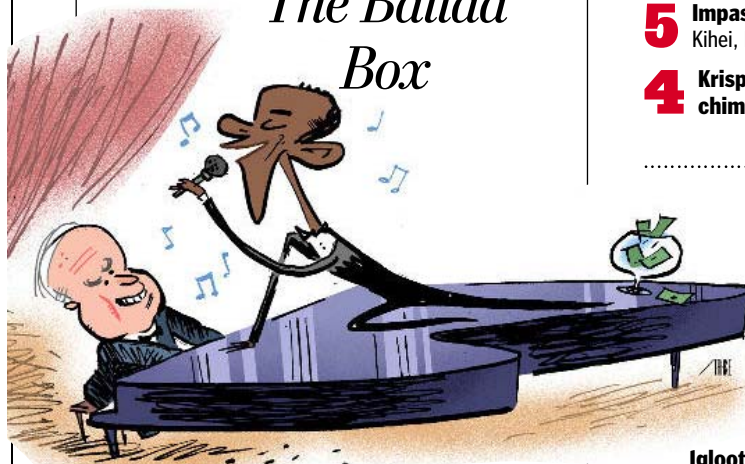


# The Style Invitational

## THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

### Week 785: The Ballad Box



BY BOB STAMME FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The results of this week's contest will run, as usual, four weeks from now. And that happens to be the weekend before Election Day. So here's our chance to do a contest that several readers have requested: **This week: Write a short, humorous song somehow relating to the presidential campaign, set to a familiar tune.** The longer the parody, the better it ought to be; one-verse songs tend to get the most ink, though we've had some fabulous longer ones as well.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets a music-themed package of a genuine German LP record of polka music with very comical musicians pictured on the jacket (donated by Elden Carnahan) and a set of colorful pencils and pens bent into the shapes of pianos, treble clefs, etc. (from Dave Prevar). We knew graphite was soft, but we didn't know you could tie it in knots.

**Other runners-up** win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable Mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. First Offenders get a smelly tree-shaped air freshener (Fir Stink for their First Ink). One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to [losers@washpost.com](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Oct. 13. Put "Week 785" in the subject line of your e-mail, or it risks being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published Nov. 1. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's results is by Brad Alexander of Wanneroo, Australia.

## REPORT FROM WEEK 781

our continually requested contest in which you change an existing word by one letter, or transpose two adjacent letters, and define the result. This time the *Empress* required entrants to start with words beginning with I, J, K or L, but allowed

proper names and multi-word terms. As usual, she was buried up to her diadem in thousands of entries, including far more good ones than we have the space to print, and — trust us on this — far more than you could possibly enjoy reading in one sitting.

- 5 Impasta:** Franco-American spaghetti. (Chris Doyle, Kihai, Hawaii)
- 4 Krisp Kringle:** The sad result of a Christmas Eve chimney fire. (Beverly Sharp, Washington)

- 3 Skilljoy:** The would-be friend who's a bit better than you at everything. (Steve Fahey, Kensington)
- 2 the winner of the Virginity Soap and Placenta Soap from Oman:** IOUprofen: The Fed's current drug of choice. (Russ Taylor, Vienna)

## AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

**Nee Jerk:** A bride who instantly agreed to take her husband's name. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

## JUST RELEX: HONORABLE MENTIONS

**Joint Chiefs of Stuff:** They're the big guys at the Pentagon, I believe? — S.P., Wasilla (Chris Doyle)

**Ididarod:** Madonna, bragging? (Mike Inman, Lewes, Del., a First Offender)

**Igloot:** Cold, hard cash. (Marc Channick, San Diego)

**Iglop:** What's left of an Eskimo's home after global warming. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf; Christopher Lamora, Arlington)

**Pigloo:** A British men's room. (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

**Ignoramusk:** Axe Body Wash. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

**Ikebanal:** A flower arrangement in a smiley-face motif. (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

**Imbib:** To overdose on baby formula. (Christopher Lamora)

**Immensa:** Massively intelligent. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

**Immolatte:** The highest steam setting on a cappuccino machine. (Frank Yuen, Forest Hills, N.Y., a First Offender)

**Immuteable:** Billy Mays, Rosie O'Donnell and the Aflac duck. (Barry Koch)

**Impants:** Male augmentation surgery. (David Komornik, Danville, Va.)

**Impromptu:** The bowtie's a black sock, the cummerbund's one of Mom's scarves, and your date is going to kill you. (Jennifer Rubio, Oakton)

