J*Company Youth Theatre: FUNNY GIRL – Insights Educational Guide

(All Curriculum Provided Meets California Standards for Theatre Arts)

FUNNY GIRL
(Hello Gorgeous!)

October 20th – 28th, 2012

Music & Lyrics by Bob Merrill & Jule Styne - Book by Isobel Lennart, Jule Styne & Bob Merrill

Directed by - Joey Landwehr
Musically Directed by, Angie Serrano
Choreographed by, David Brannen

for

THE STREISAND SEASON
2012–2013
Joey Landwehr, Artistic Director

J*Company Youth Theatre COMMEMORATES 20 YEARS

Created by Joey Landwehr - J*Company Artistic Director
Dear Fellow Educators,

At J*Company Youth Theatre, we believe that live theatre and the school curriculum go hand in hand. Every trip to the theatre offers a multitude of teaching moments for your students. This J*Company Youth Theatre Insights Educational Guide has been created to assist in making the play an enriching and enjoyable theatrical experience.

The J*Company Youth Theatre Insights Educational Guide includes a wide-ranging list of themes and topics, which are suggested by the style and content of FUNNY GIRL.

Avenues for exploring each theme and topic are suggested in the form of:

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION PROMPTS
Designed to prompt in-class discussions before and after viewing the J*Company Youth Theatre presentation.

ACTIVITIES, RESEARCH, AND WRITING PROMPTS
Designed to be researched and written on a broader scale, perhaps outside of class.

We are so proud that the San Diego Unified School District has recently been awarded for their fantastic approach to the importance of arts in schools by The John F. Kennedy Center. Congratulations to all of us in San Diego who work so hard to continue to bring visual and performing arts to young people across San Diego County!

We are so proud at J*Company to be working hand in hand with Karen Childress-Evans of Visual & Performing Arts Department (VAPA) at the San Diego Unified School District to bring the arts to young people everywhere.

It is our hope that you find this J*Company Youth Theatre’s Insights Educational Guide a wonderful tool to help enrich and enhance your already exemplary teaching guidelines.

Sincerely,

Joey Landwehr
Artistic Director, J*Company Youth Theatre
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Created by Joey Landwehr - J*Company Artistic Director
INTRODUCTION

ABOUT Funny Girl

Funny Girl is a musical with a book by Isobel Lennart, music by Jule Styne, and lyrics by Bob Merrill. The semi-biographical plot is based on the life and career of Broadway, film star and comedienne Fanny Brice and her stormy relationship with entrepreneur and gambler Nicky Arnstein. Its original title was My Man.

The musical was produced by Ray Stark, who was Brice's son-in-law via his marriage to her daughter Frances, and starred Barbra Streisand. The production was nominated for eight Tony Awards but, facing tough competition from Hello, Dolly!, it failed to win in any categories.

BACKGROUND

Ray Stark had commissioned an authorized biography of Brice, based on taped recollections she had dictated, but was unhappy with the result. It eventually cost him $50,000 to stop publication of The Fabulous Fanny, as it had been titled by the author. Stark then turned to Ben Hecht to write the screenplay for a biopic, but neither Hecht nor the ten writers who succeeded him were able to produce a version that satisfied Stark. Finally, Isobel Lennart submitted My Man, which pleased both Stark and Columbia Pictures executives, who offered Stark $400,000 plus a percentage of the gross for the property.

After reading the screenplay, Mary Martin contacted Stark and proposed it be adapted for a stage musical. Stark discussed the possibility with producer David Merrick, who suggested Jule Styne and Stephen Sondheim compose the score. Sondheim told Styne, "I don't want to do the life of Fanny Brice with Mary Martin. She's not Jewish. You need someone ethnic for the part." Shortly after, Martin lost interest in the project and backed out.

Merrick discussed the project with Jerome Robbins, who gave the screenplay to Anne Bancroft. She agreed to play Brice if she could handle the score. Merrick suggested Styne collaborate with Dorothy Fields, but the composer was not interested. He went to Palm Beach, Florida for a month and composed music he thought Bancroft would be able to sing. While he was there, he met Bob Merrill, and he played the five melodies he already had written for him. Merrill agreed to write lyrics for them; these included "Who Are You Now?" and "The Music That Makes Me Dance." Styne was happy with the results and the two men completed the rest of the score, then flew to Los Angeles to play it for Stark, Robbins, and Bancroft, who was at odds with Merrill because of a fight the two had years before. She listened to the score, then stated, "I want no part of this. It's not for me."

With Bancroft out of the picture, Eydie Gormé was considered, but she agreed to play Brice only if her husband Steve Lawrence was cast as Nicky Arnstein. Since they thought he was wrong for the role, Stark and Robbins approached Carol Burnett, who said, "I'd love to do it but what you need is a Jewish girl." With options running out, Styne thought...
Barbra Streisand, whom he remembered from *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*, would be perfect. She was performing at the Bon Soir in Greenwich Village and Styne urged Robbins to see her. He was impressed and asked her to audition. Styne later recalled, "She looked awful ... All her clothes were out of thrift shops. I saw Fran Stark staring at her, obvious distaste on her face." Despite his wife's objections, Stark hired Streisand on the spot.

Robbins had an argument with Lennart and told Stark he wanted her replaced because he thought she was not capable of adapting her screenplay into a viable book for a stage musical. Stark refused and Robbins quit the project.

*Funny Girl* temporarily was shelved, and Styne moved on to other projects, including *Fade Out – Fade In* for Carol Burnett. Then Merrick signed Bob Fosse to direct *Funny Girl*, and work began on it again, until Fosse quit and the show went into limbo for several months. Then Merrick suggested Stark hire Garson Kanin. It was Merrick's last contribution to the production; shortly after he bowed out, and Stark became sole producer.

Streisand was not enthusiastic about Kanin as a director and insisted she wanted Robbins back, especially after Kanin suggested "People" be cut from the score because it didn't fit the character. Streisand already had recorded the song for a single release, and Merrill insisted, "It has to be in the show because it's the greatest thing she's ever done." Kanin agreed to let it remain based on audience reaction to it. By the time the show opened in Boston, people were so familiar with "People" they applauded it during the overture.

There were problems with the script and score throughout rehearsals, and when *Funny Girl* opened in Boston it was too long, even though thirty minutes already had been cut. The critics praised Streisand but disliked the show. Lennart continued to edit her book and deleted another thirty minutes before the show moved to Philadelphia, where critics thought the show could be a hit if the libretto problems were rectified.

The New York opening was postponed five times while extra weeks were played out of town. Five songs were cut, and "You Are Woman," a solo for Sydney Chaplin, was rewritten as a counterpoint duet. Streisand was still unhappy with Kanin and was pleased when Robbins returned to oversee the choreography by Carol Haney.

**PRODUCTIONS**

After seventeen previews, the Broadway production opened on March 26, 1964 at the Winter Garden Theatre, subsequently transferring to the Majestic Theatre and The Broadway Theatre to complete its total run of 1,348 performances. The musical was directed by Garson Kanin and choreographed by Carol Haney under the supervision of Jerome Robbins. In addition to Streisand and Chaplin, the original cast included Kay Medford, Danny Meehan, Jean Stapleton, and Lainie Kazan, who also served as Streisand's understudy. Later in the run, Streisand and Chaplin were replaced by Mimi Hines and Johnny Desmond, and Hines' husband and comedy partner Phil Ford also joined the cast.
Streisand reprised her role in the 1966 West End production at the Prince of Wales Theatre directed by Lawrence Kasha.


