Sometimes the best plans can go horribly wrong. Such is the case for producer Max Bialystock. Max is devastated when his latest play, a musical version of Hamlet called Funny Boy, flops. The ‘King of Broadway’ vows to return to his former glory with his next project – if he only had one. Enter Leo Bloom, a mousy, unassuming accountant, who shows up to check Max’s books for Funny Boy.

After discovering that Max raised more money than he spent on the show, meaning that he actually made money on a flop, Leo has a brilliant idea. A musical that fails can actually make money. Simply raise a million dollars, spend $100,000 on the worst show ever and pocket the rest of the cash. It seems like the perfect plan.

Combing through stacks of manuscripts, Max and Leo hit ‘gold’ when they find the musical Springtime for Hitler. They then set out to hire the worst director and the worst actors to star in their musical gem. On opening night, the pair believes they’ve got it made – until the unthinkable happens. Due to circumstances beyond the pair’s control and a last minute cast change, Springtime for Hitler is a hit!

Mel Brooks’ comedy of errors was originally a movie starring Gene Wilder and Zero Mostel. Released in 1968, it won several Academy Awards® for the first-time director and helped to spark his lengthy career. Although it never quite caught the mainstream attention it deserved, it was a staple of art-house theaters for years and occasionally popped up on late night television.

In 2001, Brooks restaged the movie as a musical stage production starring Nathan Lane as Max and Matthew Broderick as Leo. The stage musical was a smash success. It won 12 Tony Awards®, breaking the previous record that had been set by Hello, Dolly! more than 37 years before. Lane and Broderick reprised their roles for the 2005 movie version, based on the musical, which also featured Will Ferrell and Uma Thurman.

Storm Roberts, who is celebrating his 20th anniversary with the WKTK morning show Storm & Chris, will appear in the first two shows of The Producers in a guest walk-on role during Act II’s courtroom scene. When he is not on the radio, Mr. Roberts can be seen around town hosting local charity fundraisers or serving on the boards of local organizations such as Stop! Children’s Cancer and the University of Florida Performing Arts.

The Producers is sponsored by WGFL CBS4. It will be performed at the Phillips Center Friday – Sunday, June 29 – July 1 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday – Sunday, June 30 – July 1 at 2 p.m.
The British are Coming!

The first time an American audience heard The Beatles, they laughed. It was August 1963 and Dick Clark had just played a clip of The Beatles performing *She Loves You* on his hit show *American Bandstand*. The teenagers in the audience thought The Beatles’ hairstyles were quite amusing. Four months later, a teenage girl saw another clip of the British foursome on the *CBS Evening News* and called her local radio station, asking them to play a Beatles song. The station was able to get a copy of *I Want to Hold Your Hand* several weeks prior to its U.S. release date. Other requests began pouring in and *I Want to Hold Your Hand* quickly became a top request for New York radio stations.

The real pandemonium started, however, when The Beatles embarked on their first trip to America in 1964. They were stunned when 3,000 screaming fans greeted them at Kennedy Airport. In fact, they were greeted by screaming fans wherever they went. One can assume that those same teenage girls were still screaming a few days later when the group appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. And even though one critic dismissed them as a fad, “Beatlemania” had definitely gripped the nation.

The group continued to perform and record throughout the 1960s, but by the end of the decade had split up and mostly gone their separate ways. Even though the most successful part of their career spanned a mere six years, they achieved a level of success that has yet to be matched by any other musical act.

In the United States, they are the bestselling musical group of all time. In the U.K., 40 of their songs reached the #1 spot on the music charts. By 1985, it is estimated that The Beatles had sold more than one billion albums, tapes and CDs worldwide. When *Rolling Stone* published a list of the Greatest Artists of All Time in 2004, the band who led the “British Invasion” was at the top.

More than 30 years after their break-up, The Beatles remain one of the most well-known and, one might say, well-versed in the musical styles and fashions of The Beatles as The Fab Four. Talented musicians in their own right, The Fab Four do more than simply impersonate The Beatles. They pay homage to them with their note-for-note renditions – renditions which are so good it’s hard to believe you’re not seeing the real thing. Even Ringo Starr’s producer Mark Hudson has said, “It's virtually like seeing The Beatles.”

