



BIG RIVER

THE ADVENTURES OF
HUCKLEBERRY FINN



STUDY GUIDE

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CONTEXT

A decorative graphic on a blue background. It features several curved lines in white, light blue, and dark blue. The text "LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SHOW!" is written in white, uppercase letters, following the curve of one of the lines.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SHOW!

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Along the Mississippi River in the 1840s, Huckleberry Finn and his best friend Tom Sawyer are up to no good. The adults around them try to steer him onto the path of good (Do Ya Wanna Go to Heaven?), but Huck and his friends decide they'd rather start a gang of thieves (The Boys). Tom and Huck make plans to run away, but Huck knows that Tom is probably not going to follow through. He thinks about what he wants for his life (Waitin' For The Light to Shine). Huck goes back home to his guardians, Miss Watson and Widow Douglas, who have been taking care of him for the past year. When Huck goes into his room, his absent father Pap is waiting for him. Once Pap finds out that Huck has recently lucked into some money, he appeals to a judge to get custody of his son—as well as access to his son's money. The judge has no choice but to give custody to Pap, so Huck moves to Illinois to live with him. Pap gets drunk and talks about how much he distrusts a government that would take his son away (Guv'ment). After his father tries to kill him in a drunken rage, Huck decides to run away by faking his own death (Hand for the Hog).

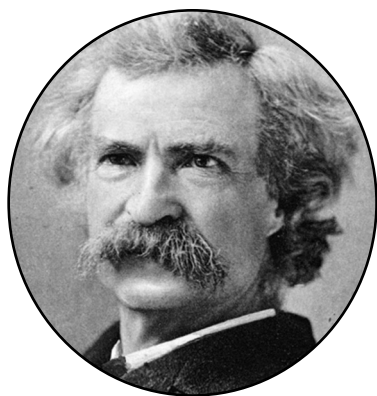
He heads across the river to Jackson Island. Eventually, he sees Pap, the judge, Tom, and others in a ferry and knows by the looks on their faces that his plan has worked and they all think he's dead. Although he feels lonely on the island without his friends and family, he decides that being alone means he can be himself (I, Huckleberry, Me). He runs into Jim, Miss Watson's slave, who has just run away to avoid being sold. Huck agrees to help Jim raft down the river to the Free States. Huck disguises himself as a girl so he can go into town and get some supplies for the trip. He discovers that Jim is being blamed for Huck's death, and that people in town are looking for Jim so they can kill him for his crime. Huck hurries back to Jim, and the two get on their raft and leave immediately before they're found (Muddy Water). Huck and Jim go down river, and see a dead body floating in the water. Huck is curious about it, but Jim doesn't let him look. The two continue on, eventually running into a group of slaves who escaped and then were caught; the slaves are being forced to cross the river and go back to their owners (The Crossing). Jim and Huck then come across a couple of men looking for other escaped slaves, but Huck manages to keep Jim safe. They are both grateful not to have been caught, and they sing about how beautiful the river is (River in the Rain). The pair soon discover that they've passed the river going to Ohio, which would have led them to the Free States. They run into two con men, The King and The Duke, who wheedle their way onto the raft with Jim and Huck. They try to trick Huck into believing they're descended from royalty. Huck knows this is a lie, but pretends he's been fooled. The King and The Duke start secretly plotting to sell Jim back into slavery (When the Sun Goes Down South).

ACT II

Huck, Jim, The King, and The Duke have rafted to Tennessee. The King and The Duke scheme to create a show that they think will make them a lot of money, even though it isn't very good. They hype up the show to a group of people to trick them into paying for it (The Royal Nonesuch). Huck and Jim talk about leaving together, since they're starting to become friends (Worlds Apart), but The King and The Duke won't allow it. They threaten to expose Jim as a runaway slave if Huck tries to leave. The four of them travel to Hillsboro, where they meet a Fool singing to himself (Arkansas). The Fool mistakes The King for a reverend whose brother has recently died and is due to receive the money from his will. The King plays along, and all five of them go to the funeral (How Blest We Are). The King talks with the reverend's niece, Mary Jane, who gives him the money from the will. Huck thinks it's wrong for The King to have the money, so he steals it back that night. He almost gets caught when Mary Jane comes in to mourn (You Oughta Be Here with Me), so he quickly hides the money in the coffin.

Huck feels so guilty about the whole situation that he decides to come clean to Mary Jane. She kisses him, and Huck thinks about how nice it would be if he could stay (Leavin's Not the Only Way to Go). The King and The Duke are found out by the town, who tar and feather them. Huck runs off to find Jim so they can escape, but Jim is nowhere to be seen. The Duke appears, tarred and feathered, and tells Huck that he sold Jim. Huck makes up his mind to steal Jim back from the new owners (Waitin' For The Light to Shine Reprise). Huck makes his way to the Phelps' cabin, where Jim has been sold. He meets Sally and is mistaken for her nephew, Tom Sawyer. He fools Sally and her husband Silas, then slips away to find the real Tom. Once they're together again, the pair devise a plan to break Jim out from the tiny cell the Phelps' have put him in. Jim thinks about what freedom will be like (Free at Last). The boys manage to get Jim, but Tom gets shot in the leg in the process. Jim helps take care of Tom instead of running for his freedom. They're taken back to town, where Tom admits that Miss Watson died and set Jim free in her will. Having earned his freedom legally, Jim decides to continue on his journey to the Free States to make enough money to buy his family out of slavery. Huck decides to keep having an adventure in the west instead of settling down and being "civilized" back home. They think about the journey they've taken together (River in the Rain Reprise), and Jim reveals that the dead body they saw was Huck's father Pap. After they part ways, Huck prepares for his next adventure (Muddy Water Reprise).