**Limpostor:** Someone who borrows a car with a handicapped license plate. (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

**Incommunicad:** Most any guy, during the game. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

**Inconvenient troth:** Dang! Abstinence fails ONE TIME and I've got to marry her. — Levi J., Wasilla, Alaska (Jon Graft, Centreville)

**In locko parents:** Grounded. (Erik Agard, Gaithersburg)

**Innuendow:** The implication that the size of one's hands and feet correspond to other appendages. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

**Insulatte:** The little cardboard sleeve around the coffee cup. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

**Internal Revenue Service:** Stripping Americans of their assets since 1862. (Jon Graft)

**Istanbul:** Genocide? What genocide? (Tristan Axelrod, Brescia, Italy)

**Jabberhocky:** An answer from Sarah Palin. (Larry Yungk, Arlington)

**Jackash:** Someone who flicks cigarette butts out the window. (Mike Inman)

**Jack-of-all-tirades:** The guy who sends a different rant every week to the Free for All page. (Chris Doyle)

**Jailhouse layer:** A person you don't want as your cellmate. (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

**Jalapeon:** A receptionist whose only skill is that she is totally hot. (Russ Taylor)

**Jehovah's Wetness:** Baptism. (Chris Doyle)

**John Bitch Society:** A group formed just to whine and complain about communism. (Russell Beland)

**Jolly Roget:** Pirate flag, banner, ensign, jack, oriflamme, pennant, streamer . . . (Aron Pollack, Atlanta, a First Offender)

**Jury dullification:** What got O.J. Simpson off. (Chris Doyle)

**Latrina:** The smelly mess left behind by a hurricane. (Beverly Sharp)

**Kerry Blue Perrier:** Let's just put it out there as the name of his dog. — K. Rove, Washington (Chris Doyle)

**Kindergarten:** First there were thongs for 7-year-olds, and now this? (Anne Paris, Arlington)

**Kitschen:** Gingham curtains, with matching dish towels, tablecloth and tea cozy. (George Vary, Bethesda)

**Knowledge:** All that stuff you've forgotten. (Jack Held, Fairfax)

**Krapton:** Ignoble gas. (Lars-Erik Wiberg, Rockport, Mass.)

**Laddie, sin waiting (ladies-in-waiting):** Sign over a Scottish brothel. (Mike Ostapiej, Tracy, Calif.)

**Flaborious:** Describing a task made more difficult because of those extra pounds you're carrying; e.g., sitting down in an airplane. (John Shea, Lansdowne, Pa.)

**Laissez-Favre:** An NFL ruling that allows a quarterback to play wherever he pleases, even after retirement. (William Bradford, Washington)

