

Yale Dramatic Association Presents

BOOTH IS BACK IN TOWN!

A NEW MUSICAL



The Yale Dramatic Association

presents

BOOTH IS BACK IN TOWN!

Based on the early life of Edwin Booth

book by
AUSTIN PENDLETON

music by
JAMES MASSENGALE

lyrics by
PETER BERGMAN

settings by
JOHN CONKLIN

costumes by
KATHERINE PRESCOTT GANZER

lighting by
PETER HUNT

choreography by
GEOFFREY WADDELL

musical direction by **JIM CUNNINGHAM**

orchestrations by **GORDON EMERSON**

entire production directed by
LELAND STARNES

recording produced by
PETER HUNT

recorded by
J. WILLIAM GODDARD

When *Booth is Back in Town!* opened at the Yale University Theatre on May 11, 1961, it was three hours long and curiously plagued by a story whose scope and complexity kept threatening to overwhelm it. It was also accorded "bravos," both at this and all subsequent performances. Its second act was hailed in one review as "profound and moving" and dismissed in another as "unduly sentimental and almost irrelevant." Every performance saw its walk-outs, but even those walked out found much to cheer about; and even the show's most devoted admirers were brimming with suggestions for its improvement and clarification. In short, *Booth is Back in Town!* opened as a work in progress.

What started it on its progress was the adventure of the young Edwin Booth in the theatrical circuit of pre-Civil War America. Young Booth, later to become one of the greatest actors in the history of the American stage, was sent on tour while still a boy with his spectacular actor father, Junius Brutus Booth, because the elder Booth, obsessed with the rootlessness and unreality of his travelling life, was self-admittedly in need of attention and care. Exposed to the excitement of his father's professional life, Edwin rapidly came to acknowledge his own affinity for it. The elder Booth saw this happening, and felt at once the strengthening of a familial bond and the disaster to which he felt this bond was committing Edwin. It is his attempt to break this bond, and what it did to Edwin and everyone else in his family and profession who loved him, that makes up the story of *Booth is Back in Town*.

It is a serious story, but its people are flamboyant and almost humorously vital. And its rightness for expression in terms of a musical play lies in the close relationship between the theatrical troubadours of the nineteenth century and the erupting frontier landscape that they were constantly moving across. With this in mind, the authors felt that much of the drama of the story could be heightened by an extensive and dramatic use of the sort of music which sprang from and characterized this landscape — the spirituals, the minstrel-show music, the songs of 'exaggeration' about newly-legendary figures,

the simple and lonely little ballads. Thus, when at the beginning of the play the Booth children express their innocent veneration of the father who is rarely able to come home and see them, it is in *The Book of Mr. Booth*; when Edwin tells his father of the aspirations which move the elder Booth to take him on the road as a companion, the means of expression is *Lettin' My Feet Run Free*. Edwin sets out with his father amidst great excitement (*Booth is Back in Town*) and meets Jenny Joanne, the empty-headed but endearing ingenue of the company ("My name is Jenny Joanne. After the popular little song of the same name") as well as Mr. Spears, Mr. Page and Mrs. Hill, veteran supporting actors who begin to awaken his interest in the acting profession by teaching him the tricks of the trade (*Round, Clear Tones*) and helping him prepare as his debut a little presentation in his father's honor (*The American Fireman* sequence).

Meanwhile, Edwin is being confronted with the disorder into which a life in this haphazard profession has thrown his father's mind. He follows him to saloons where his father imagines himself as "Captain Booth" (*Why Was I Born, Mother, Tell Me*) and sits up all night with him in filthy hotel rooms attempting to calm him down (*Now at the Farm*). Gradually he is cut off from all hopes of a normal boyhood, but he does not realize this until he meets a group of farm boys his own age on the steamboat to New Orleans. Anxiously, he tries to make contact with them, and no sooner is the contact achieved, as they enjoy a revivalistic spiritual together (*Everybody Knows*), than they are forced to go their separate ways. Edwin realizes that his only destiny is to become an actor, and when his father tells him to prove himself dances and sings before a rowdy, sophisticated New Orleans saloon crowd and wins them over (*The Southern Fried*). It is at this point that Booth begins to feel himself destructive to his family, the tragedy of the second act begins to develop, and *Booth is Back in Town!* plunges itself into the controversial and challenging arena of the serious musical play.

CAST

Junius Brutus Booth	Theodore L. Tarson
The Manager	Frank Geraci
Mr. Baxter	Peter Saccio
Conductor	Mike Reed
Asia Booth	Joan De Vita
Edwin Booth	Philip Proctor
Rosalie Booth	Barbara Bossert
Joe Booth	Richard Adessa
Mary Ann Booth	Joanna Glass
Mr. Wemyss	Alfred Goldfield
Call Boy	Bill Humphrey
Mr. Spears	Dick Goodyear
Mr. Page	John M. Badham
Mrs. Hill	Eleanor Evans
Charlotte	Virginia Meadow
Jenny Joanne	Marcia Hagen
Woman on the Street	Rita Esposito
Man on the Street	Charles Trumbull
Porter	Daniel A. Neary
Ben	Skip Hinnant
Josh	Gaston Maurin
Sam	Ives Waldo
Ethan	Toby Tompkins
Frenchwoman	Lilliane Keller
Myrt	Ruth England
Bartender	Roger Swaybill
Gautier	Henry Lyman
Boatman	Rick Calleo
Adelaide	Mary Jane Wilson
Richard	Roger Swaybill
Farmer	Bill Humphrey
Sunday School Teacher	Barbara Palumbo
Prospector	Daniel A. Neary
Actors, Actresses	Anne Climo
	Malcolm Kamin
	Roger Kenna
	Tom Ligon
	Barbara Palumbo
	Karen Bitman
Sailors	Ernesto Alvarez
	Brick Howe
	Bill Humphrey
	Malcolm Kamin
	Roger Kenna
	Tom Ligon
	Henry Lyman
	Daniel A. Neary
	Mike Reed
	Pennell Rock
	Charles Trumbull
Gentlemen	Ernesto Alvarez
	Skip Hinnant
	Tom Ligon
	Daniel A. Neary
	Mike Reed
	Pennell Rock
	Charles Trumbull
Floozies	Barbara Bossert
	Anne Climo
	Elizabeth Cohen
	Julie DeVecchio
	Rita Esposito
	Barbara Palumbo
	Ella Smith

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**A New Musical by
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James Massengale
Peter Bergman**

Directed by Leland Starnes

SIDE

1

Long Playing

Time: 23:23

- 1. Overture**
- 2. The Book of Mr. Booth**
- 3. Lettin' My Feet Run Free**
- 4. Booth Is Back In Town**
- 5. Jenny Joanne**
- 6. Round Clear Tones**
- 7. Why Was I Born, Mother, Tell Me**
- 8. Now at the Farm**

Carillon Productions

MBOP-8899

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SIDE

2

Long Playing

Time: 24:00

- 1. American Fireman sequence**
- 2. Everybody Knows**
- 3. La Lune Est Tombee**
- 4. The Southern Fried**
- 5. The Green Lime Tree**
- 6. We'll Never Waltz Again**
- 7. Seeing the Elephant
and Finale**

MBOP-8900