Please Note

• all programs are strictly copyright of the university of rochester international theatre program.
• programs are presented in the form given to the printer, thus page order is not consecutive.
• programs are formatted to be printed on legal size paper (8.5 x 14) with a centre fold.
Our work has been supported by the following generous patrons and friends of the UR International Theatre Program:

Hameed Ahmed ('11) - Walter Monteith Aikman - Leah Barish ('12) - Stephen M. Bertetti
Thomas M. Bohrer ('85) - Leslie Braun - Kevin Brice ('12) - Alan Carnasin (67) - Lisa G. Chanzi
Donald Chew - Jill M. Cohen - Timothy J. & Shelby M. Connell - Montoya Davis (10)
Alison DeSantis - Margaret Wada & Michael Dunmouchel - Eleanor Leba Eines - Diane Faissler
Randall Fippinger & the Frances Alexander Family Fund of the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
Charles Flowers - Bethany Gilbride (80) - Edmund A. Hajim - Christopher and Alissa Harrington
Frank A. & Linda E. Interlichia - Jonathan Kammel - Heidi Kasper - Taryn McKenna Kimel
Sheila Knope - Adam Konowe ('90) - Sylvia B. Lee - Jeffery Mantel
Elizabeth McMaster (in memory of Katie McManus) - Mark R. Milner - Karen Celeste Moculeski
Mitch Nelson - David Paul Dominic Pascoe - Russell Peck - Diane Waldgeir Perlberg ('77) &
Mark C. Perlberg ('78) - Paul I. Ploroz - Laura J. Platt - Peter Plummer - The family and friends of Nicholas S. Priore '83 - Ronald Rettner - Matt Rodano - Seth A. Rubinstein
Linda & Tom Sloan - Joan Ross Sorkin - Evelyn Stock - Jean Marie Sullivan - Marian Todd
Janice Willett - Cyd Rosenberg Weiss - Peter Winkelstein - Mark & Robin Young

We urge you to join their ranks! • Fill out the pledge form below.

Pledge Form

Your name: ________________________________
First: ___________________  MI:  ___   Last: ________________________________
Email: ________________________________
Home Phone: (____) _________________   Work Phone: (____) _________________

Your address:
Line 1: ___________________________________________________
Line 2: ___________________________________________________
City: ______________________________  State: ____  Zip: _________________

Your pledge:
Amount: $________________
I would like this to be a one-time pledge amount:    YES    NO
I would like this to be a recurring annual pledge amount:    YES    NO
Any Special Instructions?: ____________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Please place in the box provided or mail/fax to:
UR International Theatre Program
107 Todd Union
Rochester, NY 14627
Tel: (585) 275-4959
Fax: (585) 461-4547
www.rochester.edu/theatre
the ur international theatre program
artistic director nigel maister
production manager gordon rice
administrator katie farrell
assistant technical director sarah eisel
production assistants & props masters carlotta gambato & macie mcgowan
costume shop manager nadine brooks taylor
box office & front-of-house manager macie mcgowan
assistant costume shop manager mo seraji
senior costume shop interns lakesha holyfield & jennifer uvina
costume shop interns grace elizabeth interlichia & jessica chinnelli
wardrobe supervisor grace elizabeth interlichia
assistant props masters nina desoi, lydia jimenez & franny swanson
props intern jessica chinnelli
scene shop assistants chris bickford, cassandra donatelli, chris futia & alex karpinski
publicity interns leah barish, livie cohn, erin fairbank, iiana garcia, jordan gray, maggie morgalis, dontae mears & arden witheford
theatre intern leah barish
program information compiled by lydia jimenez
URITP photographer adam fenster
URITP videographer kevin brice
production trailer by david tan
additional trailers by johannah kohl & deema al mohammad ali
URITP webmaster zachary kimball
graphic, program & poster design
i:master/studios at imaster.studios@gmail.com

www.rochester.edu/theatre

adding machine: a musical was developed and received its world premiere at the next theatre company, artistic director jason loewith, on february 5, 2007.

adding machine: a musical was produced in new york by scott morfee, tom wirthshafter, and margaret cotter at the minetta lane theatre, opening night february 25, 2008.

