



BRONX BOMBERS

BY **ERIC SIMONSON**
CONCEIVED BY **FRAN KIRMSER**



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



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BRONX BOMBERS premiered at Primary Stages (Casey Childs, Executive Producer; Andrew Leynse, Artistic Director; Elliot Fox, Managing Director) in October 2013. It was directed by Eric Simonson; the scenic design was by Beowulf Borritt; the lighting design was by Jason Lyons; and the original music and sound design were by Lindsay Jones. The cast was as follows:

YOGI BERRARichard Topol
BOBBY STURGES/DEREK JETER..... Christopher Jackson
THURMAN MUNSON/MICKEY MANTLE Bill Dawes
BILLY MARTIN/MARK BIRKETT Keith Nobbs
REGGIE JACKSON/ELSTON HOWARD Francois Battiste
CARMEN BERRA Wendy Makkena
LOU GEHRIG John Wernke
JOE DiMAGGIO Chris Henry Coffey
BABE RUTH..... C. J. Wilson

BRONX BOMBERS was presented on Broadway by Fran Kirmser, Tony Ponturo, Quinvita, and Primary Stages, in association with the New York Yankees and Major League Baseball Properties at Circle in the Square in New York City, opening on February 6, 2014. It was directed by Eric Simonson; the assistant director was Logan Reed; the set design was by Beowulf Borritt; the costume design was by David C. Woolard; the lighting design was by Jason Lyons; the music and sound design were by Lindsay Jones; and the production stage manager was Adam John Hunter. The cast was as follows:

YOGI BERRA Peter Scolari
BOBBY STURGES/DEREK JETER..... Christopher Jackson
THURMAN MUNSON/MICKEY MANTLE Bill Dawes
BILLY MARTIN/MARK BIRKETT Keith Nobbs
REGGIE JACKSON/ELSTON HOWARD Francois Battiste
CARMEN BERRA Tracy Shayne
LOU GEHRIG John Wernke
JOE DiMAGGIO Chris Henry Coffey
BABE RUTH..... C. J. Wilson

CHARACTERS

YOGI BERRA — Yankee coach, catcher.

BOBBY STURGES — Sheraton room-service waiter.

THURMAN MUNSON — Yankee captain/catcher.

BILLY MARTIN — Yankee manager.

REGGIE JACKSON — Yankee right fielder.

CARMEN BERRA — Yogi's wife.

ELSTON HOWARD — Yankee catcher.

LOU GEHRIG — Yankee first baseman.

MICKEY MANTLE — Yankee center fielder.

JOE DiMAGGIO — Yankee center fielder.

DEREK JETER — Yankee shortstop.

BABE RUTH — Yankee center fielder.

MARK BIRKETT — a reporter.

All the actors in Act One may have an additional role in Act Two, rounding out the ensemble to 9.

SETTING

The action takes place in a hotel room in the Boston Sheraton in June 1977; the Berra household; and then the Yankee Locker Room in September 2008.

BRONX BOMBERS

ACT ONE

Scene 1

June 19, 1977. The main room of a suite in the downtown Boston Sheraton. There's a couch and a couple armchairs, a table, desk; side chairs as needed. The place reeks of '70s hotel decor, though it looks like this Sheraton may need a makeover in the next couple years. An entryway on one side of the stage leads to a door and, beyond that, a hallway; an entryway opposite leads to, we presume, a bedroom. Lights come up on Yogi Berra, 52, on the phone in mid-conversation. He is the Yogi we know: short, with enormous ears, nose, metal frame glasses.

YOGI. *(Into phone.)* No, I just got here. It was really fast ... I am calm! Sorry, didn't mean to — ... Because I'm the only one who can fix this, Carmen. And you know what they say: If it's broke, fix it. Plus I had to make all the arrangements without George Steinbrenner knowing — ... I thought it might be best to meet on neutral ground. Plus my room is cramped — *(Knock on the front door.)* Wait a sec, this might be Thurm. *(Off phone.)* Come on in! *(On phone.)* The worst part of staying in these hotels is you gotta spend time in them. *(A uniformed bellhop, Bobby Sturges, 20s, enters with a tray of coffee and settings.)* You're not Thurm.

BOBBY. Room-service. *(Bobby busies himself at a credenza.)*

YOGI. *(Into the phone.)* Look, I got someone here. Thurman's gonna come any second and I got this guy here. A waiter-guy, bellhop-guy —

BOBBY. Room-service.

