

MYSTERY SONG

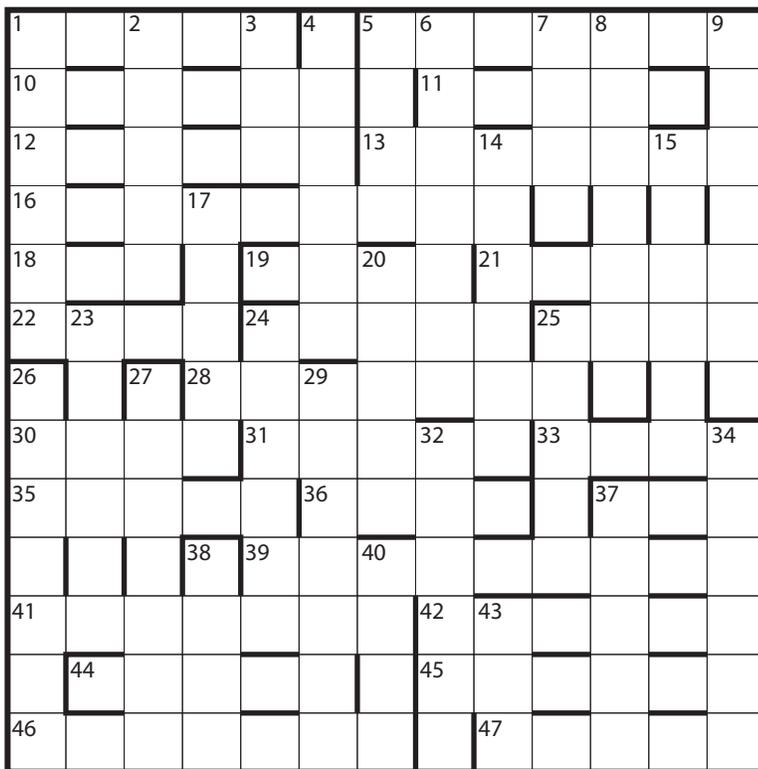
by Mark Halpin

Having completed a series of puzzles in which each paid tribute to a particular show in the Sondheim canon, we turn now to puzzles inspired by individual songs. The first song is ... well, that's for solvers to determine. Fortunately there are some clues scattered about:

1) Two performers associated with the song may be identified in the unclued entry at 28 Across; ambiguity in some crossing answers will accommodate this.

2) Each occurrence of a particular character in the grid will conflict with the answer crossing it. The crossing letter should be removed and replaced with a letter string (the same string each time); a new crossing word or phrase will be formed in each case. All of this is suggestive of a recurring lyric in the song.

3) Each removed letter is unique. Note the first letters of the clues for the affected entries and arrange them alphabetically by their associated removed letters. This will spell out something evidenced in the song (one performer's full name notwithstanding).



ACROSS

- 1 Took a picture depicting an African animal (5)
- 5 Slang for firearms confused Theresa (7)
- 10 Advise Budapest resorts with no BS (6)
- 11 Managed winter, after outset, like a hibernating critter (5)
- 12 Overturned contract snagging lawyers' group; it might be in hot water (6, 2 wds)
- 13 Stefano's playing a crafty trick (7, 2 wds)
- 16 Lady sporting thin, cool garment that covers just enough (9)
- 18 Inspect boxer's health care provider (3)
- 19 Perverse hero and king give the public a song and dance? (4)
- 21 Studies the sound of some musical instruments (5)
- 22 Oil company not originating chalk or gypsum preparation (4)
- 24 Transplant wino to the West (5)
- 25 Fight roughly, facing off (4)
- 28 See Instructions
- 30 News agency finally stole Times's crown (4)
- 31 Seal's bad luck: swallowing bit of algae (5)
- 33 Five excluded from party dance (4)
- 35 Stomach that's reminiscent of Big Ben? (5)
- 36 Place in the U.S. without a historic bridge (4)
- 37 Overturned mother ... that's awesome! (3)
- 39 Insinuating character sensed sin all over the place (9)
- 41 Atrocity almost: curdled cheese (7)
- 42 Alien first gobbling energy that's most abundant (6)
- 44 Eat up mush that's brownish gray (5)
- 45 Bean soup ingredient, often (6)
- 46 At outset of trip, space traveler mounted electronic device (7)
- 47 Fabric-coloring device doesn't start (5)

DOWN

- 1 Louie rudely taking bit of trouble to be remote (6)
- 2 Rewrite commercial essentially elevating *Barnum* (5)
- 3 Yet again concealing letter from abroad (3)
- 4 Try to fix inane rule, e.g. (6)
- 5 Data that may be gleaned from rain forest (4)
- 6 Incredible joy, I note deliriously, surrounds *City of Angels* (7)
- 7 French head of state texting insiders (4)
- 8 Decay, noise, or confusion (7)
- 9 Joint with mixture of elements gets loud? Apparently it does (7, 2 wds)
- 14 Be quiet and brave changing directions, or act like a coward (6)
- 15 Pitching duel on a small mound (6)
- 17 I complain about Ruth's mother-in-law (5)
- 20 Frown after initially seeing evidence of a whale (5)
- 23 Eastern European catching up? Fantastic! (6)
- 24 Bigot is absorbed by political pamphlets endlessly (6)
- 25 One of several clubs in Britain leading on English lord (5)
- 26 Dancing bear act's performance spot (7)
- 27 Call the novel *Fury* (7)
- 29 "Em," for example, follows alphabet's fourth letter; editor is perturbed (7)
- 32 Surrealist Dali no good taking on burdens (6)
- 34 Pay attention to distribution of tinsel (6)
- 37 Bush, eyed anew, is in need of a gardener's care (5)
- 38 Jaunt's beginning with our day in Marseilles (4)
- 40 XXX ("mature") venue for a go-go dancer (4)
- 43 Acoustic quartet's side of an argument (3)