For

XANADU – The Musical

(Seriously)

May 4th – 13th, 2012

Music & Lyrics by Jeff Lynne & John Farrar - Book by Douglas Carter Beane

based on The Universal Pictures Film, Screenplay by Richard Danus & Marc Rubel

Directed by - Joey Landwehr
Musically Directed by, Shane Simmons
Choreographed by, Karen Li
for

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 XANADU – The Musical.

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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Created by Joey Landwehr - J*Company Artistic Director
INTRODUCTION

*XANADU – The Musical,* is a musical-comedy with a book by Douglas Carter Beane, music and lyrics by Jeff Lynne and John Farrar, based on the 1980 cult classic film of the same name which was, in turn, inspired by the 1947 Rita Hayworth film *Down to Earth.* The title is a reference to the poem, *Kubla Khan, or A Vision in a Dream. A Fragment,* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Xanadu is the name of the Chinese province where Khan establishes his pleasure garden in the poem.

The story of the musical focuses on a Greek muse, Clio, who descends from Mt. Olympus to Venice Beach, California in 1980 on a quest to inspire a struggling artist, Sonny, to achieve the greatest creation of his life - a roller disco. But, when Clio, disguised as an Australian roller girl named Kira, falls into forbidden love with the mortal Sonny, her jealous sisters take advantage of the situation, and Clio risks eternal banishment to the underworld.

The musical opened on Broadway in 2007 and ran for over 500 performances. It earned an Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Musical and a Drama Desk Award for Best Book. It was also nominated for Tony Awards for Best Musical and Best Book.

The 1980 film on which *XANADU – The Musical* is based barely broke even at the box office and received uniformly unfavorable reviews, but the soundtrack was a commercial hit, as were several of the songs singly. Although the film was nominated for six Razzies, winning one for worst director, it became a cult classic. Announcements that the film would be adapted as a Broadway show drew skepticism and even derision, even from Carter Beane, who adapted the script.

According to Beane, in rewriting the script for the musical, he was influenced not only by the 1980 *Xanadu* film, but also by the 1981 fantasy film, *Clash of the Titans,* prompting him to add the subplot "in which Kira’s jealous sister-muses doom her to fall in love with a mortal, incurring the wrath of their father, Zeus." He has noted that the stage musical focuses more on the Greek mythology plotlines but has "a lot of [parody] references to the movie."

The score retains the hits from the film and also includes new arrangements by Eric Stern of "I'm Alive," "Magic," "Suddenly," and "Dancin'," as well as interpolating two classic Electric Light Orchestra songs, "Strange Magic" and "Evil Woman," plus Farrar's "Have You Never Been Mellow."

**Broadway Production**

*XANADU – The Musical* began previews on Broadway on May 23, 2007 at the Helen Hayes Theatre and opened on July 10, 2007. The production was directed by Christopher Ashley (Current Artistic Director for the La Jolla Playhouse) and choreographed by Dan Knechtges, with sets by David Gallo, lighting by Howell Binkley, costumes by David...
Zinn, sound by T. Richard Fitzgerald and Carl Cassella and projections by Zachary Borovay. The key producers were Robert Ahrens, Tara Smith and Brian Swibel.

The production included a considerable amount of skating for the characters Kira and Sonny, and the set extended over the orchestra pit partly into the audience. The show was presented partially in the round, with some audience members seated on benches on the stage. Like several other recent Broadway shows, a small cast was used, and the relatively short show (90-minutes) was played without intermission. James Carpinello was cast as Sonny and played the role during May and June previews. The actor injured his foot rollerskating during a rehearsal on June 12, 2007. Cast members Andre Ward and Curtis Holbrook alternated in the role of Sonny until Carpinello's replacement, Cheyenne Jackson, assumed the role on June 21, 2007.

The opening night cast included Jackson as Sonny Malone, Kerry Butler as Kira, Tony Roberts as Danny Maguire, and Jackie Hoffman and Mary Testa as "evil" Muse sisters, part of a new plot twist introduced in the Broadway version. Olivia Newton-John (star of the film) and composer John Farrar attended on opening night and joined the cast on stage during the curtain call.

The production closed on September 28, 2008 after 49 previews and 513 performances.

**U.S. Tour**

The tour opened at the La Jolla Playhouse in San Diego, California on November 11, 2008 and played until December 31, 2008.