On September 23, 2002, a concert version for the benefit of the Actors' Fund was staged at the New Amsterdam Theatre. Performers included Carolee Carmello, Kristin Chenoweth, Sutton Foster, Ana Gasteyer, Whoopi Goldberg, Jane Krakowski, Judy Kuhn, Julia Murney, LaChanze, Ricki Lake, Andrea Martin, Idina Menzel, Bebe Neuwirth, Alice Playten, Lillias White, Len Cariou, Peter Gallagher, Gary Beach, Steven Brinberg and The Rockettes.

In regional theatre the Paper Mill Playhouse, Millburn, New Jersey production ran in April to May 2001 with Leslie Kritzer and Robert Cuccioli. The New York Times reviewer noted: "What makes it all the more impressive is that few actors, or theater companies outside of summer stock, dare to attempt Jule Styne's and Bob Merrill's grand spectacle that propelled Barbra Streisand's career nearly 40 years ago."

A revival directed by Bartlett Sher had been announced to premiere at the Ahmanson Theatre, Los Angeles, in January 2012 with Lauren Ambrose starring as Fanny Brice and then open on Broadway in April 2012. However, on November 3, 2011, producer Bob Boyett announced that this production has been postponed. He said "We have made the extremely difficult decision today to postpone our production of 'Funny Girl'. Given the current economic climate, many Broadway producing investors have found it impossible to maintain their standard level of financial commitment."

Original Funny Girl Artwork

Created by Joey Landwehr - J*Company Artistic Director
Synopsis
The musical is set in and around New York City just prior to and following World War I. Ziegfeld Follies star Fanny Brice, awaiting the return of her husband, Nick Arnstein, from prison, reflects on their life together, and their story is told as a flashback.

ACT I
Fanny is a stage-struck teen who gets her first job in vaudeville. Her mother and her friend Mrs. Strakosh try to dissuade her from show-business because Fanny is not the typical beauty ("If a Girl Isn't Pretty"). But Fanny perseveres ("I'm the Greatest Star") and is helped and encouraged by Eddie Ryan, a dancer she meets in the vaudeville shows. Once Fanny's career takes off, Eddie and Mrs. Brice lament that once she's on Broadway she'll forget about them ("Who Taught Her Everything?"). Fanny performs a supposedly romantic number in the Follies, but she turns it into a classic comic routine, ending the number as a pregnant bride ("His Love Makes Me Beautiful").

She meets the sophisticated and handsome Nick Arnstein, who accompanies Fanny to her mother's opening night party on "Henry Street". Fanny is clearly in love ("People"). They meet in Baltimore and have a private dinner at a swanky restaurant and declare their feelings ("You Are Woman, I Am Man"). Fanny is determined to marry Nick regardless of his gambling past ("Don't Rain on My Parade").

Created by Joey Landwehr - J*Company Artistic Director
ACT II
They do marry and move to a mansion on Long Island ("Sadie, Sadie"). In the meantime, Mrs. Strakosh and Eddie propose to Mrs. Brice that she should find a man to marry, now that her daughter is supporting her ("Find Yourself a Man.") Fanny has become a major star with Ziegfeld and the Follies ("Rat-Tat-Tat-Tat"). Nick asks Ziegfeld to invest in a gambling casino, but although Ziegfeld passes, Fanny insists on investing. When the venture fails and they lose their money, Fanny tries to make light of it, which propels Nick to get involved in a shady bond deal, resulting in his arrest for embezzlement. Fanny feels helpless but stronger than ever in her love for him ("The Music That Makes Me Dance").

In the present, Fanny is waiting for Nick to arrive and has time to reflect on her situation. Nick arrives, newly released from prison and he and Fanny decide to separate. Fanny is heartbroken, but resolves to pick up her life again ("Don't Rain on My Parade, Reprise").
ABOUT FANNY BRICE

Funny Girl, a largely fictional adaptation of her life, has perpetuated the fame of vaudeville legend Fanny Brice. The real Fanny Brice was, in her time, a tremendously popular comedienne who first established herself in vaudeville and later in radio, portraying her trademark character, Baby Snooks. Her skill at Yiddish-English dialect, penchant for wacky facial expressions, and loud, perfectly timed comic singing voice endeared her to American audiences for more than four decades.

Fanny Brice was born Fania Borach in 1891 on New York's Lower East Side and dropped out of school in the eighth grade to become a chorus girl. In 1909, she scored her first success singing the Irving Berlin song “Sadie Salome, Go Home” (in a musical called The College Girls) while performing a parody on "The Dance of the Seven Veils" from Richard Strauss's opera Salome. This attracted the attention of impresario Florenz Ziegfeld, and though it seems Brice would have made an unlikely "Follies Girl," she appeared in the Ziegfeld Follies of 1910. Brice was 18 years old.

Brice continued through 1923 to star in several editions of the Ziegfeld Follies as a top-billed performer alongside acts such as W. C. Fields, Raymond Hitchcock, Van & Schenck, Moran & Mack, and Ted Lewis. She was also a featured attraction in shows produced by Irving Berlin and Billy Rose, whom she married in 1929 and divorced in 1938. Brice popularized the classic torch song "My Man" and was indelibly associated with such comic songs as "Second-Hand Rose" and "I'm an Indian." At the height of her popularity as a stage star, Brice attempted to take on roles in serious plays, but her efforts to this end proved unsuccessful.

In 1918, Brice married Nick Arnstein, a con man, who by 1920 had become implicated in a Wall Street bond robbery. Although it seems likely that Arnstein was not guilty in the matter, he was convicted and sent to Leavenworth in 1924. Upon his release three years later, Arnstein disappeared and was never heard from again. This tale ultimately became the seed for Funny Girl; Brice's later marriage to Billy Rose provided the inspiration for the film Funny Lady.

While neither of these fictionalized projects reflects the true story of Fanny Brice, one film that does is Rose of Washington Square (1939), starring Alice Faye. The resemblance was so close, in fact, that Brice sued the film's producer, 20th Century Fox, for defamation of character. Brice and the studio settled out of court.

With the arrival of talking pictures, Brice went to Hollywood and starred in a Vitaphone feature, My Man (1928), and Be Yourself (1930) for United Artists. Both of these films were failures, and Brice soon returned to Broadway. At some point during the early 1930s Brice developed the persona of the “bratty widdle kid” Baby Snooks. Brice revived this character on an episode of a radio program entitled The Ziegfeld Follies of the Air, which aired February 29, 1936. The public response was immediate, and throughout the late 1930s Brice carried Baby Snooks through an assortment of variety programs until
settling in with Maxwell House Coffee Time in 1940. By 1944, her spot on the radio schedule was finally named The Baby Snooks Show.

Brice suffered a stroke on May 24, 1951, and died five days later at the age of 50. Fanny Brice was considered to be the greatest Jewish female comedienne of her day, but sadly, few examples of her work besides the Baby Snooks radio programmes survive today.
ABOUT THE COLLABORATORS

Jule Styne, Composer

A child prodigy, accompanist, and renowned composer for Broadway, films, television, and radio, Jule Styne penned the music for some of America's best-loved and most enduring songs, including "Anchors Aweigh," "Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow," and "People." One of the most prolific songwriter-composers in American theatre, Styne specialized in creating songs especially suited for particular Broadway divas like Carol Channing and Barbara Streisand. Working closely with Frank Loesser and Sammy Cahn through the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, he also penned many movie songs. In 1954, he shared an Oscar for the title song "Three Coins in the Fountain." He later earned a Tony for Hallelujah Baby!, a New York Drama Critics Circle award, and two Grammys.

