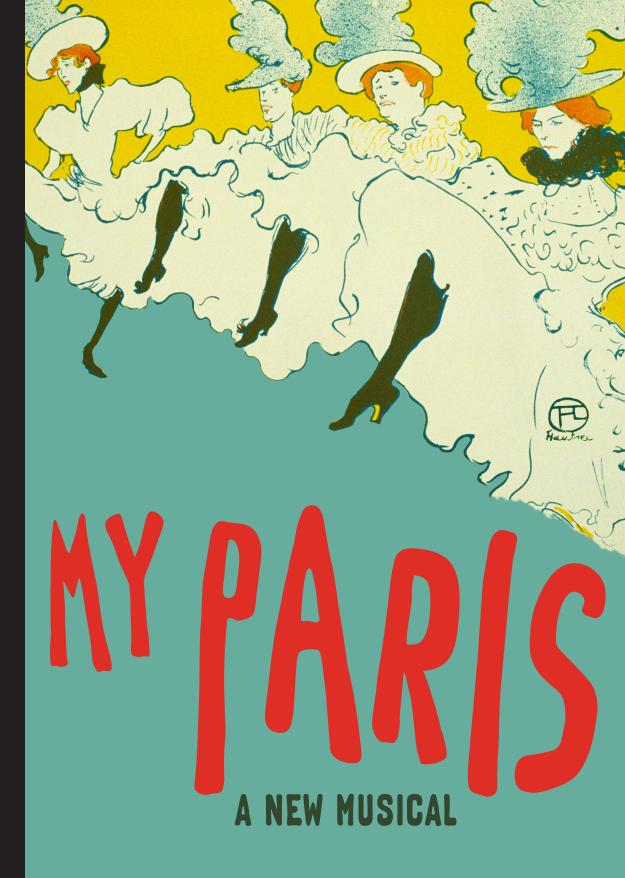
AUDIENCE INSIGHTS



THE STORY OF TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

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MY PARIS The Norma Terris Theatre July 23 - Aug 16, 2015

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Directed &
Choreographed by
KATHLEEN MARSHALL

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Audience Insights for My Paris was prepared by: Joshua S. Ritter, M.F.A, Education & Library Director Kathryn Micari, Education & Library Assistant Katherine Griswold, Creative Content Manager

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CHARACTER SUMMARY



Bobby Steggert as Toulouse-Lautrec with Tari Kelly, Cameron Adams, Kate Marilley and Wendi Bergamini. ©EMMA

HENRI-MARIE-RAYMONDE DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC-MANFA: A talented painter and the only son of the Comte and Comtesse Lautrec. He is a talented artist and embraces the bohemian lifestyle to the fullest despite his father's objections.

ARISTIDE BRUANT: Owner of Le Mirliton, a nightclub in Montmarte, and a friend of Toulouse-Lautrec. In order to boost attendance at his nightclub Bruant gives his friend Toulouse-Lautrec permission to create posters for the club and its performers.

ANQUETIN, RACHOU, AND GRENIER: Students of Leon Bonnat, artists and friends of Toulouse-Lautrec.

MAY MILTON: An English dancer and performer at Le Mirliton.

JANE AVRIL: A French can-can dancer at Le Mirliton and a frequent model for Toulouse-Lautrec.

VALENTIN, CHA-U-KAO, LE CHOCOLAT AND LA GOULOUE: Performers at Le Mirliton.

COMTE LAUTREC: The father of Toulouse-Lautrec and member of the French aristocracy. The Comte was a devoted hunter and severely disapproved of his son's bohemian lifestyle.

COMTESSE LAUTREC: The mother of Toulouse-Lautrec and his devoted caretaker.

LEON BONNAT: A Parisian art instructor and Toulouse-Lautrec's first teacher in Paris. Bonnat also instructed Anguetin, Rachou and Grenier.

SUZANNE VALADON: An aspiring artist and a figure model for Toulouse-Lautrec. She quickly becomes friends with the artist and enters into a relationship with the lonely Toulouse-Lautrec.

YVETTE GUILBERT: a French cabaret singer and performer.