ABOUT XANADU – The Musical

Original XANADU Artwork
ACT ONE

It is 1980, and chalk artist Sonny Malone is dissatisfied with his outdoor mural of the Greek Muses (daughters of Zeus) and determines to kill himself. On Mount Olympus, Clio (pronounced "Kleye-o"), the youngest, perkiest Muse, convinces her eight sisters to travel to Venice Beach (rising out of the outdoor mural) to inspire Sonny ("I'm Alive"). Zeus's rules require that Muses must always be disguised from mortals. Clio has the idea to wear roller skates, leg warmers, and sport an Australian accent and the other muses agree. Clio changes her name to something contemporary: "Kira". Quickly inspired ("Magic"), Sonny decides that he can combine all the arts and "something athletic" all into one spectacular entertainment: a roller disco.

Two of Clio's sisters, Melpomene (the oldest sister) and Calliope are jealous that Clio (although the youngest) is the leader of the Muses and that Zeus had promised "Xanadu" to Clio, although no one knows exactly what that entails ("Evil Woman"). So they plot to discredit Clio and cause her banishment by tricking her into breaking one of Zeus's rules: a Muse must not fall in love with a mortal, so they will curse "Kira" and Sonny to fall in love.

Meanwhile, Sonny finds a good location for the roller disco, a long-abandoned theater in the Fairfax district of Los Angeles called "Xanadu." "Kira" inspires him to locate the owner in the phone book ("Suddenly"), and they set up a meeting with real estate mogul Danny Maguire, who used to be a big band clarinetist before he started in the real estate game.

Sonny visits hard-hearted Danny in his posh office in downtown Los Angeles and tries to convince him to donate the theater for the roller disco, because it would bring the arts to the Fairfax district and drive up real estate values. But Danny scoffs, even though he had plans to open the theater himself, once upon a time. As Sonny leaves, "Kira" arrives, jogging Danny's memories of an old love and dance partner of his, who looked suspiciously like "Kira," named Kitty ("Whenever You're Away from Me"). Kitty tells Danny that although he had let his greed stop him from pursuing his dream to open the theater 35 years ago, he has a chance to redeem himself now by opening the roller disco with Sonny. Danny finds Sonny and tells him that if he can get the disco up and running in one day, he'll give him 25% of the take from the Disco ("Dancin'"). Excited, Sonny readily agrees.

Sonny finds "Kira" and tells her the good news. She is not impressed with the deal that he has cut. It is then that the evil sisters work their curse, and the winged Eros (Cupid), shoot "Kira" and Sonny with the arrows of love ("Strange Magic"). "Kira" is soon overwhelmed with guilt over her loving feelings and of having created her own art (a hand-drawn picture) alongside Sonny – both violations of Zeus's restrictions on the Muses.

With the help of some of the muses, "Kira" and Sonny fix up the old theater ("All Over the World"), and Danny agrees to go ahead with the opening. Clio realizes that she is
falling in love with Sonny and tells him that she must leave ("Don't Walk Away"). But the evil sisters are not finished. Now they offer Danny piles of money if he will tear down the theater and build condos. Danny can't resist and tells Sonny that the deal is off.

ACT TWO

"Kira" comes back to tell Sonny that she loves him, but the evil sisters tell her that she has broken Zeus's rules, and that she must tell Sonny the truth. So "Kira" reveals all to Sonny, including that her name is Clio, but he does not believe her and is upset. He suggests that she is a crackpot. He also doubts that she really loves him, and she is angry and hurt ("Fool"). The evil sisters have triumphed ("The Fall"), and Kira sets off for Mount Olympus to receive her punishment from Zeus ("Suspended in Time").

Meanwhile, Sonny and Danny discuss "Kira" and after seeing her in the sky - it all makes sense. Danny tells Sonny not to let go of his muse because of foolish pride as he once did back in the 1940s. Sonny, realizing that he really loves "Kira," decides to find her - even if it means climbing Mount Olympus.

Back on Mount Olympus, Zeus's wives ask him to take pity on Clio ("Have You Never Been Mellow"). One of Zeus's wives, Thetis, retells the story of Achilles and his vulnerable heel – all the demi-gods and demi-goddesses are so afflicted. This gives Clio an epiphany: She too is invulnerable, except for her heels, but when the evil sisters had her shot with the arrows of love, she had been wearing the "mighty legwarmers," and so she must have been completely invulnerable. This means that she really did love Sonny! Kira then declares her love for Sonny and rips off her legwarmers ("I'm Free") and attempts to fly away with Pegasus and Sonny, before Zeus pulls them down with copper chains. Sonny brashly declares that he would even fight Zeus for the woman he loves. Zeus, impressed with his pluck, decides to pardon Clio. The two evil sisters are displeased, the lovers are reunited, and Zeus reveals what Xanadu is: "True love and the ability to create and share art." Clio and Sonny go back to L.A. and Xanadu ("Xanadu").
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 XANADU – The Musical

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 XANADU – The Musical a success.