CREATIVE TEAM



Mark Twain (Source Author) Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, was born on November 30, 1895 in Missouri. He grew up in the small town of Hannibal, which would later inspire his most famous works. Twain started working at a local newspaper at age 12 to support his family after his father's death. He continued working at different newspapers in his young life, but by age 21 he decided to follow his dream to become a steamboat pilot. After the Civil War shut down traffic on the Mississippi River in 1861, he decided to move out west to Nevada and then California. He worked odd jobs for a few years before eventually settling at a newspaper. He adopted the name Mark Twain—steamboat slang for twelve feet of water—while he wrote news stories, editorials, and sketches for his paper. He steadily gained popularity as a writer and was able to make a career out of it. In February 1870, he married Olivia Langdon. The couple moved to Buffalo, New York, and had four children. Twain published *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in 1876. Although he began writing its sequel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, shortly after, he didn't finish it until eight years later in 1884. Over the course of his career, he wrote many other well-known works, such as *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), and *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894). He died at the age of 74 on April 21, 1910.

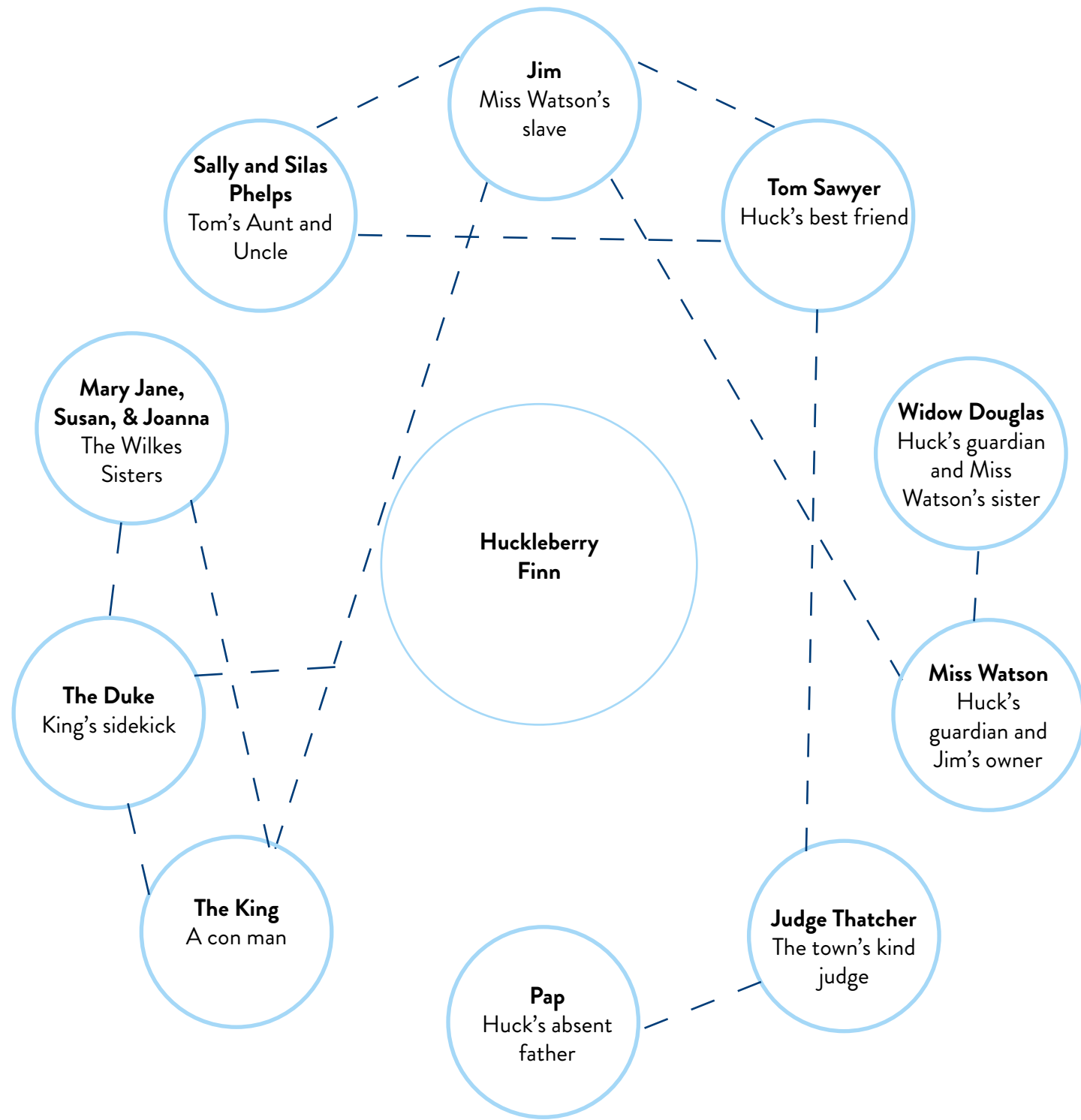


William Hauptman (Book) William Hauptman was born on November 26, 1942 in Wichita Falls, Texas. Hauptman attended the University of Texas and later received an MFA in playwriting from Yale University School of Drama. His plays include *Heat*, *Domino Courts* (Obie award winner 1997) and *Gillette* (LA Drama- League Award 1986). His best-known work was *Big River*, for which he won the 1985 Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical. His short stories have appeared in *The Best American Short Stories* anthology, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *Southwest Review*. He was a guest professor at the Texas Center for Writers, a program at the University of Texas in Austin. He currently lives in Brooklyn, New York with his wife and son.



Roger Miller (Music) Roger Dean Miller was born on January 2, 1936, in Fort Worth, Texas. He spent his childhood on a farm in Oklahoma with his aunt and uncle. He became interested in writing music as a teenager, but was too poor to afford an instrument. He stole a guitar at the age of 17, and was given the choice between serving in the United States Army or going to jail; he chose the Army, and ended up serving in Korea. Once he was discharged, he moved to Nashville to pursue his career in music. He wrote songs for the music publishing company Tree Publishing in the 1950s, and eventually recorded some of his own songs. His career took off from there; he had a string of successful top 10 hits in the late 1950s. He won 11 Grammy awards, and even had a short-lived television show on NBC. *Big River* was one of his later career projects. It took him over a year and a half to write the music, but it was ultimately very successful for him. He won the Tony for Best original score in 1985. Miller was married three times, and had seven children. He died in 1992 from lung and throat cancer.

BIG RIVER CHARACTERS



Use the synopsis to help you find the connection between the characters!

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Big River is set in the South in the 1840s, during a time in history called the “Antebellum Period”.