Bobby Stegaert as Toulouse-Lautrec and Mara Davi as Suzanne Valadon. ©EMMA

SHOW SYNOPSIS

Toulouse-Lautrec is preparing to leave Paris and retire to the country to focus on his rapidly deteriorating health. He reminisces about his time in Paris and flashes back to significant moments in his past including his childhood, his doomed romance with Suzanne Valadon and advancements in his career. Toulouse-Lautrec reflects on his debauched final nights in Montmartre with his friends; as the revelry winds down he bids a final bittersweet farewell to his rowdy friends and the city of Paris.

MEET THE WRITERS





CHARLES AZNAVOUR (*Music and Lyrics*) was born on May 22, 1924 with the name Shahnour Vaghinag Aznavourian in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Paris, to Mischa Aznavourian and Knar Baghdasarian. Aznavour was exposed to the performing arts early in life and dropped out of school at the age of nine to take up a career on the stage; he also adopted the stage name Aznavour around this time. By 1933 he had appeared in the play *Un Petit Diable a Paris* and in the film *La Guerre de Gosses*.

He decided to focus on dancing and singing in 1944 and began performing in nightclubs with Pierre Roche. While partnering with Roche, Aznavour began writing songs in addition to performing. Aznavour wrote his first song entitled "J'ai Bu" in 1950. The duo became a success in Quebec during the late 1940s and amicably ended their partnership when Roche decided to stay in Canada.

Aznavour came to the attention of Edith Piaf in 1946 and the legendary "Little Sparrow" took the fledgling songwriter under her wing. The established singer acted as a friend and mentor to the young Aznavour. He toured with Piaf for eight years as part of her entourage and wrote seven songs for her.

Music publisher Raoul Bretton offered Aznavour a writing contract and his unique lyric-driven style attracted artists such as Gilbert Becaud, Juliette Greco, and Edith Piaf. Despite his success as a songwriter, Aznavour's solo performing career was slow to take off. Critics were quick to disparage him and it wasn't until 1954 that Aznavour gained a following as a performer. In 1955 he wrote his first hit song entitled "Sur ma vie" following an appearance at the Olympia in Paris and became a regular feature on popular radio.



During this period Aznavour was also a working actor and appeared in numerous films. In 1960 he starred in *Tirez sur le pianiste* and in 1974 he appeared in the movie *And Then There Were None*; he had a supporting role in *The Tin Drum* in 1979 which won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1980; and, co-starred in *Les Fantômes du Chapelier* in 1982.

In 1974, Aznavour's song "She" became a major success in the United Kingdom and was Number One on the music charts. His career thrived and his worldwide success led him to learn multiple languages before going on tour. He felt that audiences would be more receptive if they could hear his lyrics in their native tongue. He successfully toured Spain, Angola, Portugal, Morocco, the West Indies, South America, Canada, the United States and England. In addition to his success as a performer, Aznavour continued to be a successful songwriter and collaborated with numerous artists such as Frank Sinatra, Liza Minelli, Elton John, Bing Crosby, Andrea Bocelli, Josh Groban, Petula Clark and Luciano Pavoratti.

Charles Aznavour and Edith Piaf



CLICK BELOW to listen to Aznavour's music

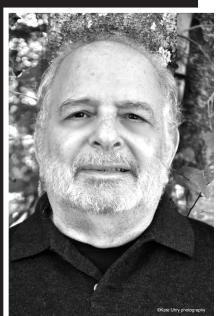
- Listen to "J'ai Bu"
- Listen to "She"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbcxHgUuzr4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxaZMreym88 Aznavour founded his own charity called Aznavour for Armenia, in 1988, in response to a massive earthquake that occurred in the region. In 1995 he accepted an appointment as an Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Armenia to UNESCO and became a member of the Armenia Fund International Board of Trustees.

Throughout the years Aznavour's career rose and he was often called "the French Frank Sinatra." In the course of his career he acted in over 60 films and wrote over 800 songs. He is currently 91 years old and, though he has cut back on his performance schedule, he continues to tour and perform all over the world.