Born Julius Kerwin Stein in London, he was still a child when he and his family immigrated to the U.S. A prodigy who received classical training early, by age eight Styne was a gifted concert pianist and occasional soloist with the Chicago Symphony. After further studies at the Chicago College of Music, he played with various bands and accompanied such stars as Fanny Brice, Helen Morgan, and Al Jolson, for whom Styne wrote the song "Sunday" in 1926. In 1931, Styne formed his own band. By mid-decade he was a noted vocal arranger and was working in Hollywood as a songwriter and voice teacher to stars such as Shirley Temple and Alice Faye. During this period in Tinseltown, Styne made a name for himself with his upbeat, memorable tunes. With Stephen Sondheim, he created the memorable songs for the Broadway staple Gypsy, which originally starred Ethel Merman as the ultimate stage mother. Styne wrote the song "Rose's Turn" especially for her. For Carol Channing, who played Lorelei Lee in the 1949 production of Gentleman Prefer Blondes, he penned the sparkling "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," which later became one of Marilyn Monroe's most famous songs, as well as a hit for Barbra Streisand. Shortly before his death of heart failure on September 20, 1994, Jule Styne was working on a revival of Gentlemen Prefer Blondes at the Goodspeed Opera House in Connecticut.

Bob Merrill, Lyricist

One of popular music's most prolific and popular songwriters, Bob Merrill was best known for a string of hits ranging from novelty smashes like "How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?" to more serious fare including "People" from Funny Girl. Born in Philadelphia in 1923, Merrill hitchhiked to New York at the age of 17, where his first job found him putting up titles on movie marquees. After a series of short-lived theatrical jobs, he relocated to Hollywood, eventually getting his big break as a radio writer and composer. Among Merrill's first songs were "Why Does It Have to Rain on Sunday?," "Lovers Gold," and "Fool's Paradise"; while all three found buyers, none were hits. Teaming with songwriters Al Hoffman and Clem Watts, he next co-authored "If I Knew You Were Coming I'd've Baked a Cake"; when singer Eileen Barton took it to the top of the charts, Merrill's career was on its way.
During the late 1940s and 1950s, Merrill's songs were seemingly everywhere, his string of hits including "Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania," "My Truly, Truly Fair," "Sparrow in the Tree Top," "Love Makes the World Go 'Round," and "Mambo Italiano." Unable to read or write music, he composed all of his work on a cheap toy xylophone, numbering the keys in order to transcribe the melodies. Merrill's ingratiating music was typified by its upbeat, wholesome sensibilities; he took charges of clichéd lyrics in stride, freely admitting that he kept a notebook filled with clichés in order to pen more universal songs. Later returning to Broadway, Merrill scored his biggest hit with *Funny Girl*, which in addition to "People" also launched the perennial "Don't Rain on My Parade." In 1964, he won the New York Drama Critics Circle award for his work on *Carnival* and *New Girl in Town*. After a long illness, Merrill took his own life on February 17, 1998, at the age of 74.

**Isobel Lennart, Librettist**

Born in Brooklyn, Isobel Lennart moved to Hollywood in the early 1940s to write screenplays. She wrote many—mostly light comedy, but occasionally drama—alone or in collaboration. Lennart received two Oscar nominations, one for *Love Me or Leave Me* in 1955, and one for *The Sundowners* in 1960. Other screenwriting credits include *The Affairs of Martha* (1942), *Anchors Aweigh* (1945), *Meet Me in Las Vegas* (1956), *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* and *Merry Andrew* (1958), *Please Don't Eat the Daisies* (1960), *Period of Adjustment* and *Two for the Seesaw* (1962), and *Fitzwilly* (1967). She scored a big hit on Broadway in 1964 with *Funny Girl*, which she later adapted to the screen. She was killed in a car accident in 1971 and was survived by her husband, actor John ("Jack") Harding.
FUNNY GIRL AND BARBRA STREISAND

Barbra Streisand received tremendous critical acclaim for her first Broadway role, a supporting one in the seldom-remembered musical I Can Get It for You Wholesale. After Wholesale closed, Streisand was already impatient to move onto bigger and better things. She was preparing to appear on The Ed Sullivan Show and had beaten several highly respected actresses to be cast in the starring role of a new Broadway musical, Funny Girl.

Funny Girl was based on the life of Fanny Brice, the famous comedienne and Ziegfeld Follies singing star. The story centres around her romance and marriage to con man Nick Arnstein. The starring role of Fanny Brice, a plain-looking New York City Jewish woman, with a prominent nose and a voice and comedic persona that made her famous, seemed tailor-made for Streisand. Jule Styne, the show's composer, was so convinced that Barbra was the actress to play Fanny that he began writing songs designed for her voice, before she was even contracted.

When Funny Girl opened at the Winter Garden Theatre on March 26, 1964, Streisand took Broadway by storm. The show was a smash success, driven by Streisand's performance. The critics raved and The New York Times said, “Barbra Streisand sets an entire theatre ablaze . . . she is the theatre's new girl for all seasons.”

In April, the soundtrack of Funny Girl came out and climbed to Billboard's no. 2 position. A month later, Streisand was awarded the Grammy for Best Female Vocalist for her first album, which also won the Grammy for Album of the Year. She was then, at 21, the youngest performer ever to win both awards in the same year, and still is.

Streisand's last performance as Fanny Brice on the Broadway stage was in December 1965. It would take almost two and a half years for the movie version to hit America and make Streisand the country's biggest female star. Ray Stark, who signed her to star in Funny Girl, at first had trouble landing her a studio deal for the film, mainly because of Barbra's inexperience. Studios were wary of theatrical stars. Many had not made the successful transition to film stardom. Stark, however, was adamant: "I just felt she was too much a part of Fanny and Fanny too much a part of Barbra to have it go to someone else." Columbia Pictures eventually required that she do a screen test for the picture.

On September 18, 1968, Funny Girl premiered at the Criterion Theatre in New York, and while the film itself received mixed reviews, Streisand did not. Her performance was "the most accomplished, original and enjoyable musical-comedy performance that has ever been captured on film," raved Newsweek. Even the soundtrack album reached the top 25 in a day when pop music was turning away from Broadway to rock and roll.

The year 1968 was a strong one for movies, so it was not surprising that the Oscars were very well contested. Streisand told a reporter, "I can’t win. Not me." But she did. It was a tie between her for Funny Girl and Katharine Hepburn for The Lion in Winter. When she collected her Oscar, she stared at the coveted statue and squealed, "Hello, gorgeous!"
FUNNY GIRL DEBUNKED: FANNY BRICE FACTS
by John Kenrick, www.musicals101.com

Although the stage and screen hit Funny Girl is based on the life of singer-actress Fanny Brice, it is mostly delicious fiction with an occasional stray fact thrown in. Fanny Brice’s son-in-law, Ray Stark, produced both the play and movie, and had to appease the memories (and egos) of Fanny's surviving family and associates. So it is no surprise that he had to encourage librettist Isobel Lennart to take creative liberties with history.

The release of the digitally restored film on DVD makes this the perfect time to debunk some of the inaccuracies Funny Girl perpetrates in the name of providing good entertainment:

• Fanny's family name was Borach. After her career took off in burlesque, she changed it to Brice, but her mother was always known as Mrs. Borach.

