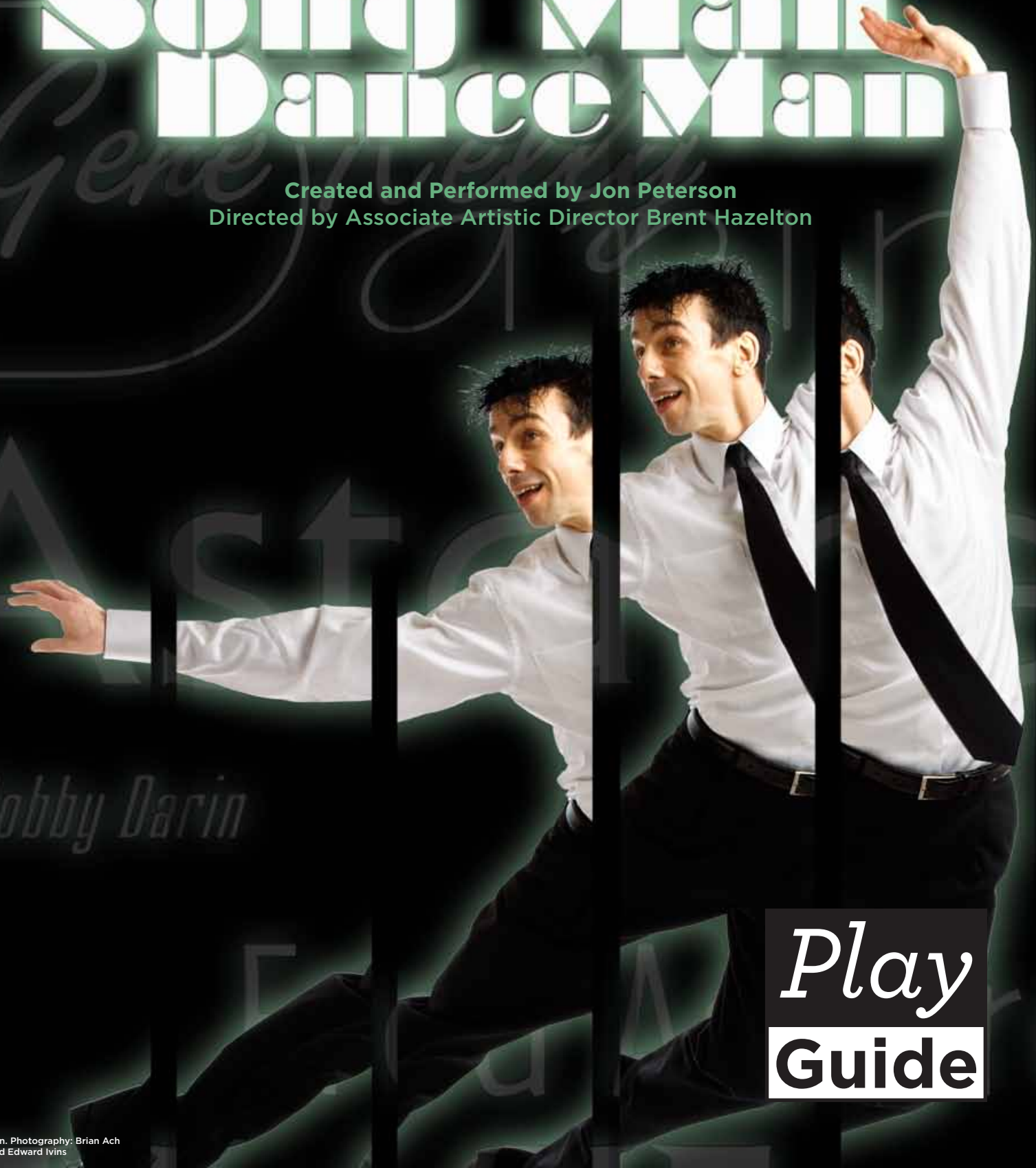


# Song Man Dance Man

Created and Performed by Jon Peterson  
Directed by Associate Artistic Director Brent Hazelton



*Play*  
**Guide**

# Song Man Dance Man

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**MILWAUKEE REPERTORY THEATER**  
108 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, WI • 53202



# SONG MAN DANCE MAN PLAYGUIDE

Milwaukee Repertory Theater presents

*Song Man Dance Man*

Created and Performed by Jon Peterson

Directed by Associate Artistic Director Brent Hazelton

November 4, 2011 – January 8, 2012

*Stackner Cabaret*

Award-winning actor, singer and dancer Jon Peterson created and stars in a joyous tribute to seven extraordinary comic entertainers:

**George M. Cohan, Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, Donald O'Connor, Sammy Davis, Jr., Bobby Darin and Anthony Newley.**

Peterson sings and dances his way through two dozen memorable moments made famous by these legendary performers.

