Hairspray is a bold, beloved blockbuster musical with depth and heart. It takes on important community issues with wit, a great score, a diverse cast and high-energy dancing. It addresses the need for racial harmony while making a strong case against bullying. It also offers a positive message about being yourself and owning the talents you possess.

Hairspray is based on the 1988 movie created by legendary, underground filmmaker John Waters, who called it “a comedy about integration.” The Broadway adaptation won eight Tony Awards in 2003, including Best Musical. It features music by Marc Shaiman, who also wrote lyrics with Scott Wittman, with a book by Mark O’Donnell and Thomas Meehan.

Hairspray is set in Baltimore in 1962. It is the story of plus-size teen Tracy Turnblad, who wrestles with body image issues and bullying, then undergoes a transformation from social outcast to sudden star when she becomes a dancer on The Corny Collins Show, a local TV dance show similar to American Bandstand.

She uses her newfound power to integrate the TV network and win the affection of the town’s heartthrob. Hairspray reminds us of the importance of individuality and the acceptance of one another: a timely thought to share today.

Hairspray is a story full of youthful enthusiasm and optimism that change is possible and that there is brighter future for everyone. At the heart of this hilarious, yet socially important show is an ensemble of teenagers. Skylight is proud to present 17 area junior high and high school students performing in our production.

Everything about Hairspray will make you smile. It has a heart of gold, with its message of acceptance, understanding and being kind to one another.

Enjoy!
Marc Shaiman was born in 1959 in Newark, New Jersey. When he was only 16, he left school to pursue a career in New York. Shaiman began his professional career as Bette Midler’s vocal arranger, eventually becoming her musical director and co-producer of many of her recordings, including The Wind Beneath My Wings and From a Distance.

He also worked on Saturday Night Live as an arranger/writer and portrayed Skip St. Thomas, the pianist for The Sweeney Sisters, played by Nora Dunn and Jan Hooks, which earned him an Emmy nomination.


His work on Hairspray with Scott Wittman earned the team a Tony Award, a Drama Desk Award and a Grammy. They also collaborated on Catch Me if You Can, a musical adaptation of the Steven Spielberg film. The musical opened on Broadway in April 2011.

They also worked together on Charlie and the Chocolate Factory the Musical, which premiered in London in 2013. The show was reworked for a Broadway production in 2017. It ran almost nine months before closing in January 2018.

In 2013, Wittman and Shaiman co-wrote the score for Bombshell, a musical about Marilyn Monroe within the context of the NBC television show Smash. A soundtrack was released later that same year. His current project is the upcoming Mary Poppins Returns, starring Emily Blunt and Lin Manuel-Miranda.

Scott Wittman

Hairspray is just one of Scott Wittman’s many successful efforts as a director, lyricist, and writer for Broadway, concerts, and television.

Born in 1954 in Nanuet, New York, he got an early career start in New York City directing a show for a Greenwich Village club. He soon directed concerts for such artists as Bette Midler, Christine Ebersole, Raquel Welch, Dame Edna Everage and Lypsinka.

In addition to Hairspray, Wittman conceived, wrote lyrics for, and directed Martin Short: Fame Becomes Me and conceived and directed Matters of the Heart, a solo concert by Patti LuPone in 2000.

Shaiman and Wittman worked with Terrence McNally on Catch Me If You Can, a musical adaptation of the Steven Spielberg film. The musical opened on Broadway in April 2011.

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Thomas Meehan (1929-2017) was a key collaborator on some of the most memorable productions in recent Broadway history. Always a prolific writer, Meehan in his 70s wrote or co-wrote three shows that each ran over 2,000 performances on Broadway: Annie (1977), 2,377 performances; The Producers (2001) written with Mel Brooks, 2,502 performances and Hairspray (2002), written with Mark O'Donnell, running for 2,642 performances. Meehan won or shared Tony Awards for all three shows.


