

Sondheim 101: Class 10 Featured Lyrics

Music & Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Merrily We Roll Along

(1981, rev. 1985) Unless otherwise noted, the songs here are in both the original and revised versions. When there are discrepancies, I've used the version in *Finishing the Hat* (Sondheim, 2010).

“Merrily We Roll Along”

COMPANY:

Yesterday is done.
See the pretty countryside.
Merrily we roll along, roll along,
Bursting with dreams.

Traveling's the fun,
Flashing by the countryside,
Everybody merrily, merrily
Catching at dreams,
Rolling along . . .
Rolling along . . .
Rolling along . . .

GROUP 1:
Dreams don't die,
So keep an eye on your dream—

GROUP 2:
And before you know where you are,
There you are.

GROUP 1:
Time goes by
And hopes go dry,
But you still can try
For your dream.

GROUP 1:	GROUP 2:
Tend your dream . . .	How does it happen?
Dreams take time. . .	When does it disappear?
Time goes by . . .	How can you get so far Of the track? Why don't you turn around And go back?
Bend your dream	How does it happen? Where is the moment?
With the road . . .	How can you miss it? isn't it clear?

How can you let it
Slip out of gear?

ALL:
How did you ever get there from here?

GROUP 1:
You roll . . .

GROUP 2:
How does it happen?
How does it happen?
When does it
disappear?
Isn't it always clear?
How does it start to
go?

You just roll . . .
Everybody roll. . .

ALL:
Does it slip away slow,
So you never even notice it's happening?

CHARLEY:
How did you get to be here?

OTHERS:
What was the moment?

MARY:
How did you get to be here?

MARY, CHARLEY:
Pick yourself a road.
Get to know the countryside.
Soon enough you're merrily,

ALL:
Merrily
Practicing dreams.
Dreams that will explode,
Waking up the countryside,
Making you feel merrily merrily
What can go wrong,
Rolling along?

Some roads are soft
And some are bumpy,
Some roads you really fly.
Some rides are rough
And leave you jumpy.
Why make it tough
By getting grumpy?
Plenty of roads to try.

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GROUP 1:
Some roads are soft
And some are
bumpy,
Some roads you
really
Fly.
Some rides are rough
And leave you jumpy.
Why make it tough
By getting grumpy?
Plenty of roads to try.
Some roads you
really
Fly.

GROUP 2:
One
Trip, all you get is
One quick ride,
Look around a bit.
One quick ride
Through the
Countryside.
Stay on the track.
Never look back.

Too many lives are at stake.
Friends this long
Has to mean something's strong,
So if our old friend's wrong,
Shouldn't an old friend come through?
It's us, old friend—
What's to discuss, old friend?
Here's to us,
Who's like us—?

CHARLEY: Damn few

MARY:
Charley,
Why can't it be like it was?
I liked it the way that it was.
Charley,
You and me, we were nicer then.

We were nice,
Kids and cities and trees were nice,
Everything . . .
I don't know who we are anymore,
And I'm starting not to care.

Look at us, Charley,
Nothing's the way that it was.
I want it the way that it was.
Help me stop remembering then.

Don't you remember?
It was good, it was really good.
Help me out, Charley,
Make it like it was.

Charley,
Nothing's the way that it was.
I want it the way that it was.
God knows, things were easier then.

Trouble is, Charley,
That's what everyone does:
Blames the way it is
On the way it was.
On the way it never ever was . . .

Never look back.
Never look back.
Never look back!
Never look back!
Never look—

ALL:
How did you get to be here?
What was the moment?
How did you get to be here?

Bending with the road,
Gliding through the countryside,
Merrily we roll along,
Roll along,
Catching at dreams,

Dreams that will explode,
Waking up the countryside.
Everybody merrily merrily
Sing 'em your song,
Rolling along!
Rolling along!
Rolling along!
Rolling a—

“Like It Was”

MARY:
Hey, old friend,
What do you say, old friend?
Make it okay, old friend,
Give the old friendship a break.
Why so grim?
We're going on forever.
You, me, him,

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“Franklin Shepard, Inc.”