**“I’ve worked with British actor Jon Peterson before and I’m pleased to bring his latest show to The Rep. Jon is a wonderful performer and he has created this delightful history of some of the greatest song and dance men in film and theater. You get all the great songs and all the great routines, and it is a wonderful night out!”**

-Mark Clements, Artistic Director



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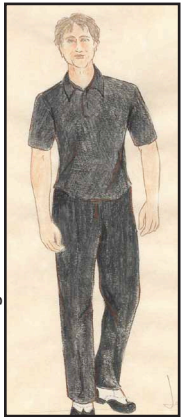
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# AN INTERVIEW WITH JON PETERSON

**REP:** What inspired you to create this show?

**Jon Peterson:** Looking on at performers who are rising to the top now was leaving me cold, and so I thought of a handful of guys that really did have it all plus the creativity to bring something of themselves to their work and decided to celebrate them.

**REP:** As well as performing the many characters in *Song Man Dance Man* you also wrote the play. What do you enjoy about performing in a show you wrote?



*Song Man Dance Man* costume rendering by Costume Designer Rachel Laritz.

**JP:** The great part of performing in my own play is, of course, the obvious - that if I go wrong I won't piss the writer off too much, or at least he'll understand - and also that I understand the sensibility that went into a particular part of the show; I know what the writer is trying to say, and I try to say it. On saying that, Brent, our director, has managed to rekindle my original sparks of passion and motivations for parts of the show that I'd almost forgotten, or lost touch with. This has reawakened my appreciation of what I'd originally set out to write.

**REP:** What excites you about bringing this production to Milwaukee audiences?

**JP:** I've done the show for New York cabaret audiences who appreciate it on one level, for Florida retiree audiences who appreciate it on an entirely nostalgic level, and for Detroit audiences who were only interested in the latest scores . . . so bringing the show to Milwaukee, I am excited to see how this audience takes to it; it being a very theater-full town with a wonderful artistic, student and theater-appreciative audience, so . . . fingers crossed!



Fred Astaire.

## ACTOR BIOGRAPHIES



**Jon Peterson** is making his Milwaukee Rep debut. He has performed *Song Man Dance Man* in LA, New York City, Off-Broadway, Fort Lauderdale, Connecticut and Detroit. He appeared in the Broadway production of *Cabaret* and Off-Broadway in *George M. Cohan Tonight!* (Drama Desk Award nominee), *Have a Heart* and *George M. Cohan Revue*. National Tour/Regional credits include: *Singin' in The Rain*, *Rocky Horror Show*, *Cabaret* (National) and *Chorus Line*. West End/UK credits: *Sound of Music*, *Chorus Line*, *Dames at Sea*, *She Loves Me*, *Y. (Yes, Y!)*, *Sophisticated Ladies*, *Definitely Doris*, *Cats*, *On Your Toes* and *Blitz!*



**Jack Forbes Wilson** recently appeared as Liberace in The Rep's recent Stackner Cabaret hit production of *Liberace!* He has also appeared in many shows at The Rep's Stackner Cabaret, usually with his friend Kay Stiefel, including: *Just For a Song* (1997/98), *Sing 'em a Story, Tell 'em a Song* (1995/96), *Unsung Cole* (1993/94), *Consumer Affairs* (1993/94) and *Rodgers and . . .* (1992/93). Born and raised in Lincoln, Nebraska, he loves living in Milwaukee, where he teaches piano lessons to a slew of kids who are much more talented than he is!



# THE SONG MEN DANCE MEN



**Fred Astaire:** Best known for his films with Ginger Rogers, Astaire is considered one of the greatest popular music dancers of all times. His innovations in filmed dance have influenced generation. His films include *The Gay Divorcee* (1934), *Top Hat* (1935) and *Swing Time* (1936).



**George M. Cohan:** Actor, songwriter, playwright and producer, George M. Cohan wrote many Broadway musicals including *The Governor's Son* (1901), *Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford* (1910), *The Tavern* (1921) and *The Song and Dance Man* (1923). He composed numerous songs, including "You're a Grand Old Flag" and "Give My Regards to Broadway", and became known as "The Man who owned Broadway".



**Bobby Darin:** Darin was a ubiquitous presence in pop music in the late 1950s and 1960s. His first single, "Splish Splash", became an international hit. Darin's reworking of the Kurt Weill song "Mack the Knife" became his signature song and earned him two Grammy Awards.



**Sammy Davis, Jr.:** Known as "Mr. Entertainment," Sammy was a founding member of Frank Sinatra's "Rat Pack". His career as a singer, dancer and actor included film roles in *Porgy and Bess* (1959), *Robin and the Seven Hoods* with fellow Rat Pack members Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin (1964), *Sweet Charity* (1968) and *Taps* (1980).



**Gene Kelly:** As a dancer, actor, choreographer and director, Gene Kelly transformed the movie musical genre with his athletic performances and innovative use of film effects and movement. His movies include *On the Town* (1949), *An American in Paris* (1951) and *Singin' in the Rain* (1952).



**Anthony Newley:** An actor, singer, and songwriter, Anthony Newley was in the pop charts seven times in 1960, twice at number one with "Why?" and "Do You Mind?", written by Lionel Bart. As a child actor, Newley starred as the Artful Dodger in *Oliver Twist*. His film career thrived as an adult. He is most well known for his role in *Doctor Dolittle* (1967).



