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## “Mame” Lyricist Proud Of World He Created

By Michael David Smith  
 Gazette Staff Writer

When audience members walk out of Musical Theatre West’s production of “Mame,” Jerry Herman hopes they’ll hum his tunes.

Herman, who wrote the music and lyrics to “Mame,” said he takes pride in the way his songs help listeners enjoy themselves.

“I want them to forget for two and a half hours about all the horrendous headlines, and all of the troubles of the world that face us all every day,” Herman said. “I want them to spend that two and a half hours in a world of humor and warmth and love, and really escape what’s happening around us and leave the theater feeling better than they did when they came in.”

The “Mame” production, which opens this weekend, stars Carol Lawrence, Sally Struthers and Ruth Williamson. It kicks off the 50th anniversary season for Musical Theatre West.

Herman said he was pleased with the casting and looking forward to the Long Beach production.

“I think that the three leads are such superb choices that I actually called the director and congratulated him, because I can’t think of more wonderful casting than Carol Lawrence, Ruth Williamson and Sally Struthers.”

Lawrence starred in Long Beach last month in the International City Theater’s production of “Amy’s View.”

“Mame” is the story of a 10-year-old orphan boy who is delivered in the 1920s to his eccentric Aunt Mame. The story follows 18 years in the boy’s relationship with his aunt. Herman’s score includes the songs, “If He Walked Into My Life,” and “We Need A Little Christmas.”

The musical is based on the novel by Patrick Dennis and the play, “Auntie Mame” by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee.

Herman said he thinks audiences relate to the show because most people have known a flamboyant person like the title character in “Mame.”

“Everybody has somebody in their family or in their lives that they think is a Mame — a glamorous, fun-loving, outgoing, larger-than-life lady,” he said. “She’s such a great character that when I was

offered this job all these years ago, I didn't even have to think about it for a second."

Performances are at 8 p.m., Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and at 2 p.m. Sunday from Nov. 2 to Nov. 17. Musical Theatre West performs at the Carpenter Center at 6200 E. Atherton on the campus of California State University, Long Beach.

Visit [www.musical.org](http://www.musical.org) or call 430-2324 for tickets or for more information.

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