MEET THE WRITERS (CONTINUED)





ALFRED UHRY (*Book*) was born on December 3, 1936 in Atlanta, Georgia, to Alene and Ralph Uhry. He attended Druid Hills High School and went on to enroll at Brown University where he earned a degree in English and Drama. After graduating college in 1958, Uhry moved to New York City and taught English at the Calhoun School on the Upper West Side.

Uhry began his career as a lyricist and librettist in New York City in the 1960s while teaching to financially support himself. His early work for the stage featured a string of commercially unsuccessful musicals that included *America's Sweethearts, Here's Where I Belong*, and a revival of *Little Johnny Jones* starring Donny Osmond. Uhry's career began to flourish in 1976 when he helped pen a musical version of the *Robber Bridegroom* and was nominated for a Tony Award. He continued to write the librettos for musicals from 1977-1985 and was on the verge of leaving show business to teach full time when he decided to write his first play, *Driving Miss Daisy*.

Driving Miss Daisy opened off-Broadway in 1987 and chronicled the relationship between an elderly Southern woman and her black chauffer. The play ran for three years off-Broadway and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1988. Driving Miss Daisy became a film in 1989 and won four Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Adapted Screenplay. In addition to writing the screenplay for Driving Miss Daisy, Uhry also wrote the script for Mystic Pizza starring Julia Roberts in 1988 and Rich in Love in 1993.

Uhry followed the monumental success of *Driving Miss Daisy* and his other screenplays with a commissioned piece for the 1996 Olympics entitled *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* that won a Tony Award in 1997 for Best Play. He returned to his roots as a musical librettist in 1998 and wrote the book for *Parade* that featured music by Jason Robert Brown. *Parade* won Uhry his second Tony Award in 1999 and a revised version of the musical was nominated for an Olivier Award in 2007. Uhry continued his work as a playwright and librettist with *Without Walls* in 2006, *Eduardo Mine* in 2006, *Lovemusik* in 2007, *Angel Reapers* in 2011, and *Apples and Oranges* in 2012. In 2013 it was announced that Uhry would adapt the 1994 novel *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* for the stage as well as write the libretto for a musical about the life of French artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, now at Goodspeed.



http://bombmagazine.org/article/2088/alfred-uhry









MEET THE WRITERS (CONTINUED)





JASON ROBERT BROWN (*English Lyrics and Musical Adaptation*) was born on June 20, 1970 in Ossining, New York, to Deborah and Stuart Brown. He studied composition at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, and spent summers at the French Woods Festival of the Performing Arts.

Brown began his career as a pianist, conductor and arranger in New York City in the 1990s and played in various nightclubs as well as piano bars around the city to support himself. He also played piano for off-Broadway shows like William Finn's *A New Brain*. The first show that featured a complete score by Brown was *Songs for a New World*; this was an off-Broadway song cycle directed by Daisy Prince, daughter of legendary director and producer Hal Prince. The pop-rock-influenced music made the show a hit with musical theatre enthusiasts and many of the songs soon became cabaret standards.

Brown was brought to the attention of Harold Prince through his daughter Daisy and was hired to write the music for *Parade* in 1998. The show ran for 84 performances and received six Drama Desk Awards along with nine Tony Award nominations. Out of the show's nine total Tony nominations it won the awards for Best Book of a Musical and Best Original Musical Score.

Daisy Prince and Brown teamed up once again on his third show, *The Last Five Years*, for which he was the librettist, composer and lyricist. *The Last Five Years* was not a commercial success and received mixed reviews from the critics. The show ran off-Broadway for two months, though Brown won two Drama Desk Awards for the music and lyrics. A film version of *The Last Five Years* was released in 2014 starring Anna Kendrick and Jeremy Jordan.

In 2003, Brown was one of 30 songwriters who contributed to the score of *Urban Cowboy* that was directed by Phillip Oesterman. Though the show itself was a flop, it was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Original Musical Score in 2003. In 2005 Brown released his first solo album through Sh-k-Boom/Ghostlight Records entitled *Wearing Someone Else's Clothes* featuring previously unreleased music. Also in 2005, Brown debuted a piece entitled *Chanukah Suite* at the Walt Disney Music Hall in Los Angeles.