• Fanny's parents owned a chain of profitable saloons in Newark, New Jersey. They lived comfortably, with household servants and and frequent trips to visit relatives in Europe. Fanny's mother, Rosie, spent years managing the bars while her husband played cards and drank his days away. When that got to be more than she could bear, Rosie got a legal separation and took the kids to New York. Rosie made a good living buying and selling real estate. While Fanny struggled towards fame, her family lived in a series of handsome apartments and townhouses, including one on swanky Beekman Place—nowhere near the folksy poverty of Henry Street seen in the film.

• Fanny was eventually fired from a chorus, but not by Keeney. No less than Broadway legend George M. Cohan dropped her from the Broadway cast of Talk of the Town because she could not dance. To cover her disappointment, Fanny always claimed she was dumped because of her "skinny legs."

• In her teens, Fanny was married to (and quickly divorced from) Frank White, a barber with a taste for young actresses. So she lost her sexual innocence years before meeting Nick Arnstein.

• Funny Girl makes no mention of Fanny's long friendship with Irving Berlin. He wrote several special numbers for her, including "Sadie Salome, Go Home," a song which helped Fanny break into big-time show business.

• Fanny made her Broadway debut in a Shubert Brothers production, so she was not in burlesque when Ziegfeld sent for her.

• Fanny performed material her own way, but the pregnant bride routine depicted in Funny Girl never happened. If it had, Ziegfeld would have fired her on the spot, no matter what the audience thought of her! When Fanny debuted in the 1910 Follies, she stopped the show singing "Lovey Joe."

Created by Joey Landwehr - J*Company Artistic Director
• Fanny and Ziegfeld had few (if any) disputes, and always treated each other with professional and personal respect.

• The Ziegfeld Follies did not move to the New Amsterdam Theatre until 1913. When Fanny made her Follies debut, it was at The Jardin de Paris, an open-air summer theatre atop the now-gone New York Theatre.

• Nick Arnstein "gorgeous"? Oy vey! Compared to whom—William Howard Taft? He may have been sophisticated, and at 6'6" he towered over most men, but he had a face that could stop a truck.

• Fanny first met Nick in Baltimore while on tour in the Shubert Brother's revue Whirl of Society. He was betting on horses under the alias "Nick Arnold." His real name was Julius Arnstein—his friends called him Nick.

• Once they met, Nick did not disappear. In fact, he slavishly tagged along with the Whirl of Society tour, returned to New York with Fanny, and moved in with her and her mother. Fanny's mama saw through Arnstein's charms and hated him from day one.

• Fanny had Nick investigated and learned he was still married to his first wife. Hopelessly in love, Fanny pretended it didn't matter. She had to wait until 1919 for his divorce to come through, and married him just two months before the birth of their daughter, Frances.

• Nick and Fanny sailed to England on The Homeric, but he didn't win any jackpots on the voyage. Instead, he shamelessly lived it up while Fanny supported him in high style.

• The musical suggests Arnstein was a classy gambler who turned to crime because he didn't want to live on Fanny's money. Bull! The real Nick happily sponged off Fanny for their entire marriage. He was also a blatant embezzler. Before meeting Fanny, he had already been arrested for swindling in three European countries. Shortly after they met, he was jailed for wiretapping. He was nothing more than a common criminal. The lovesick Fanny visited him weekly in Sing Sing.

• In addition to their daughter, Frances, Nick and Fanny had a son named William who became a respected artist and educator. No one has ever explained why he was not mentioned in Funny Girl.

• The Arnsteins had a Manhattan townhouse on West 76th Street and a large country place in Huntington, Long Island. Fanny's money paid for both, so neither was lost because of Arnstein's financial losses.

• Funny Girl suggests Nick's big mistake was selling phony bonds. In fact, he was part of a gang that stole five million dollars worth of Wall Street securities—a tremendous sum in 1920. Instead of gallantly turning himself in, he went into hiding for four months, leaving Fanny to face intense press and police harassment while giving birth to their son, William. When Nick finally surrendered to the authorities, he did not gallantly plead
guilty. Instead, he fought the charges on every possible technicality for four years. A federal court finally threw him into Leavenworth for 14 months.
NEW YORK’S LOWER EAST SIDE

New York’s Lower East Side is a neighborhood built by immigrants that traditionally has welcomed newcomers from all parts of the globe. For more than a century and a half the Lower East Side has been known as the place where masses of people from throughout the world have come to take their first steps on the road to the American dream. It is a section of the city that once was home to African Americans freed from slavery in the 1820s; immigrants from Ireland leaving behind a country devastated by potato famines in the 1840s; Germans moving away from political upheavals in their homeland in the 1850s; Southern Italians fleeing from economic deprivation in the 1870s; and countless others from around the world seeking a better life for themselves and their children. Although all of these groups have left their mark, it is the Jewish heritage that historically has shaped the identity of the Lower East Side.

The area has traditionally been poor, and its abject poverty in the late 1800s spurred social reformer Jacob Riis to write, in 1890, the classic How the Other Half Lives, dramatizing the appalling, unsanitary, overcrowded conditions that plagued the area. Recent immigrants crammed whole families into single rooms with no sanitation and little ventilation. These conditions are recreated at the Tenement Museum on Orchard Street, which also gives guided tours of the area. Funny Girl’s Henry Street is a real street that runs parallel to East Broadway, one block south.

Despite the poverty, the area’s Jewish community was close-knit. Many businesses established at the turn of the century continue to thrive today. The neighbourhood spawned a vibrant Yiddish theatrical scene, thriving from 1892 to 1928. Many theatres produced plays in Yiddish for a Yiddish-speaking audience. Although the once-thriving scene has declined, Yiddish theatre continues to have a presence in New York.

Today, although smaller in size than in the peak years, the Jewish community continues to maintain its culture and traditions through a strong infrastructure of religious, educational, and social service organizations. The current ethnic mix of the Lower East Side also includes large populations of Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Mexicans, as well as Bengalis, Chinese, and other Asian newcomers. Gentrification is making inroads as tenements are converted to market rate apartments, development adds new housing, and designer boutiques, art galleries, and music clubs move in, attracting young professionals along with a trendy new crowd, beginning yet another chapter in the history of the Lower East Side.

The area’s geography and architecture still reflect the lives of early waves of immigrants and the present Jewish community. Centuries-old synagogues, yeshivas, tenements, and settlement houses are still standing and can be visited.
ABOUT FLORENZ ZIEGFELD

Florenz Ziegfeld, often called Flo, was a theatrical producer and creator of the Ziegfeld Follies. As the master showman of the early 20th century, Ziegfeld brought a unique and sophisticated style, taste, and extravagance to the theatre, popularizing a new form of entertainment called the revue.

Perhaps in reaction to his strict father's classical music career, Ziegfeld entered show business as a producer of variety entertainments, such as "dancing ducks" and later "Sandow, the Strongman." But not until his production of A Parlor Match, with French performer Anna Held, did Ziegfeld demonstrate his talent as an impresario by using beautiful women, lavish costumes, and elaborate scenery to create spectacle. Ziegfeld staged A Parlor Match so that the production emphasized Held's beauty and risqué charm; although she appeared in only one scene, she became the star of the show. Ziegfeld entered into a common-law marriage with Held soon after this success; they divorced in 1912. Later he married Billie Burke, a musical comedy star who appeared as Glinda the Good Witch in the film The Wizard of Oz.