YOGI. Room-service-guy. Miss you ... Love you too. Bye. (*Hangs up.*) What do we got here?

BOBBY. Coffee. Tea. Sanka, for anyone who prefers that. Assorted muffins, breads, cakes — packaged and fresh — um. And of course the Sheraton's signature blueberry muffin. Sign here, Mr. Berra.

YOGI. I ain't paying for this.

BOBBY. Sir?

YOGI. Goes to the Yankee Organization.

BOBBY. (*Looking at the tab.*) But —

YOGI. I made it clear downstairs.

BOBBY. I need someone to —

YOGI. You gonna keep your mouth shut about talking?

BOBBY. Huh?

YOGI. Whatever happens here, you didn't see no one nowhere doing nothing, understand?

BOBBY. ... Okay.

YOGI. You watch baseball?

BOBBY. No.

YOGI. Good.

BOBBY. But everyone's talking.

YOGI. About what?

BOBBY. I guess there was a big fight in the Yankees' dugout yesterday afternoon.

YOGI. And what else?

BOBBY. There was the coach, or, whatever you —

YOGI. Manager.

BOBBY. Yeah, manager. And he got into a huge fight with that Reggie guy.

YOGI. Reggie Jackson.

BOBBY. That's right.

YOGI. Jeez kid, you live on a rock?

BOBBY. No sir, but it was really embarrassing, and everyone saw it on national television. (*We hear a knock, off.*) I guess the Red Sox won, which makes my job a lot easier because everyone around the hotel's really *really* happy.

YOGI. I bet they are. (*Crossing to the door.*)

BOBBY. A lot of Red Sox fans. It is Boston after all, and my boss, he's a *huge* fan, and —

YOGI. Okay, I get it.

BOBBY. (*Yogi lets in Thurman Munson, 30, scruffy, with stubble; he*

looks like he might have just rolled out of bed — in fact, he has. He is dressed in an ill-fitting polyester button-down shirt and mismatched Sansabelt pants.) About the bill —

YOGI. Thurman.

THURMAN. Hey, Yogi.

YOGI. You're late. Sign for this?

THURMAN. Ain't my room.

YOGI. It ain't mine either. Yankees'll reimburse.

THURMAN. (*Scoffs, signing.*) Sure they will.

YOGI. Gabe Paul will reimburse when you see him later today. Or make it a part of next year's negotiations. (*Thurman hands back the tab.*)

BOBBY. (*To Thurman.*) Thank you, Mr. Steenbrenner.

THURMAN. Welcome.

YOGI. You remember, right?

BOBBY. Yes, sir. I didn't see nothing, nobody, nowhere.

YOGI. And how. (*Bobby exits.*)

THURMAN. Gotta watch out, Yogi. The lobby's already crawling with reporters.

YOGI. He don't care about baseball. How're you doing, Thurman?

THURMAN. Been better, that's for sure.

YOGI. I had bad dreams last night.

THURMAN. Yeah?

YOGI. Weird dreams.

THURMAN. I got a cure for that.

YOGI. What?

THURMAN. Insomnia. (*Winces.*) My knees are killing me.

YOGI. You've been hurting since the start of the season. Why don't you take a couple days off.

THURMAN. Never.

YOGI. Catcher's got a right.

THURMAN. A reporter once — he told me he'd calculated I'd been up and down over the plate something like a hundred and fifty thousand times.

YOGI. Jeez.

THURMAN. He could have said a million for all I know. What'd *you* do, Yogi?

YOGI. Huh?

THURMAN. Catching. You never took a day off.

YOGI. I never got hurt.

THURMAN. So what's your secret?

YOGI. If I told you it wouldn't be a secret.

THURMAN. Come on, Yogi.

YOGI. You wanna know my secret?

THURMAN. Yeah.

YOGI. I'm short.

THURMAN. That's it?

YOGI. I don't got that far to go to the ground.

THURMAN. Thanks. I'll work on that. What's the plan here, Yogi?

YOGI. Just need to get these two talking.

THURMAN. Aw, man.

YOGI. It's the only way, Thurm.

THURMAN. What you need me for?

YOGI. You're captain.

THURMAN. You don't think everyone knows I'm biased?

YOGI. Just because you hate Reggie don't make you bias.

THURMAN. Danish-go-round?

YOGI. Ain't hungry. We gotta win this one today, Thurm. Get back on track. Tell me what you saw yesterday? I wanna hear your version.

