
Marcy Heisler And Zina Goldrich

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by Paloma & Carey

INTRODUCTION: THE DYNAMIC DUO BEHIND MODERN MUSICAL THEATER

When you think of powerhouse duos in contemporary musical theater, names like **Marcy Heisler and Zina Goldrich** should immediately come to mind. For over three decades, this writing partnership has crafted some of the most heartfelt, witty, and enduring songs ever to grace the stage, screen, and concert hall. Their work spans family musicals, off-Broadway hits, television specials, and beloved standards that have been performed by everyone from Broadway stars to aspiring young performers in school auditoriums. In an industry where collaborations often fizzle after a single project, the longevity and creative synergy of **Marcy Heisler and Zina Goldrich** stand as a testament to their shared artistic vision and deep mutual respect.

Understanding the journey and impact of **Marcy Heisler and Zina Goldrich** offers a window into how modern musical storytelling evolves. Their music is characterized by clever lyrics that appeal to both children and adults, soaring melodies that feel both classic and fresh, and a remarkable ability to tackle complex emotions with warmth and humor. This article dives into their backgrounds, their most celebrated works, their creative process, and why they remain essential figures in musical

theater today.

WHO ARE MARCY HEISLER AND ZINA GOLDRICH?

Before exploring their joint body of work, it helps to know the individuals behind the partnership. **Marcy Heisler** is the lyricist and book writer of the duo, while **Zina Goldrich** serves as the composer. Together, they are often referred to stylistically as "Goldrich and Heisler," though the full names **Marcy Heisler and Zina Goldrich** appear on virtually all of their joint credits.

Marcy Heisler: The Wordsmith

Marcy Heisler grew up in a theater-loving family and started writing lyrics at an early age. She studied at the University of Michigan and later moved to New York City, where she began collaborating with other artists. Her lyric style is known for its conversational quality, rhythmic precision, and ability to reveal character through song. Heisler has a knack for writing dialogue-driven lyrics that feel natural yet are packed with meaning. She has also worked as an educator, teaching musical theater writing at NYU and other institutions, further cementing her influence on the next generation of storytellers.

Zina Goldrich: The Melodist

Zina Goldrich, a native of Los Angeles, studied music at the University of California and later at the prestigious BMI Musical Theatre Workshop. Her musical instincts blend traditional Broadway orchestration with pop influences, creating melodies that are instantly hummable but never predictable. Goldrich's ability to support emotional beats with harmonic shifts is one reason her songs resonate so profoundly. She has also written for television, including work for Disney Channel, and has taught composition for theater.

The meeting of these two talents in the late 1980s sparked a partnership that would eventually produce some of the most performed contemporary musical theater pieces in schools and regional theaters across the country.

THE SIGNATURE WORKS OF MARCY HEISLER AND ZINA GOLDRICH

The catalog of **Marcy Heisler and Zina Goldrich** is diverse, but a few landmark projects anchor their legacy.

"Dear Edwina" (2008)

Perhaps their most famous work, *Dear Edwina* is a musical for family audiences that premiered off-Broadway and has since become a staple of youth theater. The show follows Edwina, a young advice columnist who helps her friends solve

problems through song. The musical features a score full of humor and heart, including the crowd-pleasing number "The Junkyard Dog." The success of *Dear Edwina* showed that **Marcy Heisler and Zina Goldrich** could create a show that appeals to children without being condescending, and that adults could enjoy just as much. The show has been licensed widely and performed by thousands of schools and community groups.

"Junie B. Jones" Musical Series

Building on their success with young audiences, **Marcy Heisler and Zina Goldrich** adapted Barbara Park's beloved book series into multiple musicals, including *Junie B. Jones: The Musical* and *Junie B. Jones: Jingle Bells, Batman Smells*. These shows captured the voice of the irrepressible kindergartner with perfect pitch, both musically and comically. The songs are filled with the exaggerated emotions of childhood, from frustration to pure joy, and have become favorites in elementary school music programs.

"The Great American Mousical" (with Hunter Foster

and Tony
Winner?)
Actually this is a
different piece:
Wait, let me
recall accurately.
They wrote "The
Great American
Mousical"? No,
that's by Hunter
Foster and
others. I need to
correct: Actually,
Marcy Heisler
and Zina
Goldrich wrote
"The Great
American

Mousical" with
Hunter Foster?
No, let me be
careful. One of
their notable
works is "The
Great American
Mousical" which
was written by
Marcy Heisler
(lyrics) and Zina
Goldrich (music)
with a book by
Hunter Foster?
Actually,
checking
memory: They
wrote a musical

called "The Great American Mousical" - I think it's by them? Let me verify from my knowledge: Yes, "The Great American Mousical" had music by Zina Goldrich, lyrics by Marcy Heisler, book by Hunter Foster. It's about a group of mice putting on a show in a

Broadway theater. That's correct. So I should include that.

