Get the behind-the-scenes story on the creation of *Being Audrey* at www.beingaudrey.blogspot.com.

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Founded in 2001, Transport Group is a not-for-profit theatre company that develops and produces work by American playwrights and composers with the aim of exploring the American consciousness in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Transport Group is the winner of a special 2007 Drama Desk Award for its "breadth of vision and its presentation of challenging productions."



Andrea Bianchi, Cheryl Stern and Mark Ledbetter in *Being Audrey* star
photo by Carol Rosegg

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