

# Song and Dance Man Steve Friedman Spends Much of His Life on the High Seas

by [Judy Colbert](#) | Aug 28, 2017 | [Arts & Life](#), [Music](#), [The Arts](#)



Steve Friedman has been known to look out at an audience of 1,000 people and say, “My parents would be so proud!”

A North Bethesda resident, Friedman gives lectures about music at local community centers, senior citizen residences and aboard cruise ships. “It’s very affirming that you have a passion that people appreciate,” he says.

Friedman, 66, recently completed a 19-day trip from San Diego to New York aboard Crystal Cruises’ *Symphony*. Crystal is known for its theme trips and enrichment programs with guest lecturers and instructors.

“Film and Theater” was the theme of the recent cruise Friedman was on. With a list of 43 Broadway musical lecture topics, he is always in demand among cruise and Great White Way aficionados.

“Crystal really values its speakers,” Friedman says. “They provide nice staterooms and show respect.”

Among Friedman’s topics are “The Rise of the Golden Age of the Broadway Musical: 1950-1960,” “The British Invasion,” “The Broadway Musical: 1980-1990,” “How Disney Reinvented (or Murdered) the Broadway Musical: 1990-1999,” and “Rodgers and Hammerstein: 1943-1949 and 1950-1959.”

In his talks, Friedman explores a theme, reminds you of when you saw your first Broadway show, and quite often performs a few songs in a fully professional lyrical tenor voice. Friedman also provides a visual component, with photos of the composers or performers or other Broadway luminaries. The *Symphony*, besides its musical name, is perfect for his lectures with venues called the Hollywood Theatre, Starlite Café and Galaxy Lounge. They’re intimate and have great sightlines and acoustics.

Friedman says he has been doing this kind of work long enough that passengers tell him they heard him on a previous cruise and enjoyed his lectures so much they had to attend his talks this time, too.

Other passengers say they’re related to someone on Broadway and tell Friedman a story or confirm something he’s said. He performs another service, too — leading Friday night *Shabbat* services aboard ships. Crystal provides the chapel, candles, prayer books and an *oneg* of gefilte fish, wine and challah.

Although a rabbi is occasionally on board, services for the holidays are generally led by passengers

Friedman says he first fell in love with Broadway musicals at the age of 7 or 8, and saw his first live show — “Bye, Bye Birdie” — at The National Theatre in Washington, D.C., when he was 11. He started singing at a young age, with lots of classical training, and continued through his years at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School and in college.

Friedman was on a callback audition when he experienced the degrading horrors of the cattle call. That and his marriage to his wife, Wendy, while attending Michigan State University, helped him decide that he wanted a more stable life than the theater.

Still, Friedman has performed in a number of productions, including “Camelot,” “Damn Yankees,” and “Sweeney Todd,” and in many venues.

Last year, Friedman came out with “The Ultimate Broadway Musical List Book” (iUniverse). Its 294 pages contain 25 lists about the best musicals, revivals, opening numbers, biggest flops that should have been hits, and, of course, Friedman’s favorite shows. He includes some history about each show, making this the ultimate reference source for Broadway musicals.

Friedman’s passion is fed by taking Big Apple field trips with other Broadway lovers. He organizes a dozen or more trips a year to see such shows as “Groundhog Day,” “War Paint,”

“Hello, Dolly!” “Come from Away” and “Hamilton” (all are sold out). Other trips will be scheduled and he distributes a monthly email announcing the trips. Some are day trips; others are overnight.

Friedman is also a regular speaker at Live & Learn Bethesda, an adult education center. Its executive director, Bev Amsterdam, says of him, “I think he’s a gem of a person and he has a great voice. One thing about him, he believes that music and an historical perspective create emotional reactions. He takes pride in helping audiences enjoy musical history.”

*For information about Steve Friedman, call 301-529-5244, email [SFrieTenor@aol.com](mailto:SFrieTenor@aol.com) or check out his Facebook page at [“Steven Friedman Broadway Musical Lectures.”](#)*

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*Top photo: Singer/music lecturer Steve Friedman: “It’s very affirming that you have a passion that people appreciate.” (Photo courtesy of Steve Friedman)*