A CHORUS LINE

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UM School of Music • Musical Theatre Department
October 14 -17, 2004 • Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre
The University of Michigan, School of Music, Musical Theatre Department presents

A CHORUS LINE

Music by Marvin Hamlisch
Lyrics by Edward Kleban
Book by James Kirkwood and Nicholas Dante
Conceived and originally directed and choreographed by Michael Bennett

Director/Choreographer  Kerry Casserly
Music Director/Conductor  Cynthia Kortman Westphal
Assistant Director & Choreographer  Billy Johnstone
Scenic Designer  Arthur Ridley
Costume Coordinator  Christianne Myers
Lighting Designer  Jaime Burke
Sound Designer  Mark Gordon
Stage Manager  Amy Duffy

Setting:
An audition in a Broadway theatre, 1975

A Chorus Line is performed without an intermission.

A Chorus Line is presented by special arrangement with, and the music and dialogue material furnished by Tams-Witmark Music Library, Inc. 560 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10022

Latecomers will be seated at a suitable break or scene change. As a courtesy to others, please set pagers to silent mode. Cellular phones and electronic watch alarms should be turned off so they will not interrupt the performance. Photography and videotaping are not permitted due to copyright restrictions. Flash photography endangers performers by causing momentary blindness.

The School of Music acknowledges the generosity of McKinley Associates, Inc. whose support has helped make this production possible.
Cast of Characters

Zach .............................................................. Eli Zoller
Larry ........................................................ Jacob Wilson
Cassie Ferguson ........................................ Alexis Sims
Paul San Marco ........................................ Daniel Taylor
Sheila Bryant ............................................. Anne Horak
Mike Costa .............................................. Brian Spitalnik
Connie Wong .............................................. Jennifer Sese
Don Kerr .................................................... Josh Rouah
Maggie Winslow ....................................... Chelsea Krombach
Gregory Gardner ..................................... Thomas Berklund
Bobby Mills III ......................................... Michael Zahler
Bebe Bensenheimer ................................. Jessica Blair Lukasik
Richie Walters ......................................... Justin Keyes

Alan DeLuca ............................................. Nick Blaemire
Kristine Urich .......................................... Erin McGrath
Valerie Clark .............................................. Whitney Bashor
Mark Anthony ........................................... Dave Hull
Diana Morales .......................................... Kate Loprest
Judy Turner ............................................... Paige Wheat
Tricia ......................................................... Dani Spiteri
Vicky ......................................................... Helené Yorke
Lois ......................................................... Mara Newbery
Butch .......................................................... Jamie Cooper
Roy ......................................................... Andrew Keenan-Bolger
Tom .......................................................... Felipe González
Frank .......................................................... Alex Michaels

Understudies: Diana, Sheila, Bebe, Cassie - Dani Spiteri; Cassie, Val - Helené Yorke; Cassie - Jessica Blair Lukasik; Judy, Kristine - Mara Newbery; Paul - Jamie Cooper; Mark, Richie - Andrew Keenan-Bolger; Mike - Felipe González; Greg, Al, Bobby - Alex Michaels

Orchestra

Saxophone/Clarinet ............................................ Justin Church
Flute/Piccolo .................................................. Kate Bowerman
Trumpet .......................................................... Jason Webb
Trombone ..................................................... Drew Leslie
Bass ............................................................. Keith Reed
Guitar ............................................................. Matt Dievend
Harp ............................................................. Nadia Pessoa
Drums ........................................................... Charles Navyac
Conductor/Piano .............................................. Cynthia Kortman Westphal

Andrew J. Mazure
1963-2004

A member of the International Association of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 395, J. made invaluable contributions to many theatrical productions of the School of Music, University Musical Society, and the Michigan Theatre. University Productions misses the friendship, craftsmanship and sports-trivia knowledge of our colleague.
Musical Numbers

Opening: I Hope I Get It................................................................. Company
I Can Do That .............................................................................. Mike
...And.............................................................. Richie, Val, Judy, Company
At the Ballet.................................................................Sheila, Bebe, Maggie
Sing......................................................................................... Kristine, Al, Company

Montage
Hello Twelve, Hello Thirteen................................................. Mark, Connie, Company
Nothing ........................................................................................... Diana
Mother ...................................................................................... Don, Judy, Company
Part 4 ......................................................................................... Judy, Greg, Richie, Company

Dance Ten, Looks Three ....................................................... Val

The Music and the Mirror .................................................. Cassie

One ................................................................................................. Company
Tap Dance ................................................................................. Company
What I Did for Love ........................................................... Diana, Company

Bows ............................................................................................... Company

From the Director

I am very grateful to the University of Michigan, Professor Brent Wagner and Linda Goodrich for inviting me to restage, recreate, and pass on “the gift” of Michael Bennett’s Tony-Award, Pulitzer-Prize winning A Chorus Line to this new generation of artists. It is the definitive “triple threat” experience.