a note about the program
program content is compiled by the production's assistant director, lydia jimenez, and edited by nigel maister. for a complete list of sources and works cited, please contact the theatre program.

the video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.

senior farewell
the ur international theatre program wishes the following students who have contributed to the theatre program over the course of their undergraduate careers and who are now graduating: good luck, godspeed, and many broken metaphorical legs in the years ahead. stay in touch!

priscilla alabi - mel balzano - leah barish - chris bickford - kevin brice
ryan brown - dominick caruso - jessica chinnelli - joe cicer - natalia de maria
chris dende - nina desoi - james eles - nicholas fedorka - william hogan
jonathan isaacs - joseph kowtun - david kniick - michael martin - kevin mccarthy
alex osuch - alex parker - andrew polec - christine m. rose
mo seraji - thomas sorrentino - liya sun - franny swanson - david tan

we are particularly indebted to Marian Todd, whose generosity made Adding Machine: A Musical possible.

special thanks
applied audio and theatre supply - Dave Izzo / URMC - Bill's carpet and furniture center
our lady of mercy high school - brighton high school performing arts
shawn casey - josef hanson - prof. john covach and the UR music department
dean jamal rossi - prof. michael burritt - rob edwardsen - Mitchell moore
christopher glattly and glattly pianoforte - nancy martin & rare books & special collections
sean curran - Charlotte furniture warehouse - Andy boroson - Derek medonia / geva theatre
Penina Rubin - Katie and tosh farrell

visit the todd theatre blog: http://toddtheatre.blogspot.com
visit the todd theatre youtube channel: http://www.youtube.com/ToddTheatre
join the todd theatre facebook group
visit the todd theatre blog: http://toddtheatre.blogspot.com

This production has been made possible through the combined efforts of
ENG 171 & 271 (Technical & Advanced Technical Theatre), and ENG 291 (Plays in Production)
John DiBartolomeo - Nicholas Fedorka - Sam Higgins - Joseph Kowtun - Chris Lebano - Michael Martin
Michael Mayor - Conor Mcmahon - Janixa Mejias - Alex Osuch - Alex Parker - Amir Patel - Penina Rubin
Corey Rudalavage - Alex Sandler - Kristopher Scharles - Thomas Sorrentino
Priscilla Alabi - Mel Balzano - Leah Barish - Chris Bickford - Kevin Brice
Ryan Brown - Dominick Caruso - Jessica Chinnelli - Joe Cicer - Natalia DeMaria
Chris Dende - Nina DeSoi - James Eles - Nicholas Fedorka - William Hogan
Jonathan Isaacs - Joseph Kowtun - David Knick - Michael Martin - Kevin McCarthy
Alex Osuch - Alex Parker - Andrew Polec - Christine M. Rose
Mo Seraji - Thomas Sorrentino - Liya Sun - Franny Swanson - David Tan
Elmer Rice wrote *The Adding Machine* in seventeen days. He regarded it as an opportunity to exorcize his feelings toward his father, unable to support his family, “failed to measure up to [his] standards of fatherhood”: It was not as though I had vented my ill-will by portraying my father in an unfavorable light. For, though he had many of Mr. Zero’s prejudices and malevolences, he was proud, self-assertive and anything but a conformist. My release is part of the mystery that enshrouds the whole creation of the play.

—Rice in his autobiography, *Minority Report*
WILL PICKENS (Sound Designer) was privileged to have designed the UR International Theatre Program’s first musical, Hello Again, Andy Bragen’s The Hairy Dutchman, The Illusion (both at the URITP and Geva Theatre Center), George F. Walker’s Suburban Motel, and The Colonel Bintley by Hiroto Boychtch. Geva Theatre Center: The Music: Man, Cabaret, A Marvellous Party, Key West, and That Was Then. Broadway: Death of a Salesman (Barrymore Theatre), That Championship Season (Jacobs Theatre). The Importance of Being Earnest, Presence (Laughter) American Airlines Roundabout Theatre). Off-Broadway: Evolution (Cherry Lane), That Hope Change Thing, Sweet and Sad (The Public Theatre), Completeness, Buried Part Boys (Playwrights Horizons), Fornicat From The Beatoes, Black Snoo, Non-Play (The New Ensemble), Benefactors, I Never Sang for My Father, Heroes, and Beasley’s Christmas Party (Keen Company). Regional credits: Water by the Spoonful, Antony and Cleopatra (Hartford Center Stage), A Time to Kill (Arena Stage), Richard III, Comedy of Errors, Cymbeline, and Macbeth (Chicago Shakespeare Theater). Will mixed the original Off-Broadway production of Adding Machine: A Musical. www.willpickens.com. Will is a UR International Theatre Program Associate Artist.