The Director: Joey Landwehr is the director of XANADU – The Musical. 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: Chris Plonka 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: Chris Plonka 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.

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.

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 Premiere), Into The Woods, Fireflies: The Story Of The Artists Of Terezin – 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.
THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE - 1

Myth As Inspiration For Art And Poetry

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

**Activity:**
English/Language Art Appreciation: View, review and understand fine art and its concepts.

When watching *XANADU – The Musical* the Students have seen examples of the influence of Greek mythology in art, language and music. Share with students some of the ways that mythology has been the inspiration for later works of fiction and poetry. First, share with your class the paintings by Anthony Van Dyke *Daedalus and Icarus* and by Pieter Brueghel the Elder, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* available through the Web Museum of Art a link from the EDSITEment resource Internet Public Library. Give students time to study the paintings in detail. Can they figure out what Daedulus is telling Icarus in the Van Dyke picture? Why is the Brueghel painting called “Landscape with the Fall of Icarus”? (Note the single leg of Icarus falling into the water in the lower right hand corner of the painting.) Does anyone in the painting seem to be paying attention to Icarus’s plunge into the water? How prominent has the painter made the event of Icarus’s fall? What meanings do such details suggest?

Now read to the class the poems by W.H. Auden “*Musee des Beaux Arts*” available on the Harpers.org and a poem by William Carlos Williams, “*Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*,” available on the EDSITEment-reviewed Academy of American Poets. Does Williams capture the feeling of the painting? How do Brueghel and Williams reinterpret the myth of Icarus for their own times? How have these artists ”made the myth their own”: understood it, interpreted it, and somehow extended its meaning?

**Extension Activity:**
Fine Arts: Students will demonstrate the ability to organize knowledge and ideas for expression in the production of art; Create images and forms from observation, memory, imagination, and feelings.

Materials needed:
Construction Paper
Glue Stick
Scissors
Magazines
Newspapers
Scraps of Paper
Multimedia Collage Materials (optional)
Pictures from home (optional)

After each student has completed the first Activity, they are now ready to make a visual representation of their story. Give each student a large sheet of construction paper, a glue
stick, and a pair of scissors. Have them search through magazines, newspapers, and journals in search of pictures and words that can tell their story. The students can also bring personal pictures from home. As they find different images, they should glue them on their construction paper to create a visual representation of their stories. These visual representations, like the written stories, should have beginnings, middles, and ends.

At the end of the exercise, display the large sheets of construction paper around the room, and have the students explain each image they used and how the visuals tell a story.
THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE - 2

Greek Names And What They Represent

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

Activity:
English/Language Arts/Social Studies: Character traits – What’s in a name?

In XANADU – The Musical there are many Greek names utilized for many of the characters in the play. Many names, especially from Grecian dissent, come connected with a meaning. Most of these meanings correlate directly with the story of the myth where they are first represented and are now a words regularly utilized in the English language. Some examples are: Ajax – A strong warrior, Andromeda – rescued, Electra – The Shining One

Below are the names of the Grecian characters from XANADU – The Musical. Look up the names and find out their meanings, as well as their correlating myths. How did the writers and designers of XANADU – The Musical stay true to the meaning of the names and how did they differ?

Then Find a Greek name, write out its meaning and create your own myth.

Then paint a picture depicting your myth in some way.

Which of the Zeus’s nine muses was the muse that inspired your writing and art?

Zeus
Hera
Cyclops
Medusa
Clio
Calliope
Melpomene
Thalia
Euterpe
Erato

Created by Joey Landwehr - J*Company Artistic Director
Terpsichore

Urania

Polyhymnia

Aphrodite

Thetis

Hermes

Pan

Centaur

Eros (Cupid)

Sirens

Muses

Next look up your name and create a persona and story around how the meaning of your name came to be. Use your imagination. It can be based in fact or fiction.
THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE - 3

Poetry

This activity should be done after seeing the show.

Activity:
English/Language Arts: Write a poem describing your favorite place.

A poem can stir all of the senses, and the subject matter of a poem can range from being funny to being sad. Below is the poem Xanadu by Samuel Taylor Coleridge which was the inspiration for the art filled roller disco Xanadu in XANADU – The Musical.