The Fab Four is sponsored by the Dharma Foundation and WIND-FM. They will perform at the Phillips Center on Sunday, July 29 at 7:30 p.m.

Strike Up the Band Again!

In 1892, with an initial investment of about $230 – used to purchase instruments from the Sears, Roebuck catalog – the Mr. Jack Daniel’s Original Silver Cornet Band was born. Mr. Jack Daniel put together the band to liven up the political rallies which came through the town of Lynchburg, Tennessee from time to time.

The town band was a familiar fixture to many of the folks who inhabited places like Lynchburg around the turn of the century. *Harper’s Weekly* estimates there were 10,000 such small town bands in the United States in 1889. They were a homegrown, America institution, made up of ordinary citizens such as the hardware clerk and the feed merchant. In most cases, their enthusiasm outweighed their skill level, but that didn’t stop them from playing everything from opera to Sousa to works from Tin Pan Alley at town rallies and parades, festivals and funerals, picnics and saloon openings.

Mr. Jack Daniel’s Original Silver Cornet Band was one of the major features of Lynchburg, Tennessee which had a population around 360 in the late 1800s. But after 20 years or so, and a little thing called progress, town bands lost their luster and they, along with Mr. Jack Daniel’s Original Silver Cornet Band, faded from memory.

Some 80 years later, an enterprising individual thought it might be nice to bring back a little bit of Americana. Dave Fulmer happened upon a photograph of Mr. Jack Daniel’s Original Silver Cornet Band and thought, “I’d give my eye teeth to hear a band like that today.” He began researching the phenomena of the small town band era, eventually becoming an expert on the culture and facets of small town American life at the turn of the century.

Fulmer received a grant from the Jack Daniel Distillery and, together with friend Greig Ritchie, a composer/arranger, set about putting together a new version of the original. Instruments were hard to come by, and the pair found themselves importing horns from France and searching through attics and antique collections. By the fall of 1978, Mr. Jack Daniel’s Original Silver Cornet Band had produced an album, appeared in two PBS specials and begun touring.

Mr. Jack Daniel’s Original Silver Cornet Band has toured to all 48 of the contiguous United States; played Lincoln Center, Disneyland and the White House; and appeared on *NBC Today* and *National Public Radio*.

“Nothing like it is around today,” says Fulmer. “Getting the Original Silver Cornet Band together and rounding out its repertoire is a project that allows me a real living glimpse of America’s past. The fact that it also happens to be fun is an additional bonus.”

The appeal of Mr. Jack Daniel’s Original Silver Cornet Band is that it presents a slice of life that is long gone. It is a unique experience to sit in a darkened theater and be transported back to an era when the days were not quite so hectic, joys were simple and life was just a little bit sweeter.

Mr. Jack Daniel’s Original Silver Cornet Band will perform at the Phillips Center on Saturday, August 4 at 7:30 p.m.
University of Florida Performing Arts has earned a solid reputation for the creation and building of quality productions in our venues. This evolution began with the development of the international touring sensation AEROS which was created in the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. The production occurred over two different time periods in the fall of 2000 and winter of 2001 under the artistic direction of Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas (co-creators of STOMP); North American choreographers Danny Ezralow, David Parsons and Moses Pendleton; and the Two Tall Guys Music Lab out of Toronto. In addition to touring for seven years, this piece was also the subject of a Bravo television special which featured audience shots taken at the Phillips Center during its public performance in Gainesville. AEROS will again grace our stage in the upcoming season.

Also developed for touring on the Phillips Center main stage was Perpetual Motion which became a Sony Classical Recording for Edgar Meyer and Béla Fleck. The People of the Forest with the Baka Pygmy Clan from Africa and Alonzo King’s LINES Ballet from San Francisco were developed at the White Oak Plantation and Conservation Center Dance Studios in northeast Florida, as well as the Phillips Center. Two world premiere performances with The King’s Singers were rehearsed and first staged in the Phillips Center – one with Emanuel Ax and the other with the Turkish musical group Sarband titled Sacred Bridges, which was released as an import CD on the World Village label. Additional touring productions that have been created under our auspices, or rehearsed for international touring, include the world premiere performance of Turtle Island Quartet and The Assad Brothers in the University Auditorium and the set design for Sinner by Stan Won’t Dance in the Phillips Center Black Box Theatre.

