

Dan Goggin: He's Like "Nun" Other

By Glenn Swift

Dan Goggin is not your typical Broadway success story. He didn't grow up in Manhattan or have parents who were "in the business." In fact, like most kids growing up in Alma, Michigan, young Dan really didn't know much about the theatre at all. So how did Goggin end up as one of the most highly respected lyricists and composers in contemporary musical theatre? Well... he followed a nun's advice.

"Back when I was a seminarian in Catholic high school, one of the sisters came up to me and said, 'You're so good in music, I think you should go to music school. With your strong background, you'll have something special to offer.'"

The sister's advice made perfect sense – or should we say – "nonsense."

Goggin soon found himself in the Big Apple enrolled at the prestigious Manhattan School of Music. Incredibly, it didn't take long for opportunity to knock.

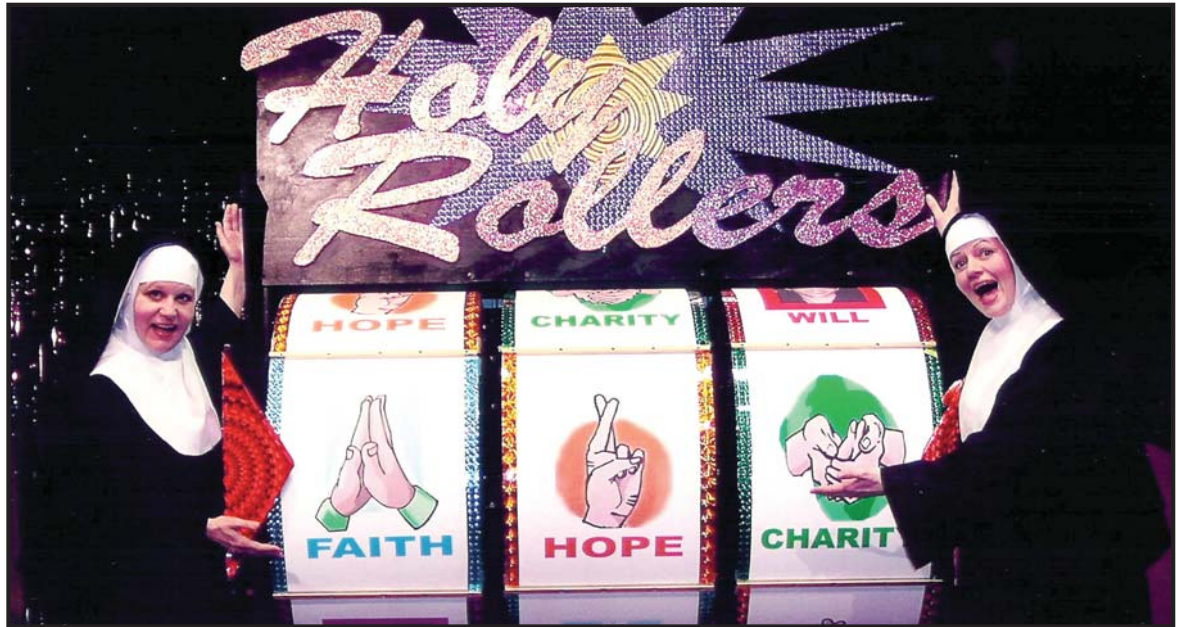
"Some folks came by one day who were casting for Luther, a new show that was about to come out on Broadway starring Albert Finney. The funny thing is, I really didn't know much about show music at all, but they wanted someone classically trained with a strong choral background. Apparently, they liked what they heard."

That's putting it mildly.

Almost overnight, and without any real stage experience, Goggin found himself on Broadway alongside some of the theatre's greatest stars.

"At the time I didn't quite realize just how incredible an experience it was to be hanging around folks like Albert Finney and Vanessa Redgrave on a daily basis."

Following Luther, Goggin toured the country as a member of the renowned folk singing duo, The Saxons. Then all of a sudden, he struck out in a new direction.



"I was having a little trouble getting parts, so I began writing musicals. That way, I could include a part for me," cracked Goggin.

His first score was for the off-Broadway musical Hark! The show was critically acclaimed and Goggin began composing both music and lyrics for revues satirizing current events, trends, and personalities.

After several years as a successful composer, including work on several Broadway shows, Goggin again decided to try something a bit different. He began writing a line of greeting cards based upon his early life experiences while in seminary. Bizarre as it may sound, Goggin had found his niche.

Featuring a nun offering tart quips, the cards were a smash success. It was then that Goggin decided to expand the zany concept into a cabaret show – The Nonsense Story, which opened for a four-day run at Manhattan's Duplex and ran for 38 weeks. Nonsense's spectacular success prompted Goggin to expand the show into a full-length production.

What followed was one of off-Broadway's biggest commercial successes of all time -- the show amassed a total of 3,672 performances. And as you might suspect, Nonsense-mania

extended well beyond the American stage. The show became an international phenomenon translated into 21 languages and with more than 5,000 productions worldwide. Goggin followed the one-of-a-kind production with five sequels: Nonsense 2: The Second Coming; Sister Amnesia's Country Western Nonsense Jamboree, Nuncrackers; The Nonsense Christmas Musical, Meshuggah-Nuns!; and Nunsensations: The Nonsense Vegas Revue.

Despite all his success, Goggin remains as humble as a Michigan farm boy.

"People are always asking me how I came up with this and how I came up with that. But I always tell them that I'm really not all that smart. It's just that I've been around so long, I've been able to learn from my mistakes."

He's also as excited about his work as ever before.

"I can't tell you how much fun it is to be bringing my latest show (Nunsensations: The Vegas Revue) to the Maltz/Jupiter Theatre. And having talented people like Andrew Cato (Maltz/Jupiter Theatre Artistic Director) involved in the production really makes it special."

When asked if there was anything in particular that he would like theatre/comedy lovers on the Treasure Coast and Palm Beach County to know about the show, Goggin said this: "We've got a world-class cast and totally brand-new material."

There was something else Goggin wanted to make clear.

"None of my shows are critical of religion in any way. In fact, our biggest fans are nuns."

As for any chance that Goggin might be ready to "hang up his spikes" after all these years, don't count on it.

"I truly love what I'm doing and having way too much fun to stop."

If you want to laugh like you haven't laughed in a long time, be sure to check out David Goggin's Nunsensations: The Vegas Revue at the Jupiter/Maltz Theatre at 1001 East Indiantown Road in Jupiter. This incredibly funny show with an all-star cast will be playing at all different times from Wednesday, September 26 to Sunday, September 30. For tickets or more information, call 561-575-2223 or visit www.jupitertheatre.org.