J*Company Youth Theatre: *The Who’s TOMMY* – Educational Guide

for

**The Who’s TOMMY**

*A Classic Rock Musical With Classic J*Company Family Values*

December 2 – 11, 2011

Original La Jolla Playhouse & Broadway productions
Directed by Des McAnuff

Book by Pete Townsend & Des McAnuff, Music & Lyrics by Pete Townsend

*Additional Music & Lyrics by John Entwistle & Keith Moon*

Directed by - Joey Landwehr
Musically Directed by, Tim McKnight
Choreographed by, Roxane Carrasco

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 The Who’s TOMMY.

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! 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

Created by Joey Landwehr J*Company Artistic Director
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INTRODUCTION

The Who’s TOMMY, was originally produced during the summer of 1992 at the La Jolla Playhouse in California. Des McAnuff and Pete Townshend sculpted the kaleidoscopic concept album by Townshend’s former band, The Who, into a stage show with a story. The Who’s Tommy was among the first Broadway shows to combat high ticket prices by offering enticements such as half-price tickets, free CDs, free tee-shirts and free souvenir programs. The show opened at the historic St. James Theatre on April 22, 1993 and closed on June 18, 1995. The original cast included Michael Cerveris (Tommy), Marcia Mitzman (Mrs. Walker) and Jonathan Dokuchitz (Mr. Walker). Tommy won five Tony Awards that year, including Best Original Score for Townshend. The production has launched successful tours throughout Europe and Canada.

The show is based on the revolutionary concept album “Tommy” by The Who, released in 1969. Considered to be one of the first albums billed as a rock opera, “Tommy” tells the story of a boy who is deaf, dumb and blind and his journey through life after he becomes a pinball celebrity. Pete Townshend, The Who’s creative leader, drew inspiration from the teachings of Indian mystic Meher Baba. Townshend says “Tommy” is “a metaphorical story of different states of consciousness.”

In 1972, an orchestral version of “Tommy” was performed at the Rainbow Theatre, London. The concert featured The Who, plus an all-star guest cast, backed by the London Symphony Orchestra. In 1975 “Tommy” was adapted as a film, starring Daltrey as Tommy, plus an eclectic supporting cast including Ann-Margret and Oliver Reed, and cameo appearances by Elton John, Tina Turner, Eric Clapton and Jack Nicholson. In 2003, the album was ranked number 96 on Rolling Stone’s list of the 500 greatest albums of all time.
ABOUT The Who’s TOMMY

ACT ONE

The year is 1940. The audience sees a montage of Mr. and Mrs. Walker meeting, their marriage, the deployment of Mr. Walker to WWII and his capture in a Prisoner of War (POW) camp (“Overture”).

Mrs. Walker is informed that Mr. Walker is missing and presumed dead. A nurse enters and hands Mrs. Walker her son (“It’s a Boy”). The years pass, and we see Walker released when the war ends in 1945. Still believing Mr. Walker to be dead, Mrs. Walker takes a new lover, with whom she celebrates her birthday (“Twenty-One”). When the recently released Captain Walker enters the home and sees the new boyfriend, there is a scuffle, and Mr. Walker ends up accidentally killing the boyfriend. In an attempt to keep Tommy from seeing the violence, Mrs. Walker turns him towards a mirror. Mr. and Mrs. Walker aggressively tell Tommy to forget what he’s seen. The police arrive to investigate. Tommy, traumatized, gazes at the mirror. The Narrator (an older version of Tommy and only visible to young Tommy) appears (“Amazing Journey”).

Captain Walker is tried but found not guilty. The family celebrates but is shocked when they realize the cost: Tommy is now deaf, dumb and blind. A battery of doctors and nurses examine Tommy to no avail (“Sparks”).

The year is 1950. The Walkers take 10-year-old Tommy to church and to a family dinner (“Christmas/ See Me, Feel Me”). Tommy does nothing but stare into the wardrobe mirror. His reflection becomes the Narrator (“See Me, Feel Me - Reprise”).