[spoken]

KATE (TV Interviewer):
Now, how do you two work together?

CHARLEY
Can I answer that?

How do we work together?

Sure.

He goes . . . (mimes playing arpeggio)

And I go . . . (mimes typing)

[sings]

And soon we're humming along—
Hmmm-hmmm-hmmm . . .
And that's called writing a song—
Hmmm-hmmm-hmmm . . .
Then he goes—
And I go—

And the phone goes—
Drrrring!
And he goes—

"Mutter mutter mutter mutter yes, Jerome.
Mutter no, Jerome.
Mutter mutter mutter mutter—"

[To KATE]: That's his lawyer, Jerome—

Mutter mutter mutter mutter mutter do it,
Jerome.
Sorry, Charley . . ."

So I go—
And he goes—
And I go—

And soon we're tapping away—
Hmmm-hmmm-hmmm . . .

Bzzz!
"Sorry, Charley . . ."
Bzzz!

[To KATE] It's the secretary—

Bzzz!
On the intercom—

"Yes, Miss Bzzz . . ."
[Nasal, as the Secretary]
"It's a messenger."

"Thanks, Miss Bzzz,
Will you tell him to wait?
Will you order the car?
Will you call up the bank?
Will you wire the coast?
Will you—"
Drrrrring!
"Sorry, Charley . . .
Mutter mutter mutter mutter sell the stock.
Mutter buy the rights,
Mutter mutter mutter mutter mutter—"
Bzzz!

"Let me put you on hold . . .
Bzzz!"

"Yes, Miss Bzzz . . ."
[Nasal, as the Secretary]
"It's the interview . . ."
"Thanks, Miss Bizz,
Will you tell him to wait?
Will you wire the car?
Will you order the coast?
Will you send up the bank?"

And the telephones blink
And the stocks get sold
And the rest of us he keeps on "hold,"
And he's into making movies,
And he's now a corporation
Right?

And I play at home
With my wife and kids,
And I wait to hear the movie bids,
And I've got a little sailboat,
And I'm into meditation.
Right?

He flies off to California,
I discuss him with my shrink.
That's the story of the way we work,
Me and Franklin Shepard, Inc.

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[spoken]

KATE: Now, when you do work together, I've always been curious, which generally comes first—the words or the music?

CHARLEY: Generally, the contract.

KATE: It sounds like you think making money's a bad thing for an artist.

CHARLEY: Money? Did I say money?

[sings]

No, I like money a lot—
Hmmm-hmmm-hmmm . . .
I mean, it's better than not—
Hmmm-hmmm-hmmm . . .
But when it's—

[spoken]

[grunts like a pig and starts grabbing
imaginary money]
Money—[Grunt, grunt]
Money—
When you're into—
Money—
And you should be—

Listen, Frank does the money thing very well, but you know what? There are other people who do it better. Frank does the music thing very well. And you know what? No one does it better.

[sings]

Still the telephones blink
And the buzzers buzz
And I really don't know what he does,
But he makes a ton of money,
And a lot of it for me—
Right?

So I think "Okay"
And I start a play,
And he somehow knows,
'Cause right away
It's Drrrring!

[Into "phone" again, as FRANK]

"Hiya, buddy,
Wanna write a show?
Got a great idea,
We'll own all the rights
With a two-week out
And a turnaround
On the guarantee
Plus a gross percent
Of the billing clause—"

And there I am in California,
Talking deals and turning pink,
Back in business and I mean just that,
Back with Franklin Shepard, Inc.

Very sneaky how it happens,
Much more sneaky than you think.
Start with nothing but a song to sing,
Next you're Franklin Shepard—

[spoken]: *Charley describes how much his friendship and collaboration with Frank mean to him.*

[sings]

Nothing permanent has happened,
Just a temporary kink.
Friendship's something you don't really
lose . . .

