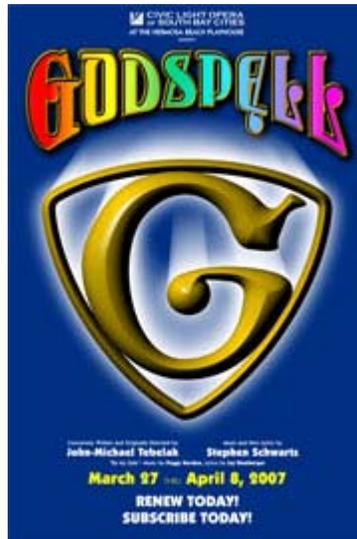


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James A. Blackman III and the  
Civic Light Opera of South Bay Cities present  
*the Tony Award Nominated*  
*rockin' gospel hit*  
**GODSPELL**



**At the Hermosa Beach Playhouse March 27 to April 8, 2007**

The setting is post Katrina New Orleans. The time: When Jesus changed the world and a community was born... but first, let's have a little levity and song!

Executive Producer James A. Blackman III and The Civic Light Opera of South Bay Cities present the musical hit **Godspell** March 27 to April 8, 2007 at the Hermosa Beach Playhouse, Pier Ave. at Pacific Coast Highway, Hermosa Beach. Tickets are \$35-45. For tickets and more information call 310-372-4477 or visit [www.hermosabeachplayhouse.com](http://www.hermosabeachplayhouse.com).

**Godspell** is a musical based on the Gospel of Saint Matthew, transposed into a contemporary urban setting, with music and new lyrics by Stephen Schwartz and book by John-Michael Tebelak. Schwartz was nominated for a Tony Award for his score of *Godspell*, and has written music and lyrics for *Butterflies Are Free*, *Pippin*, *Wicked*, and lyrics for the films *Pocahontas* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and more.

Following closely on the heels of the similarly-themed **Jesus Christ Superstar**, **Godspell** opened off-Broadway on May 17, 1971 and has played in various touring companies and revivals many times since. Several cast albums have been released over the years and the show's biggest hit, **Day By Day**, from the original cast album, reached #13 on the *Billboard* pop singles chart in the summer of 1972.

Director Stephanie Coltrin says this production, in keeping with the author's intentions to keep it modern, will be set at the site of one of the greatest disasters in our country's history – post Hurricane Katrina New Orleans. "*Godspell* is primarily and most importantly about the formation of a community,

and suggests how this community might have formed had Jesus been alive today,” says Coltrin. “It will take place on a street corner suggestive of New Orleans sometime after Hurricane Katrina. The cast will have cell phones, iPods, Blackberries, be in a hurry to wherever they need to get.”

Through the chaos and the newsflashes is the call of the conch shell from John the Baptist, who breaks through with the first song in the show, *Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord*. “The show will tell the parables of the Gospel According to Saint Matthew with a modern sensibility, incorporating improvisation, mime, music with rock music and pop culture references and jokes,” adds Coltrin.

Stephen Schwartz wrote this note: “My credit for *Godspell* reads: ‘Music and New Lyrics by...’ This is because many of the songs in *Godspell* are derived from the Episcopal hymnal. They are: *Save the People*, *Day by Day*, *Bless the Lord*, *All Good Gifts*, *Turn Back, O Man*, and *We Beseech Thee*. In addition, the lyrics from *On the Willows* are derived from Psalm 137, *Light of the World* is largely derived from Matthew 5, and *Alas for You* from Matthew 23.”

The cast features LATEEFAH DEVOE, TED ESCOBAR, ANNE FRASER THOMAS, MARIANNA FRENDO, JESSICA GISIN-MOSLEY, MATT KOEHLER as Judas, CHUCK PELLETIER, ELIJAH REYES as Jesus, KEN ROBINSON, AILEEN SCOTT, ROBERT STEINMILLER, and LOLA WARD.

Hermosa Beach Playhouse is a division of The Civic Light Opera of South Bay Cities, the largest producing civic light opera in all of Southern California. The beautifully appointed 500-seat venue enables the CLOSBC to present a new catalog of production of straight plays as well as musicals. It's Broadway at the Beach!