As a result of the success of A Parlor Match, the producing firm of Klaw and Erlanger approached Ziegfeld to mount a light musical entertainment for the summer season. He devised a show that combined European style with American topical humour. The result, The Follies of 1907, was so successful that Ziegfeld produced the show annually, eventually calling it the Ziegfeld Follies.

Twenty-one editions of the Follies were staged. Over the years, the productions developed from a modest topical review of current events with a chorus of women, staged during the slack summer season, to a complex spectacular presentation, lavish in style and grand in scale, serving as the regular season's premiere entertainment. In a two-act presentation of twenty-three scenes, Ziegfeld blended comedy sketches, dances, and specialty acts with costly costumes and innovative scenery into a carefully crafted production that emphasized the beauty of the 60-woman chorus—the Follies' most noted feature. The shows were kaleidoscopic, for Ziegfeld was a master at blending these elements into an organic, spectacular whole. Called the "Great Glorifier," Ziegfeld created a theatrical environment in which the chorus as well as the featured performers, such as Fanny Brice, Will Rogers, W. C. Fields, and Eddie Cantor, assumed a special and heightened star status.

Because of the Follies' emphasis on opulence, spectacle, and beauty, the shows embodied the values of an America imbued with the notion of prosperity and the American Dream. Significantly, the names of the elite who attended on opening nights—the Vanderbilts, the Rockefellers, the Guggenheims, show-business celebrities—were mentioned in newspaper reviews of the shows.

The Follies also represented the height of American show business, for Ziegfeld did not let financial considerations impinge upon artistic ones in the creation of his personal theatrical vision. With his death in 1932, at the height of the depression, the American
theatre lost not only a great showman, but also a form of entertainment never duplicated since.
VAUDEVILLE SLANG
The world of vaudeville had its own colourful language, with many terms still in use today.

ad-lib - to improvise
all wet - a flop, but worse
alley-oop - an acrobatic or tumbling act
bill - the lineup or program of a vaudeville show
bit - sketch, routine, trick, or a part thereof
blue - off-colour
B.O. - box office
boff, boffo - outstanding
booner - talent scout (from Daniel Boone)
Boston version - cleaned-up version of a burlesque routine
break-in - time during which a new act was honed and revised after performing before an audience
business - actions by a performer intended to establish atmosphere, reveal character, or explain a situation
canned - cancelled, fired
chooser - a performer who goes to see other acts to steal material
clicked - was a success with the audience
closed - gave the last performance of a booking; also used to mean fired
company - four or more performers in the same act
crossover - a staple of vaudeville comedy, two performers enter from opposite sides of the stage and meet in the middle for a brief comedy bit
dark - time during which a theatre is closed to the public
dialect comic - comic using an accent and ethnic humour
died - played to little or no applause
excess baggage - a nonprofessional who tours with his or her vaudevillian spouse
feature spot - headliner, nearly always the act next to closing
fighting the agents - looking for work
five-percenter - theatrical agent or broker, named for the percentage of a performer's fee to which they were entitled
flash act - a large, impressive act
flop - a failure
government - faking it, bluffing your way through an act
gagging - introducing unplanned and unrehearsed remarks, reactions, bits, or business into an act during performance
giving the bird - booing, hissing, and/or catcalling
go big - win a good round of applause
good place to die - a small town without any action
grand jury - the audience in the gallery
guy from Dixie - a performer who isn't very good
hand to hand music - applause
handcuffed - when the audience won't applaud
headliner - star of the show whose name appeared at the top of the bill
**hokum or hocum** - bits, jokes, and routines that were corny, old-fashioned, and contrived

**hoofing, hoofer** - dancing, dancer

**in-and-outer** - a performer who went back and forth between vaudeville and legitimate theatre

**ivory tickler** - pianist

**jump** - travel between towns or cities where you are booked

**knocked 'em bowlegged** - was a big success

**a knockout** - a panic, but even better

**legit** - legitimate theatre

**making the rounds** - looking for work

**mugging** - contorting the face to win laughter, irrespective of any connection to the lines or action of the scene

**milking** - encouraging, inducing, and/or begging an audience to continue applauding long after they should have ceased

**milkman** - a performer with a reputation for milking

**monologist** - a performer whose act consisted entirely of talk, without the use of song, dance, or major props

**morgue** - a house that is not doing business

**mountaineer** - a comedian who is an alumnus of the Borscht Belt, the predominantly Jewish resort hotels of the Catskill Mountains

**moved 'em** - was a big success

**N.S.G.** - reviewer's shorthand for "not so good"

**N.S.H.** - "not so hot"

**next-to-closing** - this was the "top" or "star" spot; top of the bill in vaudeville was to play next-to-closing on the Orpheum circuit

**number** - an entertainment selection; in vaudeville programmes the acts were often numbered by the running order

**nut act** - comic(s) using an excessive style, usually physical comedy

**Nut House** - vaudeville theatre known for comic acts

**out of town** - anywhere not New York City

**over their heads** - an excuse used by performers who felt their act was not appreciated due to the audience's lack of intelligence and understanding

**panicked the house** - was a big success, even better than a riot

**paper** - complimentary and promotional admissions

**papering the house** - giving away free tickets to fill up the audience; often done on opening night or when a critic is in the audience

**patter** - the spoken parts of an act

**patter act** - an act based on clever, rapidfire dialogue

**pipes** - voice

**play up** - pitch the pace of a scene or act at a high level

**playing to the haircuts** - last on the bill; in other words, playing to the backs of the audience as they left the theatre

**relatives in the ice business** - what an unresponsive audience must have

**a riot** - succeed with big applause

**routine** - a particular arrangement of bits, schtick, and/or choreography

**schtick** - bit, routine, or style

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**show stopper** - a act that receives legitimate applause or ovations lasting into the time allotted for the next act

**silo circuit** - small towns and rural areas

**split week** - a week booked in two different theatres, often in different cities

**star turn** - an act by a great performer; also used facetiously to mean an offstage temper tantrum or other diva-like behaviour

**stubholders** - the audience

**suitcasing** - travelling on tour with minimal baggage

**tad comic** - Irish comic

**talking single** - a solo act using stories, jokes, or other verbal communication (e.g., magicians, impersonators, and monologists)

**terp team** - ballroom dancers

**three-sheeting** - hanging around the theatre making it known that you are a performer in order to try and impress others

**took the veil** - retired from public life

**walking off cold** - flopping

**wheels** - burlesque circuits

**wow finish** - an impressive climax at the end of an act calculated to bring enthusiastic applause

**wowed 'em** - was a huge success; the ultimate accolade

**yock** - a big laugh from the audience
THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Etiquette: Rules of good behavior, decorum, propriety, manners…

*Please review these rules of theatre etiquette with your class!*

Please be on time!
- Plan to arrive 15 to 20 minutes before the start of the play.
- Don’t forget to use the restroom and have a drink of water before entering the theatre.

Please remember to turn off your cell phone or any other devices that might make any noise or light up during the show.

Please be seated when you see the lights dim before the show—that is a signal that the show is about to start!

Please remember that the seats in the theatre are for sitting; try to refrain from kicking, bouncing, standing or putting feet on the seats.

Please do not stand or sit in the aisles—many times actors will make entrances through the audience and cannot get to the stage if you are blocking the way. It is also a fire hazard.

Please remember that absolutely no food or beverages are allowed in the theatre.