In general, white children at this time had more free time than they do today. There weren't any laws requiring students to go to school, since school wasn't seen as a priority—especially among poorer families, who relied on older children to help support the household. Because of this, people were less educated than they are today. Many poor families in the South weren't even taught to read.

Life was very different for African Americans at the time. This play is set about twenty years before the start of the Civil War, in a time when slavery was still widely practiced in the United States. While there were some people who were against slavery (called “abolitionists”), many people didn't recognize slaves as human beings. Because of this, slaves didn't have any constitutional rights and were viewed as property of their owner.

As you watch the play, you'll hear some characters use the N word as a way to refer to black characters, in a way consistent with what happened in that time period. We have made an effort to cut down on the use of this word from the original script, so any instances of this you hear are kept intentionally to show an accurate version of the language and behavior at that time.

DISCUSSION:

Do you think that literature written during this time period should be edited to take out the N word, either in part or entirely? Why or why not?

THE TROUBLE BEGINS AT EIGHT: ANDREW LEVY ON MARK TWAIN'S THEATRE ROOTS

We don't remember Mark Twain as a man of the theater, but it wasn't for lack of trying. Twain worked as a theater critic and wrote scores of plays (most have been forgotten, although *Is He Dead?* made a belated Broadway debut in 2007 in an adaptation by longtime *Encores!* scribe David Ives). Twain was also a garrulous participant in countless amateur productions, in which he played knights, lovers, and bears. *City Center* spoke with Andrew Levy—the author of *Huck Finn's America*—about Twain's love of theater, how he made his book tours into “performance art,” and the extent to which *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was conceived in theatrical terms.

CITY CENTER: You've written that Huck Finn “began its career as a piece of performance art... spoken as much as written, and even sung as much as spoken.” What did you mean?

ANDREW LEVY: If it was November 1884, and you were one of the first people encountering something from *Huckleberry Finn*, you were seeing it performed in a theater. Or perhaps an opera hall or a church. In the 1870s, as Twain began to write *Huck Finn*, he also began to conceive a theatrical event in which a series of well-known writers would read pieces in vernacular voices. When the tour finally went on the road, a couple of months before *Huckleberry Finn* was released, it consisted of Twain and one other author, George Washington Cable. They were billed as the “Twins of Genius”: Twain read pieces of his novel, other writings, and even told stories that had been told to him by slaves in his youth. Cable read from his work and also performed Creole songs and slave spirituals. The crowd fell apart, because they had never seen anything like it. I mean, people were fainting. This was like the Beatles.

Did Twain tailor scenes in the book to suit his performing style? Was he consciously writing “material” for the stage?

It's possible that he was towards the end of the writing process, by which point he had started to think about what sections he was going to read on tour. One of those sections was Huck and Jim's conversation about King Solomon, which Twain wrote last and just dropped into the book.

What were Twain's feelings about theater?