C. Andrew Bauer (Video/Projections Designer) NYC: CQ/CX (dir. David Leveaux, co-design with Peter Nigrini, Atlantic Theatre Company), The Diary of a Teenage Girl, (dirs. Sarah Cameron Sunde and Rachel Eckerling, 3LD Art and Technology Center), Fêtes De La Nuit (dir. Kim Weild, Ohio Theater), Milk-n-Honey (Lightbox Theatre Company, dir. Ellen Beckerman, 3LD Art and Technology Center, Kó Festival, Amherst College), Romeo and Juliet (dir. Tony Spiciale, CSC); Kaddish (dir. Kim Weild, East 4th St. Theatre); 5 Minutes (New York Live Arts), Passage (LIU), both with Amanda Selwyn Dance; and An Error of the Moon (written by Luigi Creatore, dir. Kim Weild, Theater Row). Regional: Hydrogen Jukebox (dir. Lawrence Edelson, Fort Worth Opera). Associate to Peter Nigrini: The Best Man (dir. Michael Wilson, Broadway) Fela! (dir. Bill T. Jones, Broadway, International Tour), 9 to 5 (the Musical) (dir. Joe Mantello, Broadway), The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity (dir. Eddie Torres, Second Stage), as well as numerous other non-Play regional productions. Awards: 2010 Innovative Theater Award for Fêtes De La Nuit, design for Milk-n-Honey featured in USA Exhibition, 2011 Prague Quadrennial. Editor and Producer of Brooklyn Round a bound feature that premiered at the 2004 Tribeca Film Festival. Upcoming: Detour with Amanda Selwyn Dance at New York Live Arts.

Elliott Reiland (Choreographer) is a Brooklyn-based director/choreographer/artist and holds a BFA in Dance from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. Recent Work: Into the Woods (Asst. Choreographer, Centerstage/Westport); Union Square (Ens. Dancer, 80 St Marks); West Side Story (A-Rab; Dir: David Grabarkewitz, El Paso Opera); Let it Rain (Director, NYU); The Daughter of the Regiment (Soldier, dir Sean Curran, Opera Theatre of St Louis); Jennifer the Unspecial (Director & Choreographer, NYU), CIRCUITS (Dancer, Patricia Noworol Dance, German Tour). Elliott has also taught and choreographed for New York University, First Stage Children’s Theater, The Arrowhead Broadway Company, Ballet School of Stamford, Boston Ballet, NYU’s GMTWP and Milwaukee Skylight Opera Theatre. His own dance work has been shown at Joe’s Pub, The 92nd St Y, Skirball Center for the Performing Arts, and around Wisconsin.