Nice work for a kid from Ossining, New York, where he was born in 1929. Meehan graduated in 1951 from Hamilton College in Clinton, N.Y., and then served as an Army intelligence officer for two years. He joined the staff of the New Yorker in the mid-1950s where his work was noticed by composer-director-producer Martin Charnin. It was the beginning of a lifelong friendship and creative partnership.

In the mid-1960s, Meehan earned an Emmy nomination for writing for That Was the Week That Was, a forerunner of today's satirical TV programs about current events such as The Daily Show. He won an Emmy in 1970, the co-writer of Annie: The Women in the Life of a Man, a TV special that starred actress Anne Bancroft, the wife of Mel Brooks.

In 1972, Meehan, Martin Charnin and composer Charles Strouse wrote Annie, a musical adaptation of the comic strip Little Orphan Annie. The show is now a classic. They all won Tony Awards for that show.

Meehan joined forces with Mel Brooks to write the screenplay for 1983’s To Be or Not to Be, a remake of a 1942 movie spoofing Nazi Germany. Four years later, they collaborated on Spaceballs (1987), a sendup of sci-fi films. The pair made Broadway history with the musical version of Brooks' 1967 film The Producers. The show opened in 2001 to sold-out houses, rave reviews and shattered Tony history when it won a record-setting 12 statues. (Even Hamilton fell one short of that accomplishment in 2016.) Meehan and Brooks later adapted the musical into a film, thus transforming a movie into a stage play and back into a movie.

In reaction to Meehan’s death in 2017, Mel Brooks wrote on Twitter: "Stunned by the news that my friend/co-writer Tom Meehan has died. I’ll miss his sweetness & talent. We have all lost a giant of the theatre."

Similar to Brooks, Hamilton creator Lin-Manuel Miranda released a statement on Twitter stating: “RIP to Thomas Meehan, one of the best around.”

Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan shared the 2003 Musical and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Book of a Musical for their work on Hairspray, and they wrote the 2007 film adaptation. The pair also worked on another John Waters musical adaptation, Cry-Baby, for which they received a 2008 Tony nomination.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, O'Donnell received his BA from Harvard College in 1976. He was a member of The Harvard Lampoon, and was the writer and librettist for three musicals for the Hasty Pudding Theatricals group at Harvard.

His plays include That’s It, Folks, Fables for Friends, The Nice and the Nasty, Strangers on Earth, Vertigo Park along with the book and lyrics for the musical Tots in Tinseltown. He and Bill Irwin wrote Scapin, a 1997 play adapted from the original by Molière.

His books include Elementary Education, Vertigo Park and Other Tall Tales, Getting Over Homer and Let Nothing You Dismay. He contributed to The New Yorker, The New York Times, The Atlantic, Esquire and Spy. He was also a writer for the 1981-1982 season of Saturday Night Live. O'Donnell was a longtime editorial advisor to the Yale Record and taught a popular comedy-writing seminar at Yale University.

He died in 2012 after collapsing at his apartment in Manhattan. He was 58.
John Waters – Creator of the Original Hairspray

John Waters is a man of many talents. He is a screenwriter, actor, stand-up comedian, journalist, visual artist, and art collector. Sometimes called the “King of Bad Taste” or the “Pope of Trash,” Waters has built a reputation for shocking his audiences. He rose to fame in the early 1970s for his films, characterized by graphic depictions of behavior that violates socially acceptable norms.

Waters was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1946 and grew up in a suburb, Lutherville. His boyhood friend Glenn Milstead, who later became the drag performer known as Divine, also lived in Lutherville. Divine would become an integral part of Waters’ film career.

Even as a child, Waters was drawn to the spooky and bizarre; he was fascinated by the characters of Captain Hook from Peter Pan and the Wicked Queen from Snow White. He became interested in puppets and created shows that kept birthday party audiences spellbound, often earning up to $25 per performance. His grandmother gave him a movie camera for his 16th birthday and in the mid-60s he began making silent 8mm and 16mm films. His counter-culture friends were his cast, and always with Divine as his star whose persona grew more outrageous with every role.

