

PALACE THEATER

SHOW INTEL

Season 2025–2026 | Issue 5: Stereophonic

STEREOPHONIC

ABOUT THE SHOW

The most Tony Award-winning show of 2024, and the most Tony Award-nominated play of all time, *Stereophonic* mines the agony and the ecstasy of creation as it zooms in on a music studio in 1976.

An up-and-coming rock band recording a new album finds itself suddenly on the cusp of superstardom. The ensuing pressures could spark their breakup — or their breakthrough.

Written by David Adjmi, directed by Daniel Aukin, and featuring original music by Arcade Fire's Will Butler, *Stereophonic* invites the audience to immerse themselves — with fly-on-the-wall intimacy — in the powder keg process of a band on the brink of blowing up.

Recommended for ages 13+. The play contains simulated drug use and adult topics.

FUN FACTS!

- *Stereophonic*, written by playwright David Adjmi, premiered off-Broadway in 2023, before transferring to Broadway in 2024.
- It is directed by London-born and New York-based director Daniel Aukin
- The Broadway production was initially scheduled to run for 3 months, but was extended several times due to popular demand, before closing in 2025.
- *Stereophonic* was nominated for a record 13 Tony Awards, and won 5 awards, including Best Play, Best Sound Design, Best Scenic Design, and Best Direction of a Play (Daniel Aukin).
- The action of the play takes place over the course of a year, divided into four Acts.
- The set recreates an authentic 1970s recording studio, with vintage equipment.
- **The actors provide all the vocals and play their instruments live. An off-stage sound engineer records them, so that the playbacks are from that night's performance.**

**WATCH
THE TRAILER**



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COMPOSER WILL BUTLER

The music of *Stereophonic* was composed by Will Butler, formerly of the indie rock band Arcade Fire. **Butler began working on *Stereophonic* with playwright David Adjmi in 2014, composing original songs with a late 1970s progressive rock sound, layered with blues and folk sounds.** Their concept was to create a play that felt more like a documentary than a musical.

During his 18 years with the band Arcade Fire, Will Butler played multiple instruments, including bass, guitar, synthesizer, and percussion.

He was part of Arcade Fire's 2010 Grammy Award win for Album of the Year in 2010. He also co-composed the score for the 2013 film *Her* with fellow musician Owen Pallett (earning an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Score).

In 2024, *Stereophonic* netted him two Tony Award nominations (Outstanding Music in a Play and Outstanding Orchestrations).

A PLAY WITH MUSIC – ABOUT MUSIC!

One of the reasons that *Stereophonic* is so fun to watch is that the **audience is treated to the in-process creation of a fictional rock band's album, in this immersive fly-on-the-wall experience.** We hear the tracks being laid down, while we get to know the characters and their complicated inter-personal relationships. The actors play and sing live, make mistakes, and improvise, during the onstage recording session. This unique approach brings intimacy and immediacy to the story, as the audience is dropped into the middle of the unfolding drama.

Stories about the behind-the-scenes stories of rock bands (real or imagined) have long captured our interest. While biopics of famous bands and artists have always been popular, fictional stories of creative and personal tensions among band members also appeal to music lovers of all genres.

Films such *The Commitments* (1991), *That Thing You Do* (1996), and *Almost Famous* (2000) brought the struggles of aspiring musicians and their fans to the big screen, and the 2019 best-selling novel *Daisy Jones and the Six* sparked a 2023 miniseries.

Left Polaroid: (From L) Jack Barrett as 'Grover' and Steven Lee Johnson as 'Charlie' in the First National Tour of *Stereophonic*. Photo by Julieta Cervantes

Right Polaroid: (From L) Claire DeJean as 'Diana', Emilie Kouatchou as 'Holly', and Denver Milord as 'Peter' in the First National Tour of *Stereophonic*. Photo by Julieta Cervantes

On stage, "Jukebox" musicals such as Palace Theater audience favorites *Tina – The Tina Turner Musical* and *Jersey Boys* connect audiences with music and artists that they know and love.

***Stereophonic* isn't a traditional musical, but this play with music brings us into a band's inner circle, capturing critical moments as the characters face fateful personal and creative decisions.**



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