THURMAN. Okay, well. Billy charged Reggie —

YOGI. No, before that.

THURMAN. Out on the field?

YOGI. Yeah.

THURMAN. (*Thinks.*) I was behind the plate, I stood up. I remember being ... Really. Pissed. Off!

YOGI. Reggie didn't catch the ball?

THURMAN. No, it was out of reach. I don't think he could have caught it.

YOGI. That's what I think.

THURMAN. He was way out in right, playing Rice really deep — which he shoulda been. Then the guy hits a little blooper. Reggie kind of jogs up to the ball, like no big deal, but. Yeah, he could have stopped Rice from reaching second.

YOGI. Coulda kept him at first.

THURMAN. If he'd hustled.

YOGI. (*Statement.*) So you agree with Billy.

THURMAN. Hell yeah! (*Then ...*) What, for taking him out of the game?

YOGI. Yeah.

THURMAN. Billy's manager, he can do whatever he wants.

YOGI. But managers don't do that.

THURMAN. What are you talking about, they bench players all the time.

YOGI. Never an outfielder, never in the middle of an inning. Least I never seen it. Except once. Casey replaced DiMaggio in the middle of an inning — this was at the end of his career. Joe sent his replacement right back to the dugout and stayed in. Big F-you to Casey. And that was the last time they ever talked. Ever. Two more years together and they never talked. But then again, they never went at each other with punches either. Though sometimes I wish they had.

THURMAN. How's that?

YOGI. Better than the silent treatment. All that guy had to do was look at you the wrong way and you wanted to die.

THURMAN. So you think Billy was trying to humiliate Reggie.

YOGI. He was trying to show Reggie who was boss. Why didn't you help Elly and me pull those guys apart?

THURMAN. It looked like you all had it under control.

YOGI. Nothing's been under control. Not on this club, not the entire season. I ain't ever seen it this bad.

THURMAN. Things were fine before Reggie came.

YOGI. But he's here now, and he ain't going nowhere.

THURMAN. What about Billy?

YOGI. You mean is he gonna get canned?

THURMAN. Yeah. *(Beat.)*

YOGI. I guess we see.

THURMAN. The fans are on Billy's side.

YOGI. 'Cause he reminds them of when things were better.

THURMAN. I was telling the guys last night, if Steinbrenner fires Billy, I'm going to quit the team.

YOGI. Don't be stupid.

THURMAN. Not stupid. I've gotta stand up for what's right. And the Yankees aren't the only team in the country, you know.

YOGI. You talking Cleveland?

THURMAN. I don't know. Wouldn't be so bad, someplace close to home. It sure as hell would make things easier on Diana and the kids. I miss them, Yogi.

YOGI. Try being on the road for thirty years. *(Knock on the door.)*

THURMAN. Maybe I need a regular job.

YOGI. Then why did you run off and join the circus? Try to be even-minded. *(Yogi opens the door to reveal Billy Martin, 48, rail-thin. He's wearing boot-cut jeans, a Western-style shirt, leather jacket,*

BRONX BOMBERS

by Eric Simonson
conceived by Fran Kirmser

12M, 1W

BRONX BOMBERS follows beloved baseball icon Yogi Berra and his wife Carmen through a century of the team's trials and triumphs. The third installment of Eric Simonson's sports trilogy (following *Lombardi* and *Magic/Bird*) spans the team's history from Babe Ruth to the last game at Yankee Stadium in 2008, bringing generations of Yankees MVPs together on one stage. As it celebrates and explores the timeless legacy of baseball's most iconic team, BRONX BOMBERS takes a fascinating look at how and why the Yankees have remained so undeniably great, and so powerfully inspirational.

"Billy Martin and Reggie Jackson's clash of wills is the stuff of arresting drama; the 1977 Yankees, after all, had a season for the ages ... BRONX BOMBERS arrives as the club's latest era, that of the Core Four, is on the wane. So a reflection on how the Yankees assemble such great teams [is] timely." —**The New York Times**

"... intimate and immediate."

—**The New York Post**

"Playwright Eric Simonson, who wrote Broadway's Lombardi, clearly loves sports; he's adept finding its place in America's cultural landscape. And he's particularly enamored of the Yankees. [BRONX BOMBERS] is a eulogy for the past, as well as a critique of present-day play."

—**The Huffington Post**

Also by Eric Simonson

LOMBARDI

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