



Excerpt from [\*Let the Sun Shine In: The Genius of HAIR\*](#) by Scott Miller

by John Sparger

They say it's a dead show. A dated show. They (read: critics) say there's no point in performing the show these days. People are no longer interested in the hare krishna of flower children tripping out of a counter-culture long gone.

I couldn't disagree more.

Despite its seemingly quasi-loose structure, authority-bashing irreverence, and Vietnam-era backdrop; *Hair*'s message is as necessary in the Present as it was in the late Sixties. Make love, not war; Peace on Earth and good will to all creatures; Do unto others... True, there are numerous productions of *Hair* being spewed forth as so much excrement on stages from Poughkeepsie to Pomona. But when care is given to depth, enlightenment will emerge.

*Hair* was always one of those shows on my To Do list—with Berger being the prize role. What more could a long-haired, rock n rollin' hippie wannabe want out of Theatre. I thought my life at the time (sex, drugs, struggling artist) was perfect for the essence of the character. Yet, for all those years I joneded for my shot, an opportunity never presented. Ironically, it was some time later, during one of my 'cleansing periods' that I was cast. And it was the absence of the aforementioned intoxicants that enabled me greater insight to this character and this show.

Although sex and drugs in their many variations play a part in *Hair*, I feel they are merely accelerants toward the larger Meaning—Peace, Love and Understanding; Acceptance; Brotherhood. So instead of smoking pot, dropping acid, and engaging in a sampling of sexual scenarios, I confronted the show's content with a clear head and a clean shell. Expansion of the mind attained from the heart and soul can be longer lasting and more rewarding. At least it was for me.

*Hair* is a show in which the Whole is certainly nothing without its Parts, but also where the Parts are nothing unto themselves till summed. Yes, we all know "Aquarius" and the title song "Hair." And most of us recognize "Easy to be Hard." But the book itself is a series of mostly non-linear nonsequiters strung out in a drug-induced melange thinly plotted against the political and cultural climate of the times. Or is it?

Here we have a cat—Claude, who owns up to his civic duty—scratch, make that *moral* duty as a sacrifice of physical being for the betterment of... hell, I'm not sure even *he* knows what he's dying for. But there must be some justice in it, right? Cause he knows he aint coming back.

Now, whether Berger understands the politics behind the war—scratch, make that conflict, or he's just not into laying his life down for ol' Uncle Sam; he's definitely not interested in being a

cog in a machine that kills rather than loves. And he certainly can't understand why his best friend feels the need to mount the cross.

Each attacking the enemy from a different front. But exactly who is the Enemy?

The beauty of this show is within the couching of its agenda. For underneath it all, *Hair* is a morality play. The Tribe in a fight against the Authority of the times with its Savior (Claude) caught in a struggle to sacrifice Flesh to save Soul.

Breaking the staid and stagnant conventions of the 1950's allows the participants of this new generation to unshackle themselves and elevate to a higher plane. Certain drugs and sexual freedom are ways of opening up to greater possibilities. But the strongest tool available is, of course, the mind. For when the Mind is free, limits are boundless.