

Carrie Hart



Carrie Hart is now available as an inspirational speaker. Read below about her show, the Courage of the Creative Spirit, that entertains while it inspires.

To request Carrie as a speaker at your upcoming event and to discuss fees and availability, email Carrie at carriehart@msn.com. She will then set up a telephone appointment to discuss your event.

The Courage of the Creative Spirit

For one lively and informative hour, Carrie explores the Courage of the Creative Spirit, as shown to us by the icons of musical theater, such as Rodgers & Hammerstein and Lerner & Lowe. She tells their inspiring stories of overcoming failure and rejection to go on to greatness and success. After each story, she sings a song from one of their musicals.

The show opens with "Something's Coming" from West Side Story. This was Stephen Sondheim's very first musical and Carrie shares some of the reasons why Sondheim squirms every time he hears his lyrics from this early effort.



But this, then is one aspect of the Courage of the Creative Spirit, to make mistakes, sometimes over and over, until you finally get it right.

And Carrie then demonstrates how right Sondheim finally got it, by singing "Putting It Together" from Sunday in the Park with George, a fast-paced, tongue-twisting exposition of the artistic process and everything it takes to go from the creative spark to the fully realized work of art.



And after all that, what if it's a flop? As the French writer Jean Giraudoux said, "Only the mediocre are always at their best."

And Oscar Hammerstein, of the fabled Rodgers & Hammerstein team, is an amazing demonstration of the courage to continue in the face of failure. After some early successes, Hammerstein failed steadily for ten long years, during which he wrote eight musicals, each a big, public flop. Ten years is a long time to maintain your confidence and keep trying—but he did.

Carrie explores how Hammerstein dealt with this period in his life and then celebrates his courage and tenacity by singing "A Wonderful Guy" from South Pacific, one of the string of hits that followed his ten years of struggle.

Richard Rodgers, Hammerstein's collaborator in such great hits as Carousel, South Pacific, King and I and Sound of Music, actually came within one day of quitting music and becoming a baby clothes salesman. He was saved from this fate because a little voice in his head spoke up and told him to wait one more day and give music one more try.



Thank goodness Rodgers had the courage to listen to his intuition, even though the other path would have been much more sensible and solved his financial difficulties.

Otherwise he would never have written the next song Carrie sings, "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered" from Pal Joey, by Rodgers and Hart, Rodger's first collaborator.

Speaking of collaborators, which comes first, the music or the words? The answer is, it depends on the collaborators. Carrie explains the very different processes for Rodgers & Hart, Rodgers & Hammerstein and Lerner & Lowe, who wrote Camelot, My Fair Lady and Gigi. She then talks about Noel Coward, who

did it all: wrote the book, the lyrics and the music—and then starred in the show as well. And yet, he had the courage and audacity to do all of this while being completely unschooled in music, not able to read or write a note.

Carrie then sings two brief Noel Coward songs, "Mrs. Worthington," a comedy song in which Coward berates the mothers who continually beg him to put their not-so-gorgeous daughters on the stage, and "If Love Were All," a touching ballad from his play, *Bittersweet*.

Our exploration of the Courage of the Creative Spirit next takes us to Cole Porter, who spent his early life in wealth, privilege, great talent and enormous success, and later had to call upon his courage by continuing to write music in spite of a debilitating accident. Carrie then sings the Cole Porter song, "My Heart Belongs to Daddy" from a play Porter wrote while lying flat on his back and in continual pain.

That song was introduced on the stage by Mary Martin, and it made her a great star. Carrie tells the story of how Mary's interest in Lerner & Lowe's project to turn Shaw's *Pygmalion* into a musical led Lerner into writer's block, and how Lerner finally had the courage to overcome the block and go his own way, in spite of the opinion of one of the greatest stars of the time. This story is, of course, followed by one of the songs from *My Fair Lady*, "Without You."



There was one man who influenced all of these composers, a man who was so daringly original that he changed the entire face of American popular music. That man was Jerome Kern, who showed the true Courage of the Creative Spirit by daring to be different.

Carrie tells the story of how Kern managed to get his songs into musicals while being a young rehearsal pianist. And she then sings "Can't Help Lovin' That Man" from Kern & Hammerstein's hit musical, *Showboat*.

Oscar Hammerstein not only wrote with the great Jerome Kern and set a new standard for musicals with Richard Rodgers, but he was also the surrogate father and professional mentor to Stephen Sondheim. Carrie discusses this close bond and then closes the show with "Being Alive," a Sondheim song about a very deep courage, the courage to love and connect with others.



If desired, The Courage of the Creative Spirit can then be followed by an audience sing-along of favorite songs from the great golden age of musical theater.

The Courage of the Creative Spirit can be accompanied by a musical track and a solo piano (recommended for a formal evening program), or by musical track only, to reduce cost. Carrie lives in the Los Angeles area, but can travel to other locations, if the travel expenses are paid.

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