**Laissez-fairin:** A magical creature who makes taxes disappear with her invisible hand. (Aron Pollack)

**Glance corporal:** But don't tell. (Kevin Dopart)

**Larger-than-wife:** How a husband prudently describes other women. (Chris Doyle)

**Alas Vegas:** What happened there didn't stay there. (Chris Doyle)

**Slaxative:** An ill-advised method for making your pants fit better. (Pete Kaplan, Charlotte, N.C., a First Offender)

**Layabot:** A Roomba that stops vacuuming to watch soap operas. (Tom Witte)

**Blazy Susan:** Joan of Arc's little-known sister. (Peter Metrinko)

**Lepidopera:** "Madama Butterfly." (Frank Yuen)

**Loingerie:** Tarzan's underwear. (John O'Byrne, Dublin)

**Blipstick:** A momentary distraction from serious political discussion. (Bruce Alter, Fairfax Station)

**Slobotomize:** To turn an Oscar Madison into a Felix Unger. (John Shea)

**Glockbox:** Sarah Palin's got your Social Security trust fund right here! (Pam Sweeney, St. Paul, Minn.)

**Oquacious:** Especially vocal at the height of passion. (Tom Witte)

**Dumbago:** Back pain from driving your RV for five hours with a whiskey bottle in your back pocket. (Kevin Dopart)

**And Last: Jestam:** Entries tossed by the *Empress*. (Tom Witte)

**Next Week: That's the Ticket, or Ruining Mates**

## 3-in-1: Who Could Ask For Anything More?

THEATER, From C1

The Eisenhower, its somber dark wood and worn red carpeting replaced by lighter tones and new blue carpets, is given over to quasi-concert versions of each of the boiled-down shows. Wade Laboissonniere's colorful costumes handsomely outfit each show, and James Noone's incidental set pieces easily glide on and off. But the most vital fixture onstage is the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, conducted by James Moore, which gives each of the scores a heartiness of flavor that theater audiences rarely experience.

The classy, well-put-together Jones, known better for musicals on film ("The Music Man," "Oklahoma!"), is the evening's mistress of ceremonies, on hand to fill in plot details and occasionally, kid the audience.

"So, ya ready for another one?" she asks, about two hours and 15 minutes into the show, when patrons are settled in after a second intermission. The wait is more than worthwhile, for the final leg provides the most enthralling moments. As the Siamese twins of "Side Show" — which deeply divided audiences with its intimate exploration of an uncomfortable subject during its short Broadway run a decade ago — Lisa Brescia and Jenn Colella provide what is hands down the night's most luminous turn: a rendition of composer Henry Krieger and lyricist Bill Russell's "Who Will Love Me as I Am?"

The presentation of 11 "Side Show" songs comes across as a seamless distillation of the musical and its profoundly moving portrait of Daisy (Colella) and Violet (Brescia) Hilton, sisters recruited for the midway who yearn for the peaks and valleys of normal life. Price and Tom Briggs, who adapted it for the Kennedy Center, guide the segment with so much heart and energy that the concert feels as if it were a Broadway re-audition.

Choreographed with dynamic authority by Josh Rhodes, the production slithers from "Come Look at the Freaks," its dark "Willkommen, Bienvenue"-style prologue, through impassioned duets and production numbers. Ken Billington's ultra-dramatic lighting neatly heightens the emotionality. As Terry Connor and Buddy Foster, hucksters who mean both to help and exploit the sisters, Max von Essen and Bobby Steggert ably convey the characters' ambiguous textures. And Michael McLeroy is nothing short of captivating as Jake, the protective carnival hand who watches worriedly from the sidelines.

"Side Show" is supposed to represent an inventive new breed in the three waves of songwriters the production asserts define Broadway over the past 80 years or so. (During each third of the show, photographs of composers and lyricists from that general era descend from the ceiling.) In the interest of suggesting a sequential historical development of the Broadway musical, Jones explains that "Side Show" is an example of a "sung-through" musical — one performed virtually free of dialogue. It's a term being used loosely, for "Side Show" does include dialogue.

George and Ira Gershwin's "Girl Crazy" is cited as an example of Broadway "burlesque," and "Bye Bye Birdie," by Charles Strouse, Lee Adams and Michael Stewart, is described as an "integrated" book musical, one in which dialogue scenes and songs work hand-in-glove to propel the narrative. Singing out the enjoyable if sitcom-level parody of "Bye Bye Birdie" as a model of the American book musical feels like a bit of stretch. Show tune lovers can engage in their own debate.

The evening begins with a loosey-goosey "Girl Crazy," with a gallery of hayseeds and city slickers running amok in Custerville, Ariz., a town that's short on women but long



BY SCOTT SUCHMAN — KENNEDY CENTER

Randy Graff puts her stamp on the "Girl Crazy" classics such as "I Got Rhythm" in the Kennedy Center's "Broadway: Three Generations."

on wisecracks. "Bidin' My Time," "Embraceable You" and "But Not for Me" are among the standards that the show spawned, in a bygone era when Broadway minted the music mainstream America listened to.

The breakout interlude in this segment is "I Got Rhythm," which has been developed into a joyous tap number by choreographer Randy Skinner. (As sung by the skillful comic actress Randy Graff, the song lacks some of the brass and breadth that Ethel Merman gave to it.)

