

AN ORIGINAL ROCK MUSICAL FROM LORD GRAHAM RUSSELL  
OF THE RENOWNED ROCK GROUP AIR SUPPLY

— A —  
**WALL  
APART**

**AN ORIGINAL ROCK MUSICAL**  
MUSIC AND LYRICS BY GRAHAM RUSSELL • BOOK BY SAM GOLDSTEIN AND CRAIG CLYDE



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# — A — WALL APART




## STORY SYNOPSIS

Brothers Kurt, Mickey and Hans were born and raised in war time Berlin, their parents perishing in the bombings of Berlin at the very end of the war. As the eldest, Hans took on the responsibility of raising his two younger siblings. Following the war he joined the East German border police and eventually became committed to the Communist cause. He is in a sense “too old” to be part of - and appreciate - the political movement of the 60’s throughout the world and in Berlin. He views his job and the support he received from the Communist party as the reason he and his siblings survived. Mickey and his new wife Susanne, on the other hand, don’t see it that way at all. As the story begins, Kurt is much more closely aligned with his brother Hans. He accepts that the Communist party is the path for him. Falling in love with Esther changes everything. Their love story covers 28 years. These three brothers are bound by blood and history but from the very start of the play are sharply divided by politics. Kurt’s is an epic journey from blind certainty of the true life path to questioning himself, his identity, and his choices but never his undying love for Esther.



**A WALL APART TRAILER**

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.


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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. Monday, July 24, 2017 A20A

## GREATER NEW YORK

### Soft-Rock Star Adjusts His Pitch for a Musical

By CHARLES PASSY

Rock stars haven't always found success in the theatrical world. Just ask Paul Simon or Sting, whose Broadway musicals were both flops at the box office.

But Graham Russell, one of the founders of the platinum-selling soft-rock duo Air Supply, thinks he might have an edge as he prepares to launch his first show, "A Wall Apart." He has a dramatic background, having appeared in a production of the rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar" that played Australia and New Zealand in the '70s.

"I've always loved theater," said Mr. Russell, speaking during a recent break in prepping "A Wall Apart" at a Manhattan rehearsal space. The show, one of the highlights of the 14th annual New York Musical Festival, opens Tuesday at the Acorn Theatre at Theatre Row in Midtown Manhattan for a five-day run.

Not that the English-born Mr. Russell, who is 67 years old, will be on stage: His role is strictly as composer and lyricist. But either way, he feels his show has a powerful and relevant story to tell.

"A Wall Apart" is about three brothers living between East and West Berlin during the Berlin Wall era of the '60s through the '80s. The idea for the show came well before President Donald Trump's talk of a border wall separating Mexico and the U.S., so Mr. Russell doesn't claim that was part of the inspiration.

But now that the musical is being readied for its debut, the timeliness is hard to ignore, say those involved with the production. "The story feels incredibly resonant right now," said NYMF Producing Artistic Director Rachel Sussman.

The back story behind "A Wall Apart" is also quite the tale, one that involves creative types well beyond the New York theater community.

Sam Goldstein, a neuropsychologist with a second career

as a screenwriter, largely spearheaded the development of the show. With his writing partner Craig Clyde, he had been looking to create the book for a musical about a historical event. As he said, "No. 1 on my list was the Berlin Wall."

What led him to Mr. Russell? The two knew each other through a musical connection—Mr. Goldstein has also played in rock bands—and they both live in Utah. An artistic partnership soon evolved, with work on the musical starting in 2015.

Mr. Russell says the songs came quickly to him during the show's gestation, adding that he especially liked the fact the musical allowed him to step out of his musical comfort zone.

"I found it very exciting to write grungy, raw guitar-driven songs," he said. "Air Supply couldn't do that."

**'I found it very exciting to write grungy, raw guitar-driven songs.'**

The goal is to eventually take "A Wall Apart," which was developed in partnership with NewYorkRep, a theater company in the city, to a bigger stage, with Broadway remaining a goal. Mr. Goldstein says about \$200,000 has been invested in the show to date, though he declined to reveal who is putting up the money.

In the meantime, Mr. Russell is featuring some songs from the show at Air Supply concerts, which means "A Wall Apart" might already be finding a sizable audience. The rock group does about 130 dates a year.

Mr. Russell adds that he isn't quite ready to give up his day job, despite his renewed footing in the musical-theater world.

