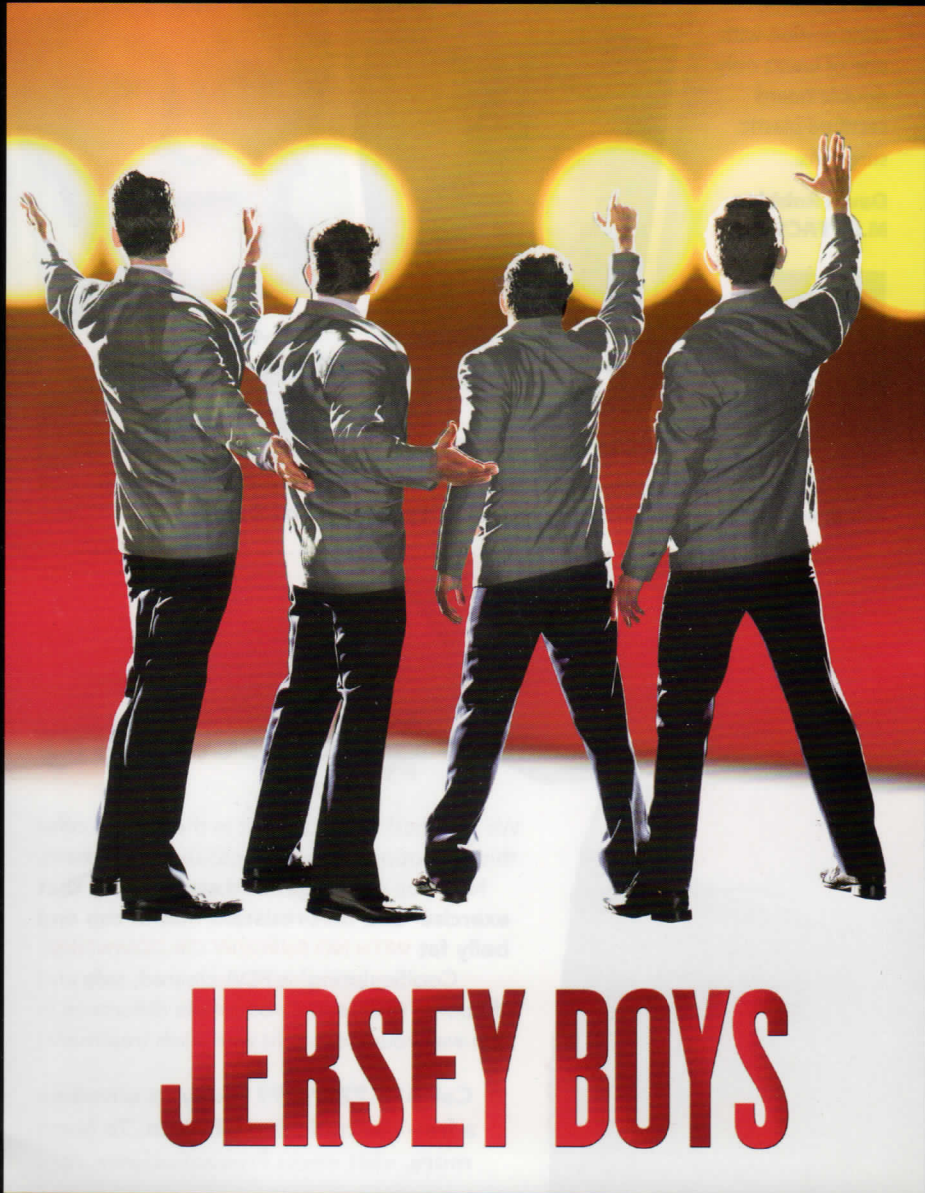



CENTERSTAGE

DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS



JERSEY BOYS

 **DES MOINES**
PERFORMING ARTS

CIVIC CENTER

Willis BROADWAY SERIES
AUTO CAMPUS



(l to r): Jason Kappus,
Nicolas Dromard,
Nick Cosgrove and
Brandon Andrus

JERSEY BOYS

AND ALL ITS MOVING PARTS

By Gerard Raymond



(l to r): Jason Kappus,
Nick Cosgrove,
Nicolas Dromard,
Brandon Andrus
and the Company of
JERSEY BOYS.

If you don't know precisely what you are supposed to be doing, stay away from the stage during the "Big Three" segment of *Jersey Boys*. That's the moment in the first act when The Four Seasons come into their own in a fast-paced montage of the legendary 1960s rock and pop band's three greatest hits – "Sherry", "Big Girls Don't Cry" and "Walk Like a Man."

"It's the most complicated and the most difficult part to 'call' in this show," says the production's stage manager Molly Meg Legal. "Calling" is the technical term for how stage managers keep the pace and rhythm of a production by saying when to make the light changes or move the scenery. "During the Big Three section," Legal explains, "most of the company is coming in and out. There is a lot of automated scenery moving on and off, and our drum kits are swirling around the stage. The actors are moving in between and you have to make sure that nobody is taking a new path and stepping in front of the moving parts."

In this production, the stage manager sits in a booth built into the side of the set, overseeing the action on stage like an air traffic controller. Multiple television

supervisor Ron Melrose and other creative team members are not present. "My job is to make sure that everything looks the way it did when we first opened."

"It's really a question of setting up so that everybody knows what they are doing," says wardrobe supervisor Sandra Hanlon Cressler, who keeps the show true to the look created by designer Jess Goldstein. Her job starts when the production moves into the theater. She must find space for the daily laundry, and a sewing area for costumes to be repaired and maintained. She also sets up the "gondolas", which are mobile wardrobes on the side of the stage where the actors make their quick changes. With just three actresses playing the more than a dozen female characters in the show, and the Seasons themselves who are on stage nearly all the time, this hardworking cast doesn't get to change in dressing rooms. Right before "Sherry" in the Big Three segment, the Seasons have just about 30 seconds to make a costume change before getting back on stage. One of the Jersey Girls has 19 changes, which includes jewelry, dresses and as many as 15 pairs of shoes, Cressler reports.

It's been more than seven years since

Jersey Boys opened on Broadway, winning the Tony Award® for Best Musical. Since then, the hit show has spawned several international productions and two national tours. The touring company is back for a second time in Des Moines, but Legal and the rest of the technical crew intend that the production be every

bit as thrilling as the first time around. "The challenge when you have a show that is so popular, and you have multiple companies, is you never want somebody to make comparisons. No one is going to feel that they are not getting the Broadway experience," says Legal.

Gerard Raymond writes about theater, film, travel and culture and lives in New York City.



Top Left: Thanks to smooth operations backstage, you can't even tell that *The Four Seasons* have only 30 seconds to change costumes in time for "Sherry".

Opposite (l to r): Brandon Andrus, Nick Cosgrove, Jason Kappus and Nicolas Dromard

monitors – one to see in the dark, another showing what the audience sees and another focused on the music conductor – allow Legal, or one of her two assistants, to keep the lights changes and moving scenery in sync with the music. "It's a high intensity job and you have to be paying attention the whole time," she explains. Legal is also the "artistic eye" of the show when director Des McAnuff, choreographer Sergio Trujillo, music