Very sneaky how it happens,
Every day you're on the brink.
First the prizes, then the interviews—

Oh, my God, I think it's happened!
Stop me quick before I sink.
One more triumph that I can't refuse—

[spoken to camera]

In case you didn't notice, this is my first time
on TV. And my last!

[sings]

No, here's the point, whatever happens,
Then we'll all go have a drink.
That's the guy I love, the fella who's
Inside
"Mutter mutter mutter mutter quick, Jerome,
Get the President,
There's a crazy man
On my TV screen!"

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Inside
Bzzz! Bzzz! Drrring!
Inside
Franklin Shepard—
Just write him:
Care of Any Bank, U.S.A. —
Inc.!

“Old Friends”

[spoken]

MARY: Hey!! Here's to us—

FRANK: Who's like us?

CHARLEY: Damn few.

FRANK [sings]:
Hey, old friend,
Are you okay, old friend?
What do you say, old friend,
Are we or are we unique?

Time goes by,
Everything else keeps changing
You and I,
We get continued next week.

Most friends fade
Or they don't make the grade.
New ones are quickly made
And in a pinch, sure, they'll do.
But us, old friend,
What's to discuss, old friend?
Here's to us—
Who's like us?
Damn few!

CHARLEY:
So, old friend,
Fill me in slow, old friend—
Start from hello, old friend,
I want the when, where, and how.
Old friends
Do tend to become old habit—
Never knew
How much I missed you till now.

ALL THREE:
Most friends fade
Or they don't make the grade,

New ones are quickly made,
Some of them worth something, too.
But us, old friends—
What's to discuss, old friends?

FRANK:
Tell you something:
Good friends point out your lies,
Whereas old friends live and let live.

MARY:
Good friends like and advise,
Whereas old friends love and forgive.

FRANK:
And old friends let you go your own way—

CHARLEY: Help you find your own way—

MARY: Let you off when you're wrong—

FRANK: If you're wrong—

CHARLEY: *When* you're wrong—

MARY:
Right or wrong, the point is:
Old friends shouldn't care if you're wrong.

FRANK: Should, but not for too long.

CHARLEY: What's too long?

FRANK: If you're wrong—

CHARLEY: *When* you're wrong—

MARY:
The thing is:
Old friends do leave their brands on you,
But old friends shouldn't compete.

FRANK:
Old friends don't make demands on you—

CHARLEY: Should make demands on you—

FRANK:
Well, don't make demands you can't meet.

CHARLEY: Well, what's the
Point of demands you *can* meet?

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MARY:
Well, there's a time for demands,
Whether you meet them or not—

[They squabble.]

ALL:
Hey, old friends,
How do we stay old friends?
Who is to say, old friends,
How an old friendship survives?
One day chums,
Having a laugh a minute,
One day comes
And they're a part of your lives.

New friends pour
Through the revolving door—
Maybe there's one that's more,
If you find one, that'll do.
But us, old friends,
What's to discuss, old friends?

FRANK: Here's to us!

CHARLEY: Who's like us?

MARY:
Two old friends—
Fewer won't do, old friends—
Gotta have two old friends
Helping you balance along.
One upbraids you
For your faults and fancies,
One persuades you
That the other one's wrong.

ALL:
Most friends fade
Or they don't make the grade,
New ones are quickly made,
Perfect as long as they're new.
But us, old friends,
What's to discuss, old friends?
Here's to us!
Who's like us?
Damn few!

“Growing Up” (1985)

FRANK:
Thanks, old friends . . .
Keep reminding me . . .
Frank's old friends
Always seem to come through.
Frank will, too . . .

So, old friends,
Now it's time to start growing up.
Taking charge,
Seeing things as they are.
Facing facts,
Not escaping them,
Still with dreams,
Just reshaping them,
Growing up . . .

Charley is a hothead,
Charley won't budge.
Charley is a friend.

