



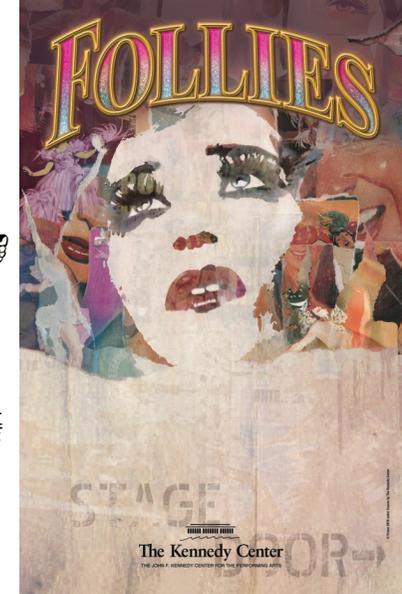
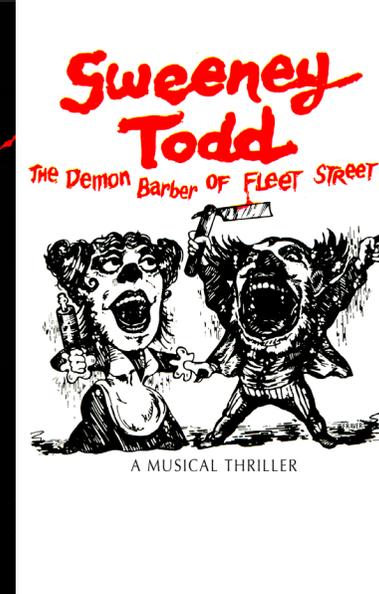
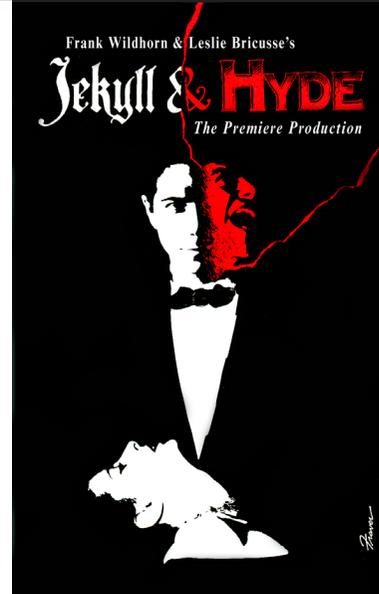
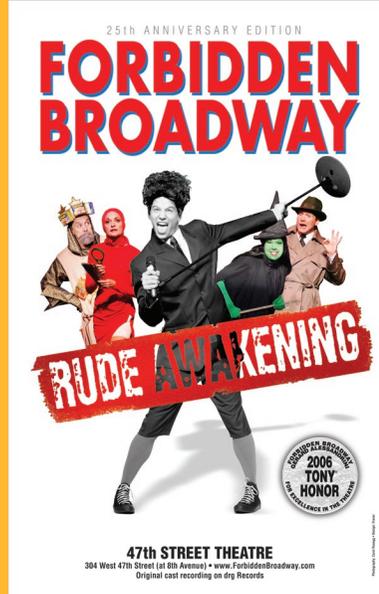
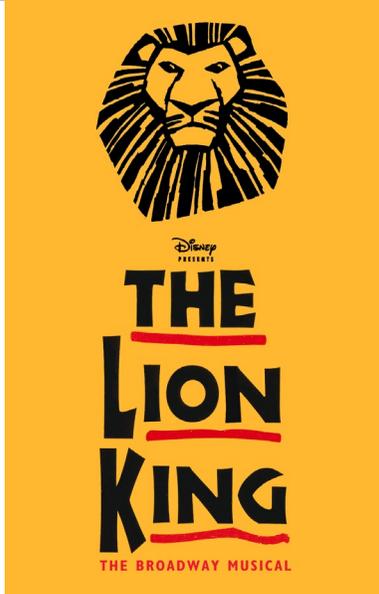
DESIGN: FRAVER

FOUR DECADES OF THEATRE POSTER ART

FEBRUARY 24 - APRIL 30, 2011

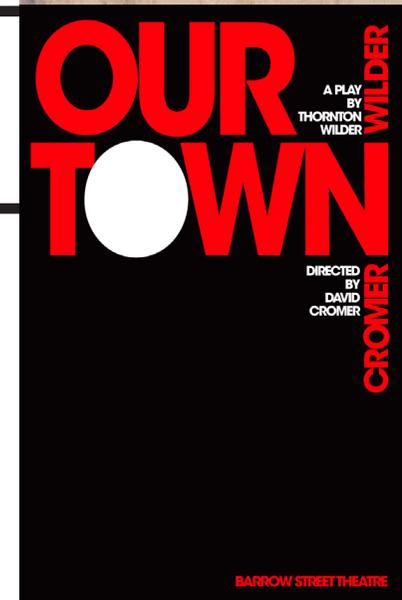
THE PLAZA CORRIDOR GALLERY

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
DOROTHY AND LEWIS B. CULLMAN CENTER



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FOUR DECADES OF THEATRE POSTER ART



Designing poster art for the New York Theatre is a wonderful challenge. Every show is different. Whether it is for Broadway or Off-Broadway, the creative process is the same. It's the budget that varies. Some shows are star vehicles, or have famous playwrights or composers as the centerpiece or, a bigger challenge, have no bold face names attached to them at all. My job is to create a poster that exemplifies the show, be it musical or drama, with an arresting image that will cause anyone looking at it to say, "I'd like to see that." or "I'd like to learn more about that show." While looking through my work, you'll get a glimpse of the back stage story behind each poster as well. I have been fortunate enough to build a career by incorporating two of my favorite art forms: poster design and the theatre.