"Performers love to perform," he said.



Graham Russell, a founding member of the group Air Supply, rehearses with the cast of the new musical 'A Wall Apart.'

PETER FOLEY FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



# The New York Times

## The Cold War Meets ‘Romeo and Juliet’ at a Festival for Musicals

By LAURA COLLINS-HUGHES JULY 30, 2017



Jordan Bondurant and the cast of "A Wall Apart" at the 2017 New York Musical Festival. Credit Michael Schoenfeld

A few minutes into "A Wall Apart," during the propulsive opening number, I noticed something that hadn't happened at either of the other shows I saw over the weekend at the New York Musical Festival: My leg was moving in time to the beat.

With music and lyrics by Graham Russell of the soft-rock band Air Supply, "A Wall Apart" is a smart, high-energy exercise in idealism, a rock musical with love and politics on its mind. And if its second act suggests that it's still a work in progress, that's part of what the festival is for — putting a show on its feet and seeing where it stumbles.

Set in Berlin when it was divided during the Cold War, "A Wall Apart" is about three brothers who have to choose which side of the city to make their home before the border closes. Freedom in the West versus oppression in the East, yes, but it isn't so simple if, like Kurt (Jordan Bondurant), the middle sibling, you have family on

one side and a woman you love (Maddie Shea Baldwin) on the other. There is a definite "Romeo and Juliet"/"West Side Story" dynamic at play.

In a confident production directed and choreographed by Keith Andrews, an excellent cast breathes life into fully drawn characters (the book is by Sam Goldstein and Craig Clyde), while Mr. Russell's music varies nicely from wailing guitar to gentle lullaby.

The show (which closes Sunday night) changes strategy in Act II, using a sort of ghost narrator — a character who won our affection when he was alive — to fast-forward the plot toward the fall of the Berlin Wall. That's not a bad tack, but the creators overcrowd the story here, pulling focus from the characters we care most about and failing to build toward the climactic reunion. The final number is a reprise of the opening song, yet the energy that is so organic at the start feels ginned up by the finish.



# PRESS



**PIX11 NEWS - JUL 28, 2017**



**"ON STAGE" NY1 - JUL 17, 2017**



**PLAYBILL FEATURE - JUL 15, 2017**

**"One of the best musicals to see at NYMF in 2017. Go and see."**

*- Time Out New York*

**"This sounds like one we'll love. Lord Graham Russell (of the charttopping band Air Supply) scored this original rock musical ...Sign us up!"**

*- Broadway.com*

**"Energized, fast paced, contagiously vibrant. ...a lovely and attractive production that will leave you rocking on your seat. ...Impressive and stylish choreography performed with vitality by the beautiful cast. ...Glorious! An amazing example of discovering exciting artists and revealing new styles that will permeate the future of musical productions."**

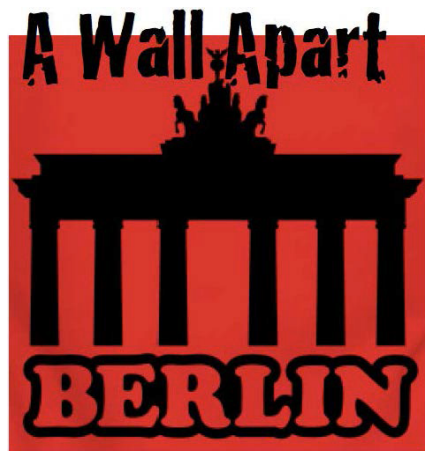
*- Brazilian Press*

**"Lord Graham Russell of Air Supply creates big rock sound. "Son of the Father" is one of the best rock tunes heard at NYMF. "The City," is forceful and enduring. "We're Having a Baby," sound joyous and melodious. ...Well drawn characters are scripted by Sam Goldstein and Craig Clyde. ...Great choreography by Keith Andrews. Also the Director, there is something terrific about the staging. ...Ingenious Scenic Designer David Goldstein has crafted the set in blocks to assemble and reassemble throughout the play. ...it's effective."**

*- Theaterpizzazz*

**"A talented 14-member cast, crackling rock and roll music and lyrics by Lord Graham Russell, and an epic story that uses the Berlin Wall as a backdrop....The entire cast belt out their songs with clarity and conviction."**

*- Curtain Up*



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