

# MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE PRESENTS TEN-FILM TRIBUTE TO STEPHEN SONDHEIM AS PART OF ITS SIGNATURE 'SEE IT BIG' SERIES

Opening April 1 with the Spielberg-directed *West Side Story* and running through May 1



Astoria, New York, March 14, 2022 — Museum of the Moving Image is pleased to announce [See It Big: Sondheim](#), a ten-film series devoted to the celebrated composer, lyricist, author, artist, and all-around innovator Stephen Sondheim. When Sondheim died last November, he didn't just leave behind an extraordinary corpus of work—he had exited a world that his art had forever changed. Though he will be first and foremost remembered for revolutionizing musical theater with his fully integrated narrative songs and mind-bogglingly complex melodies and librettos, his mark on the moving image is also indelible. The Museum's survey offers audiences the chance to see a selection of filmic interpretations of Sondheim's stage work in MoMI's grand Redstone Theater: musicals written for the screen; unexpected dramas to which he contributed scores or screenplays; and the documentary *Original Cast Album: Company*, that allows viewers access to his process. See It Big is a collaboration between Museum of the Moving Image and [Reverse Shot](#).

The series opens on Friday, April 1, with a big-screen presentation of *West Side Story*, directed by Steven Spielberg (showing again on April 3), followed by screenings of the original movie

version of ***West Side Story*** (1961) the same weekend; and continuing through May 1 with screenings of ***Gypsy*** (1962), ***A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*** (1966), ***Original Cast Album: Company*** (1970), ***Stavisky*** (1974), ***Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*** (2007), ***Into the Woods*** (2014), ***The Last of Sheila*** (1973), and ***Dick Tracy*** (1990). The full schedule is included below and will be posted online at [movingimage.us/series/sondheim/](http://movingimage.us/series/sondheim/).

#### SCHEDULE FOR 'SEE IT BIG: SONDHEIM,' APRIL 1–MAY 1, 2022

All screenings take place in the Redstone Theater at Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Ave, Astoria, NY 11106. Advance tickets are available online; walk-ups are also welcome. Tickets are \$15 with discounts for seniors, students, youth, and Museum members.

For the safety of all, the Museum requires all attendees to wear face masks in its theaters. Please review all visitor safety guidelines [here](#).

#### ***West Side Story* (2021)**

FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 6:30 P.M.

SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 4:00 P.M.

Dir. Steven Spielberg. U.S. 2021, 156 mins. DCP. With Rachel Zegler, Ansel Elgort, Ariana DeBose, Mike Faist, David Alvarez, Rita Moreno, Corey Stoll. Spielberg's masterful update of the epochal 1957 stage musical is an explosion of color, movement, balleticism, and unabashed emotion, with a brilliant, meticulously updated script by Tony Kushner, reconceived yet faithful to the show's original story and essential power. Featuring an extraordinary cast of new talent performing Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim's classic songs with bravura and fearsome skill, Spielberg burrows to the core of the tragic tale of star-crossed lovers in fifties Upper West Side New York City, their romance torn asunder by territorial gang warfare and bigotry. Effortlessly directing his first full-length musical, Spielberg proves himself yet again one of the most versatile filmmakers the form has ever known; working with cinematographer Janusz Kaminski, he has created a film that is visually dazzling almost shot for shot.

#### ***West Side Story* (1961)**

SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 1:00 P.M.

SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 12:30 P.M.

Dirs. Jerome Robbins, Robert Wise. 1961, 151 mins. DCP. With Natalie Wood, Richard Beymer, Rita Moreno, Russ Tamblyn, George Chakiris. *West Side Story* won ten Oscars including Best Picture and Best Supporting Actress (Moreno), and has stood the test of time as one of the greatest film musicals. In its adaptation of the Romeo and Juliet story—featuring unforgettable songs by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, and choreography by Jerome Robbins—feuding families are replaced by warring New York City gangs, the white Jets and the Puerto Rican Sharks. When forbidden love escalates their rivalry, tragedy strikes and doesn't stop until the powerful finale.

#### ***Gypsy***

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 1:00 P.M.

SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 1:00 P.M.

