

They Say the Neon Lights Are Bright: American Musical Theatre

Grade Level or Special Area: Grade 8, Music

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Length of Unit: Four lessons over approximately seven class periods of 45 minutes, plus rehearsal time for performance (optional) and viewings of musicals on video for project (optional)

I. ABSTRACT

In this unit, the students will be introduced to a brief history of musical theater in America, beginning with the seventeenth century and continuing to present day. Students will listen to various pieces, learn about the composers and lyricists, as well as begin to understand the literary basis for these productions. Special emphasis will be given to the music and themes of *Show Boat*, *Oklahoma!*, and *West Side Story*, but students will become familiar with several other pieces from Broadway's blockbuster musicals.

II. OVERVIEW

- A. Concept Objectives
 - 1. Students will understand that musical theater can reflect the unique aspects of a society.
 - 2. Students will compare musical theater that reflects customs, regions and cultures.
- B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*, page 193
 - 1. Composers and popular songs
 - 2. Broadway musicals
- C. Skill Objectives
 - 1. Students will discuss the music from a live performance, film or video performance as it relates to today's youth culture. (CSS 8.7)
 - 2. Students will listen to various pieces of music, exploring the ways in which the composer makes use of specific musical elements. (CSS 8.8)
 - 3. Students will recognize and/or identify specific themes within various musicals and how those themes are related to the culture and setting of which they are representative.
 - 4. Students will understand the multidisciplinary nature of theater. (CSS 6)

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers
 - 1. *The Story of Music*, Lee Stacy, editor
 - 2. *America's Musical Stage*, Julian Mates
 - 3. *Broadway Musicals Show by Show*, Stanley Green
 - 4. *Broadway's Greatest Musicals*, Abe Laufer
- B. For Students
 - 1. Early Exploration of the American West, *Core Knowledge Sequence*, Grade 1
 - 2. Westward Expansion and Civil War, *Core Knowledge Sequence*, Grade 2
 - 3. Westward Expansion and Civil War, *Core Knowledge Sequence*, Grade 5
 - 4. Elements of Music, *Core Knowledge Sequence*, Grades K-8
 - 5. *Romeo and Juliet*, *Core Knowledge Sequence*, Grade 6

IV. RESOURCES

- A. *Show Boat*, (Lesson Two)

- B. *Oklahoma!*, (Lesson Three)
- C. *West Side Story*, (Lesson Four)
- D. *The Music Man*, (Lesson Five)
- E. *My Fair Lady*, (Lesson Five)
- F. *South Pacific*, (Lesson Five)

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: A Brief History of Musical Theater in America

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 - 1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Students will understand that musical theater can reflect the unique aspects of a society.
 - 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Composers and popular songs
 - b. Broadway musicals
 - 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will recognize and/or identify specific themes within various musicals and how those themes are related to the culture and setting of which they are representative.
- B. *Materials*
 - 1. Paper and pencils, or music class notebook for each student
 - 2. Overhead projector
 - 3. Vis-à-vis pen
 - 4. Blank transparencies (OPTIONAL if whiteboard is used for notes)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
 - 1. Minstrel show - performance by a troupe of minstrels, or performers, usually consisting of melodies, jokes and impersonations (usually done in black face) in the style of black performers (e.g., Al Jolson)
 - 2. Vaudeville - popular stage entertainment consisting of many unrelated acts, ranging from song and dance to comic to pantomime, etc.
 - 3. Repertory - a theater in which several different plays/musicals are performed in a season by the same company of performers
 - 4. Operetta - a theatrical production with only sung dialogue
 - 5. Musical - a theatrical production with both spoken dialogue and sung dialogue
 - 6. Choreographer - the person who creates the dance numbers and coordinates much of the physical movement of the actors/singers/dancers in a musical production
 - 7. Overture - orchestral music played before a music begins, usually consisting of some or all of the primary songs from the musical
 - 8. Intermezzo - orchestral music played between acts of a musical
 - 9. Folio shows - shows consisting of the performance of the songs of one specific composer (e.g., *Ain't Misbehavin'* featured the music of Fats Waller)
 - 10. Libretto – the text, or story, in written format for a musical production
 - 11. Book – another name for the libretto, or the book containing the libretto
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
 - 1. In this lesson, which may take two complete class periods, depending upon the teacher's preference for delving into the historical background of musical theater in America, students will be given information in historical format prior to ever listening to any of the music. The lesson should begin by introducing students to the stock companies who came to America before we were even a country and will end with opportunities to discuss and read synopses of some of the more

popular musicals of the last hundred years. The information for this “history lesson” can be found in **Appendix A: Teaching the History of American Musical Theater.**