Please remember that live performances may not be recorded: cameras and video equipment are not permitted in the theatre.

And most importantly, please remember that the actors on the stage (unlike in the movies or on TV) know that you are in the audience and they can hear you!
- Please do not talk during the show—even in a whisper—it is distracting to the actors and other audience members.
- Please save questions and comments for the end of the show.
- Please do laugh when you find something funny—then the actors know they are doing their job.

Please do applaud at the end of musical numbers, scenes that are appropriate and of course at the finish of the show—actors enjoy knowing you had a good time at the performance.
BEHIND THE SCENES OF FUNNY GIRL

When we see a play, we only see the actors, but without the production team, the play would not happen! Let’s find out who works with the actors in rehearsal and backstage to make this production of Funny Girl a success.

The Director: Joey Landwehr is the director of Funny Girl. As the director he decides what the play will look like and how the characters will be interpreted. He chooses the actors to play the roles. He works with the design team (set designer, lighting designer and costume designer) to create the look for the show. He will rehearse with the actors to help them develop the characters they are playing. He will also “block” the show. Up until the 1940s, writers and producers had the concept that the director was expected to stage a show and supervise rehearsals in a way that made their concept shine through. Starting in the 1950s, directors took an increasing degree of control over the creative process. Today, few producers or writers have the clout to overrule a top director's decisions.

Choreographer: David Brannen is the person who stages the dances and musical scenes of a show was once called the “dance director,” but the title changed when ballet choreographers like George Balanchine and Agnes de Mille began working on musicals. A choreographer must give a musical a sense of movement that helps hold the show together visually. Since the 1940s, directors who also choreograph have staged many musicals.

Musical Director: Angie Serrano teaches the performers the music in the rehearsal process and works closely with the director to make sure all the nuances of the music and the performance is just right. The music director is also in charge of hiring and managing the orchestra, they have a tremendous effect on the sound and pacing of performances. A musical director must be ready to smooth over technical glitches, reassure uncertain understudies, and handle anything else that might stop the music. Most of the time, in present theatre, the music director also conducts the orchestra.

Stage Manager: Jamie Gilcrist is really the boss once the show opens! The stage manager has so many important duties. During rehearsals, she sets up the rehearsal space so it resembles the set (most actors do not get to work on the theatre set until shortly before the show starts), she makes sure that all the actors have scripts, schedules, rehearsal props, takes notes for the director and a thousand other tasks! During production, she makes sure all the actors, the technical team and the stage is ready for the performance each day. The stage manager also makes sure that the show does not change from what the director created; this may mean that she has to give the actors corrections after performances! The stage manager is the person who makes everything run smoothly.

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Set Designer: Mason Daryl Lev will create the environment for the story. The set designer, with the director decides how to design a set that will create the world of the play for the audience. The set must be visually engaging, safe for the actors to use and help tell the story of the play. The designer first makes drawings of ideas, then, when ideas are firm, he makes a little model of the set (kind of like a doll-house or a diorama). The technical crew will work from his drawings and model to build the set.

Lighting Designer: Omar Ramos knows doing a play in the dark would be no fun at all, so the lighting designer has a very important job! He works with the director and the set designer to make sure the show is well lit, but also to create special effects with lighting. He can create lightening, sunlight, moonlight, different colors of light—pretty much anything the director wants! The lighting designer may use a computer program to help him create all the effects and the lighting cues for the show. He will then decide which (and how many) lighting instruments will be hung from the grid (theatrical lighting is mostly hung from the ceiling on a metal grid structure).

Costume Designer: Lisa Forrest has the fun job of working with the director to decide what the characters in the play should wear! This is a vital job, because the audience learns many things about a character from what he or she is wearing. The costumes need to be in harmony with the set and lighting design, so the costumer also confers with the other designers on appropriate colors and patterns and how to contribute to the overall look of the play. She creates life-like drawings of each character in costume; these drawings are called “renderings.” She will then either buy clothing that is similar to what she wants from stores or create patterns and sew costumes (called building a costume) or find pieces in the costume storage in the theatre (costumes that have been used in other shows). Many times the costumes are a combination of all three: shopping, building and pulling.

Sound Designer: Katie “Ginge” Cox has a very important job in present-day theatre. In the 1950s, a stage manager just turned on some foot mikes at curtain time. Now, in many productions, every principal cast member wears a wireless body mike to provide full amplification—a complex proposition when there are dozens in a cast. Sound staff are on hand during all performances to continually adjust every microphone's setting—a task managed from a bank of computers at the rear of the orchestra section.

Librettist: Isobel Lennart Also called the book writer, the librettist creates the book—or script—of a musical. In musicals where the dialogue is almost completely replaced by music (Cats, Phantom of the Opera, Les Misérables), the librettist is essentially responsible for making sure everything weaves into a coherent, dramatic flow.
**Composer and Lyricist: Jule Styne & Bob Merrill** The composer writes the music, and the lyricist writes the words. It is not unusual for one person to act as both composer and lyricist. Some lyricists act as their own librettists. Only a very few people, such as George M. Cohan, Noel Coward, Meredith Willson, and Jonathan Larson have succeeded as composer, lyricist, and librettist.

For many years, Broadway composers and lyricists made much of their income from the sale of sheet music. With the change in musical tastes and the near disappearance of sheet music, they get little beyond the share of 2% of a show's profits and, if the show is ever leased for international and amateur productions, part of the long-term rights income. The only way for theatrical composers or lyricists to “strike it rich” is to become their own producer, as Andrew Lloyd Webber did with his Really Useful Company.

**Orchestrator: Ralph Burns** The composer writes the melodies, but the orchestrator determines what those melodies will sound like when an orchestra plays them. The challenge for orchestrators is to make sure their arrangements do not drown out the singers—a task made much easier by electronic amplification. Most composers let orchestrators create the overture as well as the underscoring and scene-change music.

As you can see, there are many jobs in the theatre and no play would be performed without all these talented artists. And, there are so many more people involved; the producer, the managing director, the technical crew, the scene shop workers, the costume shop workers, the light and sound board operators, the running crew, the house managers, ushers and box office staff—all the people who contribute to making a play come to life.

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**About the Creator of the Study Guide**

**Joey Landwehr**, is the proud Artistic Director for J*Company Youth Theatre, he moved to San Diego after being a professional actor/director in New York City working on and off Broadway, national tours, regional theatres across the country and soloing and directing at Carnegie Hall. Joey received his MFA in acting/directing from The Ohio State University and has studied under such instructors as Betty Buckley, Marcel Marceau, Francis Sternhagen, F. Murry Abraham, Twila Tharpe and has had the privilege of working with such greats as Phyllis Diller, Kristen Chenoweth, Joel Grey, Patti LuPone, Betty Buckley, Kaye Ballard and Howard Keel. Joey has worked in all medias of entertainment and is a proud member of Actors’ Equity (AEA), the Screen Actors Guild (SAG), the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), and the Director’s Guild of America (DGA). In San Diego Joey has worked with Diversionary Theatre, SDGMC, The Old Globe Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Orchestra Nova, San Diego Symphony and the San Diego Shakespeare Society. At J*Company he has directed: *Rumpelstiltskin Is My Name, OLIVER!, Yours, Anne, Disney’s Beauty And The Beast, The Story Of Hansel And Gretel, Disney’s The Jungle Book, Elton John & Tim Rice’s AIDA, Disney’s 101 Dalmatians, Pocahontas* (San Diego)

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THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE - 1

Movie vs. Play

This activity should be done after seeing the show.