Waters’ next project was making a movie about his childhood obsession with The Buddy Deane Show, a Baltimore after-school teen dance program. Waters considered calling the film White Lipstick, but settled on Hairspray.

Set in the early 1960s in Baltimore, the film’s heroine speaks out about a pressing issue, integration. Waters cast Divine as both frumpy housewife Edna Turnblad and station owner Arvin Hodgepile. Hairspray was only a moderate success in its initial film release. But, it gained larger audiences on home video and became a cult classic.

Hairspray’s success drew a wider audience to Waters’ subsequent films: Cry-Baby (1990), featured Johnny Depp as the title character, a teen delinquent from the wrong side of the tracks. Serial Mom (1994), starred Kathleen Turner as a suburban mom gone homicidal. As with many of his films, Waters made interesting casting choices. The legendary kidnapped heiress Patty Hearst appears as a member of the jury in Serial Mom and then went to roles in Pecker (1998) and Cecil B. Demented (2000).

Waters stepped in front of the camera for 2006’s This Filthy World, in which he shares many stories from his long career. That same year, he hosted a film series on the Here! Channel, a pay-for-view cable network, called

Waters has continued to set all his films in Baltimore, keeping true to his particular skewed vision and delighting audiences with his tales of eccentric characters who revel in the excesses of tastelessness and trash.

John Waters Presents Movies That Will Corrupt You.

Although he maintains apartments in New York City and San Francisco, and a summer home in Provincetown, Waters still mainly resides in his hometown of Baltimore, Maryland. An openly gay man, Waters is an avid supporter of gay rights and gay pride.

For more info on John Waters, this is a website devoted to the life and work of John Waters: https://www.dreamlandnews.com/
Act I

It is June 1962 in Baltimore. High School student Tracy Turnblad wakes up and goes to school, (Good Morning Baltimore). After school, Tracy and her best friend, Penny rush home to watch the local teenage dance show, The Corny Collins Show (The Nicest Kids in Town).

Edna, Tracy's shy and overweight mother, is ironing when Penny's mother, Prudy arrives to pick up her laundry and to find Penny. Host Corny Collins announces that there will be auditions for the show and Tracy begs her mother for permission to audition. Edna, fearing that Tracy will be ridiculed due to her weight, refuses. Tracy, Penny and Amber, the star dancer on The Corny Collins Show, all argue with their mothers (Mama, I'm a Big Girl Now).

After getting permission from her father, Wilbur, Tracy auditions for the show and bumps into heartthrob, Link Larkin (I Can Hear the Bells). Velma Von Tussle, the producer of the show, rejects Tracy and Little Inez because of, respectively, their size and race (Miss Baltimore Crabs).

At school, Tracy is sent to detention for her "monumental hair-don't". She meets Seaweed J. Stubbs, the son of the hostess of "Negro Day" on The Corny Collins Show, Motormouth Maybelle, who teaches her some new dance moves.

The next day at the Sophomore Hop, Tracy demonstrates her new dance steps (The Madison). Corny gives Tracy a place on the show. Link sings It Takes Two to Tracy, to Amber's dismay. Velma is determined to ruin Tracy (Velma's Revenge).

At the Turnblad house, Edna is receiving calls from Tracy's new fans. Mr. Pinky, the owner of a plus-size dress shop, calls for an endorsement. Although Edna has not left their apartment in years, Tracy convinces her to come with her and act as her agent. Edna gets a makeover and Tracy becomes the spokes-girl for Mr. Pinky's Hefty Hide-Away (Welcome to the 60's).

During a game of dodge ball at school, Amber knocks Tracy out, and Link rushes to help her. Penny and Seaweed meet and are instantly attracted to each other. Seaweed invites all of them to his mother's record shop (Run and Tell That).

At the shop, Tracy rallies everyone to march against the station, as blacks are not allowed on the show except for the monthly "Negro Day." Link is reluctant, fearing it would compromise his record contract.