The shift from "Girl Crazy" to "Bye Bye Birdie" is far less jarring than the leap that Price and company have to execute to get to "Side Show." Jones is required in this middle segment to over-explain the story of "Bird-

ie," as if its silly plot were something out of Dickens. (For the three of you out there who need the reminder, it's about an Elvis-like dreamboat who comes in a P.R. stunt to an Ohio suburb to sing and plant a kiss on a local girl's cheek before his Army enlistment.)

Thanks, however, to Leslie Kritzer's vivacious, well-sung turn as Rose, the neglected girlfriend of the teen idol's agent — and lively renderings of such songs as "The Telephone Hour" and "Hymn for a Sunday Evening" — "Birdie" has its moments. (Laura Osnes, who won the "Greasel" reality-TV casting competition on NBC, plays Kim, the kissable teen, with all the requisite perkiness.)

"Side Show," the least well known of the

featured musicals, gets the biggest boost from the tender-loving treatment of "Broadway: Three Generations." And for that, an audience can forgive this mammoth undertaking some of its missteps and liberties.

**Broadway: Three Generations**, adapted for concert version by Tom Briggs and Lonny Price. Directed by Price. Choreography, Randy Skinner and Josh Rhodes; music director, James Moore; sound, Peter Hylenski. With Michael Mulheren, Ned Eisenberg, Richard Pelzman, Brooks Ashmanskas, James Snyder. About three hours, 1:30 p.m., at Kennedy Center. Call 202-467-4600 or visit [www.kennedy-center.org](http://www.kennedy-center.org).

## Music

### TGIF! Here, Amateurs Let Their Love Flow.

By ANNE MIDGETTE  
Washington Post Staff Writer

"Amateur" means, literally, "lover." And passionate lovers of music have been responsible for creating many great music institutions, like the storied Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, founded in Vienna in 1812. These amateurs were not merely patrons, but active players who often concertized with professionals. In classical-era Vienna, one of the most renowned gatherings (at

Prince Lichnowsky's) was held on Friday mornings.

So there is clear precedent for the Friday Morning Music Club, which, though not quite as venerable, has an impressively long history; it is in its 122nd season. Its age is belied by its vitality. Run by volunteers, presenting free performances by professionals and non-professionals who play for the love of it, the organization offers a range of orchestra, choral and chamber concerts, and competitions in and around

the District, not all of them on Fridays.

It also offers a wide range of music. Yesterday's concert in the carpeted hall of the Summer School Museum, the series' home base and most frequent venue, had a refreshing eclecticism that seems echoed in the programs as a whole: unusual and little-played works, offered by various combinations of players. Few chamber presenters could afford to present a flute and clarinet duo, a four-hand piano team and two singers on a single program. But when they're

playing for free, you can put on as many combinations as you like.

The point of an amateur concert is to come together to appreciate the music — an art we have nearly lost in an age that has trained us to view classical concerts as opportunities to gawk at high-wire feats of virtuosity. Such a concert is less about performance, per se, than a shared exploration of unusual repertory.

Some of yesterday's "unusual" offerings fell well within the club's living history. Take Morton Gould's Duo, played by Michael Bowyer, a flutist, and Nancy Genova, a clarinetist. Gould's music always smacks to me of the 1950s; though this piece actually dates to 1982, it offers neat little packages of bright coordinating color (imagine the shades of kitchen appliances),

pretty tunes tied with a bow and offered, here, earnestly. Or take the songs of Roger Quilter and Ralph Vaughan Williams, souvenirs of earlier in the century, sung by Ben Wallis.

In the classical heyday of amateurism, the four-hand piano arrangement was the main vehicle for home music enjoyment. Yesterday, however, Sophia Pallas and Julian Trail, in an arrangement of Debussy's "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun," offered the day's highest level of technical polish. But Wallis's contributions, sung in a more than respectable baritone with a heartfelt straightforwardness that would be welcome from many professionals, were a better indication of what the spirit of amateurism, in its truest and most ardent sense, can be about.