Created by Joey Landwehr J*Company Artistic Director
The Walkers, needing to have some time on their own in order to save their marriage, worry about whether to leave Tommy with Cousin Kevin, a known bully about town ("Do You Think It’s Alright"). Cousin Kevin and his friends, taunt and bully him mercilessly ("Cousin Kevin"). The group then takes Tommy to a church youth group where, to everyone’s astonishment, he plays pinball brilliantly ("Sensation"). Encouraged, the Walkers try yet another doctor, a psychiatrist, who tests Tommy without success ("Sparks - Reprise"). Mr. Walker is approached by The Hawker who promises a miraculous cure for Tommy ("Eyesight to the Blind"). They take Mr. Walker and young Tommy to a side show in Piccadilly Circus. This side show is filled with carnival “freaks” stimulating Tommy to feel that there are others like him out in the world that are different. They find a fortune-teller called The Gypsy Queen. She attempts to coax Tommy into consciousness with the paranormal ("Gypsy Queen"). Mr. Walker, horrified, runs away with Tommy. The act ends in 1958 as a group of teenagers await 18-year-old Tommy’s appearance (now the same as the Narrator) at the amusement arcade ("Pinball Wizard").

ACT TWO

The year is 1960, and Tommy has become the pinball champion and hero of the neighborhood boys ("Underture"). Mr. Walker, still in search of a cure, convinces his wife to try once more ("It’s a Boy - Reprise/There’s a Doctor"). They take Tommy to a specialist who turns him to a mirror. Tommy sings with his 4 and 10-year-old selves, who appear only to him in the mirror ("Go to the Mirror/Listening to You"). As Cousin Kevin and his friends toss a ball, they surround Tommy and ask if he’s been cured ("Tommy, Can You Hear Me?"). At the Walker house, Tommy’s parents express their frustration and the strain Tommy’s condition has on their relationship ("I Believe My Own Eyes").

As Tommy stares into the mirror, Mrs. Walker picks up a chair, hurls it at the mirror, shattering it ("Smash the Mirror"). After reliving the murder scene from 14 years ago, he screams and he is free. Tommy celebrates his new-found consciousness, as the Walkers, Uncle Ernie and the Minister all come to marvel at his recovery ("I’m Free/Pinball Wizard - Reprise"). Still shocked from the turn of events, Tommy decides to leave home.

The year is 1961 and Tommy, now a huge pinball star, enters the stage riding a pinball machine. He is surrounded by reporters. His parents tell the press that they don’t see much of him anymore.

Years pass. When interviewed, Cousin Kevin tells reporters he has always believed in Tommy’s greatness. Tommy goes on stage and climbs atop a huge, mirrored pinball machine.

The Hawker and his side show freaks, from years earlier, try to capitalize on Tommy’s stardom by selling Tommy souvenirs in a carnival-like setting ("Tommy’s Holiday Camp"). Cousin Kevin tells the story of one of Tommy’s fans, teenage Sally Simpson, and we see it played out: against her parents’ wishes, Sally manages to sneak out of her house and attend Tommy’s concert. She gets on stage and tries to touch Tommy, but when he pushes her aside, she falls and is pummeled by the guards ("Sally Simpson").
Tommy, in horror, realizes how caught up in the celebrity machine he has become. He invites Sally and his other fans back to his house (“Welcome”).

At the Walker’s residence, Sally asks Tommy how she can be more like him and less like herself (“Sally Simpson’s Question”). He is confused and says he waited years to be like them. Disenchanted with their hero, the crowd turns on him and leaves (“We’re Not Gonna Take It”). Tommy hears the voice of his ten-year-old self. He turns to his family, whom he has ignored during his stardom, and embraces them in acceptance (“See Me, Feel Me - Reprise/Listening - Reprise”). The show ends as everyone but Tommy exits. The 4-year-old Tommy, 10-year-old Tommy and adult Tommy look out in different directions.
INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR
JOEY LANDWEHR

What is your history with *The Who’s TOMMY*?
The Who’s TOMMY, the Broadway production, holds a very special place in my heart. This show was the first Broadway production I ever saw as a young man. I, quite honestly, didn’t even know who The Who was, but I knew I wanted to see this production. I was absolutely riveted. The show further solidified my love for the theatre and was truly one of the driving forces in making my leap from performer to director. To get the chance to work with The La Jolla Playhouse on this piece and with the season of my theatre company, not to mention being able to call Des McAnuff friend and mentor is one of the greatest joys of my life. I can honestly thank Des, even if from a theatrical distance, for making me buckle down and become a theatre director and continue my education by getting my MFA in acting and directing from The Ohio State University.

What is it about the show that appeals to multiple generations?
The music and the story are universal. There’s the aspect of family, about going through difficult times, supporting each other, overcoming obstacles and coming together. There’s also Tommy’s teenage animosity for his parents, the effect of being different and not being able to find his place in the world, and then the point where Tommy realizes his life without his family isn’t getting him anywhere, and of course the idea of creating one’s own family. I think everyone can identify with that.

