

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER
Carey Perloff, Artistic Director • Ellen Richard, Executive Director

PRESENTS

WORDS ^{on} PLAYS

INSIGHT INTO THE PLAY, THE PLAYWRIGHT, AND THE PRODUCTION

*Armistead Maupin's
Tales of the City
A New Musical*

LIBRETTO BY MUSIC AND LYRICS BY
JEFF WHITTY JAKE SHEARS AND JOHN GARDEN

BASED ON ARMISTEAD MAUPIN'S *TALES OF THE CITY*
AND *MORE TALES OF THE CITY*

CHOREOGRAPHY BY LARRY KEIGWIN

DIRECTED BY JASON MOORE

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

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A TALES OF THE CITY TIMELINE: 1976–77

1976

The Consenting Adult Sex Bill, passed in California in May 1975, becomes effective in January. The bill—which repeals the state’s sodomy law, making gay sex legal for the first time—was championed by State Senator George Moscone, who was elected mayor of San Francisco in November 1975.



1978 San Francisco Gay Day Parade. Photo by Marie Ueda. Courtesy Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

On March 20, after a three-month high-profile trial in a federal court in San Francisco, Patty Hearst, socialite granddaughter of publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst, is convicted for her role in the Symbionese Liberation Army’s (SLA) 1974 robbery of a Hibernia Bank branch in the city’s Sunset District (along the coast). She is sentenced to prison in September.

On May 24, the first daily installment of Armistead Maupin’s *Tales of the City* column appears in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

In July, California passes Senate Bill 95, decriminalizing the possession of marijuana, making

possession of one ounce a misdemeanor punishable by a \$100 fine.

The United States celebrates its bicentennial. The inspirational performance group Up with People performs the Super Bowl halftime show at Miami’s Orange Bowl, proclaiming, “Some folks say we’ve come a long way. Others say we’ve got a long way to go. And you know, probably both are right.”

President Ford, hobbled by his connections to the Nixon administration, barely manages to win the Republican nomination over former actor and California governor Ronald Reagan.

Georgia Democrat Jimmy Carter defeats Ford on election day, becoming the first president from the Deep South since the Civil War.

Ice dancing makes its first appearance at the Winter Olympics.

Johnnie Taylor's "Disco Lady," off his album *Eargasm*, becomes the first-ever certified platinum single.

Teenage sensations Donny and Marie Osmond get their own television variety show.

Mayor George Moscone nominates Jim Jones of the People's Temple to San Francisco's Housing Authority. Jones, then a respected community leader, will be responsible for the mass death of 900 followers in Jonestown, Guyana, just two years later.

San Francisco bans roller-skating on public streets.

On November 25, music promoter Bill Graham presents The Band in "The Last Waltz" at the Winterland Ballroom in the Fillmore District. Guest stars including Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Van Morrison, Muddy Waters, and Ringo Starr all perform during the monumental farewell concert, which is filmed by Martin Scorsese.

Three nights later, Elvis Presley plays the Cow Palace in Daly City (immediately south of San Francisco), his last Bay Area show before his death the following year.

Popular films: *Rocky*, *Taxi Driver*, *Network*.

1977

The day after his January inauguration, Jimmy Carter pardons the vast majority of Vietnam draft dodgers.

In January, thousands protest the eviction of low-income San Francisco residents from the International Hotel at Kearny and Jackson.

Orange juice spokeswoman Anita Bryant begins her Save Our Children campaign in January, calling for the repeal of a Miami law that forbids discrimination against homosexuals. On June 7, 70 percent of Miami voters vote with Bryant to repeal the law, energizing the country's religious conservatives. That night, hundreds of Castro residents, led by Harvey Milk, march through San Francisco in protest.

In March, City Hall installs metal detectors after a string of threats and bombings by SLA-like radical groups such as the Red Guerrilla Family and the New World Liberation Front.

Famed disco club Studio 54 opens in New York.

In June, State Senator John Briggs, a supporter of Bryant's Save Our Children campaign, travels from his Orange County district to San Francisco to announce a new initiative: he plans to bar homosexuals from teaching in California's schools.

Robert Hillsborough is stabbed 15 times in a Mission Street parking lot on the night of June 21. Hillsborough had gone out disco-dancing with Jerry Taylor; they were leaving a late-night burger joint when they were attacked by four young men screaming "faggots." Mayor Moscone speaks out against John Briggs. Hillsborough's mother publicly blames Bryant for the murder of her son.

On June 26, 250,000 people march in San Francisco for the fifth annual Gay Freedom Day (the forerunner of today's Pride Parade)—twice as many as participated the year before. Marchers carry anti-Bryant protest signs and set up a memorial for Hillsborough on the steps of City Hall.

Good Vibrations, San Francisco's first women-oriented, sex-positive sex shop (and only the second of its kind in the country), opens on Valencia Street.

Following a Moscone-led switch to district elections for city supervisors (who were previously elected at-large from a single slate), the 1977 municipal election reshapes the political landscape of San Francisco. For the first time, voters elect a Chinese American, an African American woman, a single mother, and an openly gay man—Castro leader Harvey Milk. Milk and Moscone will be assassinated by disgruntled ex-supervisor Dan White on November 28, 1978.

Saturday Night Fever, starring John Travolta, opens in December. Other popular films: *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Annie Hall*.



Harvey Milk in front of Castro Camera (his store and headquarters), June 1977. Photo courtesy San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.