He thought it was amazing and transformative. One of the impulses behind *Huck Finn* was a nostalgia trip: Twain was writing in the 1870s and 1880s about the 1840s. Like any of us, a lot of what he remembered were the songs and the narratives. He's just *fixated* on popular culture, and what he's doing throughout *Huck Finn* is saving bits and pieces of it. Twain loved the loose, messy, vital feel of the theater of his childhood, when audiences would insist that scenes be repeated if they liked them and pelt actors with rotten fruit if they didn't.

Twain's earliest theater experiences were at minstrel shows. Very few theatrical forms remain so disturbingly charged to us, and so horrifying. What did Twain see in them?

We are trained to hate minstrel shows, and we *should*. I don't make any apologies for the minstrel show, clearly. But in the nineteenth century it was an art form that fascinated white people like

THE TROUBLE BEGINS AT EIGHT: ANDREW LEVY ON MARK TWAIN'S THEATRE ROOTS

Twain who were deeply conflicted about race. There were moments where sly performers could treat race like a joke and a construction. If you read a bunch of minstrel show scripts from the 1880s and then read a bunch of newspapers from the 1880s, you find that the newspapers embrace racism as a truth and an organizing social structure, whereas minstrel show scripts could be fluid and ambiguous. Given Twain's choices, he went with the minstrel show.

One of the revelations in your book is that elements of the minstrel show survive in so much of what we think of as wholesome Americana. It's there in “Turkey in the Straw,” in Mickey Mouse's gloves, and in Huckleberry Finn. What did Mark Twain lift from the minstrel tradition?

There are scenes where characters cross-dress or perform garbled Shakespeare, which were tropes in a lot of popular theater back then, including the minstrel show. Twain also seems to have aped the three-part structure of minstrel shows in the structure of *Huckleberry Finn*: a lot of minstrel shows began with songs and jokes, followed by a series of short theatrical pieces, and ended with an extended parody of plantation life. I think people miss this in *Huckleberry Finn*. They think a lot in terms of Jim being a minstrel show character—but there were actually more minstrel show characters named Finnegan or Finn than Jim. If you happened to go to a minstrel show in the nineteenth century, Huck Finn might be closer to a stock stage Irishman than Jim was a stock African-American.

There's also the King Solomon scene. Was Twain playing with minstrel tropes there?

The minstrel show had stock characters: the interlocutor, who had the lightest skin and spoke in the most polished English, and the end-men, who spoke in deep dialects and told jokes that relied on punning, bawdiness, or the misunderstanding of obvious concepts, in ways that sometimes suggested a secondary level of subversion. In the Solomon exchange, Huck essentially takes on the role of the interlocutor, with Jim as an end-man. Of course, you can easily make the argument that Jim's “misunderstanding” of the Solomon parable is subversive. He sees Solomon as an analogy for the kinds of slaveholders he knew, who *would* think that splitting a baby was an acceptable thing to do.

Ads for the “Twins of Genius” tour used the tagline “The Trouble Begins at Eight.” It's a fascinating phrase, particularly in light of Mike Pence's visit to *Hamilton* and Donald Trump's subsequent proclamation that “The Theater must always be a safe and special place.” Did Mark Twain see the theater as a place for troublemakers?

Oh, yeah. (*laughs*) That's the short answer. And Twain loved that line, “The Trouble Begins at Eight.” He'd been using it since he first hit the lecture circuit in the 1860s. He wanted people to be laughing the whole time, of course—but he also wanted you thinking, and a little uncomfortable.

Huck Finn's America: Mark Twain and the Era That Shaped His Masterpiece is available in paperback from Simon & Schuster.

BIG RIVER, SMALL CHANCE

BY ROCCO LANDESMAN

“If I’d a knowed what trouble it was to enact this history I never would a tackled it.” We certainly didn’t know, my wife Heidi and I, what we were in for, as we drove from our home in Brooklyn to a rare Roger Miller concert at the Lone Star Cafe in lower Manhattan. Could Roger Miller, we wondered out loud, write a Broadway musical?

The American musical and country music, we had long felt, were much closer in form and spirit than was generally thought, with their emphasis on lyrics in the service of storytelling and hummable melodies. Roger, I knew with total certainty, was a genius, the greatest American songwriter; he could do anything.

But what would be the story, or as we say in the theater, the book? Heidi: “How about your favorite novel?” And then it seemed obvious. There was a natural affinity, we felt, between the voices of the authors of “King of the Road” and the most famous journey novel in American literature, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Broadway and country, Roger Miller and Mark Twain. Obvious? Maybe. Easy? If only we’d a knowed.

In *The Season*, William Goldman’s legendary account of the 1967-68 season on Broadway, he observes that Broadway veterans always handicap a show’s chances by checking the “past performances” of the people who are doing it. What’s the track record of the producers, writer, director, actors? Well, *Big River* was directed by Des McAnuff, who had never directed a Broadway show. The book was by William Hauptman, who had never written the book for a musical. Roger Miller had never written the score for any musical, had only seen two of them in his life (he later loved to say, when recounting how the show had come about, “Rocco made me an offer I couldn’t understand”). And the producers? We had never produced a show of any kind; not on Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theater, or summer camp. Because the racetrack’s tote board can only show two digits, the odds were 99-1.

