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Mathematical Heroes-No Longer Unsung. Preliminary report.

Sir Andrew Wiles' proof of Fermat's Last Theorem is the subject of "Fermat's Last Tango", a one-act musical created by Joshua Rosenblum and Joanne Sydney Lessner. The piece premiered off-Broadway in November 2000. The second U.S. performance took place at Madison East High School in May 2005. This production was adapted, directed, and performed by high school students.

The book, assisted by several catchy tunes, portrays mathematics as a discipline informed by a rich history yet continually undergoing change. Mathematical insight results from study and effort, not involuntary clairvoyance. Mathematicians in this work are fully human; stereotypes are acknowledged (somewhat playfully) and addressed. For an educator seeking to convince students that a future in mathematics is worth considering, the piece holds undeniable attractions.

Students were intrigued by the notion of "mathematician-as-hero," and the adventure of a small-scale musical attracted participants from a wide variety of mathematical backgrounds. Performers and audience members alike learned about the history and professional culture of mathematics. Educational benefits have continued into the next school year. Teachers and students at our school recommend similar projects to others. (Received September 23, 2005)