

# PAPER MILL PLAYHOUSE

MAY 31-JULY 1

# HALF TIME

THE NEW MUSICAL  
ABOUT NOT ACTING YOUR AGE

## HALF TIME, A NEW MUSICAL

*Book by* **BOB MARTIN AND CHAD BEGUELIN**, *Music by* **MATTHEW SKLAR**, *Lyrics by* **NELL BENJAMIN**, *Additional Music by* **MARVIN HAMLISCH**, *Finale by* **ESTER DEAN, MATTHEW SKLAR, AND NELL BENJAMIN**,  
*Co-Choreographed by* **NICK KENKEL**, *Directed & Choreographed by* **JERRY MITCHELL**

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Paper Mill Playhouse is a not-for-profit arts organization.

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## CREATIVE TEAM



**BOB MARTIN (Book)** has been working as an actor and writer for over three decades. He has received many awards in both Canada and the US, including a Tony for *The Drowsy Chaperone*. Recent TV projects include *Slings & Arrows*, seasons one, two, and three (TMN, Sundance); *Michael: Tuesdays and Thursdays* (CBC); *Michael: Every Day* (CBC); *Sensitive Skin*, seasons one and two (HBO); and *Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas* (NBC). Recent theater projects include *The Sting* (Paper Mill), *Encores!* (NYC), *The Prom* (Atlanta), *Gotta Dance* (Chicago), *Elf* (Broadway, Dublin, London), *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Toronto, Broadway, London), Second City Toronto (performer, director, artistic director). In development: *Millions*, *The Princess Bride*.



**CHAD BEGUELIN (Book)** is a four-time Tony nominee whose works include Disney's *Aladdin* (Tony Award nominations for best book and best original score, Drama Desk Award nominations for outstanding lyrics and book), and *The Wedding Singer* (Tony Award nominations for best book and best original score, Drama Desk Award nomination for outstanding lyrics). He also wrote the lyrics for the Broadway musical *Elf*. He is the recipient of the Edward Kleban Award for lyric writing, the Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation Award, the Gilman & Gonzalez-Falla Musical Theater Award, and the ASCAP Foundation Richard Rodgers New Horizons Award.



**MATTHEW SKLAR (Music, Vocal Arrangements)** a Tony, Emmy, and Drama Desk Award–nominated composer, proudly began his professional career as a rehearsal pianist at Paper Mill Playhouse. As composer on Broadway: *Elf*, *The Wedding Singer* (Tony Award nomination for best original score). TV/film credits include *Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas* (2015 Primetime Emmy nomination for outstanding music direction), *Sesame Street*, *Wonder Pets!*, and PBS's *American Masters*. Awards: ASCAP Richard Rodgers New Horizons Award, the Gilman & Gonzalez-Falla Musical Theater Award, Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation Award. Upcoming: *The Prom*, premiering this fall on Broadway at the Cort Theatre.



**NELL BENJAMIN (Lyrics)** Broadway: *Legally Blonde*, with Laurence O'Keefe (Olivier Award, Tony nomination); *Mean Girls*, with Tina Fey and Jeff Richmond (Tony nomination). Off Broadway and Regional: *The Explorer's Club* (Outer Critics Circle Award); *Cam Jansen*; *Sarah, Plain and Tall*; *Because of Winn Dixie*; *Pirates!*; *3hree*. New York Philharmonic New Year's Eve and Young People's Concerts. TV: *Unhappily Ever After*; *Whoa! Sunday with Mo Rocca*; *The Electric Company*; *Best Time Ever with Neil Patrick Harris*; *Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway*; *Julie's Greenroom*. Upcoming musicals: *Huzzah!*, *Life of the Party*, *Dave*. Grateful recipient of the Kleban Award and a Jonathan Larson Grant. Most grateful for Larry and Persephone.