The musical 13, with music and lyrics by Brown, premiered on Broadway in 2009 after previous runs at the Mark Tauper Forum in Los Angeles and at Goodspeed's Norma Terris Theatre. Following 13, Brown penned the music and lyrics for the musical adaptation of *The Bridges of Madison County*, which premiered on Broadway in 2014 and earned him two more Tony Awards for Best Score and Best Orchestration, and the musical adaptation of *Honeymoon in Vegas*, which also opened on Broadway in 2014.



Brown accepting the 2014 Tony Award for Best Orchestrations

Honeymoon in Vegas, which also opened on Broadway in 2014.

Throughout his career Brown has been hailed "one of Broadway's smartest and most

sophisticated songwriters" and "a leading member of a new generation of composers who embody high hopes for the American musical." He is often compared to Stephen Sondheim for his rhythmically challenging music and use of complex harmonies.



DIRECTOR'S VISION BY KATHLEEN MARSHALL





Kathleen Marshall at the first readthrough of Goodspeed's My Paris. ©Diane Sobolewski.

The first production of a new musical is a thing both thrilling and terrifying. Most musicals these days have a rather protracted gestation period and the development process often goes on for several years. Along the way, you do readings and workshops for small groups of invited audiences—audiences made up of some friends and family, but mostly consisting of other theatre professionals. But the fact of the matter is that you don't really know what you have until you do your first production, until you put your show up in front of real people.

We are thrilled that our first production of *My Paris* is happening here at Goodspeed's Norma Terris Theatre. Goodspeed has a long and distinguished history of developing new work and we are honored to be a part of that storied tradition. We thank you for being our first audience, for helping us to learn more about what we have created and for playing a crucial role in the development of a new show.

And now just a minute to talk about the "we" behind this new project. My amazingly brilliant colleagues have enough hardware between them to fill a museum. First of all, there's the legendary, world-famous and dapper Charles Aznavour, composer, lyricist and performer extraordinaire, whose many honors include his induction into the Songwriters Hall of Fame and an Honorary César Award, basically the French equivalent of an Oscar. Oh yeah, and M. Aznavour is also the Armenian Ambassador to Switzerland. The remarkably ingenious and charming Alfred Uhry's crowded shelves include an Oscar, the Pulitzer Prize and two Tony Awards. Speaking of Tonys, the astonishing Jason Robert Brown, who adapted M. Aznavour's French lyrics into English, has three Tonys of his own. Our incredible design team includes Derek McLane, Paul Tazewell and Don Holder, who jointly have a plethora of Tony Awards and nominations. Add to that our wonderful music team of David Chase and David Gardos, my right hand man David Eggers, and all the folks here at Goodspeed and in New York City who have worked diligently to bring this show to life. And bringing the colorful world of Toulouse-Lautrec to life is a spectacular company of actors, each uniquely talented and creative, and collectively, a formidable group of fearless artists.

It truly does take a village to put together a show, and we are delighted that the town of Chester is hosting our creative village for the world premiere of *My Paris*.

AUTHOR'S NOTES BY ALFRED UHRY





Alfred Uhry at the first read-through of Goodspeed's My Paris. ©Diane Sobolewski.

My Paris was not mine to begin with. The idea came from Charles Aznavour, the renowned French songwriter/ performer. He wrote songs for a proposed stage musical about the life of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec back in the nineties. The songs reached Kathleen Marshall, Broadway director/choreographer and winner of three Tony Awards. She was delighted with what she heard and brought the idea to me. Wow! A show about Toulouse-Lautrec with songs by Aznavour! An internationally famous French writer creating songs about the life of the most famous French artist of all? And to be staged by one of the most

celebrated director/choreographers in the business? Who wouldn't want to join that team? I said yes right away and got to work.

We all agreed that we wanted the show to express the joie de vivre of Toulouse-Lautrec's work as well as the pathos underneath. He was born a titled aristocrat. a duke three times over, but he was also born with a physical disability that caused people to regard him as a freak. He could never fully participate in the raucous, earthy world of Montmartre that he depicted so vividly in his art. He could drink the wine, hear the music, watch the cancan dancers, but he was always set apart. He lived only thirty-six years, but in this short span of time, he managed to bring to life the colorful Parisian world to which he could never quite belong.