My mom taught dance which insured that all six kids could afford lessons. At our house in the basement, there was always a song and dance going on — costumes galore, records playing, silliness, kids, chaos, fun — all fun until it was time to clean up. Call it left brain, call it right brain, I learned showbiz is hard work. My parents were teachers who inspired artistic expression yet instilled a seriousness about life’s spiritual journey. I am glad they did or I may never have survived working in the theatre in NYC for 25 years, much less the A Chorus Line sagas.

When I first met Michael Bennett in 1979 while playing Kristine in Boston, I was immediately drawn into his lightening-speed life force, his charismatic personality, and his deep passion for his work. In his sparkly brown eyes, one could see that he knew exactly what he wanted, how he felt, how he was going to get that “moment” out of an actor. Still I was intrigued and loved him the first time I saw him in person. I wanted to please him and — luckily he liked my work.

Michael danced full out at some rehearsals and demanded the same. So one by one we had to do the jazz combination alone onstage with the drummer. I was so terrified. I felt sort of like I was having an out of body experience where I was still dancing but my feet and knees felt like mush and I had to look down to see if they were still there.

One of my sweetest memories of Michael was sitting at a piano backstage in Buffalo, NY (Michael’s hometown). A couple of us were making up tunes and lyrics and Michael sang along a line or two and rightly said, “I can’t sing on pitch.” We all laughed and I consoled him. That day we met his mom and family and I believe he was given his high school diploma and a key to the city.

Most of the students at U of M have never seen the stage version of A Chorus Line and because of that they breath new life, creativity, humor, reality, and a fresh depth into these 26 characters so many of us have come to know and love. I love this beautiful little Mendelssohn theatre. Michael Bennett would be known to comment “We never used to need microphones.” I commend the wonderful collaboration of teachers, students, cast, crew, orchestra and production department. Special thanks to Musical Director Cynthia Westphal and my assistant Billy Johnstone. Lastly, thank you dear audience for coming to re-live and share some of your own memories of feeling close to A Chorus Line.

— PEACE! Kerry Casserly

P.S. To the U of M students, just remember the advice of Paul, Cassie, Greg, and Diana: “without an education you can’t get a good job,” “you’re all special,” “one day at a time is enough to deal with,” “the gift is yours to borrow,” “Do it for Love!”
About A Chorus Line

On July 25, 1975, *A Chorus Line* opened on Broadway at the Shubert Theatre. It closed there on April 28, 1990 after 6,137 performances. For some time, it held the record as the longest-running musical in history. While all shows are a result of collaboration, *A Chorus Line* particularly owed its success to its true creator, Michael Bennett. Never had a director-choreographer been so dominant in a show’s formation. While Bennett knew that it had to have commercial audience appeal, he wanted a show that spotlighted “gypsies” (a theatrical term for chorus dancers). He wanted to honor a dancer’s life.

Throughout his previous musicals, Bennett created a style of choreography that remained unique to each particular show. At the top of his form with *A Chorus Line*, he incorporated what he called “cinematic staging.” There was constant “jump-cutting” as the audience’s attention was shifted from one figure to another. Bennett brought things into sudden focus as in a film through stage dissolves, close-ups, montages and wipes. Equally effective, creative and dramatic was Bennett’s use of mirrors in the show. It was musical staging that went beyond anything other musicals had ever presented.

*A Chorus Line* began as a workshop “share” session. A group of dancers met after rehearsals for other shows to talk about their personal and professional lives. The sessions were tape recorded, written down, and a musical libretto was pieced together. Playwright/novelist James Kirkwood and former dancer Nicholas Dante assembled the book. Academy-award winner Marvin Hamlisch composed the music and the relatively unknown Edward Kleban wrote the lyrics. Their combined work, guided closely by Bennett, resulted in a staging scheme that filled the songs and book with overlapping layers. Neil Simon was called in to do some uncredited book doctoring, adding some of the great one-liners. Their combined work, guided closely by Bennett, resulted in a staging scheme that filled the songs and book with overlapping layers. Neil Simon was called in to do some uncredited book doctoring, adding some of the great one-liners.

