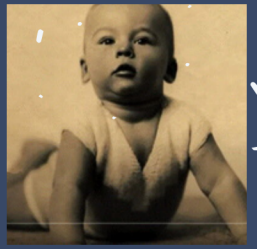


# Stephen Sondheim: The Early Years

## 1930

Stephen Joshua Sondheim was born to a Jewish family in New York City.



## 1930s

Stephen first became interested in music and theatre after seeing the Broadway musical, *Very Warm for May*, when he was 9 years old. At this time, he was also taking regular piano lessons.



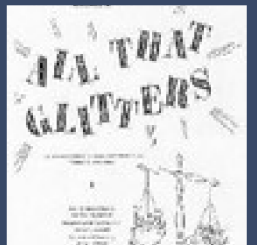
## 1940s

An emotionally neglected child, he found a mentor and father figure in family friend, Oscar Hammerstein, lyricist and playwright of musicals such as *Oklahoma*, and *The King and I*.



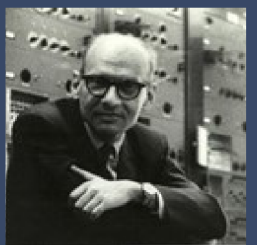
## 1949

Under Hammerstein's tutelage, Sondheim had already written two musicals before the age of 20, which were staged at his alma mater, Williams College.



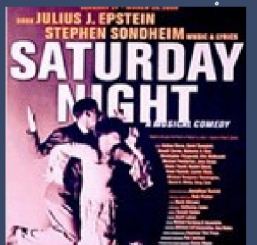
## 1950

During his time in university, Sondheim began studying classical musical composition under Milton Babbitt, while simultaneously pursuing his degree at Williams College.



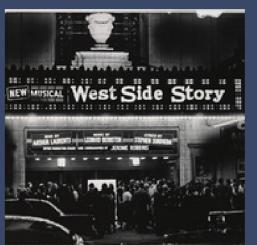
## 1954

Sondheim was set to debut his first musical, *Saturday Night*, on Broadway in 1954. Unfortunately, the producer of the show tragically passed away, and the show was cancelled.



## 1957

Sondheim was hired to write lyrics for the musical, *West Side Story*, alongside composer Leonard Bernstein. This would be Sondheim's Broadway debut. He was just 27.



## 1962

Sondheim always considered himself both a composer and a lyricist, and in 1962, he would finally get the opportunity to write both music and lyrics for the musical, *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*.



### List of References

[All That Glitters poster]. (ca. 1949) [Photograph]. Sondheim Guide. <https://sondheimguide.com/chronology.html>

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum. (ca. 1964) The Playbill for A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum. [Photograph]. Wikimedia Commons. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A\\_Funny\\_Thing\\_Happened\\_on\\_the\\_Way\\_to\\_the\\_Forum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Funny_Thing_Happened_on_the_Way_to_the_Forum)

Hutchins, M.H. (2014, April 23) Sondheim Guide. Retrieved 22:15, April 13, 2023, from <https://sondheimguide.com/>

Milton Babbitt with the RCA Mark II synthesizer. (n.d.) [Photograph]. Wikimedia Commons. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Milton\\_Babbitt.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Milton_Babbitt.jpg)  
MrPoochsmooch. (2014 Aug 21) Sondheim TONY wins (and one loss) '71, '72, '73, '79, '88, '94, 08. [Video] Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whXMi5Pqf3k>

Oscar Hammerstein II and Stephen Sondheim. (n.d.) [Photograph]. American Theatre. <https://www.americantheatre.org/2022/05/02/oscar-hammerstein-ii-he-had-some-notes/>

Outside Philadelphia's Erlanger Theatre before the Broadway Opening. (1957) [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/westsidestory/westsidestory-exhibit.html>

Parker, P. (n.d.) [Stephen Sondheim (at the piano as a boy)]. [Photograph]. The Boston Globe. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/books/2011/12/11/look-made-hat-stephen-sondheim/OW36QBH0yAkTcf3GyB8DoN/story.html>

[Saturday Night poster]. (ca. 2000) [Photograph]. Wikimedia Commons. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:2nd\\_Stage\\_Production.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:2nd_Stage_Production.jpg)

Secrest, M. (1998). *Stephen Sondheim: A Life*. Knopf.

Wikipedia contributors. (2023, March 23). Stephen Sondheim. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 22:07, April 13, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stephen\\_Sondheim&oldid=1146229997](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stephen_Sondheim&oldid=1146229997)

Wikitree. (1930) Stephen Sondheim as a baby. [Photograph]. <https://www.wikitree.com/photo/jpg/Sondheim-1-3>