My research revealed that Lautrec was obsessed with women—all kinds of women. His physicality denied him relationships with most of them. But there was a one, a beautiful, spirited model named Suzanne Valadon, who provided the things he was starved for and a few surprises in the bargain. He also had to contend with his aristocratic, disapproving Papa and his loving, but smothering, Maman.

Shortly after I became a part of the show, a bulky manila envelope arrived from France. It contained tapes of dozens of songs M. Aznavour had written for the show. The music was exactly right—jaunty, soaring, tender, sad, as the situation demanded. And it didn't sound French. It WAS French! No worries about authenticity here. All the lyrics were, of course, in French. I had two years of high school French, but there was no way I could understand, much less translate, what I was hearing.

Direct translations into English proved to be accurate, but lifeless. What I heard Aznavour singing on the tapes didn't sound like that at all. Clearly an English-speaking lyric writer was needed. And, preferably, one who understood Broadway musicals. There was only one choice—Jason Robert Brown. Jason and I had collaborated before on Parade. We worked well together, and we both won Tonys for that show, so we were anxious to work together again. Luckily, Jason came on board. I'm not sure that he knows more French than I do. He savs he does and he does a good Maurice Chevalier imitation, but—more to the point—he understood the spirit of Aznavour's words and his adaptations fit both the music and the situations exquisitely.

And now Goodspeed comes into the picture. It's time to get the show up on its feet and see what we have wrought. The Norma Terris Theatre is the ideal place to do it. We believe the audience will experience the world of Toulouse-Lautrec with all its joy and heartbreak and life and vitality. We are excited and hopeful and more than a little edgy. Come and give us a look-see.

"GOODSPEED TO PRODUCE..." EXCERPT FROM THE DAY

Excerpt from *The Day*: "Goodspeed to produce Toulouse-Lautrec musical by Driving Miss Daisy writer Uhry and songwriter Aznavour"

By Kristina Dorsey Published January 17, 2015

It's truth in advertising: Goodspeed's Festival of New Musicals does, indeed, focus on new musicals — not only staged readings of fresh works but, on Saturday, an announcement of a trio of new pieces to be produced later this year at Goodspeed's Norma Terris Theatre in Chester.

Goodspeed
Festival of
New Musicals

Alfred Uhry at Goodspeed's 2015 Festival of New Musicals. ©Diane Sobolewski.

One of those Norma Terris-bound musicals boasts a book by Alfred Uhry, who also wrote *Driving Miss Daisy*. He was at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam Saturday and spoke of his in-development musical, *My Paris*, about famed French painter Toulouse-Lautrec. It features songs by French songwriter Charles Aznavour, with English lyrics by Jason Robert Brown. Directing the production, which will run July 23 through Aug. 16, will be choreographer and director Kathleen Marshall, who has won three Tony awards, most recently for 2011's revival of *Anything Goes*.

Marshall is a Goodspeed alum, having choreographed *Swinging on a Star* here. Uhry, too, has worked at Goodspeed in the

past, recalling on Saturday such shows as Little Johnny Jones, Funny Face and, as he phrased it, "one about golfing."

"I learned a lot up here," Uhry said. "I'm really excited to come back."

Bob Alwine, Goodspeed associate producer, told the crowd assembled at the Opera House for the new musical preview, "We talk about triple threats in the theater. This man (Uhry) is truly a triple threat, in that he's won an Oscar, two Tonys and a Pulitzer." Uhry said that Marshall and her husband, producer Scott Landis, asked if he'd be interested in working on a Toulouse-Lautrec show with them.

"The idea of working with Kathleen was tempting, and also the score was written by Charles Aznavour," he said.

Clearly, the story of Toulouse-Lautrec held an appeal, too. Uhry explained the artist's tortured background.

"His parents were first cousins, which is probably not a really good idea, and his bone structure was all messed up. He broke his legs a lot when he was a little boy. After he was 9, his legs never grew, but the rest of him did," Uhry said.

He was raised an aristocrat. It was when he moved to Paris, though, that he found the place he felt he belonged.