How do you feel about the piece on stage?
The film in 1973 leans towards “sex, drugs, and rock & roll” in a post-psychedelic age, and it wasn’t right for TOMMY at all. Des McAnuff dug it off the back shelf and pulled Pete Townsend in to help conceive the stage version, which is completely and totally brilliant. Some people are “afraid” of the musical on stage because they remember the movie. It’s nowhere near the movie! They finally found the right formula to tell the story. All the elements are perfect. It stays true to the energy of the music and finally makes sense.

Why does Tommy play pinball as opposed to other arcade games?
During that time in London, if a teenager was given the choice between pool, darts or pinball, he’d choose pinball. Pinball was essentially the first video game.

What are some aspects you’re bringing to J*Company’s TOMMY as a director?
Obviously we can’t re-create the original, and I’m not sure we’d want to for youth theatre. We’ve re-vamped some of the places and reasons for Tommy’s change back to his earlier self, while still staying true to the story. We’ve also cut some of the more “adult” scenes, as well as any sexual or drug related references to allow the show to reach more people, particularly students.

How’s the cast?
I’m so excited about this cast. I have seen this production too many times to count, some utilizing youth and some not, some good and some not-so-good, but I have never had the
chance to work on a production of *TOMMY* with this much talent. The energy this age group has is the energy needed for this piece. I can look at every single one of these J*Company Young Artists and know that there’s not a weak link.
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 *The Who’s TOMMY*

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 *The Who’s TOMMY* a success.

**The Director: Joey Landwehr** is the director of *The Who’s TOMMY*. 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.

**Stage Manager: Jamie Gilcrist** is really the boss! 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.

**Set Designer: David Weiner** 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: Matthew Novotny** 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: Shulamit Nelson** 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.

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 Sterhagen, F. Murry Abraham, Twila Tharp and has had the privilege of working with such greats as Phyllis Diller, Kristen Chenowith, 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 Scripps Ranch Theatre, 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 Premiere), Into The Woods, Fireflies: The Story Of The Artists Of Terezín – Featuring The Original Children’s Opera BRUNDIBAR (World Premiere), Rodgers & Hammerstein’s South Pacific, Rodgers & Hammerstein’s The King And I, Rodgers & Hammerstein’s The Sound Of Music, Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Cinderella, Fiddler On The Roof, 13 – A New Musical, Children Of Eden, Disney’s MULAN, The Who’s TOMMY, Thoroughly Modern Millie, & Xanadu.*

Created by Joey Landwehr J*Company Artistic Director
THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE - 1

Fanatical Fans

This activity should be done after seeing the performance.

Activity:
History - Comparison

One of the many issues that *The Who’s Tommy* addresses is the dangers of fanatical fan culture. After the tragedy of Sally Simpson, Tommy realizes the celebrity lifestyle is not for him.

SALLY SIMPSON

Towards the end of the show, the audience hears the story of Sally Simpson, a teenager who snuck out of her house to see Tommy. After reaching the front row, she reaches out to touch Tommy and gets pummeled by the guards. According to *The Who’s* official site, the song was inspired by an incident that occurred when The Who played with The Doors at New York’s Singer Bowl in August 1968. Pete Townshend apparently saw the way Jim Morrison (of The Doors) was inciting the front row, and the dangerous situation he created.

THE POWER OF THE PRESS

In *The Who’s Tommy*, the audience watches Tommy’s life change as he becomes a superstar. The Hawker, Side Show Freaks and Cousin Kevin capitalize on Tommy’s fame by giving interviews to the press and selling Tommy memorabilia to fans. Tommy’s sensational rise to stardom is a social commentary on celebrity culture, an issue definitely relevant today.

It’s important to keep a clear head when you’re watching news on TV, reading the newspaper and browsing through news blogs. Think about this: is the information presented truly newsworthy or simply sensational stories that will get attention? Be aware of the bias of the reporters or the organization. In newspapers and blogs, opinions should be labeled as such. Are you getting someone’s viewpoint or the facts? You can double-check facts and rumors at sites like snopes.com and factcheck.org.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION PROMPTS

People do crazy things when they become obsessive fans. One example is the vampire/werewolf craze brought on by the *Twilight* books and movies. In groups, RESEARCH the impact of the *Twilight* craze (or pick another trend) on society. DISCUSS the questions below.

- How does *Twilight* present the role of men and women in romantic relationships?
- How would different age groups view the books and movies? Are they appropriate for young viewers?
- Does the book/movie have a message or moral? Is it positive or negative?
- How do dedicated *Twilight* fans act?
- Do you think that kind of behavior is acceptable or fanatical, like the fans in *Tommy*?