Marsha Ginsberg (Set and Costume Designer) Previous work with Nigel Maister at UR: *sets and costumes: The Puzzle Locker* (David Hancock); *Suburban Motel* (George Walker); sets: Gorky’s *The Lower Depths*. Recent theater work: *Map of Virtue* (13P); *Er Nicht ab Er zu mit Robert Walser*, Meetfactory, Prague; *Our Class* (dir. Blanka Zizka; Wilma Theater); *Halál* (David Levine; Lumino Festival, Mass MoCA, Watermill Center); *Blue Flower* (ART; Elliot Norton Design Award); *Telephone* (Foundry Theater, NYC, Obie-award); *Lavishious Something* (Women’s Project/Cherry Lane); *Blúkbouque* (Bauhaus Festival, Theaterhaus Jena); *Kaféion* (Athens/Epidauros Festival); *Knock-Out* (Thaia Theater, Hamburg, Theaterhaus Jena); *Opera: with Ken Schnoll: It Happens Like This* (Guggenheim Museum, Tanglewood Music Center), *Prosperina* (Spoleto Festival USA), with Christopher Alden: *Phaeton* (Sanlandshire: Staatstheater), *Die Einführung aus dem Serum* (Theater Basel); *Imenos* (Gimmerglass Opera); *Carmen* (Nationaltheater Mannheim); *Serca Padrone, Rita & Pause Motels* (San Francisco Opera); *In Mahler’s Shadow* (Ensemble 21); *The Lower Depths* (Prince Music Theater). *Paradise Found*, *Narrative Something* (dir. Robert Walser), Meetfactory, Prague; *Las Habitantes* (San Francisco Opera); *Die Entfuhrung aus dem Serail* (Nationaltheater Weimar); *Don Pasquale* (Saarlindishes Staatstheater); Opera: with Ken Schnoll: *It Happens Like This* (Guggenheim Museum, Tanglewood Music Center), *Prosperina* (Spoleto Festival USA), with Christopher Alden: *Phaeton* (Sanlandshire: Staatstheater), *Die Einführung aus dem Serum* (Theater Basel); *Imenos* (Gimmerglass Opera); *Carmen* (Nationaltheater Mannheim); *Serca Padrone, Rita & Pause Motels* (San Francisco Opera); *In Mahler’s Shadow* (Ensemble 21); *The Lower Depths* (Prince Music Theater).

Thomas Dunn (Lighting Designer) designs lighting for architecture, dance, theater, and visual art venues in the US and abroad. Previous Todd Theatre productions include: *Suburban Motel, The Illusion, The Hauny Dutchman, 365 Days/365 Plays, King Lear, The Lower Depths*, and *Killer Joe*. Other University affiliations include: Auburn University, Bard College, Florida State University, and Fordham University. Thomas is the recipient of a 2009 Kevin Kline Award for Outstanding Lighting Design on *The Little Dog Laughed* (The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis), as well as a 2007 Bessie Award for Lighting and Visual Design on *Notthing Is Important* (DD Dorvillier/human future dance corps). He was educated at Bennington College and Yale School of Drama. Thomas is a UR International Theatre Program Associate Artist.

**ARTIST BIO**


**MARSHA GINSBERG** (Set and Costume Designer) Previous work with Nigel Maister at UR: *sets and costumes: The Puzzle Locker* (David Hancock); *Suburban Motel* (George Walker); sets: Gorky’s *The Lower Depths*. Recent theater work: *Map of Virtue* (13P); *Er Nicht ab Er zu mit Robert Walser*, Meetfactory, Prague; *Our Class* (dir. Blanka Zizka; Wilma Theater); *Halál* (David Levine; Lumino Festival, Mass MoCA, Watermill Center); *Blue Flower* (ART; Elliot Norton Design Award); *Telephone* (Foundry Theater, NYC, Obie-award); *Lavishious Something* (Women’s Project/Cherry Lane); *Blúkbouque* (Bauhaus Festival, Theaterhaus Jena); *Kaféion* (Athens/Epidauros Festival); *Knock-Out* (Thaia Theater, Hamburg, Theaterhaus Jena); *Opera: with Ken Schnoll: It Happens Like This* (Guggenheim Museum, Tanglewood Music Center), *Prosperina* (Spoleto Festival USA), with Christopher Alden: *Phaeton* (Sanlandshire: Staatstheater), *Die Einführung aus dem Serum* (Theater Basel); *Imenos* (Gimmerglass Opera); *Carmen* (Nationaltheater Mannheim); *Serca Padrone, Rita & Pause Motels* (San Francisco Opera); *In Mahler’s Shadow* (Ensemble 21); *The Lower Depths* (Prince Music Theater).