Uhry said Toulouse-Lautrec was "a man who was never really able to be accepted in the world he wanted to be accepted in because he was so odd-looking. He was a very sensitive man and a man who saw beauty in places most people don't see beauty ... in rough, raw street people and prostitutes and street dancers and thieves."

He noted there was both joy and heartbreak in the painter's life.

"I can't wait to wallow inside this show," Uhry said.

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC: BALANCING TWO WORLDS



Photo of Toulouse-Lautrec



Toulouse-Lautrec's poster for the Moulin Rouge

Toulouse-Lautrec was the unofficial raconteur of Montmartre, Paris in the late 1800s. His work embodied the Bohemian lifestyle of the struggling artists, and creative personalities that were drawn to the glamour of Paris. The brightly colored, passionate depictions of the denizens of Montmartre brought the language of the avant-garde to the general public and created an artistic bridge between the brothels, salons and society circles. Despite the fact that Toulouse-Lautrec was a master of his craft and displayed the upper and lower classes with equal skill in his art, he was not held in high regard by the general artistic community at the time of his death. By being an aristocrat by birth and a champion of the bohemian lifestyle by choice, he was never able to find his professional footing in either world, though he did discover a surrogate family in the subjects of his work.

Toulouse-Lautrec was born on November 24, 1864 in Albi France to a family of wealthy aristocrats that could trace their bloodline back to Charlemagne the Great. This impressive lineage was a source of great pride within aristocratic circles; however, it bestowed a genetic limitation directly onto the shoulders of young Toulouse-Lautrec. The precise cause of his ill health was never proven; though, a 1995 article in the New York Times claimed that he suffered from pycnodysostosis, an inherited skeletal abnormality. According to the article, "Pycnodysostosis is characterized by mild dwarfism, underdeveloped facial bones, a receding chin, prominent forehead, incomplete closure of the "soft spots" between the plates of the skull, fragile bones that fracture easily, a nose with a parrot-like hook, short fingers and toes, and a tendency to suffer from dental cavities." This hypothesis was never tested due to surviving members of the Toulouse-Lautrec family refusing to allow exhumation of the artist's bones for testing; nevertheless, the symptoms of this disorder fit the description of Toulouse-Lautrec's various ailments.

Whatever the cause of his afflictions, despite the best medical treatments available at the time, broken bones plagued

him. He broke both thighbones by the time he was 14 and the injuries left his legs visibly atrophied. Toulouse-Lautrec's upper body continued to grow normally throughout his childhood; yet, his legs did not and he remained child-sized giving him a distinct appearance. As mentioned in *My Paris*, at barely five feet tall it was running joke among his friends that he was "taller sitting down than standing up." Unable to participate in virtually any sports or physical activities, Toulouse immersed himself in drawing and art.

In 1881 Toulouse-Lautrec moved to Paris to become an artist, a transition that his father opposed and his mother shakily supported. By 1882, he had begun to develop his own artistic style and began to chafe at the opinions of his teacher, Leon Bonnat. Bonnat was a vehement opponent of any artist deviating from the established academic rules of painting; thus, Toulouse-Lautrec's exaggerated style was a point of contention between the two. Contemporaries of Toulouse-Lautrec remarked that he would make "a great effort to copy the model exactly but in spite of himself he exaggerated certain details."

In 1883, he moved to the studio of Fernand Cormon, who taught the likes of Vincent Van Gogh and Emile Bernard. Cormon was a supportive teacher; yet, the perverse young artist found that criticism suited him better than praise. In a letter written to his uncle, Toulouse-Lautrec shared that "Cormon's corrections are much kinder than Bonnat's were. He looks at everything you show him and encourages one steadily. It might surprise you, but I don't like that so much." His dissatisfaction with his instructors led him to open his own studio in 1884 in the Montmartre district of Paris.

Montmartre, as it turned out, was the key to Toulouse-Lautrec's success and creativity. The cafes, entertainers, artists, and cabarets fascinated him, and he threw himself into the Bohemian lifestyle. He shed the opinions of an aristocrat and embraced the decadence of Montmartre complete with absinthe, nightclubs and can-can dancers.

