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THE PLAY

Move and groove to the hit show *Smokey Joe's Café!* In this **musical revue** of classic American pop tunes. Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller's songs share stories that will transport you back to a time when every kid's dream was to be Elvis or a member of a doo-wop group harmonizing on the street corner in their own neighborhood.

The winner of the 1996 Grammy award for Best Musical Show Album and nominated for seven Tony awards, *Smokey Joe's Café* is the longest-running musical revue in Broadway history.

With such classic pop songs as "Hound Dog," "Jailhouse Rock," "Stand By Me" and "On Broadway," this show is full of heart and soul and will have you singing and clapping along! ●

musical revue – an entertainment form that features skits, dances and songs.

SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ

THE SONGS OF LEIBER AND STOLLER

Now Playing in the Fichandler Stage

April 25 – June 8

Words and Music by

Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller

Directed by Randy Johnson

Choreography by Parker Esse

*You say that music's for the birds,
You can't understand the words.*

Well, honey, if you did,

You'd really blow your lid.

Cause, baby, that is rock and roll.

— "Baby, That Is Rock and Roll"
by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller





MEET LEIBER & STOLLER

Named two of the founding fathers of rock 'n' roll, Jerome "Jerry" Leiber (lyrics) and Mike Stoller (music) shared a common love for the gospel music and rhythm and blues that shaped the American pop music industry.

Born only six weeks apart in 1933, Leiber and Stoller met during the summer of 1950 in Los Angeles when they were 17. The two teenagers spent the whole summer writing songs that reflected their interests in "race music," (see article) becoming one of the top song writing teams for African-American performers.

Only months after they met, Leiber and Stoller sold their first song "Real Ugly Woman" recorded by African-American blues singer Jimmy Witherspoon. Soon hits like "Kansas City," "Jailhouse Rock," "Don't," "Stand By Me" (with Ben E. King), "On Broadway" and "Hound Dog" were topping the pop and rock music charts.

Originally performed in 1953 by blues diva Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton, "Hound Dog" broke records in 1956 when Elvis Presley covered it. This song solidified Leiber and Stoller's ability to write songs that both white and African-American radio stations would play.

After more than 60 years of creating hit records, Lieber and Stoller's partnership ended in August 2011 when Lieber died at the age of 78. They were inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1985 and the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in 1987, officially making them a part of rock 'n' roll history. ●

ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

Arena Stage's production of *Smokey Joe's Café* has brought together a talented group of artists to design a **revival** of this hit Broadway musical. This production uses dance numbers, musical transitions and design elements (sets, lights, and costumes) that change the time, place and mood. Here are some of the ideas, themes and sketches for the show.

revival – a new production of a play or musical that was already produced once.

Director: Randy Johnson

"It's like exploring my roots... I'm a rock 'n' roll child!"

Choreographer: Parker Esse

"I hope to use my choreography to tell individual stories in each musical number and then weave storytelling from number to number, creating a through line with movement and dance."

Music Director: Victor Simonson

"Leiber and Stoller were among the first composers to use elaborate production values like strings, congas and Latin rhythms in black 'race music' thereby helping to enhance its emotional value."

Costume Designer: Ilona Somogyi

"When researching for this show, I wanted a design that would be hip, fun, funky and urban. I found that many of the styles on the fashion runways today are reflective of the styles from the past." ●

Design renderings by Ilona Somogyi, Costume Designer

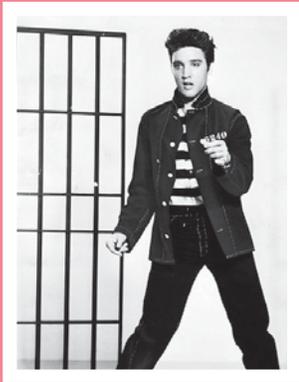
Costume designer Ilona Somogyi wanted a design that would represent the music of Leiber and Stoller yet still resonate with today's culture.

While researching, she discovered that many of the clothing styles from the 1950s and 1960s era were being shown on the fashion runways of today in New York City and around the world. Inspired by this retro trend, she decided to incorporate this style into her costume designs for Arena Stage's production of *Smokey Joe's Café*.



ACTIVITY Design your own musical revue based on your neighborhood. Just like the designers in *Smokey Joe's Café*, think about your neighborhood and what qualities make it special. Create a list of songs, dance styles, and costumes that you would like to use for your design.

LEIBER AND STOLLER SONGS



Elvis Presley:

Known as "the King of Rock 'n' Roll"



The Coasters:

A doo-wop vocal group who found success with Leiber and Stoller songs like "Young Blood."