During the protest, led by Motormouth, Velma calls the police and everyone is arrested (Big, Blonde and Beautiful).

Act II

After the march, the ladies are locked up in the penitentiary (The Big Dollhouse). The governor pardons Velma and Amber. Wilbur bails out everyone else, except for Tracy who must remain in jail through another one of Velma's manipulations. (Good Morning Baltimore - Reprise).

Back at the Har-De-Har Hut (Wilbur's novelty store), Edna sympathizes with her daughter's dream, recalling that she had dreamt of making her "own line of queen-sized dress patterns". Edna and Wilbur reaffirm that they will never be parted from each other (You're Timeless to Me).

That night, Link sneaks into the jail to find Tracy. Meanwhile, Penny's mother, Prudy, punishes Penny for "going to jail without her permission" and Seaweed comes to her rescue. Both couples declare their love (Without Love).

After escaping from their respective prisons, the couples meet at Motormouth Maybelle's Record Shop. They plan to integrate The Corny Collins Show, inspired by Motormouth's song about the long fight for equality (I Know Where I've Been).

Corny starts the Miss Teenage Hairspray competition with a song (It's Hairspray). Amber shows off in a bid to win votes (Cooties).

Just before the results are announced, Tracy stuns Amber as she takes over the stage joined by Link, Penny, Seaweed, Edna, Wilbur, Little Inez, Corny and Motormouth. Tracy is declared the winner. Amber and Velma protest the results, but are dismissed as Tracy proclaims The Corny Collins Show is "now and forevermore" racially integrated.

Mr. Spritzer runs onstage thrilled with the public's response to the telecast and announces that the governor has pardoned Tracy and given her a full college scholarship. He offers Link a recording contract and Velma the position of vice president of Ultra Glow, beauty products for women of color, much to her chagrin.

Prudy arrives at the station and, seeing how happy Penny is with Seaweed, accepts her daughter for who she is. With the station in joyous celebration, Tracy and Link cement their love with a kiss (You Can't Stop the Beat).
Hairspray is set in Baltimore, Maryland, John Waters’ hometown. Waters understood the unique character of the city and captured its sometimes tacky, always exuberant, unself-conscious quality.

In the early 1960s, when Hairspray takes place, more than half of the population of Baltimore was African-American and the city was heavily segregated.

North Avenue, the location of Motormouth Maybelle’s record shop in Hairspray, was originally the northern boundary of the city. The Black population was not allowed to cross this boundary after dark.

1948
President Truman orders the integration of the U.S. military.

1954
The U.S. Supreme Court declares that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” Baltimore is the first Southern city to integrate schools after the Supreme Court decision.

City dime-stores open lunch counters to black customers.

1955
In Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat to a white man in defiance of local laws.

Baltimore department stores allow blacks to try on clothes.

Federal court orders Baltimore to desegregate public swimming pools.

1956
Governor McKeldin ends separate listings for black and white applicants for state jobs.

1957
The Buddy Deane Show first airs on WJZ-TV in Baltimore.

Congress enacts the 1957 Civil Rights Act, designed to enforce the right to vote in federal elections.

President Eisenhower sends federal troops to enforce the right of nine black students to enroll at Central H.S. in Little Rock, Arkansas.

1958
Most Baltimore movie theaters open to black customers.

1961
Protesters at Glen Echo Amusement Park in Baltimore are arrested.

1962
In Baltimore, Dr. Martin Luther King speaks to 3,500 people at Willard W. Allen Masonic Temple urging continued non-violent demonstrations opposing segregation.

President Kennedy orders federal marshals to escort James Meredith, the first black student permitted to enroll at the University of Mississippi.

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1963
At the March on Washington, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers his “I Have a Dream,” speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Northwood Movie Theatre admits black patrons after eight years of protest.

President Kennedy is assassinated.