Continued • • • • • • • • •

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC (CONTINUED)



Toulouse-Lautrec's Posters







As seen in *My Paris*, Toulouse-Lautrec began to produce advertisements for the local cabarets based on the encouragement of his friend and customer Aristide Bruant. He combined commercial advertising techniques with avant-garde designs characterized by sharp angles, silhouettes and flat areas of color drawing attention to the clubs and cabarets that filled Montmartre. His first poster was created in 1891 and featured La Goulue (The Glutton), one of the infamous cabaret dancers of the time and a character in *My Paris*. The work entitled, Moulin Rouge: La Gouloue showed the young dancer in the middle of a cancan with her partner Valentin le désossé or No Bones Valentin, also a character in My Paris, in front of an anonymous audience identifiable as upper-class men by their top hats. The image utilized the simplicity of Japanese art that was popular at the time and a minimalist approach that immediately set it apart from the traditional text-heavy ads of the period. In addition to its simplicity, the poster was sexually suggestive, something allowed as a direct result of the loosening of censorship laws, and created a public uproar due to its challenge to bourgeois morals and its depiction of Montmartre's performers that subsequently turned them into exotic overnight celebrities.

By switching his focus from the traditional artistic medium of oil on canvas to lithographs, Toulouse-Lautrec was able to present his art to a far broader audience than most of his contemporaries. He also took the time to use the actual cabaret performers as the models for his prints rather than a generic form or artist's model. Though his work mortified his traditional father, Toulouse-Lautrec took pride in his mass-produced lithographs and they, as Comte Toulouse-Lautrec stated in My Paris, made him infamous. Faced with his family's continued disapproval, Bruant, Valentin le désossé, La Gouloue and others became a surrogate family to Toulouse-Lautrec as well as the subjects of his art. Described as a "sensitive, deeply affectionate man conscious of his infirmity but wearing a mask of joviality and irony" by his acquaintances, Toulouse-Lautrec seemed to find a home amidst the radical politicians and artists that popularized Montmartre.

At the dawn of 1899, Toulouse-Lautrec was at the high point of his career artistically; however, his demanding and debauched lifestyle with the characters of Paris had taken their toll. During his time in Paris he had contracted syphilis. This disease, coupled with alcoholism and preexisting physical handicaps, led to a mental collapse. His family committed him to a sanatorium to avoid shame and gossip. Toulouse-Lautrec remained in the sanatorium until May of 1899. Unfortunately, though, he relapsed into alcoholism in the spring of 1900 and died three months shy of his 37th birthday.

Despite the mass popularity of his work, Toulouse-Lautrec was not well regarded by the larger art community at the time of his death. In fact, his family had to pay a museum to take one of his pieces shortly after his death. Nevertheless, he managed to be an influence in art well beyond his lifetime and his work has been heralded as a direct predecessor to the schools of Fauvism and Cubism. In addition to becoming a lasting icon in the art world, he provided future generations with a kaleidoscopic view of Montmartre and its inhabitants during the late 19th century. His artistic ability and penchant for depicting scenes throbbing with life made him the unofficial record keeper of his generation. His unique social standing allowed him to straddle the worlds of aristocracy and bohemian freedom while depicting them both with equal honesty though he apparently never truly belonged or felt comfortable in either sphere.

HIS PARIS





A painting of Boulevard Montmartre by Camille Pissarro, 1890

"In this bizarre land swarmed a host of colorful artists, writers, painters, musicians, sculptors, architects, a few with their own places but most in furnished lodgings, surrounded by the workers of Montmartre, the starchy ladies of the rue Bréda, the retired folk of Batignolles, sprouting up all over the place, like weeds. Montmartre was home to every kind of artist."

The French novelist Félicien Champsaur used these words to describe the varied audience members that would attend the Chat Noir nightclub in 1882. Although, he may very well have been describing Montmartre as a whole. Creative personalities flocked to the streets of Montmartre in droves to absorb the neighborhood's bold entertainment and irreverent attitude.