Activity:
English/Language Art Appreciation/Critical Thinking: Compare and contrast the stage production with the film starring Barbra Streisand.

Compare and contrast the stage production with the film starring Barbra Streisand. Which did you prefer? Why?

Were there elements that worked better on film, or visa versa?

Did seeing a play about a stage performer seem more realistic on an actual stage or in the film?

Was the stage production successful in capturing the essence of the era? If so, was this success achieved through sets, costumes, lighting, acting, or other methods?

The characters of Fanny, Eddie, Flo Ziegfeld, John the stage manager, and the many chorus members and showgirls are all stage actors playing stage actors and backstage personnel. Do you think it would be easier or more difficult for an actor to play another actor?

Try to think of other plays and movies where this is the case.
THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE - 2

The Setting

*This activity may be done before or after seeing the performance.*

**Activity:**
English/Language Arts/Social Studies: Is history so different than today?

New York’s Lower East Side is one of the most famous immigrant neighbourhoods in North America. In the play, how did the Henry Street community contribute to Fanny’s success?

Do you think she would have been as successful if she had come from the suburbs?

Florenz Ziegfeld specialized in entertainment that was risqué for the time; mostly beautiful girls in long flowing beautiful gowns “stage-walking” across the stage. Research some of his productions and decide whether contemporary audiences would find them tame or if they would still be considered titillating today.

Compare Fanny’s “pregnant bride” bit with contemporary shockers like Janet Jackson’s “wardrobe malfunction.”
THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE - 3

The Characters

*This activity should be done after seeing the show.*

**Activity:**
Social Studies: The difference between real life and heightened theatricality.

Many of Fanny’s songs and numbers emphasize her unique character and appeal. Analyze how the lyrics encapsulate her individuality and her difference from the usual run of starlets.

Try to think of other unconventional stars that have been successful in show business.

The real Nick Arnstein was not a very nice man, but he somehow managed to charm Fanny. The play emphasizes his charm, but manages to keep some of the essence of his rakish character. Think of some present-day con men, real or fictional, and examine how they manage to dupe their victims.
THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE – 4

Adaptation And Music Theatre

*May be done before or after seeing the performance.*

**Questions & Discussion Prompts:**
Performance & Visual Arts/English/Language Arts/History — origins

Funny Girl is based on the life of Fanny Brice, one of the nation’s greatest treasures. Musical theatre works are frequently adapted from sources such as films, plays, novels, tales, short stories, and television shows. How many examples of musical theatre works that were adapted from such source materials can you name?

Name five musical theatre works that were original and not based on any other sources.

What does a team of musical theatre collaborators add to a work from another medium in the process of adapting it for the musical stage?

**Activity:**
Performance & Visual Arts/English/Language Arts/History — origins

What were the source works on which the following musicals were based:
   o Fiddler On The Roof
   o Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
   o The Sound Of Music
   o Hello Dolly!
   o Sweet Charity
   o The King And I
   o Cabaret
   o Guys And Dolls
   o Cinderella
   o A Little Night Music
   o South Pacific
   o Into The Woods

Select a film, non-fiction book, satirical book, play or group of short stories that you think would make a strong musical theatre work.

Why do you think this piece “sings?” What about it is inherently musical? What can music add to its existing form?

What elements of the source will be hard to transfer to musical theatre form?

Write a two-page description of a musical theatre work based on your source.

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What role will music play? Will the work be all sung? Will it include dialogue? What role will dance play in your work? What will the musical style of your adaptation be?
THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE – 5

Funny Girl As Musical Theatre

*May be done before or after seeing the performance.*

Questions & Discussion Prompts:
English/Language Arts — art imitates life

Would *Funny Girl* have been as successful as a straight play without music? Why or why not? How does the score heighten the basic storyline? How does it move the action of *Funny Girl* forward? What do we know because of the music that we might not know otherwise?

How does the music contribute to our understanding of the larger themes of the show?

How did the music and lyrics evoke time and place for you?

In what ways is the music indispensable to the plot?

Why do some theatre song lyrics rhyme? Write a few verses in prose about something you are wishing would happen and then write it in rhyme. How is the experience of writing in the two forms different?

Discuss the ways in which music and lyrics can compress and elevate the importance of information.

What role does music play in your life? If you were to choose moments in your life worthy of being set to music, what would they be?

Find examples of duets or shared songs in *Funny Girl*. How do these duets help to define relationships?

Select two songs from *Funny Girl* from the following:

- Poker Chant No. 1
- If A Girl Isn’t Pretty
- I’m The Greatest Star
- I’m The Greatest Star - Reprise
- Cornet Man
- Nicky Arnstein No. 1
- Who Taught Her Everything?
- His Love Makes Me Beautiful
- I Want To Be Seen With You Tonight
- Nicky Arnstein No. 2
- Henry Street
- People
Summarize the contents of these songs. Discuss:

What do we learn about the character or characters who sing the songs and their personal philosophies?

What do we learn about the larger themes of the show from the songs?

What makes the character or characters sing at these moments? Why do they sing instead of talk? What is the emotional energy of the moments that push them into song?

What do the songs accomplish in terms of plot? Where is the action when the song begins and when it ends?

Every dramatic scene has a “main beat” or central moment of importance. Do the songs you chose become the “main beat” of the scenes in which they appear?

Do the songs exist in real time, suspended time or compressed time? In other words, do they represent the amount of time that it would really take to express their contents? Do they magnify the moment? Do they speed up time?

What is the physical action of the character or characters during the songs?

**Activity:**

English/Language Arts—art imitates life

Imagine you have been asked to create a new song for the show. Who would sing it? Where in the show would it take place? What would it be about? What kind of music would it involve?
THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE – 6

The Creators Of Musical Theatre

*May be done before or after seeing the performance.*

**Activity:**
Visual Arts/English/Language Arts— creation

**Collaboration**
The Musical *Funny Girl* was created by many collaborators: Music & Lyrics by Bob Merrill & Jule Styne - Book by Isobel Lennart.

Read a biography or autobiography of another famous musical theatre collaborator or collaborative team. Report on their creative and/or collaborative process.

Read and listen to other works by the authors to obtain a broader view of their approach to their craft and a deeper understanding of their artistic sensibilities.

**Production Elements**
Design your own sets & costumes for *Funny Girl.* Explain your choices.

Read about set & lighting designers: learn more about their role in creating musical theatre.

**Create Your Own Musical**
How do ideas begin? Have your ever begun a project with a simple idea?

Give examples of great ideas or inventions that began with simple thoughts or images.

Write a story based on a famous person (as *Funny Girl* is) or on a section of a famous story. Use this person/story as the basis for a musical.

Outline your musical scene by scene.

Make a list of characters.

Make a list of musical segments you might include.

Will your work include dance? How will dance be used?

Try to write the first scene, a turning point scene, and the final scene of your musical.

Try to write a lyric or melody for one of the musical segments.

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THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE – 7

Critical Analysis

This activity should be done after seeing the performance.

Activity:
Visual Arts/English/Language Arts—critique

Write a review of a performance of Funny Girl.

How To Write A Theatre Review
When writing a theatre review, you must remember three main components: the acting, the technical, and the overall view.