1964
The Buddy Deane Show is cancelled.

U.S. Congress enacts the 1964 Civil Rights Act, prohibiting discrimination in public accommodations and employment.
Debbie Reynolds was a movie star once known as “America's Sweetheart.” Her movie roles include *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), *Bundle of Joy* (1956; with then-husband Eddie Fisher) and *The Singing Nun* (1966).

Eddie Fisher was the most successful recording artist during the first half of the 1950s, selling millions of records and hosting his own TV show. He divorced his first wife, Debbie Reynolds, to marry Reynolds' best friend, Elizabeth Taylor, after Taylor's husband, film producer Mike Todd, was killed in a plane crash.

Elizabeth Taylor was one of the biggest Hollywood stars when she began an affair with her *Cleopatra* co-star, Richard Burton. The scandal caused Taylor and Burton to be condemned for "erotic vagrancy" by the Vatican.

Dubbed "Liz and Dick" by the media, they were married in 1964 and starred together in 11 films. They led a jet-set lifestyle, spending millions on furs, diamonds, paintings, designer clothes, a yacht and a jet.

They divorced in June, 1974, and remarried in October, 1975. The second marriage lasted less than a year, ending in divorce in July, 1976.

Metrecal was a brand of diet foods popular in the early 1960s. It eventually lost popularity because it was linked to deaths.

First Ladies Jackie B. Kennedy and Mamie Eisenhower

Singer and movie star Connie Francis

Movie poster for *Peyton Place*, a popular film based on the best seller by Grace Metalious.

TV star Jackie Gleason- "Away we go!"
The Buddy Deane Show was a teen dance television show, hosted by Winston "Buddy" Deane that aired on WJZ-TV in Baltimore, Maryland from 1957 until 1964. It aired for two and a half hours a day, six days a week. The show was, for a time, the most popular local show in the United States.

Teenagers who appeared on the show every day were known as "The Committee." These young people became local celebrities as hundreds of thousands of teens watched the show to learn the latest dances, copy their personal style, and follow their life stories and interactions.

Many top acts of the day, both black and white, appeared on the show. Its main rival was Dick Clark’s American Bandstand, which aired out of Philadelphia. WJZ-TV "blocked" the broadcast of American Bandstand in Baltimore and aired the Deane program instead, reportedly because Bandstand showed black teenagers dancing on the show.

The Buddy Deane Show was completely segregated. "When my show went on, management decided they would follow 'the local custom' of segregation, and we were going to have separate but equal," Deane told Tony Warner, author of Buddy's Top 20: The Story of Baltimore's Hottest TV Dance Show and the Guy Who Brought It to Life.

"Separate" meant that the Committee consisted entirely of white dancers. "Equal" was a bit more of a stretch: it meant that black youths appeared on the show on one Monday each month. Among Buddy Deanners, this day was known as "Special Guest Day." Among black kids in Baltimore, it was called "Black Monday." In Hairspray, it’s called "Negro Day."

Although much of Hairspray is true to the events of The Buddy Deane Show, the similarity ends at the climactic moment when Tracy and Seaweed and their integrated group storm a nationally televised broadcast of The Corny Collins Show and dance on the air. The bold move results in their ultimate victory: The show is officially integrated.

It didn't have the same happy ending in real life. On January 4, 1964, nearly five months after the first, and only, day that black and white kids danced together on TV in WJZ's studios, the show went off the air. "The dance show was "the victim of an 'insoluble' integration problem," said Deane.

At the time, John Waters was a teen living in Baltimore and was an avid Buddy Deane Show fan. When asked whether Hairspray’s happy ending sugarcoats the complicated and controversial ending of the real story, Waters said, "I feel that by making the movie, I brought The Buddy Deane Show back -- no one would know about it otherwise. Besides my movie was never supposed to be the truth. It's not even the dream version. It's the John Waters version. It's a comedy about integration."

Real Life Dynamites—The Royalettes were a girl group from Baltimore. They formed their group in high school. Their hit was It’s Gonna Take A Miracle.