**QUESTION AND DISCUSSION PROMPTS**

Our society is fascinated with the celebrity culture. Often the more outrageous someone is, the more publicity he or she receives. GATHER a few news sources (magazines, newspapers, blogs) and ANALYZE the people and stories. With a group, DISCUSS the following questions:

- Who do we idolize as a culture?
- What are some characteristics of these people? Are they good role models?
- Can you name anyone who purposely tries to stay out of the spotlight? Why?
- Some famous people, like actor George Clooney, use their celebrity status to draw attention to worthy causes. Is that a good use of their fame?
THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE - 2

The Who

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

Activity:
Art - Creation & Analization


THE WHO

The Who are a 60s English rock band that included Roger Daltrey (vocals), Pete Townshend (guitar), John Entwistle (bass) and Keith Moon (drums) and became famous for their rock music and stage presence. In the early days, Daltrey, Townshend and Entwistle played American-influenced blues and country music. During one show in London in 1964, Pete Townshend accidentally broke the head of his guitar on the ceiling. Angered by the smirks from the crowd, he decided to play it up and actually smash his guitar on stage. The next performance, Keith Moon smashed his drum set and instrument destruction became a staple of The Who’s shows.

Their first hits in the U.S. were “Happy Jack” and “I Can See for Miles.” After playing at famous festivals like Monterey Pop (in California in 1967) and Woodstock (in New York in 1969) their fame increased, and it reached a high point with the release of Tommy in 1969. Indian mystic Meher Baba was a huge influence on Townshend, and Townshend said “Tommy” was an exploration of his ideas on different states of consciousness. The Who were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1990.

COLLABORATE AND CREATE

Many bands start out as friends who are interested in making the same type of music together. In groups of 3-5 people, START A BAND! Find some common musical influences, pick a genre, come up with a catchy, original band name and decide who will play what instruments. Next, CREATE an album cover for your band’s first release. EXPERIMENT with different types of album art: paintings, photographs with text, illustration, blocks of color, experimental type, etc. Draw inspiration from some of the following interesting album covers:

- “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band” – THE BEATLES
- “Let It Bleed” – THE ROLLING STONES
- “Viva La Vida” – COLDPLAY

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LISTEN AND ANALYZE

The Who’s Tommy is one of many jukebox musicals. A jukebox musical is a musical that consists of previously released pop songs which are then contextualized to form a loose plot. Using the list of jukebox musicals below, pick one and listen to the original artist and then the Original Broadway Cast recording. What do you think of each? How much did the Broadway recording change from the original music?

- “Rock Of Ages” – The music of the 1980s
- “Mamma Mia!” – The music of ABBA
- “Jersey Boys” – The music of Franki Valli and the Four Seasons
- “All Shook Up” – The music of Elvis
- “American Idiot” – The music of Green Day
THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE – 3

The Who’s TOMMY As Musical Theatre

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

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

Would The Who’s TOMMY 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 The Who’s TOMMY 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 The Who’s TOMMY. How do these duets help to define relationships?

Select two songs from The Who’s TOMMY from the following:
- It’s A Boy
- Twenty-One
- Amazing Journey
- Christmas
- Do You Think It’s Alright?
- See Me, Feel Me
- Cousin Kevin
- Sensation
- Eyesight To The Blind
- The Gypsy Queen
- Pinball Wizard
- There’s A Doctor I’ve Found
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 – 4

The Creators Of Musical Theatre

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

Activity:
Visual Arts/English/Language Arts— creation

Collaboration
The Musical The Who’s TOMMY was created by many collaborators: Music & Lyrics by Pete Townsend, Book by Pete Townsend and Des McAnuff, Additional Music & Lyrics by John Entwistle and Keith Moon.

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 The Who’s TOMMY. 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 (as The Who’s TOMMY is) on a section of a famous story. Use this 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 – 5

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 The Who’s TOMMY.

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.
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. 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 *The Who’s TOMMY*, come back for one of these great plays during our LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE Tribute Season:

   a. **Appropriate for all ages.**

2. *Xanadu – The Musical*(s er i o u s l y), running from May 4 - May 13, 2012
   a. **Appropriate for all ages.**

Contact Emily Calabrese, J*Company Education Administrator at 858-362-1129 or **emilyc@lfjcc.com** for more details
RESOURCES

American Musical Theatre and The Who’s TOMMY


Green, Stanley. Broadway Musicals, Show By Show. Hal Leonard Publishing Corporation


White, Timothy. Rock Lives: Profiles And Interviews (See pages 213-228, “Pete Townsend”).

Rock Music


Created by Joey Landwehr J*Company Artistic Director


