

Synopsis of RAGS

Odyssey Music & Drama presents the first Western New York high school production of RAGS February 19–21, 2010.

With great passion and humor, RAGS tells the story of Rebecca, a naive Russian immigrant, who arrives at Ellis Island with her young son. Searching for her husband who had arrived six years earlier, Rebecca begins her struggle to make a life on New York City's Lower East Side in 1910. She goes to work in a sweatshop and becomes politically aware of the inequities of American social and economic life. Once reunited with her husband, she discovers that he is changing, but not entirely for the best.

This walk through history helps us understand ethnic cultures, alongside the establishment of America's first unions, important inventions of the era, and the customs, clothing, and emotions of our ancestors! This sweeping saga of awakenings and disappointments, of greed and power, of strength and love is a deeply moving and inspirational musical.

Its acclaimed score is an amazing collection of ragtime, ethnic, ballads, and musical comedy songs including klezmer-ish "Penny A Tune," the unusual love duet "Three Sunny Rooms," the Cohan-like "Yankee Boy," and the anthem, "Children of the Wind."

"I think it is one of those shows that defies critical judgment and will please audiences with its power and sense of humor." – Scott Green

RAGS is truly "A Story of America". Written by "Fiddler on the Roof" author Joseph Stein, this musical tells the next chapter of life for immigrants leaving Europe seeking the "rags to riches" American dream. Evocative lyrics by Stephen Schwartz further enhance the plot.

Composer Charles Strouse and lyricist Stephen Swartz ("Godspell") collaborated to write "RAGS." The score, by Charles Strouse ("Annie", "Bye, Bye Birdie" – and an Eastman School of Music graduate!), was described in the New York Times as "first-rate" and "a rich tapestry of musical styles," saying that

"Mr. Strouse has really stretched himself here. Evoking composers as diverse as Joplin, Sousa, Weill and Gershwin, he uses his music to dramatize the evolution of a vernacular American pop music...."

To give full justice to this magnificent score, Odyssey Academy's production will be accompanied by a full 22-piece professional orchestra.

RAGS is a show every generation of your family will love!