Charley is a screamer,
Charley won't bend.
Charley's in your corner.

Mary is a dreamer,
Mary's a friend.
Mary is a nudge.

Mary is a purist,
Charley's a judge.
Charley is a dropout,
Everything's a “copout.”

Why is it old friends
Don't want old friends to change?
Every road has a turning,
That's the way you keep learning.

So, old friends,
Don't you see we can have it all,
Moving on,
Getting out of the past?
Solving dreams,
Not just trusting them
Taking dreams,
Readjusting them,
Growing up,
Growing up . . .

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Trying things,
Being flexible,
Bending with the road,
Adding dreams
When the others don't last.
Growing up,
Understanding that growing never ends,
Like old dreams—
Some old dreams—
Like old friends.

[Gussie enters—scene & dialogue]

GUSSIE:
Life is knowing what you want, darling,
That's the only thing to know.
As I told you moons ago, darling,
Nothing wrong with wanting . . .

Nothing wrong with wanting me, darling,
Also nothing wrong with not,
Though it's only fair that
You should be aware that
I want you a lot.

Growing up
Means admitting
The things you want the most.
Can't pursue
Every possible line.
Folding tents,
Making choices,
Ignoring all
Other voices,
Including mine . . .
You're divine . . .

You decide on what you want, darling,
Not on what you think you should.
Not on what you want to want, darling,
Not from force of habit.
Once it's clearly understood, darling,
Better go and grab it.
Things can slip away for good, darling,
What is it you really—?

“Not a Day Goes By” [Act I]

BETH:
Not a day goes by,
Not a single day
But you're somewhere a part of my life,
And it looks like you'll stay.

As the days go by,
I keep thinking, when does it end?
Where's the day I'll have started forgetting?

But I just go on
Thinking and sweating
And cursing and crying
And turning and reaching
And waking and dying
And no,
Not a day goes by,
Not a blessed day
But you're still somehow part of my life,
And you won't go away.

So there's hell to pay,
And until I die,
I'll die day after day
After day after day
After day after day
After day,
Till the days go by!
Till the days go by!
Till the days go by!

“Now You Know” (1985)

SCOTTY:
So you've made a mistake,
So you're singing the blues,
So you'll take some time, go visit some
places—

MARY:
You gotta be somewhere
Where there's nothing to remind you,
Right?

TYLER:
What you need is a break.
I'll arrange a nice cruise,
You'll relax a bit and see some new faces—

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CHARLEY & MARY:

You've gotta do something,
But just never look behind you.

CHARLEY, MARY & TYLER: Right?

SCOTTY & KATE:

Best thing that ever could have happened—

FRANK [spoken] Right.

JOE:

So you'll sit in the sun,
You'll come back with a tan,
Then we'll do that show you've always been
talking.

SCOTTY:

The side is retired,
So we start another inning—
Right?

DORY: On a boat is such fun—

JEROME:

You'll come back a changed man—

TYLER:

I've had lots of guests and no one's
squawking—

CHARLEY & MARY:

Feels like an ending,
But it's really a beginning,
Right?

KATE:

Best thing that ever could have happened,
I say, best thing that ever could have
happened—

SCOTTY & DORY:

It was all getting much too complicated—

FRANK [spoken] Right!

MARY:

All right, now you know:
Life is crummy.
Well, now you know.

I mean, big surprise:

People love you and tell you lies.
Bricks can tumble from clear blue skies.
Put your dimple down,
Now you know.

Okay, there you go—
That's the sum of it.
Now you know.

It's called flowers wilt,
It's called apples rot,
It's called thieves get rich and saints get
shot,
It's called God don't answer prayers a lot.
Okay, now you know.

Okay, now you know,
Now forget it.
Don't fall apart at the seams.
It's called letting go your illusions,
And don't confuse them with dreams.
If the going's slow,
Don't regret it,
And don't let's go to extremes.