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**JERRY MITCHELL (Director & Choreographer)** received Broadway's Tony Award for Best Choreography twice, for the revival of *La Cage aux Folles* and *Kinky Boots*, for which he was also nominated as director. Most recently on Broadway, Jerry directed the Gloria Estefan musical *On Your Feet!*. He was nominated for an Olivier Award for his choreography in *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, which he also directed and coproduced in the West End. In the 35 preceding years, Jerry has been involved with over 50 Broadway, West End, and touring productions, including as choreographer of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*; *The Full Monty* (Tony nomination); *The Rocky Horror Show*; *Hairspray* (Tony nomination, also NBC's live telecast); *Gypsy*; *Never Gonna Dance* (Tony nomination); *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (Tony nomination); *La Cage aux Folles*; *Legally Blonde* (Tony nomination), which he also directed; *Catch Me If You Can*; and *Kinky Boots*. He also directed and choreographed the new musical based on the iconic film *Pretty Woman*, which will open on Broadway later this summer.

## HALF TIME – SUMMARY

One remarkable dance team. One big chance. One small twist... you've got to be over 60. From the director/choreographer of *Kinky Boots* comes the incredible true story of ten ordinary seniors with extraordinary dreams who audition to dance at half time for a major basketball team. Only after making the cut do they learn they won't be dancing tap, salsa, or swing—instead, they will bring down the house with a style that is entirely new to them: hip hop. Take the uplifting journey with these dreamers—and the young coaches who inspire them along the way—as they battle self-doubt, stereotypes and even each other for a chance to bust a move at center court in front of 20,000 screaming fans. Together they remind us that in life, when the odds are stacked against you and the challenges seem too great to overcome, it's not the end of the game—it's HALF TIME.



## HALF TIME – A TRUE STORY



The new musical *Half Time* is based off a true story that took place right here in New Jersey! Back in 2007, the public relations department of the New Jersey Nets (now the Brooklyn Nets) had an idea for a stunt: form a hip-hop dance crew with all its members being senior citizens! The Nets already had a professional dance team, a kids' dance team and a cheerleading squad, so adding another dance team was a surprising move. The team, named the NETSationals, was comprised of 12 women and 1 man, who auditioned on a dare from his children!

"Keep your old age jokes in your hat. I'm dancing, and I got no time for that. Watch Mama rock this step, kick, turn. Watch, kids. Watch and learn." ~ lyrics from HALF TIME

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Early on, the idea caught the attention of documentary filmmaker and Broadway producer Dori Berinstein (*Dori Berinstein [left] with HALF TIME cast member Lillias White [right]*), who decided to make a documentary about the dance team. She documented how the team was created, from auditions until their debut at halftime of a New Jersey Nets game, in a documentary feature titled *Gotta Dance*.



The team (*see picture below*) made their debut in early 2007 in a game against the Detroit Pistons and was instantly a sensation. The team received requests by multiple media outlets and soon they were all over television and magazines. In the following years, around a dozen NBA teams started senior dance teams as well, like the Miami Heat's Golden Oldies, New Orleans Pelicans' Senior Dance Team and Milwaukee Bucks' Grand Dancers.



The documentary *Gotta Dance* premiered at the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival and was very well received, earning numerous awards. The film spawned other senior citizens dance crews and inspired Royal Caribbean cruises to roll out a multi-generational hip-hop dance program on 20 of their ships worldwide.

Dori Berinstein aspired to tell this story as a musical on stage, so she enlisted a team of Broadway veterans to bring it to life. Bob Martin and Chad Beguelin would write the book, Matthew Sklar would write the music and Nell Benjamin would write the lyrics. Prior to his death, composer Marvin Hamlisch (*see picture on right*) wrote some of the score and his music still appears in the show. *Half Time* is directed and choreographed by Tony Winner Jerry Mitchell. The stage musical had its world premiere in Chicago in December 2015 under the title *Gotta Dance*. In anticipation of the second production here at Paper Mill Playhouse, the title was changed to *Half Time*.



**"I wanted to make this film to celebrate age and to inspire and challenge present and future AARP members to embrace life...to get out there and take on something they always dreamed of doing." – Dori Berinstein**

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## HALF TIME – AGE IS JUST A NUMBER

As the characters in Half Time show us, age is simply just a number! Senior Citizens continue to find ways to be active and inspire all generations. Here are a few seniors who did extraordinary things:



Harriette Thompson (*see picture on left*) was the oldest person to run a marathon at age 92!