**THOMAS DUNN** (Lighting Designer) designs lighting for architecture, dance, theater, and visual art venues in the US and abroad. Previous Todd Theatre productions include: *Suburban Motel, The Illusion, The Hauny Dutchman, 365 Days/365 Plays, King Lear, The Lower Depths*, and *Killer Joe*. Other University affiliations include: Auburn University, Bard College, Florida State University, and Fordham University. Thomas is the recipient of a 2009 Kevin Kline Award for Outstanding Lighting Design on *The Little Dog Laughed* (The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis), as well as a 2007 Bessie Award for Lighting and Visual Design on *Notthing Is Important* (DD Dorvillier/human future dance corps). He was educated at Bennington College and Yale School of Drama. Thomas is a UR International Theatre Program Associate Artist.

**CAST**

**Mr. Zero** ...... **Andrew Polec IV**
**Mrs. Zero** ...... **Katie Lewis**
**Daisy Dorothea Devore** ...... **Zoe Netter**
**Shrdlu** ...... **Chris Urquiga**
**The Boss/The Fixer/Charles** ...... **Jacob Goritsky**
**Mrs. One/Mae/Prisoner’s Wife** ...... **Leah Mould**
**Mrs. Two/Betty/Matron** ...... **Christine M. Rose**
**Mr. One/Prisoner** ...... **Brian Giacalone**
**Mr. Two/Prison Guard** ...... **Andrew Spitzeberg**
**Ensemble** ...... **Christina Graham & Travis Kohler**

**BAND**

**Piano/Conductor** ...... **John Baxindine**
**Keyboards** ...... **Jesse Lozano**
**Percussion** ...... **Daniel Lyons**

**MUSICAL NUMBERS**

*Something to be proud of*
*Harmony, not discord*
*Office Reaver*
*Moving Up In Numbers (Reprise)*
*I’d rather watch you*
*The Party*
*Zero’s Confession*
*Ham and Eggs*
*Didn’t We?*
*I was a fool*
*The Gospel According To Shrdlu*
*Death March*
*Intermission*
*A Pleasant Place*
*Shrdlu’s Blues*
*Daisy’s Confession*
*I’d rather watch you (Reprise)*
*Freedom!
*Freedom! (Reprise)*
*The Music of the Machine*
The Occupy Movement began on September 17, 2011 in Zuccotti Park, a privately owned park in New York City's financial district. Activists protesting social inequality and corporate influence on government occupied the park in a tent encampment until November 15, when it was dismantled by law enforcement. Following Zuccotti Park's example, numerous Occupy demonstrations were formed in cities across the United States and around the globe.

The temporary encampments of the Occupy movement, evoking as they do the tent cities of the displaced, lacked—certainly in their beginnings—a formalized social structure. The freedom and improvisation of these ad hoc communities soon necessitated the establishment of rules and hierarchies to ensure peaceful, sound and sanitary cohabitation.

Joshua Schmidt (Composer/Co-librettist) is a Milwaukee-based composer/sound designer. Schmidt believes Adding Machine “to be a romantic comedy; a very, very dark romantic comedy that explores one simple question: What is a life worth living.” His other works include: A Minister’s Wife, which received six Joseph Jefferson Award nominations and two awards: Best New Work (Musical), and Best Supporting Actress (Liz Baltes); Whida Peru, a one-act monologue in music that served as the second act of INNER VOICES: 2010; and The Gift of the Magi, which premiered in 2010 at The American Players Theatre. Schmidt’s work has been featured in venues across the US. He created the sound design for the UR International Theatre Program production of Kaufman and Hart’s You Can’t Take It With You (2008; dir. Susanna Gellert).
In a letter written on March 25, 1938, Todd Union President, George Corwin, assured the son of George W. Todd that even after his father's death, "as long as our student union shall function on this campus, [his] name shall be perpetuated in the hearts and minds of this institution." Decades after his death, and decades after the building's transformation from student union to Theatre Program home (the conversion of the union dining hall to black box theatre was funded by Todd's daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Conolly Todd; his granddaughter, Marian Todd, underwrote the piano used in this production), our production of *Adding Machine* leads us to consider more than the name of our benefactor.