In the above manner, UFPA has the opportunity to support the “research” component of the University of Florida’s mission. This is not the only way that UFPA is involved in performing arts research, however. It has also been instrumental in the commissioning and development of new works such as two pieces by Laurie Anderson, Happiness and The End of the Moon; the recent Woven Harmony Suite for Robert and Rebecca Bluestone by Andrew York of the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet; Anytown for Shapiro & Smith Dance; the creation of a new work specifically for the Ahn Trio by Russian composer Nikolai Kapustin; Mikel Rouse’s cameraworld; Diavolo’s DreamCatcher; and Faustin Linyekula’s Triptyque sans Titre.

Following in the tradition of creating new artistic works and assisting in the technical preparation of touring productions, this season finds the Phillips Center the site for the development of the world premiere performance of the Urban Bush Women with Compagnie JANT-BI; the Fresh Air Music preparation of Mannheim Steamroller’s spring tour; and the building for the North American tour production of Pamina Devi, the Cambodian interpretation of Mozart’s The Magic Flute. In addition to the above, the Phillips Center will also host the touring company of The Wedding Singer as they prepare for their North American tour.

By being the site for the staging of new works, and through its commissioning efforts, UFPA is able to bring the newest, freshest and most energetic performing arts to the audiences in the heart of Florida.

We hope you enjoy them.

Michael Blachly
Director
(Top) UFPA Director Michael Blachly spends time with Affiliates Gladys and Joseph Lowry at the 2006-07 Director’s Dinner which was held last March.

(Above) Cast members from I Can’t Stop Loving You pose with Roland Daniels (center) at the African-American Leaders reception which followed the performance. More than 100 people attended the reception, enjoying hors d’oeuvres and conversation with the cast.

(Background and right) At the Hard Hat Gala, UFPA’s annual fund raiser, guests enjoyed the centerpieces, filled with live betta fish, while listening the sounds of the Marty Liquori ensemble. Silent auction items included Gator sports memorabilia which proved very popular among bidders. favors included mini hard hats made of foam.

(Right) This year’s Affiliate Director’s Dinner was held on Mardi Gras, which inspired the evening’s Cajun theme.
Young Dancer Answers “Leahy’s Call to Dance”

When they were first starting their career, the siblings who make up the group Leahy were encouraged by many established musicians and performers. As a way to continue this tradition of encouraging young performers, Leahy hosted a special contest – “Leahy’s Call to Dance” – in conjunction with their March 16 performance at the Phillips Center. UFPA received many wonderful entries, but it was Elijah Eyerly who was chosen to perform with the Canadian powerhouse during the performance of their song The Call to Dance. Elijah, who shares the same birthday as group member Donnell Leahy, said, “This was my best dancing experience ever! I loved meeting Leahy and getting to share the stage with them because they are so talented. The whole experience inspired me to continue to pursue my music and dance education.”

Gainesville Cares

Founded in the late 1980s, Broadway Cares and Equity Fights AIDS merged in 1992 to form Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. The not-for-profit organization raises funds to help support those in the entertainment industry who are affected by HIV, AIDS and other critical health-related issues. During their March run at the Phillips Center, cast members from Mamma Mia! collected funds for the organization’s efforts. “This community contributed $15,700, which is a phenomenal amount of money for a community our size and a hall our size,” says Michael Blachly. “Thank you Gainesville for your support.”

(Above) Mamma Mia! cast members greet patrons during the Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS fund drive.

(Above) Frederica von Stade with UFPA intern Sarah Dardis and her friend following von Stade’s February performance.

(Left) Bobby McFerrin with Bill McFarland, general sales manager for sponsor WKTK, and Chandler, Joseph, Anna and Jo McFarland.
(Left) Tapestry artist Rebecca Bluestone shares the inspiration and creative dynamics behind her work with the children at O2B Kids. Rebecca, along with her husband Robert, presented Woven Harmony at the Phillips Center Black Box Theatre in March. The performance featured a new work, Woven Harmony Suite by Andrew York, which was co-commissioned by the University of Florida Performing Arts.

(Above) Local elementary school students display their love for animals, and classical music, prior to Gainesville Chamber Orchestra’s “Walk through the Orchestra.”