Dir. Mervyn LeRoy. 1962, 143 mins. 35mm. With Rosiland Russell, Natalie Wood, Karl Malden. Thanks to a perfectly cast Rosiland Russell as ultimate monster stage mother “Mama Rose” Hovick, taking over from originator Ethel Merman with brash bravado, LeRoy’s splashy screen adaptation of the Broadway masterpiece—featuring legendarily great songs by Sondheim and Jule Styne—is one of the movie musical movie treats of the early sixties. Based on the memoirs of groundbreaking burlesque entertainer Gypsy Rose Lee (played by Natalie Wood, just one year after *West Side Story*), it’s a caustic, clever, and emotionally complex depiction of the travails of show business and those who remain forever on its margins. “Everything’s Coming Up Roses,” “Small World,” “All I Need Is the Girl,” “Let Me Entertain You”... musical devotees know the deal: there may not be a more perfect song score.

***A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum***

SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 4:30 P.M.

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 1:00 P.M.

Dir. Richard Lester. 1966, 99 mins. 35mm. With Zero Mostel, Phil Silvers, Buster Keaton, Michael Crawford, Michael Hordern, Annette Andre. After breaking out as the lyricist of the stage smashes *West Side Story* and *Gypsy*, Sondheim dove into his first musical as both composer and lyricist. The result was a bawdy Broadway hit in 1962, a wild, comic reimagining of the farces of ancient Roman playwright Plautus that starred the inimitable Zero Mostel and won the Tony for Best Musical. Fresh off the Beatles hits *A Hard Day’s Night* and *Help!*, Richard Lester directed the movie version and scored a hit, casting not only Mostel but a lineup of comic legends, including Phil Silvers and Buster Keaton in his last film role. Winner of the Academy Award for Best Adapted Score and featuring cinematography by Nicolas Roeg.

***Original Cast Album: Company***

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 4:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 1:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 1:00 p.m.

Dir. D. A. Pennebaker. 1970, 53 mins. DCP. With Elaine Stritch, Dean Jones, Donna McKechnie, Beth Howland, Stephen Sondheim. One of the greatest screen adaptations of Sondheim’s stage work is this revelatory and wildly entertaining documentary by vérité trailblazer Pennebaker. Allowing viewers a rare glimpse into the studio recording sessions for the cast album of Sondheim’s masterpiece *Company*, which was just about to revolutionize Broadway with its sophisticated adult themes and complex, almost acrobatic melodies, lyrics, and arrangements, Pennebaker captures the skill and strain involved in making an album—which, unlike a live performance, is intended to stand the test of time. Dazzling moments abound, including Dean Jones’s titanic rendition of “Being Alive,” Beth Howland’s breathless tongue-twister “Getting Married Today,” and, especially, Elaine Stritch’s “The Ladies Who Lunch,” which becomes a climactic gauntlet.

***Stavisky***

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 7:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 4:00 p.m.

Dir. Alain Resnais. 1974, 120 mins. DCP. With Jean-Paul Belmondo, Charles Boyer, Anny Duperey, Michael Lonsdale, François Périer. Based on the true story of a con artist who nearly brought France to financial and political ruin in the 1930s, *Stavisky* is Resnais's lushest and most opulent production, featuring Art Deco sets, a magnetic central performance by Jean-Paul Belmondo, and a lush musical score by Sondheim. A meditation of the fragility of time and beauty, *Stavisky* was a triumphant return to filmmaking by Resnais after a hiatus following the commercial failure of his brilliant sci-fi *Je t'aime, je t'aime*.

***Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street***

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 3:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 1:00 p.m.

Dir. Tim Burton. 2007, 116 mins. 35mm. With Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter, Alan Rickman, Timothy Spall, Jayne Wisener, Sacha Baron Cohen. Burton proves he was a fitting choice to finally direct the long-anticipated screen adaptation of Sondheim's masterpiece, the musical that shocked Broadway audiences in 1977 for its unholy mix of operatic tragedy, winking sociopolitical satire, macabre subject matter, and unflinching gore. Casting his recurring muse Depp as the "demon barber," freshly out of jail and seeking revenge against the corrupt judge (Rickman) who imprisoned him, destroyed his wife, and is now the ward of his grown daughter, Burton hews closely to the source material while giving it his own visual spin, especially in the Oscar-winning set design by Dante Ferretti, which recreates a desperate, Dickensian mid-nineteenth-century London with sinister, theatrical élan. As always, it's Sondheim's verbal showmanship and melodic grace that are the real stars here, with one of the greatest scores ever written, including "A Little Priest," "Not While I'm Around," and "Pretty Women."

***Into the Woods***

SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 4:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 3:00 p.m.