With his brother Libanus, George W. Todd conceived and commercialized the Todd Protectograph, a machine designed to protect against the fraudulent alteration of checks. The early machines embossed an ink imprint into the body of the check paper that stated a limiting amount. A check written for $8.26 embossed by the Protectograph would read, "Not over $9." Improved design soon permitted the embossing of exact amounts. The use of bank checks was not a common practice at the time, but a wave of forgeries and check "raisings" swept the country in the early 1900s. Skilled forgers, called "draft raisers," would increase the amount of genuine bank drafts a hundred, even a thousand times their original amounts. Thus, the Todd Protectograph Company enjoyed rapid growth in its first decade, and its business continued to thrive well into the 20th century.
shrdlu's name is the second half of the typographic sequence “ETAOIN SHRDLU,” a phrase born out of the keyboard arrangement on Linotype machines. Linotype machines were hot metal typesetting machines with which newspapers and magazines were printed from the 1880s until the 1970s (when computer typesetting and offset lithography made them obsolete). In hot metal typesetting, molten type metal is used to make a mold with a line of raised letters, called a slug, which presses ink to paper. The letters on the Linotype machine were arranged to reflect their frequency of use in the English language. ETAOIN SHRDLU are the twelve most frequently used letters in English, and so composed the first two vertical columns on the right side of the machine's keyboard. When a typographical error was made, the Linotype operator was unable to backspace to delete it. But to retype the line, he had first to finish the line of type to eject the incorrect metal type slug. To finish the line, the quickest method was to "run down" the first two columns on the keyboard with a finger: producing the phrase ETAOIN SHRDLU. Sometimes, the line would inadvertently not be discarded, and so the phrase would appear erroneously in publications.

The classical Greek conception of paradise and the afterlife, where, as Shrdlu says, "only the most favored remain," is the Elysian Fields, a place where gods, heroes and the righteous eternally reside. Homer writes in the Odyssey: "men lead an easier life than anywhere else in the world, for in Elysium there falls not rain, nor hail, nor snow, but Oceanus breathes ever with a West wind that sings softly from the sea, and gives fresh life to all men." In the Odyssey, Elysium is not a realm of the righteous dead, but a paradise where heroes live eternally under the rule of Rhadamanthos, son of Zeus. In Pindar's Odes, those who lived righteous lives on Earth reside in Elysium after death, where they "receive a life free from toil… in the presence of the honored gods," and "enjoy a life without tears," where "flowers of gold are blazing." Like Homer and Pindar, Rice envisions the Elysian Fields as a "pleasant place," however, admittance is not exclusive to the righteous, but also, in defiance of Shrdlu's religious dogma, "the bastet of sinners."
Numerous inventors developed mechanical calculating machines throughout the seventeenth century. Drawings by German astronomer professor, Wilhelm Schickard, in a 1623 letter to Johannes Kepler depict a “calculating clock” that could add and subtract six digit numbers. French mathematician Blaise Pascal invented the first commercialized calculator in 1641, and French watchmaker Rene Grillet and German mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz found inspiration from Pascal’s work.

William Seward Burroughs, a bank clerk born in Rochester, New York, built, manufactured and commercialized the adding machine for the American office in the late 1800s. Seward founded the American Arithmometer Company in 1886, later named the Burroughs Adding Machine Company.

In the American office, adding machines remedied the “long hours and slow, tortuous business progress” of pen and paper bookkeeping. John S. Coleman, president of the Burroughs Corporation in the late 1940s remarked about the American office prior to mechanical data handling: “Bookkeeping, before the advent of the adding machine, was not an occupation for the flagging spirit or the wandering mind. It required in extraordinary degree, capacity for sustained concentration, attention to detail, and a passion for accuracy.” Data could now be figured faster, in larger quantities and with greater accuracy. As industry and businesses rapidly expanded, the amount of data needed to be figured increased. Businesses realized the efficiency value of mechanical data handling, and the adding machine soon became a staple in the American office. Furthermore, the adding machine enabled business functions that had before never been practiced, and the existence of data that before had never existed. Businesses now could easily keep daily ledger balances, daily cash balances, figure discounts, compute commissions, figure estimates and post perpetual inventory records. These basic calculations were often not figured because businesses did not...
How did you first encounter Elmer Rice's The Adding Machine? What propelled you to musicalize Rice's text?