**Donald O'Connor:** O'Connor performed in movies from the 1930s through the 1990s. Gaining fame as Peter Stirling in *Francis the Talking Mule* (1949), O'Connor is best known for his performance alongside Gene Kelly in *Singin' in the Rain* (1952). His solo dance number, "Make 'Em Laugh", marked a defining achievement in his career. O'Connor's role as Cosmo Brown earned him a Golden Globe Award for Best Actor, and secured a place for him in film history.

# TIMELINE

1878

**George M. Cohan** born in Providence, Rhode Island.

1899

**Fred Astaire** born in Omaha, Nebraska.

1901

**George M. Cohan** writes, directs and produces his first Broadway musical, *The Governor's Son*.



1912

**Gene Kelly** born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

1925

**Donald O'Connor** born in Chicago, Illinois.  
**Sammy Davis, Jr.**, born in New York, New York.

1931

**Anthony Newley** born in London, UK.

1933

**Fred Astaire** performs in his first film with Ginger Rogers, *Flying Down to Rio*.

1936

**Bobby Darin** born in New York, NY.



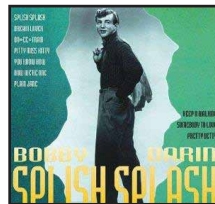
1942

**George M. Cohen** dies at age 64.

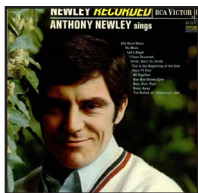
1952

*Singin' in the Rain* stars **Gene Kelly** and **Donald O'Connor**.

1958



**Bobby Darin's** "Splish Splash" hits number three on the U.S. pop single charts.



1960

**Anthony Newley's** "Why?" hits number one on the U.S. pop singles chart.  
**Sammy Davis, Jr.**, appears in the first Rat Pack movie, *Ocean's 11*.

1973

**Bobby Darin** dies at 37.

1987

After a career spanning 76 years, **Fred Astaire** dies in Los Angeles, California.

1990

**Sammy Davis, Jr.**, dies of complications with throat cancer.



1996

**Gene Kelly** dies in his sleep at age 83.

1999

**Anthony Newley** dies at age 67.

2003

**Donald O'Connor** dies at age 78.

# RESOURCES

## WATCH

> FRED ASTAIRE - *Puttin' On the Ritz*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFabjc6mFk4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFabjc6mFk4)

> FRED ASTAIRE & GINGER ROGERS – *Swing Time*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxPgplMujzQ&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxPgplMujzQ&feature=related)

> BOBBY DARIN sings *Mack the Knife*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENbBPWjYtPM&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENbBPWjYtPM&feature=related)

> BOBBY DARIN sings *The Start of Something Big*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nxzzBXVJzs&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nxzzBXVJzs&feature=related)

> SAMMY DAVIS, JR., sings *Candy Man*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRf1Ad\\_Txsg&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRf1Ad_Txsg&feature=related)

> SAMMY DAVIS, JR., sings *I Can't Get Started*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ls33JN395OE&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ls33JN395OE&feature=related)

> GENE KELLY – *I've Got Rhythm*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvglHa\\_P9BA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvglHa_P9BA)

> ANTHONY NEWLEY – *Gonna Build a Mountain*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUVVguTKw-w&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUVVguTKw-w&feature=related)

> ANTHONY NEWLEY & DONALD O'CONNOR –  
*Song Man Dance Man*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=35YQRTzTkoA&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35YQRTzTkoA&feature=related)

> DONALD O'CONNOR – *Make 'em Laugh*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oWk4ZiuSHE&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oWk4ZiuSHE&feature=related)

## EXPLORE

> BROADWAY: THE AMERICAN MUSICAL: COHAN  
[www.pbs.org/wnet/broadway/stars/cohan\\_g.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/broadway/stars/cohan_g.html)

> BOBBY DARIN OFFICIAL WEBSITE  
[www.bobbydarin.net/](http://www.bobbydarin.net/)

> SAMMY DAVIS, JR., OFFICIAL WEBSITE  
[www.sammydavis-jr.com/](http://www.sammydavis-jr.com/)

> AMERICAN MASTERS: GENE KELLY  
[www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/gene-kelly/anatomy-of-a-dancer/516/](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/gene-kelly/anatomy-of-a-dancer/516/)

> ANTHONY NEWLEY OFFICIAL WEBSITE  
[www.anthonynewley.com/](http://www.anthonynewley.com/)

> DONALD O'CONNOR OFFICIAL WEBSITE  
<http://donaldoconnor.org/>

> FRED ASTAIRE DANCE STUDIO WEBSITE  
[www.fredastaire.com](http://www.fredastaire.com)

> These links and more can be found on The Rep's webpage for *Song Man Dance Man* at [www.MilwaukeeRep.com/season/songman.html](http://www.MilwaukeeRep.com/season/songman.html) under **RESOURCES AND LINKS**

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