Dir. Rob Marshall. 2014, 116 mins. DCP. With Anna Kendrick, Meryl Streep, Chris Pine, Emily Blunt, James Corden, Simon Russell Beale, Billy Magnussen, Tracey Ullman. Sondheim and writer James Lapine's brilliant fractured fairy tale is given the grand-scale Disney treatment, yet miraculously without sacrificing its sophistication, cleverness, or melancholy. A philosophically minded melding of a group of well-known fairy tales (including Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, and Little Red Riding Hood), *Into the Woods* locates the loneliness beneath the joy, and questions the possibility of happy endings, even in fantasy. It's also wildly funny, featuring an eclectic series of beloved songs that show Sondheim at his most deceptively simple *and* linguistically complex.

***The Last of Sheila***

SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 6:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, MAY 1, 3:30 p.m.

Dir. Herbert Ross. 1973, 120 mins. DCP. With Richard Benjamin, James Coburn, Dyan Cannon, James Mason, Joan Hackett, Racquel Welch. Sondheim's only foray into screenwriting is this delightful, complexly woven comic-tinged mystery, co-written with his friend Anthony Perkins. A

stated inspiration for Rian Johnson's hit *Knives Out*, the movie gathers a crackerjack cast of seventies Hollywood all-stars for a sinister, sun-dappled trip into the Mediterranean, hosted by movie producer and obsessed gamesman Clinton Greene (Coburn), who corrals them into increasingly unsettling tricks of one upmanship and truth-telling gambits. A slyly subversive entertainment, *The Last of Sheila* proves that Sondheim's gift for twists and turns weren't just related to song lyrics and invites one to imagine an entire second career path for this polymath.

### ***Dick Tracy***

SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 3:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, MAY 1, 1:00 p.m.

Dir. Warren Beatty. 1990, 105 mins. 35mm. With Warren Beatty, Madonna, Al Pacino, William Forsythe, Glenna Headly, Seymour Cassel, Dustin Hoffman, Kathy Bates, James Caan. Beatty's big-budget, color-drenched adaptation of Chester Gould's classic mid-century comic strip is a visual delight from start to finish, featuring lovingly detailed noir photography by Vittorio Storaro. Perfectly casting Beatty as the granite-jawed, crime-busting detective and employing a who's-who of Hollywood stars and character actors, many amusingly hidden behind face-altering latex, *Dick Tracy* is both summer blockbuster and a kind of personal memory piece, featuring a flawless song score by Sondheim (the Madonna-sung "Sooner or Later" won him his first Academy Award) that is one of his late-career highlights.

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Top image: *West Side Story* (2021, Dir. Steven Spielberg) / courtesy of Criterion Pictures

### **Press contacts:**

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**PRESS IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE. Contact Tomoko above.**

### MUSEUM INFORMATION

Museum of the Moving Image (MoMI) is the only institution in the United States that deals comprehensively with the art, technology, enjoyment, and social impact of film, television, and digital media. In its acclaimed facility in Astoria, New York, the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, and creative leaders; and education programs. It houses the nation's largest collection of moving image artifacts and screens over 500 films annually. Its exhibitions—including the core exhibition *Behind the Screen* and *The Jim Henson Exhibition*—are noted for their integration of material objects, interactive experiences, and audiovisual presentations. For more information about the MoMI, visit [movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us).

Hours: Friday, 2:00–8:00 p.m. Saturday–Sunday, 12:00–6:00 p.m.

**Please note:** Beginning March 24, the Museum will offer free gallery hours every Thursday, 2:00–6:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: \$15 adults; \$11 senior citizens (ages 65+) and students (ages 18+) with ID; \$9 youth (ages 3–17). Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free.

Address: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street), Astoria (Queens), NY, 11106

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. W (weekdays only) or N to 36 Ave.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: [movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us)

Membership: <https://movingimage.us/join-and-support/become-a-member/> or 718 777 6877

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Unless noted, tickets are \$15 adults / \$11 students and seniors / \$9 youth (ages 3–17) / free or discounted for Museum members. Advance online purchase is recommended.

[Please note safety protocols for visiting the Museum.](#)

Museum of the Moving Image is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and has received significant support from the following public agencies: New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York City Council; New York City Economic Development Corporation; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Governor and the New York State Legislature; Institute of Museum and Library Services; National Endowment for the Humanities; National Endowment for the Arts; and Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation).