

In an era where disastrous musicals with sinking reviews still have the political clout to sweep the awards, shoving the brighter new lights in theatre aside. -

**"It's Time For
New York to
'Get Frank' About
Broadway"**

W I L D H O R N

Frank Wildhorn's range of musical style and theatrical future are as big and bright as his smile. And with good reason. After years of struggling and competing against a dozen other versions of J&H - his "Jekyll & Hyde" is thrilling Broadway audiences nightly, with new productions now opening all around the world. This month 'Scarlet Pimpernel' an enormous new musical at the Minskoff, directed by Peter Hunt, sallies forth on the great white way. Sitting in his office at Atlantic records, we talked about theatre. "In the end, each night Jekyll and Hyde is really just a show about 31/2 people" grins Frank. "But Pimpernel, is all about the journey's and escapes between London and Paris. With chase scenes and is all this stuff going on. It has a huge sweep to it. Thank God the Minskoff is enormous. When we started dry tech, it was the first time I'd seen all this stuff". "Jekyll & Hyde was originally done in an intimate theatre. Then it went on tour and spent years touring in a concert rock & roll version playing to 3,000 - 4,000 seat houses. Which is good. I understand the economics of touring and playing in all those big houses where everybody makes a lot of money - but you completely lost the intimacy of the original show. Coming back to Broadway to an intimate size theatre, gave the show back it's passion. - It's like a lovely chamber piece, and the power is back that I lost on the road. People are going nuts over it again".

I asked him how he dealt with the obvious slights and snubs he had received from the Tony's "Old Guard" board for Victor Victoria and Jekyll & Hyde. Many people in the Broadway community feel he is being ostracized for making his own success on Broadway. Responding with a shrug and a laugh he replied - "I don't know why some

people resent the way we've done it. The saddest thing about the Tony's, and of course I was very up- set, was calling my mother. I mean come on, your parents are all excited, they go to the show and see people go nuts and then - with the Tony's - entertain people for a few hours and give them great feelings and music, some melodies they can hum and a wow factor. But you can't worry about it. I can't be worried and bitter. I'm having too much fun doing it".

In addition to "Hyde & Pimpernel" his concert tour of "Civil War" Directed by Nick Corley and written with Jack Murphy and Gregory Boyd, (Texas's Alley Theater) is currently in recording session. It will be one of the largest theatrical releases ever with recording starts from every major musical venue. With stars like, Kenny Rodgers, Trisha Yearwood, Hootie & The Blow Fish, Travis Tritt, Dr. John and Betty Buckley are just a few of the talents adding their voices to this recording. With a TV Special to be filmed at the Lincoln Center Memorial in Washington DC, produced by Pierre Cossette, followed by a national tour - another Wildhorn Musical begins it's journey towards Broadway. Next there is Svengali, with two regional productions already to it's credit, is just waiting for Linda Eder to gear up and go. In the works are Havana - a new project with Sergio Mendes, Jack Murphy, and Gregory Oyd. Alice Underground - inspired by te waif like singing star - Jewel. Vampyr - a gothic opera, Natasha - a classical ballet, and Big Nose - a children's musical version of Cyrano. He keep going, and going, - and finally - Wedding Bells ring this spring for Frank & Linda after many years together - they're finally making it legal!

by
Robert W. Cabell