2. Following the initial instruction in the historical aspect of musical theater, the teacher will select some of the more popular songs from some of the “blockbuster” productions with which students may be familiar. Some examples might include “Seventy-six Trombones” from *The Music Man*, “One” from *A Chorus Line*, or just about anything from *The Phantom of the Opera* or *The Lion King*.
 3. Discuss with students the controversial nature of some of the themes and songs contained within these productions (see **Appendix B: Controversy in Theater**). Ask students to think of some issues that might be considered controversial if contained in a musical today. Why might these be controversial, and why might a lyricist/composer wish to include “hot button” items in a theatrical production?
 4. Find out how many students have actually seen a live musical performance. If you live in a city, such as Denver, perhaps several may have. If, however, you are in an area without easy access to a major theater, ask how many have seen any of the movies that were made from these stage productions. Explain to students that you will be holding some “Evenings at the Theater” in which you will be showing some of the videos of the more popular productions and that they should arrange to attend at least TWO of these viewings. (NOTE: These can be arranged with your administrator for viewing after school one or two afternoons a week for a couple or three weeks, or in the evenings, depending on your after-hours building use policy and availability. **(This should be arranged well in advance of your teaching this unit!)** Students will be expected to attend at least two of the showings so that they can write their contrast/compare paper using their two selected productions. Of course, students must have signed parental permission, and I personally prefer to invite and include parents in this event as much as possible. Many parents love musicals, too! See your school office for their standard permission form or feel free to use the one included in **Appendix C** at the end of this unit. Also included in **Appendix C** is the outline of the project for the students. This project was created to support my school’s policy of teaching written communication in all content areas.
 5. Familiarize students with the vocabulary at the beginning of this lesson early on, as these words will need to be understood throughout the unit.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. At the end of the historical information portion of this lesson, students should be given the written assessment provided in **Appendix D** (or a similar one of your own design). They should also be encouraged to retain this to refer back to as they view the various musicals for their project.

Lesson Two: *Show Boat* Makes Waves in American Musical Theater

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Students will understand that musical theater can reflect the unique aspects of a society.
 - b. Students will compare musical theater that reflects customs, regions and cultures.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Broadway musicals – *Showboat*: “Ole Man River”

3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will discuss the music from a live performance, film or video performance as it relates to today's youth culture.
 - b. Students will listen to various pieces of music, exploring the ways in which the composer makes use of specific musical elements.
 - c. Students will recognize and/or identify specific themes within various musicals and how those themes are related to the culture and setting of which they are representative.
- B. *Materials*
1. Recorded music from *Show Boat* (if entire musical is not available, at least make sure to have "Ol' Man River" and "Can't Help Lovin' dat Man o' Mine")
 2. Video of the 1951 screen version of *Show Boat*
 3. (Optional) a copy of the novel, *Show Boat*, by Edna Ferber, on which this musical is based
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
- None
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Ask students to recall what they know about the period of reconstruction following the Civil War. They should remember that around the 1880s, travel by riverboat was popular and that many of these paddlewheel boats provided entertainment such as gambling and music.
 2. Explain to students that musicals are most often based on literary works. For example, *West Side Story* and *The Boys from Syracuse* were both based on Shakespearean plays. *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Godspell*, and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* were all based on Bible stories. If the novel *Show Boat* is available, show it to the students. Discuss how a composer/lyricist might begin to turn a novel into a musical. Ask students to give some examples of books they have read that might make a good musical. Why did they choose the novels they chose?
 3. Give students a copy of **Appendix E: Synopses of *Show Boat*, *Oklahoma!*, and *West Side Story***. Ask them to read the synopsis of *Show Boat*. What themes might have been seen as controversial or inappropriate for musical theater at the time of this musical (originally, 1927)? (*racism, murder, gambling, adultery*)
 4. Ask students to listen to selected pieces from the musical (audio only) and to list what they think might be happening on stage based on the composer's choice of musical elements. Hold on to these papers for the next activity.
 5. If time permits, show students some preselected clips from the film version of the movie, and let them know that the movie in its entirety will be one of the offerings for the "Evenings at the Theater" viewings coming up. Suggest to students that if at all possible (with their own family's schedule and availability), they should select at least one of the three listed musicals to see (*Show Boat*, *Oklahoma!*, *West Side Story*) as one of their two contrast-compare films. (NOTE: If there is not enough time for students to see the film clips that correspond to the music you had them listen to, simply discuss their thoughts and ask them to justify their choices based on one or more specific musical elements noted in their listening.)
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Teacher will observe and keep students engaged in listening, writing and discussion activities. Teacher will also remind students all along the way that this information will be helpful as they develop their compare-contrast paper.