The first production, at the American Repertory Theater in February 1984, had only seven songs; it was subtitled “A Play with Music.” There were more songs in the production at La Jolla Playhouse later that year, and a full score when we opened on Broadway in April of 1985. The ART production was encouraging; I’ll never forget watching the faces of the ART actors when Roger, playing his guitar, sang “Free at Last” for them. That was the first moment when I allowed myself to think, Maybe this will work.

Still, we needed a success in La Jolla to raise money. That production felt more like a musical and was enthusiastically received by the reviewers in the major papers in San Diego and Los Angeles. There was one dissent, a review in the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*. This show is intended for Broadway, that reviewer said, but the producers are delusional. There is so much wrong with it he wouldn’t even know how to begin to fix it. I’m happy to report that that reviewer’s career as a theater critic would be permanently over within a year, but to this day I remember his name: Jack Viertel.

There were so many moving pieces, Heidi’s magnificent set design the one constant. Only one actor from the La Jolla production came to New York: our Pap Finn, played by a plus-sized but obviously talented diamond in the rough named John Goodman. The musical direction and orchestrations changed. The score came together not in the usual workmanlike manner but in fits and starts, with long silences and sudden bursts.

Roger hated writing to order and even more, to a deadline. He once said to me, “You want tomorrow? You can have Earl Scheib tomorrow. Rembrandt takes time.” Des McAnuff’s alchemy, somehow managing to blend an eclectic mix of songs that were inspired but not always on point, into an actual score, amazes me more with each passing year.

Roger stopped to give me a hug on his way to the stage to accept his Tony in June 1985. Des, Bill, Ron Richardson (our Jim), and our lighting designer Richard Riedel got their Tonys, and Heidi, who earlier that year had given birth to our son North, got two. With our co-producers Michael and Ed and Sherman (the Dodgers); two of my best friends and earliest investors, Rick Steiner and Tony Fisher; and our friends and families; we celebrated well into the next morning. Again, Huck said it best: “It had been like the fortune [Jim] predicted for me long ago. Considerable trouble and considerable joy.”

Rocco Landesman is President Emeritus of Jujamcyn Theaters. From 2009 to 2013 he served as the chairman of The National Endowment for the Arts.

MARK TWAIN MAKES A PLAYLIST

BY MATT WEINSTOCK

What would Mark Twain have thought of the songs in *Big River*? It’s an absurd question—on par with “Would Ramses have liked Chubby Checker?”—but an intriguing one, particularly because Twain encountered the American musical in its herky-jerky infancy. In 1867, he took in a performance of *The Black Crook*, the five-hour spectacle that has often been pegged as the first piece of theater in which song and dance grew out of the story. Whatever its formal innovations, Twain saw *The Black Crook* as degenerate. “It is the wickedest show you can think of,” he wrote in the *San Francisco Alta California*. “The scenery and the legs are everything.”

Mark Twain can be forgiven for failing to enjoy “You Naughty, Naughty Men,” *The Black Crook*’s bouncy breakout hit. He once wrote that his “passion for music” was “restricted to a *single kind* of music: the somber, the solemn, the melancholy.” When he sang at home, Twain’s specialties weren’t “Camptown Races” or “Buffalo Gals” (which he dismissed as “comic songs that made a person sorry to be alive”), but rather the African-American spirituals he remembered from childhood, like “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” and “Go Chain the Lion Down.”

The cats scattered and his children mobbed the piano whenever Twain sang. His daughter Clara recalled that he performed “quite loudly with his head thrown back and his eyes fixed on the ceiling. We thought he looked very ‘cute.’ He interrupted himself constantly to correct wrong chords, but usually in vain, for he could not find the right ones.” One number that Twain’s children requested “with burdensome frequency” was a dirty parody of the hymn “There Is a Happy Land.” “To their minds it was superior to the ‘Battle Hymn of the Republic,’” Twain wrote.

But what made it inferior? If a song gave pleasure, how could the poobahs of high culture dismiss it? These sorts of questions gnawed at Twain. “I suppose [Könemann’s *Der Fremersberg* is very low-grade music,” he wrote after seeing a public performance in the 1860s. “I know, indeed, that it *must* be low-grade music, because it so delighted me, warmed me, moved me[, and] nothing but the very lowest of low-grade music *could* be so divinely beautiful.” Twain mused that there were “two kinds of music,—one kind which one feels, just as an oyster might, and another sort which requires a higher faculty, a faculty which must be assisted and developed by teaching.”

Twain was in a state of peak anxiety about his musical tastes in 1878, when his wife Olivia gave him an ornate Swiss music box with a customizable playlist of ten songs. Twain labored over the playlist with the self-consciousness of a Bushwick hipster, scrawling potential song titles in notebooks and prevailing on pals for advice. “I thought I had ten favorite tunes, but easily found I had only four,” he wrote glumly. (They were “God Save the Tsar!”, Verdi’s “Miserere,” Wagner’s “Bridal Chorus,” and Silcher’s “Die Lorelei.”) One letter to a friend closed with this pathetic entreaty: “Come, will you help me?”

Twain took five months to finalize the playlist, toying with songs ranging from “Auld Lang Syne” to “Way Down in Tennessee.” In the end, the music box proved a disappointment; according to the scholar Kerry Driscoll, it was a status symbol that “could play only ‘high-grade’ music that he ‘pretended to like’ rather than the popular melodies that genuinely moved him.”