It's called what's your choice?
It's called count to ten.
It's called burn your bridges, start again.
You should burn them every now and then
Or you'll never grow!

Because now you grow.
That's the killer is,
Now you grow.

All right, nothing's fair
And it's all a plot,
And tomorrow doesn't look too hot—
Right, you better look at what you've got:
Over here, hello?
Okay, now you know.
Right?

SCOTTY:

So you'll find a new gal,
So you'll write a new play—
In a month or two, you're going to thank us.

MARY:

You may have missed one road,
But there's plenty more to follow,
Right?

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TYLER:
We'll go through the canal,
Up the coast to L.A.,
You'll come see the place I'm building in
Trancas—

CHARLEY:
You hang around here, pal,
And you're only gonna wallow,
Right?

ALL: Right!

KATE & SCOTTY:
Best thing that ever could have happened!

MARY:
I mean, you'll come back,
I mean, what's the fuss?

CHARLEY:
I mean, sea and sun and comfort plus—

CHARLEY & MARY:
I mean, after all, you've still got us—

ALL:
Best thing that ever could have happened!
It was all getting much too complicated—
Best thing that ever could have happened!

FRANK:
Right!
You've gotta let go,
Gotta do it from scratch,
Take a long deep breath,
Go back to your sources,
A little vacation,
Which is all about forgetting—
Right?

ALL: Right!

FRANK:
Right!
Then we'll do a new show—
No, we'll do a whole batch,
Maybe one that's all about divorces!
I mean, a divorce court—
What a fascinating setting!
Right?

ALL: Right!

FRANK: Right!

ALL:
Best thing that ever could have
happened . . .
I say, best thing that ever could have
happened . . .
It's your time, your time . . .

Yesterday is done,
See the pretty countryside,
Soon enough you're merrily merrily
Rolling along . . .

So you'll sit in the sun,
You'll come back with a tan,
In a month or two
You're going to thank us . . .
It's your time . . .

What's your choice?
It's called count to ten.
It's called burn your bridges, start again.
You should burn them every now and then
Or you'll never grow!

Because now you grow.
Life's a killer, so now you grow.

MARY:
You're right, nothing's fair,
And it's all a plot
And tomorrow doesn't look too hot—

ALL:
Right, you better look at what you've got:

SCOTTY: Me.

TYLER: Me.

MARY: Me.

DORY & JEROME: Me.

CHARLEY: Over here, hello?

SCOTTY & KATE: Over here, hello?

JOE: Me.

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ALL: Us!

MARY & CHARLEY: Over here, hello?

ALL:

Right! Right! Right! Right!
Right! Right! Right! Right!
All right, now you know!
Now you know!
Now you know!

“Good Thing Going”

CHARLEY:

It started out like a song.
We started quiet and slow,
With no surprise.
And then one morning I woke
To realize
We had a good thing going.

It's not that nothing went wrong:
Some angry moments, of course,
But just a few,
And only moments, no more,
Because we knew
We had this good thing going.

And if I wanted too much,
Was that such
A mistake
At the time?
You never wanted enough—
All right, tough,
I don't make
That a crime.

And while it's going along,
You take for granted some love
Will wear away.
We took for granted a lot,
But still I say:
It could have kept on growing,
Instead of just kept on
We had a good thing going,
Going,
Gone.

“Not a Day Goes By” (Act II)

BETH:

Not a day goes by . . .

MARY:

Not a single day . . .

MARY & BETH:

But you're somewhere a part of my life
And it looks like you'll stay.

FRANK & MARY:

As the days go by,
I keep thinking, when does it end?

BETH:

That it can't get much better much longer,
But it only gets better and stronger
And deeper and nearer—

FRANK & BETH:

And simpler and freer
And richer and clearer . . .

ALL THREE:

And no,
Not a day goes by—

MARY:

Not a blessed day—

MARY & BETH:

But you somewhere come into my life
And you don't go away.

ALL THREE:

And I have to say
If you do, I'll die.