Originally a rural village perched on a hilltop outside of Paris, Montmartre was popular with artists for its picturesque and rustic views. When the quant village was annexed into Paris's city limits around 1860, its inexpensive lodging and removed location transformed it into a working class neighborhood. Despite the area's urbanization, it retained much of its charm in the old buildings, twisting streets and bucolic windmills. The unique scenery of the neighborhood coupled with its remoteness and growing reputation for radical politics and subversive culture began to attract writers, poets, artists and students to the area in the late 1880s. By congregating at the very top of the village known as the "butte," the artists of the day were able to rent inexpensive studio space and the area quickly became home to avant-garde artists like Toulouse-Lautrec, Vincent van Gogh and Émile Bernard.

With crowds attracted to Montmartre's increasingly salacious reputation, it swiftly became the center of the city's artistic

and intellectual community. Montmartre possessed a flourishing bohemian culture that was fueled by a disapproval of high society and its boisterous cafés, concerts and cabarets often featured satires and subversive performances that mocked the bourgeois morality and distorted politics.

In addition to providing the disenfranchised a place to congregate freely, Montmartre offered the social classes an opportunity to mix in the cabarets and dance halls of the area. Toulouse-Lautrec was particularly interested in the diversity of the dance hall's audience and frequently used the dancers and bourgeois men found in Montmartre to convey sexual autonomy and the excess associated with the district. He also used the adventurous and exotic atmosphere of the area as a selling point in his advertisements for the local cabarets and cafes. Toulouse-Lautrec's interest in the atmosphere of Montmartre was not limited to advertising and he became one of the first artists to immortalize the seedier aspects of Parisian nightlife through art. He was fascinated by the mixing of the social classes and attempted to expose the disingenuousness and tension that characterized turn of the century Parisian society.

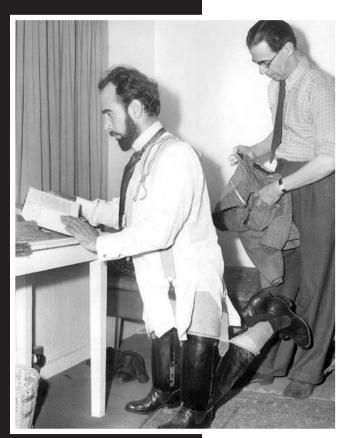
Montmartre's reputation and the widelyseen posters and lithographs of Toulouse-Lautrec augmented the area's popularity during the 1880s and '90s making it the premiere destination to see and be seen. The quaint village had transformed into a mecca of entertainment and featured over 40 different entertainment venues ranging from the glamorous Moulin Rouge to the theatre. However, by 1900, the once-underground bohemian culture had been appropriated by the bourgeois and become part of mainstream entertainment. The commercialization of the once-exotic venues and performers caused the avantgarde successors of Toulouse-Lautrec to lose interest in Montmartre, and the counterculture that had begun as a critique of decadent society became a symbol of decadence itself.

IMPRESSIONIST IMPRESSIONS



Toulouse-Lautrec is a noted Impressionist painter of the late 19th and early 20th century. His iconic works depicting the performers and patrons of Montmartre, Paris, have come to define the bohemian lifestyle to modern viewers. Not only does Toulouse-Lautrec's work continue to fascinate modern audiences, but Toulouse-Lautrec himself has become the object of public fascination.

Since his death in 1900, Toulouse-Lautrec has been featured in dozens of films, television shows, books, plays and documentaries. Actors ranging from John Leguizamo to José Ferrer have portrayed Toulouse-Lautrec. He has been a character in such films as Frida, Midnight in Paris, Around the World in 80 Days, Modigliani, and Moulin Rouge. Toulouse-Lautrec has also had several theatrical works based on his life including Times and Appetites of Toulouse-Lautrec by Jeff Wanshel, Toulouse: a New Musical by Josh Walker and John David Nelson, The Body Lautrec by Heath Allen, a one-man show by Japanese writer Jun Sawaki entitled Toulouse-Lautrec: The Musical, and Alfred Uhry and Charles Aznavour's My Paris.



José Ferrer transforms into Toulouse-Lautrec for the 1952 film Moulin Rouge.



Aaron Cromie as Toulouse-Lautrec in Heath Allen's The Body Lautrec.



John Leguizamo as Toulouse-Lautrec in the 2001 film Moulin Rouge.

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