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# Academy of Visual & Performing Arts Culver City High School

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4401 Elenda Ave.  
Culver City, CA 90230  
<http://www.avpa.org>  
Phone 310-842-4200 x6009

Contact: Dr. Tony Spano  
Executive Director  
tonyspano@ccusd.org  
Phone 310-842-4200 x6094 or x6009

For Immediate Release

## **AVPA's Funny and Touching Production of *Company***

Culver City, CA, October 6, 2005

What happens when 14 high school students explore the depths of middle-aged relationships? In song, no less? When those students are the talented actors from Culver City's Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA), the results are bound to be hugely entertaining. Even side-splitting, at times.



*Company*, with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by

George Furth, is a legend in musical theatre. When it was first performed on Broadway in 1970, it was considered a groundbreaking "concept musical" with its non-linear plot. It won both the Drama Critics and Tony Awards for Best Musical and Sondheim received awards for the best composer and best lyricist. When *Company* first opened, one critic said, "It's Broadway's first musical treatment of nerve ends." For Tony Spano, AVPA's Executive Director and the director of this production, *Company* is one of Sondheim's most funny and lyrical musicals.

*Company* tells the story of a single man in New York City and his best friends – five married couples. And his girlfriends. Three of them. And how they all negotiate their relationships—relationships that are often brittle, romantic, cynical, calculating, but always very, very real. It takes place on the 35<sup>th</sup> birthday of Bobby, the main character. At a crossroad in his life, he explores the poignant and often hilarious situations in his own relationships and those of his friends while trying to identify what he wants in his own life.

Spano jumped at the opportunity to direct *Company*, one of his favorite musicals. He



says, "I am honored and privileged to have this chance to work with the dedicated and talented students that make our AVPA program truly outstanding. Their hard work has brought this musical comedy to life and I'm confident their audiences will experience a wonderfully entertaining evening of theatre."

The show opens on Wednesday, October 19 at 7:00 p.m. Evening performances, starting at 7:00 p.m. can be seen October 19-22 and 26-29. A matinee on October 29<sup>th</sup> will start at 2:00 p.m. All performances are in the Sony Pictures

Theatre behind the Robert Frost Auditorium, 4401 Elenda Street, Culver City. Tickets are \$15 general admission, \$12 ASB, Seniors, Children and Faculty. Please note: this play contains mature subject matter that may not be appropriate for young children. Seating is limited, so purchase your tickets now at [www.avpa.org](http://www.avpa.org).

A Gala will be held on Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, after the performance. Join the actors and the creative team in an evening of live music and good food. Proceeds from this fund raiser will help send the hard working students from AVPA's Blurred Vision Theatre Company to the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, next summer where they'll perform *Antigone*. Tickets for the Gala are available for \$20 and are also available at [www.avpa.org](http://www.avpa.org).



The Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) at Culver City High School offers a comprehensive arts curriculum after regular school hours for students who are committed to excellence in Art, Film, Theatre, Dance, and Music. Established in 1996, AVPA enjoys tremendous community support from Sony Pictures Entertainment and other design, recording, and theatre companies in the area. For more information, go to [www.avpa.org](http://www.avpa.org) or contact Tony Spano at 310-842-4200 x6094 or x6009.

**Photo Caption:**

**Company cast:** *Company's* cast: Back row L-R: Norman Lankford, Dana Murphy, Chris Narrie; Middle row L-R: Brian Sonia-Wallace, Alison Sieke, Giana Bommarito, Chris Sanchez, Molly Clancey, Skyler France, Front row L-R: Clare Snodgrass, Stephanie Vasseghi, Penelope Yates, Jessica Erskine, Brandon Storm, Phaedra Neitzel.

**Company chorus line:** L-R Alison Sieke, Penelope Yates, Dana Murphy and Stephanie Vasseghi rehearsing for *Company*

**Company Jessica:** Jessica Erskine as Joanne in *Company*