The formation of the show took place during a lengthy series of workshops that allowed Bennett’s many creative re-thinkings to develop. His methods did not always sit well with his cast, but Bennett’s determination held firm. Joseph Papp, through his New York Shakespeare Festival, became the show’s producer. He provided the essential funding, rehearsal/workshop space, and unusually generous time for the show to take shape.

*A Chorus Line* opened to almost unanimous rave reviews and ran for fifteen years. It won almost every award possible, including the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. It received nine 1976 Antoinette Perry Awards: Best Musical, Best Director of a Musical (Michael Bennett), Best Choreographer (Michael Bennett), Best Book (James Kirkwood & Nicholas Dante), Best Score (Marvin Hamlisch & Edward Kleban), Best Actress in a Musical (Donna McKechnie - Cassie), Featured Actress in a Musical (Carole Bishop - Sheila), Featured Actor in a Musical (Sammy Williams - Paul), and Lighting Designer (Tharon Musser).

While this musical about musicals focused on the lives of dancers, general audiences found that the show spoke to their individual lives and experiences. In the Playbill, the show was dedicated “to anyone who has ever danced in a chorus or marched in step… anywhere.” However, it seemed to be professional performers and future hopefuls who were most affected by *A Chorus Line*. Ask almost any dancer or actor who saw it and they will tell you it provided a spark or moment of inspiration that pulled at some part of their souls. In some way, they found their own stories on that stage with all the joys and disappointments, fears, memories, and hopes.

*A Chorus Line* was the perfect combination of artistic achievement and popular appeal. As *A Chorus Line* ran on, Michael Bennett went on to *Ballroom* (1979) which had a disappointing run but brought Bennett another Tony for choreography. Then came the enormous hit *Dreamgirls* (1981) and yet another Tony for choreography. On September 29, 1983, *A Chorus Line* became the longest running Broadway show ever with performance number 3,389. For that special night, Bennett re-staged the show so that each number featured current and past members of the Broadway, touring and international casts. The highlight was the finale, with 338 dancers sharing the stage.

Michael Bennett began work on two more projects, *Chess* and *Scandal*, but never finished. He died on July 2, 1987 at his home in Tuscon, the official cause being lymphoma, an AIDS-related form of cancer. The man who was “one singular sensation” was gone at the age of 44. On Broadway, *A Chorus Line* was still playing and his dances were still being performed. He had kept his illness quiet, so there were no final tributes in his final days. No bows, just a fade out. A dancer’s life.

— William J. McKay, 1998

From www.musicals101.com

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From www.musicals101.com
Michael Bennett (Original Direction/Choreography) April 8, 1943 - July 2, 1987 — American dancer, choreographer, and stage musical director, Bennett studied many styles of dance and began his career as a dancer in productions of West Side Story and Subways are for Sleeping. His major contribution to the dance scene was as a choreographer-director of Broadway musicals, notably in Promises, Promises (1968), Coco (1969), Company (1970), Follies (1971), A Chorus Line (1975), and Dreamgirls (1981). His beginnings as a dancer were most strongly reflected in A Chorus Line, which was made for and about dancers. This musical was conceived, directed, choreographed, and coproduced by Bennett; it won nine Tony awards and the 1976 Pulitzer Prize for drama and became the longest-running musical in the history of the Broadway theatre. Bennett received eight Tony awards and several New York Drama Critic awards during his career. He gave up directing Chess when he was diagnosed AIDS. Withdrawing from the public eye, he tried to keep his illness a secret until his death at age 44.

Nicholas Dante (Book) 1942 – 1991 Dante, whose real name was Conrado Morales, started his career as a dancer, appearing in the choruses of shows including Applause, I'm Solomon, Ambassador, Smith, on television shows and in nightclubs. His experiences became one of the prominent stories in A Chorus Line. His own story - about growing up poor in New York City and feeling scorned and lonely because of his homosexuality - was told in the character, Paul. “It's the first thing I ever wrote,” Dante said when the show opened at the Shubert. “I've been dancing all my life. Now I hope I can be a writer.” Dante later wrote an unproduced screenplay, Fake Lady from Paul's story in A Chorus Line. He also wrote the book for Jolson Tonight, a musical that toured the country in the early 1980s. At his death in May 1991 from AIDS, he was working on a new play, A Suite Letting Go.