**For tickets and more information, please call 310-372-4477 or visit [www.hermosabeachplayhouse.com](http://www.hermosabeachplayhouse.com).**

## Background on Godspell

*Godspell* was one of the major long-running off-Broadway successes, winning unanimous bravos from the critics and drawing long audience lines for three years. The inspiration for the musical arose on a snowy spring Easter Sunday during sunrise service, when John-Michael Tebelak, a long-haired student at Carnegie Mellon University, was stopped and frisked for drugs by a Pittsburgh policeman in the nave of St. Paul's Cathedral. As a candidate for a Master of Fine Arts degree, Tebelak was required to direct a production of a classic or a period piece for his thesis. He asked to be allowed to write his own play for this exercise and, using his Easter Sunday experience, wrote a musical based on the Gospel according to St. Matthew. *Godspell* was enthusiastically received.

A chance meeting with Ellen Stewart of the Cafe La MaMa in New York paved the way for the musical to move from Carnegie to her off-off-Broadway theatre for a two-week run. A producer saw *Godspell* while at La MaMa and offered to do the show off-Broadway. The show opened off-Broadway on May 17, 1971, and its success was immediately evident.

Soon after the New York opening, "resident" (non-touring) companies were organized in major cities with the intention of playing extended runs. Among the cities outside of New York that had their "own" *Godspell* productions were Boston, Washington, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Toronto. During most of 1972, these seven companies performed simultaneously. Most played for six to nine months. *Godspell* enjoyed popularity abroad as well. It opened in Paris in the summer of 1972; and a London production that opened in 1971, ran nearly three years. There were also productions in Amsterdam, Hamburg and Melbourne.

After five years of attracting sold-out audiences off-Broadway, *Godspell* made its way to the 1,200-seat Ambassador Theatre on Broadway in June 1976. Critics found the show to be just as fresh as it was when it first hit the boards. On September 4, 1977, *Godspell* ended its run after 527 performances. In all, the musical achieved more than 2,600 performances both on and off Broadway.

As a thank you to *Godspell* fans and followers, the cast offered a special production on August 14, 1977, in the sanctuary of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. In the last four years of its New York run, there were 25 companies performing *Godspell* around the world, with eight resident companies and three touring companies in the United States and Canada. Perhaps its greatest success was the record-breaking run in South Africa, with a multi-racial cast in Johannesburg and a multi-racial audience in Capetown — events covered by the media worldwide.

## Trivia

- **Godspell** is the archaic Old English spelling of the word *gospel* and literally means good news.
- In the film *Meet the Parents*, Greg (Ben Stiller) recites "Day by Day" when asked to say grace over meals.
- In the film *Wet Hot American Summer*, "Day by Day" is performed at the camp talent show.
- On their album *Jesus Freak*, Christian rock band DC Talk do a cover version of "Day by Day."

# Calendar **GODSPELL**

Music and New Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz  
Conceived, Written & Originaly Directed By JOHN-MICHAEL TEBELAK  
"By My Side" Music by PEGGE GORDON, Lyrics by JAY HAMBURGER

## Production Staff:

James Blackman, Executive Producer  
Stephanie A. Coltrin, Director/Associate Producer  
Christopher Beyries, Associate Producer/Set Designer  
John Feinstein, Sound Design  
Michael Tushaus, Lighting Design  
Karen Cornejo, Costume Design  
Katrina Mahoney, Choreographer

**When:** **March 27 to April 8, 2007**

## Cast:

Featuring  
LATEEFAH DEVOE  
TED ESCOBAR  
ANNE FRASER THOMAS  
MARIANNA FRENDON  
JESSICA GISIN-MOSLEY  
MATT KOEHLER as Judas  
CHUCK PELLETIER  
ELIJAH REYES as Jesus  
KEN ROBINSON  
AILEEN SCOTT  
ROBERT STEINMILLER  
LOLA WARD

## Where:

### The Hermosa Beach Playhouse

Pier Ave at Pacific Coast Highway, Hermosa Beach, California

## When:

**Previews:** Tuesday, March 27 through Thursday, April 8 at 8 p.m.

**Gala Opening:** Saturday, March 31 at 8 p.m.

**Regular Schedule:** Tuesday through Saturdays at 8 p.m.

**Sunday Matinees:** April 1 & April 8 at 2 p.m.

**Closes:** Sunday, April 8 at 7 p.m.

**TICKETS:** \$35-45

**FOR TICKETS AND INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 310-372-4477 OR VISIT  
[www.hermosabeachplayhouse.com](http://www.hermosabeachplayhouse.com).**

For press seats and information, contact  
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Pegge Forrest - Jay Irwin - Deborah Swanson  
818-760-0964 or 818-693-0964