Although Twain eventually developed an appreciation for classical music, the “low-grade” tunes of his youth retained a unique power. On his deathbed, Twain’s lone request was that his daughter Clara sing the Scottish folk song “Flow Gently, Sweet Afton.” “It seemed to have a quieting effect on him,” Clara said. “He sank from excited talking into reposeful musing”.

What did the song mean to him? “Tunes are good remembrancers,” Twain explained in 1868. “Almost everyone I am familiar with, summons instantly a face when I hear it.” Music was a conduit to the past—an occult magician, Twain wrote, “who lifts his wand and says his mysterious word and all things real pass away and the phantoms of your mind walk before you clothed in flesh.” Which, all in all, is not a bad description of musical theater.

RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES ON YOUR WAY TO THE THEATER!

BEFORE THE SHOW

Brainstorm with the class on what kinds of things would be different for people in the South during the 1840s. This can be done as a whole group, or students can be separated into small groups to brainstorm specific aspects of how life was different then (jobs, social customs/norms, technology and medicine, dress, language, civil rights, education, etc.)

As a whole class, have students create a character who grew up in the south in the 1840s. Draw an outline of a person on a large piece of paper that can stick to a wall, and then have students think about who this person is. On the outside of this outline, students will write the ways that this character is viewed by others, and on the inside will be the way this person views him or herself. The best way to do this is to start with the outside—things such as the person’s name, job, race, gender, etc.—and then gradually work to the inside of the outline.

Once the character has been fully fleshed out, have each student write a short diary entry as that character. Make sure they consider what this character’s biggest struggle would be, and the reason why the character is writing this diary entry. Have volunteers share their entry with the whole group, or have them share with a partner.

Extension Activity:

1. With the whole class, have students discuss and create a small town, and brainstorm what landmarks, stores, etc. might be in this town.
2. Physically map out in the classroom where these places in the town are (the school is near the window, the bakery is by the door, the river is near the back wall, people’s houses are near the center of the room, etc.)
3. Have students pick a character they want to be based on what’s in the town, and tell them to stand in the room where their characters would be (the teacher would be in the school, the baker in his shop, riverboat captain on the river, etc.).
4. As a group, have students improvise a typical day in the life of their characters. This is best accomplished by the teacher gradually calling out times of the day (6am, 7am, 8am, etc) and students then doing whatever their characters would be doing at that time of day. The baker might start working at 4am, and not go home until 5pm, for example, while the teacher might not start teaching until 8am.
5. Once you’ve gone through 24 hours, come back as a group and talk about what the students experienced. Some possible questions: a) What new things did you discover about this time period by physically acting out a character? b) What’s the biggest difference about life in this time period? What things are the same as they are today? c) Based on this activity, what kinds of things do you expect to see and experience in *Big River*?

THEATER MANNERS

Attending the theater is an adventure and a privilege. Before you see the performance this evening, understand your responsibilities as a good audience member. Just remember to SHOW RESPECT!

- S** Sit in your seat properly. Please do not bother your fellow audience members by standing up, sitting on your knees, or placing your feet on the back of the chair in front of you.
- H** Hush... Talking in the theater is appropriate only before and after the performance. The performance is live! That means the actors can hear and see you. Give them your full attention.
- O** Only use the restrooms before and after the performance, when the lights are up. Restroom locations can be found by asking the ushers. (Also make note of the FIRE EXIT nearest your seat.)
- W** Walk (don't run!) when moving through the theater. Your safety and the safety of those around you depend on this.
- R** Respond respectfully. It is alright to respond to the show with applause and laughter, but please be respectful and non-disruptive to the performers.
- E** Eating, drinking, gum chewing and smoking are not allowed in the theater.
- S** Singing along is distracting to the performers. We're so happy that you've learned songs from the show. However, during the performance, it's the actors' turn to sing!
- P** Placing anything on the railing is dangerous; it could fall over the balcony.
- E** Electronics like iPods, gaming devices, and cameras should be left at home. They are distracting to the performers and will be confiscated if brought into the theater.
- C** Cell phones should be turned off! And make sure to unwrap any noisy candy or cough-drops before the performance.
- T** Theater is meant to be enjoyed. Remember to HAVE FUN!

WRITE A REVIEW!

It's intermission! To start thinking like a theater critic, jot down your thoughts to the following questions. Then, after you've seen the whole show, look back at your answers and see if you've changed your mind.

- What was your favorite part of the performance so far?
- Now that you have seen some of the show, what themes are emerging?
- Who was your favorite character and why?
- What was your favorite song?
- Were there any additional aspects of the show that you enjoyed (e.g. sets, lighting, costumes, etc.)?
- What did you like most about those aspects of the show?
- What did you like most about seeing a live performance?
- What creative changes or additions would you make to the show?



AFTER THE SHOW

ENCORES! AND YOU!

After seeing BIG RIVER at City Center, compare and contrast your ideas about theme and your focus with what you saw on stage.

