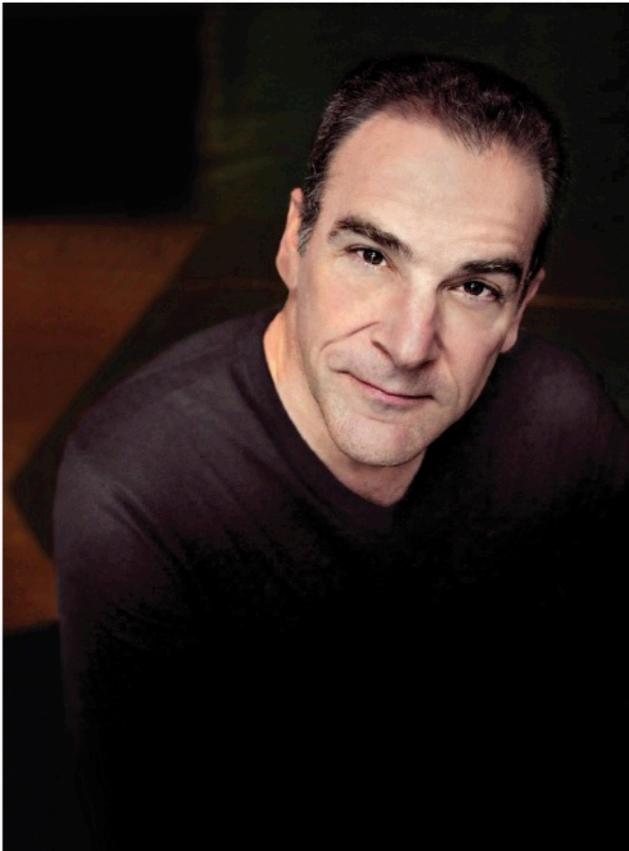




The screen and stage star comes to Pittsburgh, and gives without taking.



I fell in love with Mandy Patinkin during the 2007-2008 Writer's Guild of America strike. Though I'm not big into television, I was forced to watch reruns, and really got into *Criminal Minds*, the television FBI drama in which he played Jason Gideon for two seasons. It turns out, Patinkin isn't much into television either — he prefers the musical aspect of his career, and will be performing his show, *Dress Casual*, on October 6 for the Allegheny Valley School's Black and Golden Gala.

"Music is the chord of my life, and it's the thing I love more than anything. So, I never, I never get very far away from it," he says.

He's calling me from Berkley, Calif., for a spur-of-the-moment interview — his schedule is tight, as he is performing in Rinnie Groff's *Compulsion*, and upon hearing about our interview request, he asked his publicist if we could do the interview right now. Of course! "All of my concerts [for *Dress Casual*] were previously booked. So, in between doing the play, I fly out and do these concerts and come back. My life is always mixed up," Patinkin says, and I swear I can hear him smiling as he says it.

He's currently in the process of developing a new show with Patti LuPone, appropriately dubbed *An Evening with Patti LuPone and Mandy Patinkin*. He also recently created a show with opera singer Nathan Gunn, which is slated to debut this fall.

GOLD ANNIVERSARY

The **Black & Golden Anniversary** on October 6 at the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh marks 50 years of Allegheny Valley School. AVS was formed by Patricia Hillman Miller, Bob Prince, and Doug Hannah when the Pittsburgh Home for Babies orphanage closed its doors. "They started with one facility and a handful of children. Today we have more than 100 facilities throughout Pennsylvania and we are caring more than 900 adults and children with a staff of more than 2,500," says Regis Champ, president and CEO of AVS.

To further its mission of helping those individuals with developmental and intellectual

Most people remember Patinkin's famous words as Inigo Montoya in *The Princess Bride*: "You killed my father, prepare to die." He's also had roles in *Dick Tracy*, *Yentl*, *Chicago Hope*, and has even done voice work on *The Simpsons* — he was the pastor who married Lisa in a glimpse of her future. Last year, he guest-starred on *Three Rivers*, the short-lived medical drama set in Pittsburgh on CBS that aimed to compete with *Grey's Anatomy*. No matter. His performance had me crying like a baby.

But despite his talent, what he does on stage trumps what he does on the screen. Perhaps it's because of his undying passion for live musical performance — the Tony Award-winning actor has more theatre credits to his name than anything else, including several Broadway shows. "Why do you like one food more than another? Or, why, when you sit down with one human being, do you connect in a way that you can't even explain, and you want to be with them over and over again? And, marry

disabilities, AVS was recently acquired by NHS Human Services, the largest non-profit provider of services people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. "We feel that the future of the school and its long standing commitment to the community has been secured with the recent acquisition of AVS by NHS Human Services," Champ says.

Events like the Black and Golden Gala help to raise the necessary funds to keep AVS going. "We hope to achieve greater awareness of AVS and funds to support our programs statewide," says Dorothy Gordon, chief development officer. Adding to the funds generated during the event will be a raffle of two tickets to Super Bowl XLV in Dallas and \$1,000 cash — Art Rooney II and Greta Rooney are chairing the event, and have generously donated the tickets.

And with a little luck and a lot of funding, AVS should experience just as much growth in the next 50 years as it has in the last 50 years.

them, and even have children? The musical aspect of my career is the part where I wanted to get married and have children," Patinkin says. "I just love it. There's nothing like singing to me. It's the universal language. In my work, the live venue is always something I've loved more than anything."

Patinkin has visited Pittsburgh before. Though, it was so long ago, he isn't sure exactly when (his part in *Three Rivers* was shot on set in Hollywood). He's not one to get off of the plane and head to Primanti Brothers, "I try not to eat red meat," he says. "I'm a chicken, fish, fruit, and vegetable guy." Nor will you spot him at Heinz Field during his time here. "I'm not a big sports fan," he says. "I root for whoever I'm sitting next to, whoever they are rooting for. I haven't offended your Steeler sensibility, have I?"

I explain that so long as he doesn't say he is a Cleveland Browns fan, we are OK. He responds, "No, no. Is this basketball or football we are talking about?"

And while basketball or football aren't sports that he follows, he does share some fond memories of going to White Sox games with his father. "Every Saturday after

we went to synagogue, my father would take to me Comiskey Park to see the White Sox. Religiously. That was the more of a religious experience than being in the synagogue," he laughs.

For many, listening to Patinkin sing is a religious experience. His voice ranges from soft and soothing, much like he sounds when he speaks, to deep and powerful. Look for Patinkin to try out some of the new material he has been working on during his performance at the Carnegie Music Hall, as well as some old favorites thrown in. "I just keep at it and feel grateful that I get to do what I love to do."

For more information on **Mandy Patinkin**, visit mandypatinkin.org. For tickets or more information on the **Allegheny Valley School's Black and Golden Gala**, contact the Allegheny Valley School at 412.299.7777, or visit www.av.net.