Marvin Hamlisch (Composer) As composer, Hamlisch has won every major award: three Oscars, four Grammys, four Emmys, one Tony and three Golden Globe awards. His groundbreaking show, A Chorus Line, received the Pulitzer Prize. Among the Broadway shows Hamlisch has composed are They're Playing Our Song, The Goodbye Girl, Sweet Smell of Success and Imaginary Friends. He is the composer of more than 40 motion picture scores including his Oscar-winning score and song for The Way We Were and his adaptation of Scott Joplin's music for The Sting, for which he received a third Oscar. His scores for films include original compositions and/or musical adaptations for Sophie's Choice, Ordinary People, The Swimmer, Three Men and a Baby, Ice Castles, Take the Money and Run, Bananas and Save the Tiger. Hamlisch holds the position of Principal Pops Conductor with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra as well as with the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C.

James Kirkwood (Book) Aug. 22, 1924 - April 21, 1989 American librettist, actor, author, and playwright, he was the son of silent film stars Lila Lee and James Kirkwood. Kirkwood followed his parents into show business, appearing on Broadway in Junior Miss, Small Wonder and Welcome Darlings and in such films as Oh God, Book II (1980) and Mommie Dearest (1981). For A Chorus Line, a story about dancers auditioning for a musical, Kirkwood won both a Tony award and a Pulitzer Prize in 1976. He also wrote such plays as U.T.B.U. (1965; “Unhealthy to Be Unpleasant”) and the comedy Legends (1986). Among his books are There Must Be a Pony! (1960), Good Times/Bad Times (1968), P.S. Your Cat Is Dead (1972), and Hit Me With a Rainbow (1980).

Edward Kleban (Lyricist) 1939 – 1987 Kleban was born in New York City and graduated from Columbia University. He produced records for Columbia Records in Los Angeles before returning to New York in the late 1960s to work in the theater. A Chorus Line earned Kleban a Tony Award in 1976 for best lyrics. “I remember talking to a friend the week before it opened,” Kleban said in 1983, at the time of the musical’s record-breaking 3,389th performance. “I’d been paid $500 for my whole year’s work, and I said that I didn't know if that would be it or if I’d make a fortune.” Kleban taught for many years with the B.M.I. Musical Theater Workshop, a series of classes for lyricists, librettists and composers. Far from being a one-hit wonder, Kleban composed both music and lyrics for a variety of musicals that never got produced, leaving a trunk of songs behind unheard at his untimely death in 1987 from complications from cancer of the mouth. In 2001, his friends Linda Kline and Lonny Price created A Class Act, a musical based on Kleban’s life using many of his unheard songs.

About the Creators
About the Cast

WHITNEY BASHOR (Val) senior, Bettendorf, IA
THOMAS BERKLUND (Greg) senior, Middleton, WI
NICK BLAEMIRE (Al) junior, Bethesda, MD
JAMIE COOPER (Butch) sophomore, Olympia, WA
FELIPE GONZALEZ (Tom) junior, Akron, OH
ANNE HORAK (Sheila) junior, De Pere, WI
DAVE HULL (Mark) sophomore, Cincinnati, OH
ANDREW KEENAN-BOLGER (Roy) sophomore, Detroit, MI
JUSTIN KEYES (Richie) senior, San Jose, CA
CHELSEA KROMBACH (Maggie) senior, Brookfield, WI
KATE LOPREST (Diana) senior, Deerfield, IL
JESSICA BLAIR LUKASIK (Bebe) junior, Chicago, IL
ERIN MCGRATH (Kristine) junior, BFA Musical Theatre/BA Political Science, Geneva, IL
ALEX MICHAELS (Frank) junior, New York, NY
MARA NEWBERY (Lois) sophomore, Louisville, KY
JOSH ROUAH (Don) sophomore, Miami, FL
JENNIFER SENE (Connie) junior, Cincinnati, OH
ALEXIS SIMS (Cassie) senior, Birmingham, AL
DANI SPIEGLER (Tricia) sophomore, Scarsdale, NY
BRIAN SPIEGLER (Mike) senior, Potomac, MD
DANIEL TAYLOR (Paul) senior, Los Angeles, CA
PAIGE WHEAT (Judy) sophomore, Houston, TX
JACOB WILSON (Larry) sophomore, Pittsburgh, PA
HELENE YORKE (Vicky) sophomore, Los Angeles, CA
MICHAEL ZAHLER (Bobby) senior, New York, NY
ELI ZOLLER (Zach) junior, Huntington Woods, MI

The performers in this production are composed of undergraduate students pursuing a BFA in Musical Theatre in the School of Music unless otherwise noted. The designers are composed of faculty, guest artists, and undergraduate students in the Department of Theatre and Drama. Scenery, costumes, properties, sound, and lighting were realized by the students and staff of University Productions, the producing unit of the School of Music.