FRANK & BETH:

I want day after day
After day after day after—

MARY [overlapping]:

I'll die day after day after—

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ALL THREE:
Day after day after day after day
After day,
Till the days go by . . .

FRANK & BETH:
Till the days go by . . .

MARY:
Till the days go by . . .

“Our Time”

COMPANY:
Something is stirring,
Shifting ground.
It's just begun.
Edges are blurring
All around.
And yesterday is done.

Feel the flow,
Hear what's happening:
We're what's happening.
Don't you know?
We're the movers and we're the shapers.
We're the names in tomorrow's papers.
Up to us, man, to show 'em.

It's our time, breathe it in:
Worlds to change and worlds to win.
Our turn coming through,
Me and you, man,
Me and you!

FRANK:
Feel how it quivers,
On the brink . . .

CHARLEY: What?

FRANK:
Everything!
Gives you the shivers,
Makes you think
There's so much stuff to sing!

And you and me,
We'll be singing it like the birds,
Me with music and you the words,
Tell 'em things they don't know!

BOTH:
Up to us, pal, to show 'em . . .

Our time, breathe it in:
Worlds to change and worlds to win.
Our turn, we're what's new,
Me and you, pal, me and you!

Feel the flow,
Hear what's happening:
We're what's happening!
Long ago
All we had was that funny feeling,
Saying some day we'd send 'em reeling,
Now it looks like we can!

CHARLEY:
Some day just began . . .

BOTH:
It's our heads on the block.
Give us room and start the clock.
Our time coming through!
Me and you, pal,
Me and you!
Me and you!

[spoken]

CHARLEY: There!

FRANK: There it is!

MARY: Don't say it for me.

CHARLEY: You call it "Sputnik."

FRANK: You call it a miracle.

CHARLEY: We're standing on the threshold
of the future.

FRANK: We gotta be the luckiest people who
ever lived. After this moment, this moment
that the three of us are sharing here together,
nothing's ever gonna be the way it was ever
again. You guys realize that now we're gonna
be able to do anything? Anything we ever
dreamed of? What a time to be starting out.
What a time to be alive.

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[sung]

FRANK, MARY, & CHARLEY:

Something is stirring,
Shifting ground.
It's just begun.
Edges are blurring
All around,
And yesterday is done.

COMPANY:

Feel the flow
Hear what's happening:
We're what's happening.
Don't you know?
We're the movers and we're the shapers.
We're the names in tomorrow's papers
Up to us now to show 'em.

It's our time, breathe it in:
Worlds to change and worlds to win.
Our turn coming through,
Me and you, pal,
Me and you!

FRANK, MARY, & CHARLEY:

Years from now,
We'll remember and we'll come back,
Buy the rooftop and hang a plaque:
"This is where we began
Being what we can."

ALL:

It's our heads on the block.
Give us room and start the clock.
Our dream coming true,
Me and you, pal,
Me and you!
Me and you!
Me and you!
Me and you!
Me and you!
Me and you!
Me and you!
Me and you!
Me and you!

"The Hills of Tomorrow" (1981 only)

STUDENTS:

Behold the hills of tomorrow!
Behold the limitless sky!
Fling wide the gates
To a world that waits!
As our journey starts,
Behold! Our hearts
Are high!

Between the hills of tomorrow,
At times the road may seem strange.
The hills are deep,
And the way is steep,
But for those who dare
The world is there
To change!

Then raise the torch and seize the day!
Behold! Our banners fly to mark the way!
Standards billowing, unsullied, proud!
Visions bright, voices loud!

Beyond the hills of tomorrow
Are skies more beautiful still!
Behold! Begin!
There are worlds to win!
May we come to trust
The dreams we must
Fulfill!

Sondheim on *Merrily We Roll Along*:

"It was a show I adored and a deep disappointment in its first outing, and it marked an important period in my professional life.

"But then I met James Lapine."

—*Finishing the Hat* (2010), p. 421