Lesson Three: Oh, What a Beautiful Musical! Rodgers and Hammerstein's OKLAHOMA!

A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Students will understand that musical theater can reflect the unique aspects of a society.
 - b. Students will compare musical theater that reflects customs, regions and cultures.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Broadway musicals – Rodgers and Hammerstein, *Oklahoma!*, “Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin’”; “Oklahoma”
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will discuss the music from a live performance, film or video performance as it relates to today’s youth culture.
 - b. Students will listen to various pieces of music, exploring the ways in which the composer makes use of specific musical elements.
 - c. Students will recognize and/or identify specific themes within various musicals and how those themes are related to the culture and setting of which they are representative.

B. Materials

1. Recorded music from *Oklahoma!* (if full score is not available, you should at the very least have “*Oh What a Beautiful Mornin’*,” “*Oklahoma!*” and “*The Surrey with the Fringe on Top*”)
2. *Oklahoma!* Video recording of the 1955 film version starring Shirley Jones

C. Key Vocabulary

None

D. Procedures/Activities

1. Explain to students that this musical is set in Indian Territory just after the turn of the century (1900 or so). Ask students to recall any facts about this westward expansion and settlement of these territories from their second and fifth grade history studies.
2. Go over the synopsis of the musical from the handout in Lesson Two (**Appendix E**). Ask if any students have seen a live production of *Oklahoma!* If not, ask if any know any of the songs or have seen the screen version.
3. Play the audiotape of the songs you wish students to work with. As in Lesson Two, have them keep notes of the various elements they notice that might signify specific action with the song.
4. Again, if time permits, show clips from the film that correspond with the recorded music listened to earlier. Follow the procedures from Lesson Two.
5. With this play, pay specific attention to the “dream sequence” (show the video) that was created so masterfully by Agnes de Mille. Because of this portion of the musical, many others began to follow suite, adding a dream ballet to their own productions. Ask students to view this sequence and to tell how they felt it enhanced the play. Ask them to think about how it would be different in a stage production as opposed to the filmed version. How is the music used to emphasize specific actions within this sequence?
6. Again, let students know that his play will be one that will be offered in its entirety for viewing for their written project.

E. Assessment/Evaluation

1. Teacher will observe and keep students engaged in listening, writing and discussion activities. Teacher will also remind students all along the way that this information will be helpful as they develop their compare-contrast paper.

Lesson Four: East Side, West Side...A Conflict's a Conflict!

A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Students will understand that musical theater can reflect the unique aspects of a society.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Broadway musicals – Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim, *West Side Story*, “Maria”; “I Feel Pretty”
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will discuss the music from a live performance, film or video performance as it relates to today’s youth culture.
 - b. Students will listen to various pieces of music, exploring the ways in which the composer makes use of specific musical elements.
 - c. Students will recognize and/or identify specific themes within various musicals and how those themes are related to the culture and setting of which they are representative.