About the Artists

JAMIE BURKE (Lighting Designer) is a junior in the University of Michigan's BFA Design and Production Program studying lighting, stage management, and scenic artistry. UM: Oklahoma!, Guys and Dolls, Jesus Christ Superstar, Regional Theatre: UM Festival of New Works - 2003 & 2004: electrician, asst. stage manager; Pine Mountain Music Festival, scenic artist.

KERRY CASSERLY (Director/Choreographer) Broadway: Michael Bennett's A Chorus Line (Kristine in the 3,389th record breaking performance), My One and Only, One Night Stand. National/International Tours: A Chorus Line (Judy, Kristine, Cassie, Shelia), Pippin, Annie. Off Broadway: Annie Warbucks. Regional Theatre: Sophisticated Ladies, Crazy for You, Robber Bridegroom. Film/TV: All That Jazz, Baryshnikov on Broadway, In Concert at the White House, Guiding Light, David Letterman. Other: On faculty at the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theatre; Artistic Director and owner, Lundstrom Center for the Performing Arts, a non-profit musical theatre training center for kids in the inner city of North Minneapolis, MN.

AMY DUFFY (Stage Manager) is a senior BTA studying stage management and musicology. UM: Stage manager - Luck!, She's All Yours, asst. stage manager - The Cunning Little Vixen; Basement Arts - Production Stage manager, stage manager: Stop, Kiss. Regional Theatre: Assistant stage manager: UM Festival of New Works (Summer 2004).

MARK GORDON (Sound Designer) is a member of University Productions’ technical staff. He has been the front-of-house audio engineer on national tours of (among others) One Mo’ Time, Camelot, On Your Toes, South Pacific, and Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. UM: Guys and Dolls.

About the Artists

CHRISTIANNE MYERS (Costume Coordinator) is an asst. professor in the Dept. of Theatre and Drama. UM: Don Giovanni, The Nutcracker, Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet), Xerxes, The Canning Little Vixen, Hamlet. New York: Heloise and Abelard, Juilliard School; Running Man, Music Theatre Group; Dare Clubb’s Oedipus, Blue Light; The Acting Co.; TheatreWorks/USA; The Public Theatre & Ma-Yi Ensemble; Irondale Ensemble; Lincoln Center Institute. Regional Theatre: Indiana Rep; Purple Rose Theatre; Clarence Brown Theatre; Syracuse Stage; Caldwell Theatre; Pine Mountain Music Festival. Film: The Office Party, HBO. Other: BFA, Pace Univ.; MFA, New York Univ.

ARTHUR RIDLEY (Scenic Designer) is a lecturer in the Dept. of Theatre and Drama and the properties master for University Productions. UM: Scenic design: Oklahoma!, The Tavern, Side Show, Sweeney Todd, Pat Joey; costume design: Forum.


Acknowledgments


Staff for A Chorus Line

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Scenic Painter .................................Kate Shay
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Asst. Stage Managers .......Katie McGee, Christina Hagan
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Asst. Master Electrician ..............Stephen Siercks
Scenery .................................Ryan Foy, Matt Semler
Paint ........................................Mikala Bierma, Cassidy Bloom,
Elyse Handler, Esther Neff, Sherron Novis,
Lena Sanda, Colter Starr, Kathryn Van Horn
Props ..............Serh Anderson, Jenni Barber, Grant Bates, Kyla Embrey, Felipe Gonzalez, Katherine Hire, Matt Noellert, Michael Zahler, students of Theatre 250
Professional Stitchers ....................Laurie Kntnert,
Monica Prince, Kay Stefanek
Costumes ...............................Katie Bolz, Adam Caplan,
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Sarah Showalter, Kendal Sparks, students of Theatre 250
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Melanie Berg, Jamie Burke, Andy Fritsch,
Justin Hyatt, Frank Maiorana, Joe Ostrander,
Monika Patel, Mary Roeder, Josh Rouah, Joe Schlenke,
Kathryn Van horn, students of Theatre 250

RUNNING CREW
Scenery .........Peter Gosik, Derek Krantz, Shina Morris
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Light Board Operator ............Andrew Ludel
Electrics .................Paul Lessard, Michael Lowney,
Jacob McGLAUN, Benton Whiteley
Sound .................................Alex Brumel
Wardrobe .......Darren Biggert, Ted Ely, Marjorie Faloni,
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University of Michigan - School of Music - Friends of Musical Theatre

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