Read the poem from beginning to end visualizing the exciting place it describes.

Xanadu - Kubla Khan
a poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Xanadu
Kubla Khan

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momentally was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me
That with music loud and long
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Now try writing your own poem describing your favorite place. Remember a poem may rhyme or it may not, but either way a poem is descriptive and creates pictures for the mind with words. So utilize your imagination. Break out a dictionary, rhyming dictionary and thesaurus to help you find just the right descriptive and action filled words to use. Above all else, have fun. Remember…

“There is no right or wrong, but thinking makes it so.” –William Shakespeare

So let your spirit run free.
THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE – 4

Designing A Disguise

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

**Activity:**
Visual Arts/English/Language Arts— fictional characters

Costume designers at a theatre have to take a lot into account when they think of costumes for a show. Not only do they need to think about the number of characters, how old they are, and whether they’re male or female; they also have to think about a character’s personality and how much they move around onstage. Colors may bring about certain emotions: ask your students how they feel when they see the colors green, blue, yellow, or red. The size of a character’s costume might also depend on his or her personality—imagine a clown without oversized shoes or pants. These whimsical objects help the audience understand that the clown is funny, just from looking at him. Some characters in *XANADU – The Musical* also have to come up with their own disguises. Clio becomes Kitty from the past and Kira from the present (80s). Sonny & Danny do not recognize her because of the clothing she wears, plus the change of her name and accent.

The template on the next page is a costumer’s outline. Ask your students to pick a particular type of character to costume: they may pick based on profession, like chef, teacher, police officer, etc., or personality trait (brave, shy, optimistic, etc.) They can even choose characters from popular books or fairy tales (the Wicked Witch of the West, Little Red Riding Hood, etc.) Remind them that they need to think about the following things when creating their costume design:

- Character’s age
- Where and when the play takes place
- Where and when the character is representing even when it is not the actual time or place the play is set in
- The character’s personality
- What colors might the character wear?
- Would the character wear prints or solid colors?
- Would the character wear tight or loose clothes, or would his/her clothes just fit?
- Does the character want to impress someone; if so, how does s/he try?
- Would the character wear a special item of clothing (e.g. a chef wears a special hat; a police officer wears a badge)?

The costume design can be done with markers, crayons, colored pencils, or collage techniques. Make sure your students write the name of the character on their designs. After seeing the play, ask your students what they noticed about the costumes in *XANADU – The Musical*. Could they tell who the characters were and what they were like, just by looking at what they wore? Why did the costume designer make the choices she did?
Name of character: 

Costume design by: 

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THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE – 5

Adaptation And Music Theatre

May be done before or after seeing the performance.

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

**XANADU – The Musical** is based on The 1980 film “XANADU” with a tongue in cheek nod to the 1981 film “CLASH OF THE TITANS”. 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

Watch the films “XANADU” & “CLASH OF THE TITANS”. Think about the important ways in which the stage production differs from the film versions of the story. What were the qualities of the story of “XANADU” and “CLASH OF THE TITANS” that makes them a good source for a musical?

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

Created by Joey Landwehr - J*Company Artistic Director
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.

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 – 6

XANADU – The Musical As Musical Theatre

May be done before or after seeing the performance.

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

Would XANADU – The Musical 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 XANADU – The Musical 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 XANADU – The Musical. How do these duets help to define relationships?

Select two songs from XANADU – The Musical from the following:
- I’m Alive
- Magic
- Evil Woman
- Suddenly
- Whenever You’re Away From Me
- Dancin’
- Strange Magic
- All Over The World
- Don’t Walk Away
- Fool
- The Fall
- Suspended In Time
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 – 7

The Creators Of Musical Theatre

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

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

** Collaboration**

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 *XANADU – The Musical*. 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 *XANADU – The Musical* 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.
THEMES AND TOPICS TO EXPLORE – 8

Critical Analysis

This activity should be done after seeing the performance.

Activity:
Visual Arts/English/Language Arts— critique


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 XANADU – The Musical, come back for one of these great plays next season: THE STREISAND SEASON – J*Company Youth Theatre Commemorates 20 Years:

1. **Funny Girl** - Hello Gorgeous! People Who See *Funny Girl* Are The Luckiest People In The World.
   - School Show:
   - Suggested for all ages.

2. **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?
   - Running: December 7 - 16, 2012
   - School show:
   - Appropriate for all ages, recommended for 10 and older.

   - Running: March 1 - 17, 2013
   - School Show:
   - Suggested for all ages.

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

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