One could say rather that the "Machine" chose me first. Adapting Elmer Rice's 1923 expressionist juggernaut was the long-time dream of librettist, Jason Loewith. Apparently he had approached other composers with the project to no avail. When he finally inquired into my interest in the project in January of 2004, I was working as a sound designer on a show on that he was producing at the Next Theatre Company in Evanston, IL, where he served as Artistic Director. Up to that point, I had never written a musical, nor did I envision myself writing one. I knew of Elmer Rice—his play Street Scene had been wonderfully adapted into a music theatre piece by Kurt Weill and Langston Hughes—but up to that point I had never read or seen or even heard of The Adding Machine. I didn't hesitate. I said yes. I committed to the project. Then I read it....

Where did you begin?

The first music written for Adding Machine was "Daisy's Confession." This was before I met my wife—in my "single" years, tortured romantic that I was. I rewrote and re-orchestrated that song for a long time. Kept it secret, even. There are some difficult and explosive emotional moments in Rice's play, but I have always felt that the act of openly articulating your love for another person when you have never done so before, is maybe the most profoundly frightening things many normal people ever experience.

Who is Mr. Zero?

Mr. Zero is the fundamental expression of human inability—psychological inability, lack of empathy, sexual inability, inability to interact with others, function in a career other than menial work, lack of vision, lack of work ethic—an encapsulation and reflection of all the worst of human behavior beyond sociopaths, psychopaths. He is who I am at my worst.

Can you consider a passage in the show, like, "Something To Be Proud Of," and discuss how the music works technically to communicate content?

The lyrics for this song are cherry-picked phrases from Rice's original scene one monologue, transformed. Each phrase has a natural rhythm—the natural rhythm of speech. Repetition of these phrases allows this rhythm to become iconic, groovy as it were. We splice in and out of these rhythms, which make it seem very complicated but actually it's the heightened expression of natural speech rhythm (2's and 3's at different speeds). Taking out all the pauses in-between makes this rhythm relentless, even nagging. Harmonically, the music is actually very simple and basic, but I have only three instruments, so I embarked on a method of adding color and edge to the proceedings by playing with register (high notes/low notes), intervalic clusters (two notes or more, close together on the piano) which occur in parts of a measure, reflect the accentuation on natural rhythms of speech. Over time, I change one note of the overall "chord" of a particular sequence, and that changes the harmony of a section very gradually. These things in combination make the music seem extreme, which is exactly how Mr. Zero feels about his wife's bitching about the movies. Movies—to friends—to "I hate you." This music she sings is the equivalent of the feeling inside Mr. Zero's head. It is his nightmare. The song is his hell. And she is articulating it.

Can you talk a bit about Shrdlu and his music? His music sounds very distinct from the rest of the score... Why is this? What are some technical characteristics of gospel music? Why does gospel/blues "work" with his character?

Shrdlu is Rice's everyman: the prototypical American, lilly-white, church-going stereotype gone wrong—wrong as in matricide. You say it sounds distinct. I'd say each character has a distinct musical vocabulary, and that the consistency is that we grind all these musical styles through a filter—the very limited complement of piano/synth/drums as a means of unifying it all. Shrdlu sings gospel when secure in his faith; blues (at least 12 bar blues structure with very dense harmonies) when his faith is shaken. The two are related genres borne of the American experience. It made sense to me at the time, I guess. Daisy sings tin pan alley songs and pop ballads. Why? Why not. Rice wrote a play in seven wildly different scenes. Ten page monologues, naturalistic scenes, abstract scenes—the whole gamut laid out in dizzying complexity. It's the hallmark of the play, and one could say the hallmark of the American experience: the melting pot where it all collides.

I've heard the music described as "Expressionist." Can you define this style in terms of music? Why does this style of music work well with Rice's text?

I don't know what you heard. Someone tell me what "expressionist" music means, and I guess what I could do would be to point out several pieces in current and past history that would refute or support what you say. I wrote what I wrote without even thinking about it. Each song started as an emotional response to a scene, character, or mood, pulled from my own experience—my musical tastes and experiences—which are varied, and all relative to text.

an interview with composer-librettist joshua schmidt