The Drifters



Ben E. King

- "Smokey Joe's Café," The Robins 1955
- "Hound Dog," Elvis Presley 1956
- "Fools Fall in Love," The Drifters 1957
- "Jailhouse Rock," Elvis Presley 1957
- "Yakety Yak," The Coasters 1958
- "Kansas City," Wilbert Harrison 1959
- "Love Potion #9," The Clovers 1959
- "There Goes My Baby," The Drifters 1959
- "Spanish Harlem," Ben E. King 1960
- "Stand By Me," Ben E. King 1961
- "I Keep Forgettin'," Chuck Jackson 1962
- "I'm a Woman," Peggy Lee 1962
- "On Broadway," The Drifters 1963



ACTIVITY Leiber and Stoller were inspired at a young age by the sounds of a culture that was different from their own. What cultures inspire you? Research these other cultures and their music. How does their music differ from the music heard in your neighborhood? How is this music influenced by the culture that it comes from? Share your findings with your class.

RACE MUSIC

race music - an early 20th century term used to describe music rooted in the African-American experience of jazz, blues, and soul.

During the Great Migration (1910 – 1930) about 1.5 million African Americans moved from the South to the North for a better life, bringing with them a vibrant culture and style of music that was rooted in the southern African-American experience. Despite the growing popularity of African-American jazz and blues bands in the North, record producers felt that white audiences would only buy jazz records from white musicians.



In 1921 Columbia Records started marketing special labels of "race records" – music by and for African-American audiences to capitalize on the popularity. This new genre of "race music" began to open the door for many African-American artists to reach a national audience for the first time.

THE MUSIC OF LEIBER AND STOLLER

"It's about the feeling you get when you hear the music for the first time."

– Randy Johnson, Director

The songs of Lieber and Stoller were part of a cultural change in American music. Their songs introduced the African-American sounds of gospel and rhythm and blues to a mainstream white America that was accustomed to traditional pop music. This would become known as "crossover," an entertainer's ability to become popular in more than one genre.

Stoller said, "We felt, in some cases, very successful if people thought that what we wrote was traditional. We wanted people to hear that we were a part of the tradition, rather than imitating something that wasn't ours." ●

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: ROCK 'N' ROLL

During the 1950s and '60s, rock 'n' roll was the music of a new generation who wanted to rebel against the music of their parents. Although it was considered to be a mainstream genre, its roots came from African-American gospel and blues. Due to segregation,



From left, Mike Stoller, Elvis Presley and Jerry Leiber at MGM Studios in 1957.

many African-American entertainers could not get equal radio air time as their white peers. Record producers began finding white artists, like Elvis Presley, to ease "race music" into the homes of all Americans. Soon the music of African-American artists like Chuck Berry, Little Richard and Fats Domino could be heard in homes all over America.



Leiber and Stoller with The Drifters.

a! ACTIVITY Many generations identify with a genre of music. What genre does your generation identify with the most? Are there any objections to this genre in society? What are they? Playing songs as examples, discuss how the music of your generation has helped shaped how society perceives you.

THREE BIG QUESTIONS

1. What is the power of song?
2. What makes a hit record?
3. What influence have Leiber and Stoller had on pop music today?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BOOKS

Hound Dog: The Leiber & Stoller Autobiography by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller with David Ritz

Leiber & Stoller: Songbook by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller

Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop by Guthrie Ramsey

ON DVD

Jailhouse Rock: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1957

Smokey Joe's Cafe: The Songs of Leiber and Stoller: Broadway Worldwide, 2000

ON THE WEB

Time Magazine: <http://entertainment.time.com/>

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<<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/source-songwriter-jerry-leiber-dies-at-78-20110822>>

Grimes, William. *Jerry Leiber, Prolific Writer of 1950s Hits, Dies at 78*. Web. 22 Aug. 2011

<<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/23/arts/music/jerry-leiber-rock-n-roll-lyricist-dies-at-78.html>>

Schoenberg, Loren. *Jazz: A History of America's Music*. Web

<http://www.pbs.org/jazz/exchange/exchange_race_records.htm>

Helpful Hints for Theater Audiences

As an audience member at the theater, YOU are part of the show! Just as you see and hear the actors onstage, they can see and hear you in the audience. To help the performers do their best, please remember the following:

Arrive at least 30 minutes early.

Visit the restroom before the show starts.

Before the show begins, turn off your cell phone, watch alarms, pagers and other electronic devices. If anything rings by accident, shut it off immediately.

Save food and drinks for the lobby. There is no eating or drinking inside the theater.

Walk to and from your seat - no running in the theater!

Do not talk, whisper, sing or hum.

Do not use cell phones for calls, text messages, pictures or games.

Keep your feet on the floor, not on the seat in front of you.

Avoid getting up during a show because it distracts your neighbors and the performers. If you must leave, wait for a scene change, then exit quietly and quickly.

Performers appreciate enthusiastic applause rather than whistling or shouting.

Cameras and videotape are prohibited because they are distracting to the performers.

Enjoy the show!



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