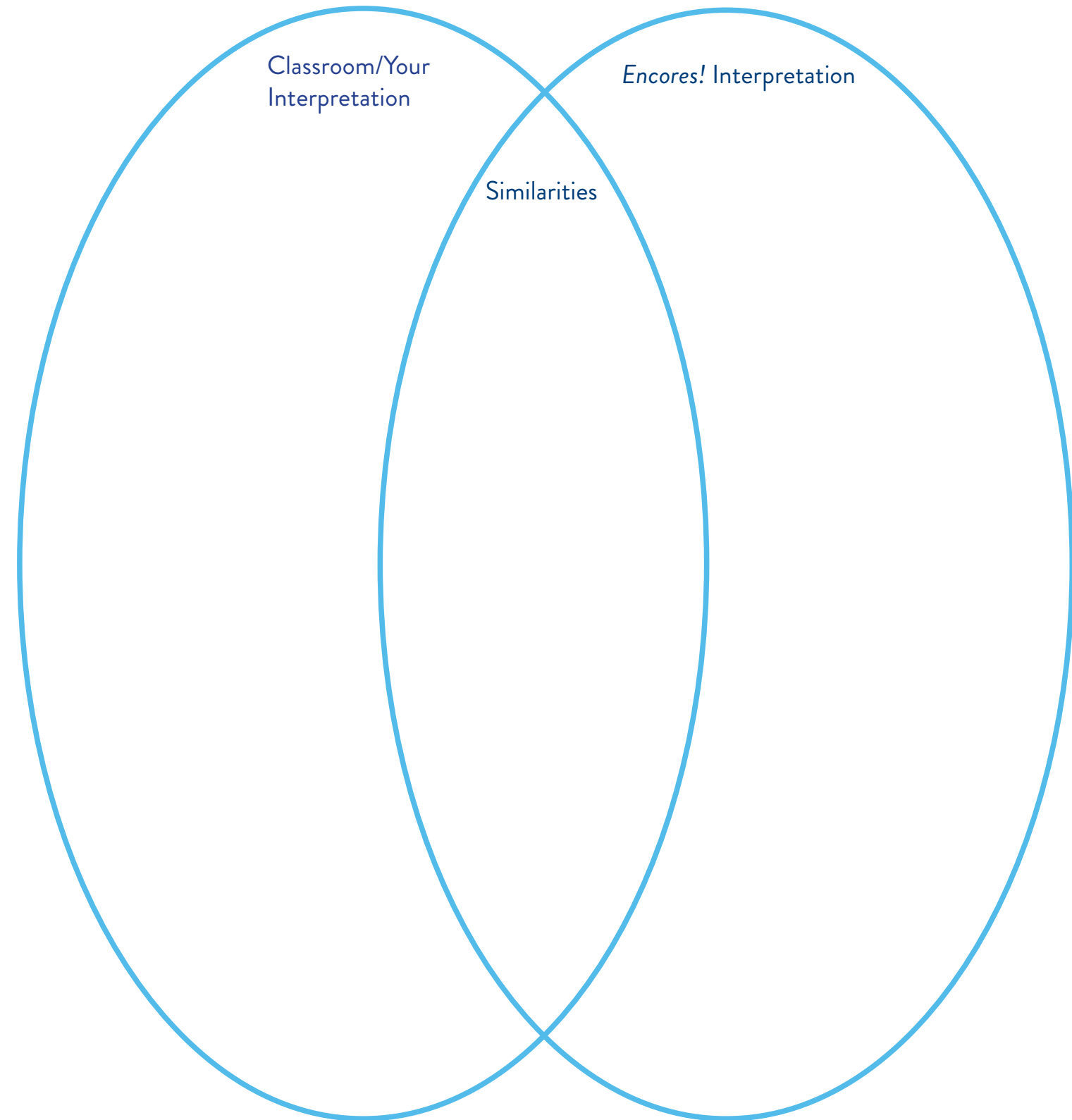
Have students free write based on one or more of the below prompts, and then ask volunteers to share with the group.

Writing Prompts:

- Throughout the play, Huck experiences conflict between what he wants to do and what the people in his life tell him he should do. Write about a time when you or a friend experienced something similar to this. What did you or your friend decide to do? How is this similar to what Huck experienced and decided? How is it different?
- The river is a big symbol throughout the play. What did you think the river represented? Did it mean something different for different characters? Include at least one specific example from the show that supports your idea
- Think back to the character you created before you saw the show. What would your character think about the idea of abolishing slavery? Would they be for it or against it? Write another diary entry as your character responding to the news that Jim escaped from his master.

Extension Activity:

1. Let the students know that City Center's production of *Big River* was cut slightly so that instances of the N word were fewer than they were in the original play, and the uncut version of the play has less controversial language and material than the original book, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The book itself has been banned in some school districts from being read.
2. Have the class debate on whether or not the book should be banned from schools, with reasons supporting both points of view. It may be helpful to divide them into a "pro" side and a "con" side, and have them brainstorm ways of supporting their side in their groups.
3. Questions to consider:
 - Is this text still relevant to society today? If so, in what ways is it relevant? If not, how is it irrelevant?
 - Is it appropriate for the language of to be read in schools, or is it potentially damaging?
 - Would it make a difference if the language was toned down, similarly to the City Center show?
 - Is censorship of literature in school right or wrong? Why?
4. Depending on the class, this activity can be adapted so that it's a more formal debate. Students can even do research for homework to find other arguments supporting their side. This can even be set up with the convention of a trial, with each side representing lawyers that have to defend their case.