B. Materials

1. Recorded music from *West Side Story* (if full score is not available, you should have at the very least “Maria,” “Tonight,” and “America”)
2. Film version of *West Side Story*

C. Key Vocabulary

None

D. Procedures/Activities

1. Ask students to recall their reading of the play *Romeo and Juliet* in sixth grade literature. Ask them to recall the themes of the play, or even to retell it briefly. Explain to students that this musical is based on that Shakespearean play. Give them the background that it was originally entitled “East Side Story,” and was to have been about conflict between Catholics and Jews. Instead, by the time it was staged, it had been changed to be about interracial conflict between Puerto Rican and white gangs on New York City’s west side.
2. Ask students to read the synopsis of the play found in **Appendix E**.
3. Ask them to predict what types of music might be included in this production, given its setting and themes.
4. Have students listen to several selections and again, to keep notes about what might be happening in the story based on the musical elements they observe as they listen.
5. Show students video clips from the film version of the musical that correspond to the pieces they listened to previously. Discuss their predictions against the actual staging selected for the songs. (NOTE: If you have not previously discussed blocking scenes with students, ask if any have participated in theater-musical or dramatic. If so, ask students to explain a bit about blocking scenes and how in a musical, the director and choreographer must work in tandem in order to ensure that what we see as an audience is the most appealing visually and that it adds to and does not detract from the scene. Again, you might have them recall Agnes de Mille’s dream ballet sequence from *Oklahoma!*)
6. Inform students that this musical will also be one of the selections for “Evenings at the Theater.”

E. Assessment/Evaluation

1. Teacher will observe and keep students engaged in listening, writing and discussion activities. Teacher will also remind students all along the way that this information will be helpful as they develop their compare-contrast paper.

Lesson Five: BLOCKBUSTERS-a-Plenty! American Musicals since the 1940s

A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Students will understand that musical theater can reflect the unique aspects of a society.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Broadway musicals* (*This lesson includes additional content related to, but not taken directly from, the CKS. Additional musicals, composers and songs are introduced in this lesson, which will enhance the performance component of the unit.)
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will discuss the music from a live performance, film or video performance as it relates to today's youth culture.
 - b. Students will listen to various pieces of music, exploring the ways in which the composer makes use of specific musical elements.
 - c. Students will recognize and/or identify specific themes within various musicals and how those themes are related to the culture and setting of which they are representative.

B. Materials

1. Synopses of selected "blockbuster" musicals of teacher's choosing; some suggested titles are listed in **Appendix F**
2. Recorded music that corresponds to the selections made in "1" above
3. At least one cassette player and cassette(s) of the music you compiled in "2" above; another option would be several cassettes and several players that students can utilize in small groups of three-four students

C. Key Vocabulary

None

D. Procedures/Activities

1. Give students copies of the synopses of the musicals you have selected. These should also include a list of the songs, the year the musical was first performed, and the length of its run, if possible. (*Broadway Musicals Show by Show* by Stanley Green is an excellent resource for this information, if a little outdated.)
2. Compile a recording of one or two songs from each of the listed musicals for students to listen to. Ask them to listen in small groups or as a class, depending upon your music room's resources, and to make notes of the truly ear-catching musical elements employed for what seems to be specific purpose.
3. Allow students to listen and make notes (without benefit of discussion) for all but the last 15-20 minutes of the class period. Spend the remainder of the time discussing what they heard and why they felt it was important enough to note.
4. Ask students to refer back to both their synopses and the music they heard today as they make their choices about which film versions to see for their contrast-compare paper.
5. A couple of notes to the teacher about the film viewings: First, there will no doubt be extenuating circumstances in which some students may not be able to come to school for one or both of these films. In that case, parents need to understand that they will need to arrange to borrow (if your school has these videos available) or rent from their neighborhood movie store another musical

from the list of approved musicals provided by you. While this method certainly is not advisable for the whole eighth grade music class because of logistics and video availability, it will without a doubt be an eventuality you will need to have prepared for in advance. Use the form found in **Appendix G** if you wish. Second, it is important to review these films **BEFORE** placing them on the list, even if you believe yourself to be quite familiar with them. Your district surely has stringent guidelines around what constitutes appropriate material for listening and viewing by students, and you want to be sure to follow those guidelines. Additionally, while some musicals are fine for discussion (e.g., *Hair*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Godspell*, etc.), their content may be considered too controversial by your school or district to be used for “Evenings at the Theater” or for using video clips from in the classroom.

- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
 - 1. Teacher will circulate as students listen, answering any questions they have. Teacher will facilitate discussion of the material following the listening. Teacher will reiterate the guidelines and rubric for scoring the written piece (**Appendix C**).

