

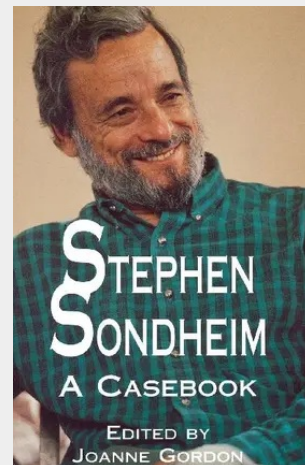
Gordon

Stephen Sondheim

A Casebook

Stephen Sondheim is an artist with many contradictory facets: he is an avant-garde composer and lyricist working in the populist art form, an apparently dry and acerbic critic who captures all the ambivalent pain of passion, an intellectual whose work contains some of the funniest bawdy lines on the Broadway stage. He has chosen to confront an audience that is usually looking for escapist literature with the very issues it has fled to the theatre to avoid. This collection of original essays takes particular pains to present Sondheim's diversity in a chronological plan that illustrates how each new work grew out of the previous one. Some of the topics covered are the evolution of Sondheim's female characters, who take us far beyond the usual sweet ingenues; the Roman farce antecedents of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and the resemblances between Sondheim's chorus and the chorus in ancient Greek drama; Sondheim and the concept musical; and Sondheim's maturing philosophy. All students of the modern theatre and the modern musical will want to read this book.

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