LEARNER OUTCOMES

CURRICULUM STANDARDS

THE ARTS

Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts

- Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theater, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts.

Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

- Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.

Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

- Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.

Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts

- Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

- Literary response and expression
- Critical analysis and evaluation
- Social interaction

SOCIAL STUDIES

History of the United States

- Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

World History

- Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments and turning points in world history while examining the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BLUEPRINT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE ARTS

MUSIC MAKING

- Learn, sing, and perform a musical theater number in unison
- Use a vocal warm-up
- Use their voice expressively
- Use a variety of vocal skills for appropriate articulation, dynamics, phrasing and rhythm
- Create lyrics for an original song
- Write lyrics that fit the scansion of the melody
- Develop thematic connections through lyric writing

DEVELOPING MUSIC LITERACY

- Learn several musical theater motifs
- Compare several songs in one score
- Interpret motifs through original song
- Understand and use specific music vocabulary
- Use and understand music vocabulary necessary for performing musical theater number

DANCE MAKING

- Develop Skills and Techniques
- Explore the movement vocabulary of a number
- Apply basic partnering skills
- Choreography
- Use their bodies expressively to recall, repeat and revise movement sequences
- Demonstrate basic grouping and patterning choreographic techniques
- Move appropriately in personal and general space
- Make personal movement choices that enhance the number
- Performing
- Dance with focus and intent
- Reproduce dance sequences accurately
- Exhibit self-awareness and awareness of the audience
- Understand stage directions

DEVELOPING DANCE LITERACY

- Understand dance as a means of personal expression
- Understand how personal commitment determines performance
- Adapt movement to character
- Apply dance vocabulary and terminology
- Use appropriate terms and vocabulary for musical theater dance
- Analyze, critique, and communicate about dance
- Be able to talk with peers about dance
- Be able to self-assess their own dance performance

THEATER MAKING

Acting

- Create a distinct character and make choices reflecting that character
- Understand characters relationship to others
- Understand stage directions
- Sustain focus and character throughout performance
- Receive, respond and incorporate directions
- Demonstrate appropriate onstage and offstage behavior

Playwriting

- Create original dialogue that is thematically coherent

DEVELOPING THEATER LITERACY

- Use and understand appropriate theater vocabulary
- Understand basic stage directions
- Understand the director's direction regarding character work
- Understand dramatic texts
- Articulate how musical theater is different from a standard play
- Respond to a theater performance
- Develop shared criteria for evaluating performance

MAKING CONNECTIONS: MUSIC, DANCE AND THEATER

- Understand the history of musical theater as a culturally significant performing art
- Understand the general historical progression of musical theater in this century
- Identify the year of the original musical production
- Understand that musical theater is a unique combination of the disciplines of dance, theater, and music
- Articulate how musical theater draws on three disciplines to create a unique performing art
- Understand how this particular work of musical theater is a product of a particular time and place

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Engage with Cultural Institutions
- Be able to articulate their personal experience of the *Encores!* in Residence program
- Identify New York City Center as a site of American musical theater preservation
- Identify other theaters and organizations who provide access to musical theater

EXPLORING CAREERS AND LIFELONG LEARNING

- Gain awareness of careers available in musical theater
- Identify several key jobs in creating and producing musical theater
- Identify roles and responsibilities of key jobs
- Set career goals and plans
- Understand the education background and training necessary for key jobs in musical theater
- Gain appreciation of musical theater as a source of personal enjoyment and lifelong learning
- Articulate how musical theater is a valuable and enjoyable part of our shared cultural heritage
- Exhibit appropriate audience behavior at peer and professional performances



NEW YORK CITY CENTER EDUCATION VISION STATEMENT

The mission of New York City Center Education is to ignite an appreciation of the performing arts, cultivate the creative mind and create a culture of inquiry and exploration. Committed to drawing inspiration from works on the mainstage, New York City Center Education strives to provide innovative, accessible arts education to schools and communities across New York City.

ABOUT NEW YORK CITY CENTER EDUCATION

Each year City Center reaches over 9,000 students from NYC public and private schools, kindergarten to grade 12, through dance and musical theater performances and in-school performance workshops. In-depth residencies engage young people in building technical and expressive skills, personal voice, and collaborative spirit. Residencies culminate with student showcases of works-in-progress in schools and at City Center's studios. Master classes and open rehearsals are offered to mature dance students. Innovative workshops are crafted for families, seniors, and other special groups that express an interest in collaborating with City Center.

Through the Introduction to Performing Arts program, students have the opportunity to view live performing arts at City Center. At the Workshops level, students receive two in-school workshops in addition to attending a live performance. Mini-Residencies and Residencies provide in-depth multi-week study around one of the productions presented during the season. During the 2015-2016 Season, City Center Education offers students the opportunity to study Dance and Musical Theater productions from City Center's mainstage.

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