

Marvin Hamlisch

"One Singular Sensation"
with the San Diego Symphony

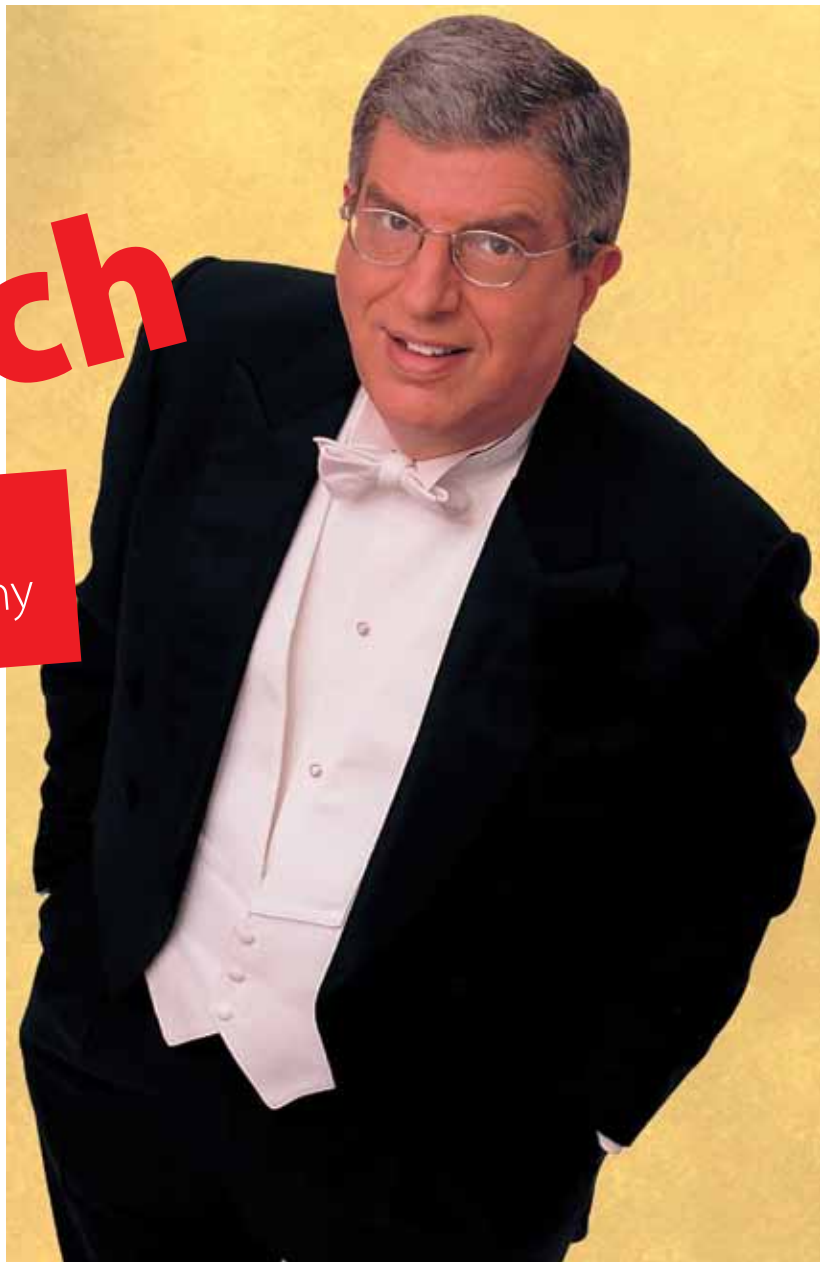
by bill biss

There is obviously a lot more to Marvin Hamlisch's career than just "One Singular Sensation." But his music for the long-lasting Broadway score of *A Chorus Line* is just part of this autobiographical trip along his contribution to both theatre and film music on November 12 and 13 at The San Diego Symphony Hall. It's not very often...or has it even been done...that a composer wins three Oscars in one year. That was the case in 1974 when Hamlisch collected these statuettes. He states, "I got three Oscars. Two for *The Way We Were*. One was for the song and one was for the score and the third was for the adaptation of Scott Joplin's music for *The Sting*. It was a good year."

Marvin Hamlisch is a graduate of the Julliard School of Music and Queens College. When he started his career, did he aspire to tackle Broadway, Hollywood or both with his talent? "I always wanted to write originally for the theatre. But, in order to do theatre, it's a real collaboration. You've got to find somebody who has got a book, you have to find a lyricist...a lot of different people at the same time who want to do the same thing. No one was offering me that at the time. I got into movies kind of by accident because I was at the right place at the right time. I was at a Hollywood party where I played for producer Sam Spiegel. Out of that, came my first film score, which was *The Swimmer* (1966). I basically started out doing something that I didn't even plan to do, which was film. Then, one thing led to another. Finally, after films, I got the famous phone call from Michael Bennett and that started me on *Chorus Line*. Shows have always been the thing I wanted to do...but I love doing other things. Anything that has to do with writing music is fine with me."

Marvin Hamlisch created the film score last year for *The Informant*, starring Matt Damon. The score itself is a rollercoaster ride of lows and highs depicting Damon's character in the film. Hamlisch describes his creative process in adding the music, "It is a film about a man who is bi-polar. Everything in his life is upside-down. Good is bad. Bad is good...it's all strange. I wanted to capture the fact that this music is all coming out of the way he sees the world. I'm particularly proud of it when you are actually watching the film. When you see the contrast between what is going on and what he's thinking, it's really funny."

For the upcoming "One Singular Sensation," Hamlisch describes his ability to add humor into the mix...along with all his wonderful musical creations. "This one is more autobiographical than most. J. Mark McVey, who is a friend of mine is a wonderful singer (McVey has completed seven years as "Jean Valjean" in *Les Miserables* and will join Hamlisch as vocalist). And yes, what I try and do about these programs, is to make a program that cannot be captured just by buying a CD. It's one thing to hear the music and a



lot of that music you can buy. I try to make that thing where you are giving a performer, things that are having to do with the moment and having to do with some fun. It's a combination of serious and fun. That's what I think is unique about the program. The show talks about some of the songs that have had a great influence on me and things that I have written, that I am very proud of."

Marvin Hamlisch is Principal Pops Conductor for numerous symphonies including his position for over two years at The San Diego Symphony. How does he describe his joy for bringing music to the youth and the general public? "I think right now, it's a very important time. There is hardly any music education in the schools. On radio, you hardly ever hear anything from the American songbook. I want to make sure that people hear this music. Particularly, that people bring their kids to the concerts to hear what it actually sounds like to hear a live orchestra. I think kids get a kick out of it, if they know that it's happening. I'm just trying to make sure that the kids have this outlet. I'm always thrilled when I see a couple of children in the audience...that to me, is a real thrill!"

Marvin Hamlisch "One Singular Sensation"

Friday, November 12 and Saturday, November 13

8:00 P.M.

Box Office: 619.235.0804

Sandiegosymphony.org