

# Tommy Tune's Song and Dance Act is Ageless

*By: Jean Battey Lewis  
The Washington Times  
Monday, January 26, 2009*

“Steps in Time: A Broadway Biography in Song and Dance.”

He was at the Music Center at Strathmore Friday and Saturday for a performance that managed to be both low-key and bravura.

Years in the spotlight have honed his warm, easy communion with the audience, and his canny sense of timing led him to craft a show that combined reminiscence, stirring belted-out singing, and whispery, understated soft-shoe routines.

The dancer-singer was on stage virtually every minute of the program that ran over 1 1/2 hours without intermission.

Even allowing for the fitness that would come to someone who never stopped dancing, the evening was a tour de force. Mr. Tune began quietly, talking to the audience, making contact, asking for reaction with a show of hands, then breaking his performance down to one of the most basic elements, the time step: brush, brush, step, brush, brush, step.

From there Mr. Tune who has received nine Tony awards, film credits and has a Carnegie Hall gig under his belt -was off on a romp that was a survey of show biz over the past 50 years that he has been treading the boards.

There were plenty of corny jokes about his height, such as: “When I first tried to join a chorus line I told them I was five feet 17 1/2 inches tall.”

He spoke of his encounter with Sir Laurence Olivier who told him, “Acting is simply an expression of love,” which seems to be Mr. Tune’s mantra, too. There were references to revered golden oldies like Noel Coward, Charles “Honi” Coles, Gene Kelly and Gregory Hines.

He channeled Rex Harrison, shouting “Damn, damn, damn!” before breaking into “I’ve grown accustomed to her face”; Walter Houston singing Kurt Weill’s “September Song”; and Maurice Chevalier (“I’m glad I’m not young any more.”)

Some of the most satisfying moments of the evening were when Mr. Tune was joined by two members of the Manhattan Rhythm Kings (one on each side, looking dwarfed beside him) and the three of them hunkered down, hands in pockets, and slid as smooth as butter through the hushed patter of lightly tapping vaudevillian feet.