(Right and above) Members of the Bayanihan Philippine National Dance Company work with patients at Shands Pediatric Outpatient Clinic as part of the AIM Together program.

Education
Volunteer Spotlight

If you’ve been to the Phillips Center or the University Auditorium in the last few years, there’s a very good chance you’ve met or seen Benjamin and Marilyn Barger. The couple, who celebrated their 60th anniversary this past November, has been volunteering for UFPA for 15 years – practically since the Phillips Center opened its doors in 1992.

For the Bargers, volunteering at UFPA brings “a wonderful sense of satisfaction.” If anyone should know the ins and outs of volunteering in the community, it would be the Bargers. In addition to volunteering for UFPA, they also volunteer for Alachua General Hospital, the Alachua County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program and Dance Alive.

That’s not to say that volunteering doesn’t have its “downs” along with its “ups.” The Bargers were among the first to volunteer at the Baughman Center. Their job? To keep people from coming up to the windows and looking in during wedding ceremonies. There was just one small problem. “If it rained, the mosquitoes were bad,” says Mrs. Barger.

While the Baughman Center no longer utilizes volunteers to keep crowds at bay, there is still plenty to do at UFPA. This season alone, the Bargers have volunteered an average of 300 hours each.

“It is a pleasure and a privilege knowing and working with Ben and Marilyn,” says UFPA Volunteer Coordinator Travis Prescott. “Their dedication and commitment to service in the arts is inspiring to us all, and their support brings a new level of meaning to the word ‘community.’”

The Bargers volunteer because they “enjoy the people” and reap a number of great benefits, including making friends through their various volunteer activities. Their experience with volunteering has been so rewarding that Mrs. Barger has one simple bit of advice for anyone even considering it: “I’d say ‘do it.’ It’s wonderful.”

2007-08 University of Florida Performing Arts

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As you may have noticed, UFPA is currently under construction! Work began in February on the construction of new enclosures for the lobby terraces at the Phillips Center. Work is proceeding on schedule and should be finished this December. According to UFPA Operations Manager Matt Koropeckyj-Cox, “The new construction will expand our public lobby space, adding reception and meeting spaces for our patrons. Restrooms are also being improved. We will have a new family and ADA-accessible restroom, and more stalls for the women’s restrooms on both lobby floors.” Thanks to Dr. Martin Fackler and Shelley Melvin for their generous contribution supporting the lobby expansion.
Below is a list of Affiliates for the 2007-08 Season as of May 7, 2007.

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If your name was inadvertently omitted or listed incorrectly, please accept our apologies and notify us at 352-846-3647.

www.performingarts.ufl.edu
Going to the Chapel

Love is in the air for wedding singer Robbie Hart. Not only does he serenade happy couples every weekend, he is also eagerly preparing for his own nuptials. But when his fiancée leaves him at the altar, the town's best wedding singer becomes a bride's worst nightmare.

Robbie is down in the dumps until he meets a lovely waitress named Julia. Instantly smitten, it seems that he might be able to love again. There’s just one problem. Julia is engaged to a two-timing Wall Street shark. Vowing not to lose at the game of love (again), Robbie sets out to pull off the performance of a lifetime and win the girl of his dreams.

Based on the hit movie starring Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore, the musical version of *The Wedding Singer* features a brand-new score that pays homage to an era when greed was good, pop music reigned and fashion was king. University of Florida Performing Arts is fortunate to be the spot where *The Wedding Singer* will rehearse before embarking on its national tour.

UFPA has a long history of hosting performing acts as they prepare for national tours or other engagements. *The Wedding Singer* will work out technical details and rehearse on the Phillips Center main stage for more than a week before performing for the audiences in the heart of Florida.

*The Wedding Singer* is sponsored by WCJB TV 20. It will kick off its national tour at the Phillips Center on Friday, August 31 at 7:30 p.m.

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Wish List

University of Florida Performing Arts is currently looking for a number of items to enhance our visitors’ and guest artists’ experiences. Needs range from assisted listening devices, to audio visual equipment, to meeting room and dressing room furniture. For more information on how you can make an in-kind donation, please contact the UFPA Director of Development at 352-846-3648 or visit UFPA’s website at www.performingarts.ufl.edu. The complete list may be found under Support/Donors.