

I'm here to present Alfred Uhry for induction in the Theatre Hall of Fame, and I couldn't be happier. Alfred is one of the sweetest men I know. He is kind and generous, loves to laugh, is patient, and loyal, and he has a sentimental streak for the people of his worlds, both real and imaginary. His real world started in Atlanta, Ga where he was born and grew up, and that setting has been the background for some of his most successful work.

I met Alfred when I auditioned for *Driving Miss Daisy*. I didn't know then that not only would he create the best role I ever had, but that he would become one of my best friends. Alfred won the Pulitzer Prize for *Driving Miss Daisy*, and he said later about that production, "It had some kind of light around it." His imaginary characters in *Driving Miss Daisy* have become household names and part of today's mythology. I'm enormously proud to have been the first Miss Daisy.

Several years after "Daisy," I was in his play "*The Last Night of Ballyhoo*" which won him the Tony Award for Best Play that year, and was on the nomination list for a Pulitzer Prize. It, like Miss Daisy, was set in Atlanta. The third play in what is known as his "Atlanta trilogy" is the musical *Parade*, also set in Atlanta. Alfred won his second Tony award for the book of *Parade*, which premiered at Lincoln Center.

You might not know that *Driving Miss Daisy* was Alfred's first play and that he began his career in the theatre in musicals. It informs all that he writes and he has said, "I hear rhythms in my head when I write; it's not the words so much, it's the rhythms." Some lesser-known works include contributions to *Here's Where I Belong*, *Swing*, *Little Johnny Jones* and *America's Sweetheart*. He collaborated with Bob Waldman to adapt the Eudora Welty short story called "*The Robber Bridegroom*," and received a Tony

nomination for writing the book and lyrics of that musical. In the last several years he has given us the musical “*Lovemusik*,” which used music by Kurt Weill, and the plays “*Edgardo Mine*,” and “*Apples and Oranges*.”

Along the way, Alfred has scripted several movies, *Rich in Love* and *Mystic Pizza*, and he adapted his own play for the movie of *Driving Miss Daisy*, which won him an Oscar.

Alfred’s wonderful ear for dialogue and his keen observation of relationships have led him to be the first American playwright to win two Tonys , an Oscar and the Pulitzer Prize.

He is a man with a big heart, who writes with extraordinary skill and I can’t imagine a dearer, wiser friend.

I am thrilled that he’s being honored with induction into the Theatre Hall of Fame.