The acting aspect is probably most important. It is a good idea to read the play before you go see it so that you are familiar with the script ahead of time. Make sure you know all of the characters' names and the actors who are playing them; a playbill is an ideal place in which to find all this information. Ask yourself if the actors understand what they are saying. How familiar are they with the script? Do they really know what the play is all about? Also look to see if each actor is connecting well with his/her character. (However, keep in mind that everyone has a very unique style of acting and maybe even comment on that.) How well are they giving and taking focus? Is there any one person who sticks out in your head as "hogging" all the attention?

The second aspect to look at is the technical. This includes everything from the lights and sound to the costumes and makeup. Someone once said that if the technical aspect of the performance becomes noticeable, then it was not effective. Keep in mind that the lights, sound, makeup, etc. are there to enhance the performance, not to be the main focus. (But as the reviewer, you should be looking for it.) For instance, the lights should be prospective to the time of day, the season and so on. Also, it should not cast any shadows on the actors' faces. The sound is usually just your opinion because everyone likes different kinds of music; however, it should accent the style and format of the play. If they are using microphones, look for the quality of sound coming from that. The costumes should portray the time period and part of each character's personality. The makeup should do the same, but as well, keep a look out for shadows and lines on the face. All these things are very important to the performance of the show.

The overall view of the theater will give the reader a feel of exactly how well you enjoyed your experience at this play. Include ticket prices here and your opinion of the worthiness of that cost. Also, keep in mind the quality of the theater and its facilities. The audience is also a major part of your theatre experience. Was the audience big? Were they perceptive and interactive? Remember, you shouldn't make this the main point, but it would be good to comment on it. This entire portion should convey your opinion and feeling of how the show went.

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So in conclusion, remember the acting, the technical, and the overall view, and you'll have written a successful theatre review. Oh, and one more thing: Don't ever lie so as not to hurt someone's feelings. Constructive criticism will only do someone good. However the sign of a good reviewer is someone that can keep a well-balanced review always leaning on the positive in order to help the performance grow and get better. Negativity never helps any situation whenever seeing any production always focus on and try to find the positive and good within each performance. Perhaps try to write the entire review without using words like not, no, never and nothing. Encouraging the arts is always the reviewer’s most important job. Keep all these things in mind when writing your review and it will be great. Have fun!

If you are doing this as a class feel free to send it to J*Company Youth Theatre as we are always looking to improve and to encourage young people in the arts and that includes writing a great review!

**Example Of A Theatre Review**

Recently I attended the Sarasota Player's Theater performance of "Sweeney Todd." Altogether it was a great show. What stuck out in my mind the most was how excellent the acting was. Susie Mace played "Charlene" and had a beautiful voice. She expressed each emotion with energy and tact. Many of the other roles really followed her example. Although she took much of the attention, when it was her turn to give, she had no problem. Every one of the characters understood the meaning and theme of the script, and expressed it well. Alan Barber, playing "Sweeney Todd," had a lighter voice, but definitely made up for it in his acting and character work. He was full of energy and spark. The entire cast played out the spooky and mysterious scenes very well.

All I have to say about the lights and sound is wow! Not only did the lights portray the darkness of the foggy London nights, but they actually set the mood for the entire scene. There were awesome sound effects and the orchestra played music to make you jump out of your seat! The makeup was also great. In most performances shadows on the face would be unwanted, but in this play the spooky shadows enhances the spooky, dead-like characters. The costumes weren't outstanding, but fit each character role well and added to the whole mood. Two thumbs up to the technical team.

The Sarasota Players is set downtown, across from the Van Wesel. The theater itself is a less than glamorous building, but just right for great community theatre. The cost of the show is $10 for adults and $5 for students and seniors. (And well worth it!) Tickets can be purchased by calling 555-555-5555 or by going to their website at [www.sarasotaplayers.org](http://www.sarasotaplayers.org). The audience needed no extra help getting in the mood, which made it much more fun. Altogether, this was a very fun experience for me. I would recommend it to anyone in the mood for a good scare!
LEARN MORE ABOUT THEATRE

J*Company Youth Theatre is an inclusive theatre company which offers a wide variety of theatre arts opportunities for students housed at the Lawrence Family Jewish Community and the state-of-the-art David and Dorothea Garfield Theatre in La Jolla, California!

SCHOOL-DAY SHOWS AT J*COMPANY YOUTH THEATRE

If you’ve enjoyed Funny Girl, come back for one of these great plays this season: THE STREISAND SEASON – J*Company Youth Theatre Commemorates 20 Years:

1. YENTL - Nothing’s Impossible! In a time when the world of study belonged only to men, there lived a girl who dared to ask why?
   a. Running: December 7 - 16, 2012
   b. School show:
   c. Appropriate for all ages, recommended for 10 and older.

2. GYPSY – A Musical Fable - The Magnificent Musical Where “Everything’s Coming Up Roses.”
   a. Running: March 1 - 17, 2013
   b. School Show:
   c. Suggested for all ages.

3. Hello Dolly! - It’s so nice to have her at J*Company where she belongs.
   a. Running: May 3 - May 12, 2013
   b. School Show:
   c. Suggested for all ages.
THANK YOU

As a parent/educator, you are the only person qualified to determine what is appropriate for your child(ren)/student(s), but we hope the information in this guide is helpful in making an intelligent, informed decision about the importance of live theatre in the life of all children whether ON STAGE or IN THE AUDIENCE.

ABOUT J*COMPANY

J*Company was founded in 1993 as a Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center program of which the early participants were predominately members. J*Company has since developed into one of San Diego's leading diverse youth theatre companies. Designed to engage and motivate youth to express themselves and connect with each other and their community through theatre development and performance, J*Company offers classes in theatre performance and production and has built a solid base of programming that focuses heavily on instruction. With the development of the JACOBS FAMILY CAMPUS and the David & Dorothea Garfield Theatre, J*Company has developed professionally mounted performances, and is now considered one of Southern California's leading family-based youth theatre companies. Garnering national as well as regional attention, J*Company has become home to many of the region's top youth theatre performers. This professional attraction to J*Company has resulted in a higher level of production allowing J*Company to be viewed not only as a major component of the San Diego Center for Jewish Culture, but also a professionally produced and highly acclaimed theatre for youth.

J*Company Mission Statement:
With respect to the vision of the San Diego Center for Jewish Culture, the mission of J*Company is to maintain its emphasis as the region's leading, culturally diverse, all-inclusive youth theatre, fostering respect, and featuring young performers of exceptional potential and talent in the Broadway tradition.

CONNECT WITH J*COMPANY

J*Company Youth Theatre
David & Dorothea Garfield Theatre
4126 Executive Drive
La Jolla, California 92037

www.sdcjc.org/jcompany
twitter: @JoeyArtisticDir
www.facebook.com/JCompanyYouthTheatre
www.facebook.com/JCompanyAlumni

J*Company Youth Theatre Artistic Director, Joey Landwehr, joeyl@lfjcc.com
J*Company Youth Theatre Managing Director, Nan Pace, nanp@lfjcc.com

Created by Joey Landwehr - J*Company Artistic Director
RESOURCES

General Theatre Texts


Musicals & Funny Girl


Setting


Santé, Luc, *Low Life*. Vintage Books USA, 1992

Web Resources*
http://www.stlyrics.com/f/funnygirl.htm
http://www.musicals101.com/
http://entertainment.msn.com/celebs/
http://www.biography.com
http://www.tenement.org/

*Web links were active when preparing this guide.*

Created by Joey Landwehr - J*Company Artistic Director