Correction for accuracy: The musical *The Great American Mousical* features music by Zina Goldrich and lyrics by Marcy Heisler, with a book by Hunter Foster. It premiered at the Goodspeed Opera House and

is another charm. example of their imaginative storytelling. The show is a love letter to old-school Broadway, told through the eyes of tiny performers. It showcases the duo's ability to write pastiche numbers that feel authentic to different eras while retaining their signature Individual Songs and Anthology Works. Besides full musicals, **Marcy Heisler and Zina Goldrich** have contributed songs to revues and cabaret acts. Their song "Taylor the Latte Boy" became a viral hit when sung by Kristin Chenoweth on *Late Show with David Letterman*.

and later on *The Martha Stewart Show*. That song, a whimsical story of a girl crushing on a coffee shop barista, perfectly encapsulates their gift for finding the extraordinary in everyday life. Other popular songs like "Alto's Lament" (a comedic ode to the often-overlooked voice part) have become staples of vocal competitions and concerts.

**THE CREATIVE PROCESS OF
GOLDRICH AND HEISLER**

The partnership between **Marcy Heisler** and **Zina Goldrich** is characterized by a collaborative give-and-take. In interviews, both have described a process where they often start with a character or situation, then Heisler writes a

lyric which for rewriting Goldrich then extensively sets to music. based on However, audience sometimes a reactions. melody comes One key to their first. They success is their emphasize the shared belief in importance of truth in trusting each storytelling, even other's instincts in comedic or and being willing children's work. to edit ruthlessly. They avoid Their workshops pandering or often involve using forced actors reading rhymes. Heisler and singing has said that she material, and always writes they are known with a specific

performer in the lyric.

mind, even if that performer is theoretical. This approach gives their songs a specificity that makes them relatable.

Goldrich's music, while melodic, often employs unexpected harmonic progressions that keep the ear engaged and support the emotional arc of

IMPACT ON MUSICAL THEATER EDUCATION

Marcy Heisler and Zina Goldrich have had an outsized influence on musical theater education. Their shows, especially *Dear Edwina* and the Junie B. Jones musicals, are frequently produced by schools due to their age-appropriate content,

manageable cast craft, discipline, sizes, and strong and the musical scores. importance of But beyond that, writing from a both women are genuine place. dedicated Many educators. They contemporary have taught at musical theater the BMI Lehman writers cite Engel Musical **Marcy Heisler** Theatre **and Zina** Workshop, New **Goldrich** as York University, inspirations, and various particularly for summer creating work programs. Their that appeals to pedagogical intergenerational approach audiences. In an emphasizes era where

theater often fractures into adult-only or children-only categories, they have built a bridge. Their songs are used in audition books, vocal anthologies, and countless YouTube covers. The duo has also received grants and awards, including the Jonathan Larson Grant and the Fred Ebb Award, recognizing their contribution to musical theater.

NOTABLE PERFORMERS AND RECORDINGS

The songs of **Marcy Heisler and Zina Goldrich** have been performed by some of Broadway and television's biggest names. Kristin Chenoweth is a frequent champion of their work,

having sung productions.
 "Taylor the Latte Cast recordings
 Boy" and other are available for
 Goldrich/Heisler *Dear Edwina*
 songs on (Original Off-
 national Broadway Cast
 television. Audra Recording), the
 McDonald has Junie B. Jones
 also performed musicals, and
 their material in *The Great*
 concert. Other *American*
 performers *Mousical*. These
 include Josh recordings serve
 Groban, who has as important
 sung selections documents of
 from their shows, their work and
 and various casts are used by
 of their musical aspiring
 theater performers to

learn the style. not only
 The recordings entertaining but
 highlight the also teachable.
 clarity of Music teachers
 Heisler's lyrics appreciate that
 and the warmth Goldrich's
 of Goldrich's melodies are
 orchestrations. singable and that

**STYLISTIC LEGACY AND
 ACCESSIBILITY**

What sets **Marcy
 Heisler and
 Zina Goldrich**
 apart from many
 of their
 contemporaries
 is the sheer
 accessibility of
 their music.
 Their songs are

use vocabulary
 that challenges
 young
 performers
 without being
 obscure.
 Furthermore, the
 emotional range
 in their
 work—from the

hilarious who wants to be
frustration of a star or a girl
"Alto's Lament" pining for a
to the tender caffeine-serving
friendship crush, **Marcy**
anthem "The **Heisler and**
Junkyard **Zina Goldrich**
Dog"—means approach each
there is a song piece with the
for every mood same level of
and occasion. craft and care as
Their style has a grand
evolved over the Broadway epic.
years, but the That dedication
core remains: a to truth in
commitment to miniature is
story. Whether perhaps their
they are writing greatest gift to
about a mouse the musical

theater
landscape.

**CONCLUSION: A PARTNERSHIP
THAT CONTINUES TO SHINE**

**Marcy Heisler
and Zina
Goldrich** have
carved out a
unique and
irreplaceable
niche in the
musical theater
world. Their body
of work
demonstrates
that great
songwriting can
happen on any
scale, and that
stories meant for

young audiences
can have just as
much artistic
integrity as those
for adults. As
they continue to
write new
material, teach,
and inspire, their
influence shows
no sign of
waning. For
anyone looking
to understand
how lyricist and
composer can
work in perfect
harmony, the
partnership of

Marcy Heisler and **Zina Goldrich** offers endless remains a rewards. Their shining example music reminds of creative us that the most excellence, joy, powerful stories and heart. are often the Whether you're a ones that make theater educator, us laugh, cry, a student, a and feel a little casting director, less alone—and or simply a fan of that is the well-crafted timeless songs, the hallmark of great catalog of **Marcy** musical theater.