



## PRESS RELEASE



A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum August 10-19 at Woodminster Amphitheater, under the stars in Oakland's Joaquin Miller Park

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## CALENDAR INFORMATION (August 2012)

WHAT: A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum

PERFORMED BY: Woodminster Summer Musicals by Producers Associates, Inc.

WHERE: Woodminster Amphitheater in Joaquin Miller Park, 3300 Joaquin Miller Road, Oakland

WHEN: August 10-19, 2012

PERFORMANCES: August 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19 - 8 p.m.

TICKETS: 510-531-9597, or [www.woodminster.com](http://www.woodminster.com), \$27-\$56 (\$2 discount for children/seniors)

PREVIEW PERFORMANCE (Final Dress Rehearsal): August 9, 8 p.m., All tickets \$12 at the door.

Book by Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart, Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, Based on the plays of Plautus. Produced by arrangement with Music Theatre International.

## Woodminster Summer Musicals Presents A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum

Hilarious Slapstick Farce Will Continue Woodminster's 46th Season in Oakland, August 10-19, 2012

July 25, 2012, Oakland, CA -- Producers Associates, Inc. will continue the 46th season of the Woodminster Summer Musicals with an early Stephen Sondheim show, A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum, playing August 10-19 at Woodminster Amphitheater in Oakland's Joaquin Miller Park.

A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum will be performed at 8 p.m. on August 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, and 19. Tickets are \$27-\$56, with discounts for children and seniors, and half-price tickets for groups of 25. The organization also continues its Preview Night, instituted

in 2010, which opens the last dress rehearsal to the public for a flat \$12 at the door. The Preview for Forum will be Thursday, August 9, at 8 p.m.

Tickets may be purchased online at [www.woodminster.com](http://www.woodminster.com), or through the theater box office at 510-531-9597, or in person in advance or at the door.

Woodminster continues its Kids Come Free program, which provides free tickets each season to children and teens 16 or younger. These free tickets are available the night of the performance (not in advance) and some restrictions apply, but over the last 15 years, Kids Come Free has become an institution at Woodminster, and the board was unwilling to discontinue it when the organization lost its major funder for this program this year. The program will continue, and the organization is seeking funding to help keep it alive after this season.

A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum, inspired by the stories of the ancient Roman playwright Plautus, is classic farce meets vaudeville, slapstick comedy all mixed up with satirical humor about romantic love and social class. The show tells the bawdy story of a slave named Pseudolus and his attempts to win his freedom by helping his young master woo the girl next door. According to Music Theatre International, "Broadway's greatest farce is light, fast-paced, witty, irreverent and one of the funniest musicals ever written."

Forum's original 1963 Broadway production won several Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Book. It has had several Broadway and West End revivals. Every actor who has opened in the role of Pseudolus on Broadway (Zero Mostel, Phil Silvers and Nathan Lane) won a Best Actor Tony Award for his performance.

In the Woodminster production, the show-stopping role of Pseudolus will be played by Trente Morant, an actor who is also well-known to Bay Area audiences as a conductor, arranger, performer, and musical director. In recent years, he has performed roles including the Leading Player in Pippin at ACLO, Lou in Hairstory at Theatre Rhino (original production), Five Guys Named Mo at the California Conservatory Theater in San Leandro, Sportin' Life in a concert version of Porgy & Bess with Michael Morgan and the East Bay Symphony, and the Swan with the Oakland Ballet in Carmina Burana. He has been Artistic Director of Oakland Youth Chorus, Musical Director of the Hayward Little Theater, and has conducted at both the Monterey and San Francisco Jazz Festivals.

Says Harriet Schlader, Managing Director of Producers Associates, "If you want to laugh your head off, A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum is your show. It's one joke after another, which is why it's been a vehicle for some of the greatest comic actors of our time. Parents may want to be aware that there is some risqué humor. It's not very explicit by the standards of modern television, and it definitely seemed naughtier 50 years ago, but bawdy humor never goes out of style."

The Woodminster production of Forum is directed by Joel Schlader. Choreography is by Jon Gourdine, with music direction by Richard Vetterli and vocal direction by Kim Vetterli. The Woodminster Summer Musicals are performed under the stars at Woodminster Amphitheater, an open-air performance facility in Joaquin Miller Park high in the Oakland Hills.

The park's spectacular views and serene woodsy environment made it the perfect setting for the amphitheater, cascades, reflecting pool, and paths that were originally built as a WPA project in 1939-40. For many East Bay families, it is a long-standing summer tradition to enjoy a picnic in the park and then see a musical at Woodminster.

Producers Associates, Inc. was founded in 1967 by the late James Schlader and his wife Harriet to provide affordable live summer family entertainment in the East Bay, and to foster a love of live theatre. For more than four decades, the organization, in partnership with the Oakland Park and Rec Department, has been producing summer musicals at Woodminster Amphitheater. Healthy season tickets sales, attendance by groups, and special opportunities for families have made Woodminster shows the best attended performances in Oakland. Today, it sells the highest number of individual tickets of any resident performing arts organization in the city. For more information about the 2012 season or history of the organization, visit <http://www.woodminster.com>.

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