Tamae Watanabe and Yuichiro Miura were the oldest woman and man to climb Mount Everest at age 73 and 70 respectively.

At the 2018 Academy Awards, James Ivory (*see picture on right*) became the oldest person to win an Academy Award at the age of 89.



Jack Nicklaus scored a hole in one at the 2015 Masters.

Georgina Harwood celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday by jumping out of an airplane. She later swam with sharks!

Nola Ochs became the oldest person to graduate from college at age 95!

John Glenn was the oldest man to fly in space at the age of 77.

In 2013 at the age of 88, Cicely Tyson (*see picture on right*) became the oldest person to win a Tony Award.



Benjamin Franklin was the oldest person to sign the Declaration of Independence at age 70. He lived another 14 years!



The oldest current living person is Chiyo Miyako (*see picture on left*) at 117 years old. The oldest living person ever was Jeanne Calmet at 122 years old!

Sources:

<https://list25.com/25-oldest-people-to-accomplish-amazing-feats/>

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/senior-health-pictures/10-super-seniors-we-admire.aspx#02>

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## THE ORIGINS OF HALF TIME PERFORMANCES

Whether you're at the theater or at a sporting event, one of the events of the evening is typically some kind of break in the middle of the action. The idea of having breaks within a performance or game go back to Ancient Greece and Rome, where sports and performances were often used interchangeably as ways to pass time between larger events. Sports and theatre have a lot more in common than we sometimes think, and half time is a prime example of something they share.



When you attend a sports game today, half time for sports like basketball, football and soccer have been made into large-scale events. For those who choose not to visit the concessions or restrooms, the teams decided

that providing entertainment during this 10-15-minute period provided extra value for the price of admission.

For football, marching bands have been a customary kind of entertainment, especially for high school and college sports (*Ohio State Marching Band, above*). Of course, the biggest half time show of the year is always the Super Bowl half time show. Until 1991, the Super Bowl always had a marching band perform. The first pop stars to perform were New Kids on the Block and Gloria Estefan, which started a trend that led to the



biggest acts in the world dreaming of having that spotlight. Everyone from Beyoncé (*right, at 2013 Super Bowl*), Paul McCartney, Madonna (*left, at 2012 Super Bowl*), Bruce Springsteen and The Rolling Stones have provided the half time entertainment. These performances often cost millions of dollars and take weeks of rehearsals to perfect.

Basketball half time shows have evolved over the last two decades to the point where they can be considered variety acts. Some games have jugglers, gymnasts, trampoline artists and much more. The classic act, which also is popular with football, is cheerleaders (*LA Laker Girls on right*). A competitive sport, cheerleaders often take the court at halftime to perform their main routine. These routines are typically performed by all female troupes that have high energy and excellent precision.



What makes dance teams like the NETSationals so fun to watch has to do with our expectations for a cheerleading half time performance. Seeing senior citizens dance with precision despite not looking like your typical cheerleader provides a pleasant surprise that you can't help but cheer on. The next time that you're at a game, keep an eye out for how the half time entertainment brings the crowd away for the game for the moment. They may not be as entertaining as the crew in the musical Half Time, but it will be fun!

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## HALF TIME DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*After you see the show and read this study guide, use these prompts to start a discussion with your students and peers.*

- 1) How do the seniors in the musical exhibit courage? What fears did many of them have that they had to overcome in trying out for and performing with the dance troupe? How did they work together? What did they do separately to benefit the team?
- 2) Do you enjoy half time shows? What are some of your favorites that you've seen?
- 3) How does this musical help dispel ageism? Do you agree with the statement that "age is just a number?"
- 4) Half Time is both a documentary and a musical. If you have seen both versions, how do they compare? Are there elements that work better on screen rather than on stage or vice versa?
- 5) Did this musical change your mind about the abilities of seniors? Did you have any pre-conceived notions about how seniors should move or sound?



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