

The New Criterion

Theater

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Campaign season

by [Brooke Allen](#)

On *Of Thee I Sing* at Bard Summerscape, and *The Understudy & Broke-ology* at the Williamstown Theatre Festival.

In the final few months of a presidential campaign that has certainly been the most heated in recent memory, it's rather surprising that no one has planned a Broadway revival of the great Gershwin musical *Of Thee I Sing*. Though it was written back in 1931 during the Herbert Hoover administration, the show retains an almost uncanny similarity to the farce-cum-extravaganza currently being played out in Washington and on the campaign trail. In fact there is only one real anachronism in the show: a running gag about the anonymity and irrelevance of the Vice President. (No doubt this was funny once, but Dick Cheney and Al Gore have exploded the ineffective- V.P. cliché forever.)

Everything else is spot-on. The First Lady has to prove she's a real woman by making delectable corn muffins—well, remember Barbara Bush and Hillary Clinton's chocolate-chip cookie bake-off? Candidate J ...

Brooke Allen's latest book is *Moral Minority: Our Skeptical Founding Fathers* (Ivan R.

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