I am a New York City native and very proud of it. Born in Manhattan, I was raised primarily in The Bronx but attended the High School of Art and Design on 57th Street and Second Avenue. From grade school on, I loved drawing and design. As a young art student, I lived at the movies. Almost everything I created

was based on a film. Then, I went to the theatre. It was the 1965 revival of *Kismet*, starring Alfred Drake, here at Lincoln Center. It blew me away.

Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, where I attended college, furthered my love of design for all things theatrical. I was lucky enough to have as my illustration teacher David Edward Byrd. David designed the very iconic art for the original production of *Godspell*. He taught in his home studio and one of my stunning recollections from that period was seeing, pinned to his drawing table, the poster art for *Follies*, still a work-in-progress.

After graduation, David suggested I show my portfolio to Morris Robbins, the senior art director at New York City's leading theatrical ad agency, Blaine Thompson. The offices were in the Sardi building. You cannot get more theatrical than that. It immediately felt like home. I was hired to work in the art studio doing "mechanicals" (which meant assembling the daily newspaper ads) for Broadway and Off-Broadway productions. I was in heaven.

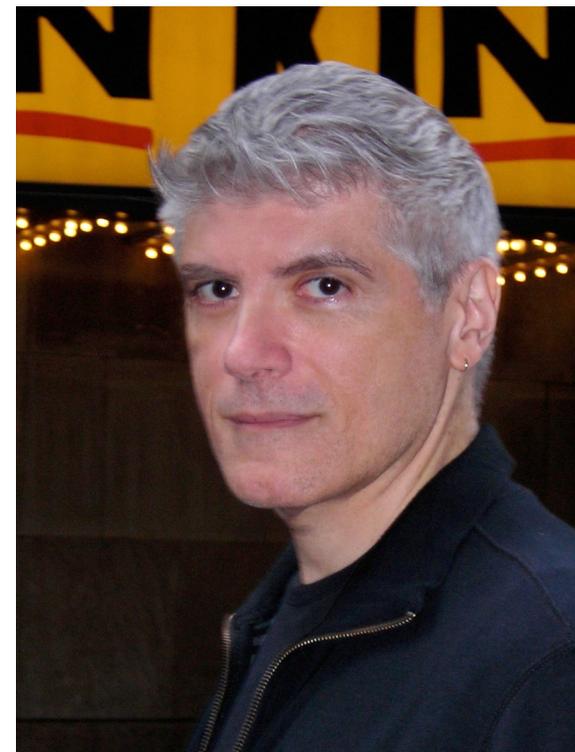
I soon learned that the selection process for Broadway artwork happened at our office. The meeting consisted of presenting a collection of various designs from freelance artists for a specific show. Since my "official" studio day job ended at 6:00 each evening, I started staying late at the office to read scripts and work up poster comps. When Morris liked something I'd designed, he would add it to the art presentation. The more my posters were chosen to use as key art for a production's ad campaign, the more time I was given to design during legitimate work hours. After over 35 years of designing poster art for the theatre, I am still excited about the prospect of working on a new show every single time I begin work.

Unlike many other commercial design forms, the Theatre Poster is considered, by most, to be art. Here, then, is my art. I hope you enjoy looking at them as much as I enjoy creating them. It's an honor to present my work here at The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center. You might say it's kismet.

FRANK VERLIZZO, FEBRUARY, 2011

Designs: © Fraver
The Lion King © Disney
Design: Fraver

Photo: Jon Bierman



PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Monday, April 4 at 6:00pm

BEHIND THE POSTER: A DISCUSSION WITH FAMED GRAPHICS DESIGNERS FRAVER AND JAMES MCMULLEN

Graphics artists Fraver and James McMullen will show examples of their work and walk us through the process of design for theater posters.

Programs take place in the Bruno Walter Auditorum. Admission is free and on a first come, first served basis. For further information about programs, call 212.642.0142.



New York
Public
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The New York Public Library
for the Performing Arts

DOROTHY AND LEWIS B. CULLMAN CENTER

www.nypl.org/lpa

DESIGN: FRAVER was developed by the artist and The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts: Jacqueline Z. Davis, Barbara G. and Lawrence A. Fleischman Executive Director; Barbara Cohen-Stratynner, Judy R. and Alfred A. Rosenberg Curator of Exhibitions; and Performing Arts Museum staff: Caitlin Mack, Designer and Rene Ronda and Herbert Ruiz, Installers.

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And thanks to the great photographers: Sherri Cohen, Kenn Duncan, Jean-Marie Guyaux, Douglas Kirkland, Ivan Mair, Joan Marcus, Walter McBride, John Reilly, Carol Rosegg, Joseph Sachs, and Gaspar Tringale.

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Cover Image: © Fraver

Poster design for the original Broadway production of Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984).