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

- A. This unit affords so many possibilities for culminating activities, but I have selected two. One is a performance of Broadway “hits” by the students. This might be a regularly scheduled performance of the eighth grade chorus, or it could be a special eighth grade performance so that the entire class might be included. The selection of songs is left to your own preference and discretion, but I have included an Appendix (**H**) of possible songs that are familiar, fun, and generally easy to obtain music for. Obviously, practice for this event would far outreach the length of this unit, but could certainly begin as the unit begins in order to pique student interest. Again, don’t forget to schedule facilities and dates **EARLY!** ☺
- B. The second activity, mentioned throughout the text of this unit and for which a student outline is provided in **Appendix C**, is the written paper comparing and contrasting two musicals using specified criteria. I have also included one form of a rubric for scoring these papers, but you may prefer to use a school-wide rubric or to create your own. As scarce as time for instruction in fine arts has become in many schools, and as requirements for us to teach other content areas such as writing have become more and more common, this is an excellent opportunity for students to sharpen their skills as writers, as thinkers and as people who appreciate music. Perhaps you might even wish to coordinate this portion of the unit with the writing/grammar instructor in your building so that students might also receive credit in his/her class as well. This also shows students a side of you as an educator that they might not readily identify with (i.e., you as a teacher in a holistic sense rather than as “just the music teacher”). At the same time, if students know that they are also to be scored in their writing class for this piece, additional incentive to perform as well as possible is provided. Again, compelling attendance at after-school or evening viewings of these musicals will be next-to-impossible for all students, so be sure that you have arranged a way for all students to be successful in this activity, given their busy out-of-school schedules as well as the availability of your building facilities.
- C. Appendix D: Written Assessment for History of Musical Theater. (Note: A suggested answer key is provided in the final appendix, Appendix I.)

VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- A. Appendix A: Teaching the History of American Musical Theater

- B. Appendix B: Controversy in Musical Theater
- C. Appendix C: Permission Form and Outline of Written Assignment
- D. Appendix D: Written Assessment for History of Musical Theater
- E. Appendix E: Synopses of *Show Boat*, *Oklahoma!*, and *West Side Story*
- F. Appendix F: Blockbusters: Selected Synopses
- G. Appendix G: Approved Musicals List for Home Viewing for Project
- H. Appendix H: Suggested Pieces for Performance
- I. Appendix I: Suggested Answer Key for Assessment in Appendix D

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- B. Bordman, Gerald. *American Musical Comedy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982. ISBN 0-19-503104-0.
- C. *Bye Bye Birdie*, 1963. 112 minutes. Columbia Pictures. Fred Kohlman, Producer. George Sydney, Director.
- D. *Carousel*, 1956, 1984. 128 minutes. 20th Century Fox Film Corporation. Henry Ephron, Producer. Henry King, Director.
- E. *Core Knowledge Sequence, Content Guidelines for Grades K-8*. Charlottesville, VA: Core Knowledge Foundation, 1998.
- F. *(The) Fantasticks*, 1995. 87 minutes. MGM Home Entertainment, Inc. Michael Ritchie and Linne Radmin, Producers. Michael Ritchie, Director.
- G. *Fiddler on the Roof*, 1971. 181 minutes. United Artists, MGM-UA. Produced and Directed by Norman Jewison.
- H. *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, 1953, 1992. 92 minutes. Fox Video, Inc. Sol C. Siegel, Producer. Howard Hawkes, Director.
- I. *Grease*, 1977, 1998. Paramount Pictures (PG). Robert Stigwood and Allan Carr, Producers. Randal Kleison, Director.
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- K. *Guys and Dolls*, 1955, 2000. 149 minutes. MGM Home Entertainment, Inc. Samuel Goldwyn, Producer. Joseph L. Mankiewicz, Director.
- L. *Hello, Dolly*, 1991. 146 minutes. Fox Video. Ernest Lehmen, Producer. Gene Kelly, Director.
- M. *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, 1967, 1985. United Artists Corporation. Produced and Directed by David Swift.
- N. *Jesus Christ, Superstar*, 1973. 108 minutes (G). Universal Pictures. Robert Stigwood, Producer. Norman Jewison, Director.
- O. *(The) King and I*, 1956. 133 minutes. 20th Century Fox. Charles Brackett, Producer. Walter Lang, Director.
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- Q. Mates, Julian. *America's Musical Stage: Two Hundred Years of Musical Theater*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985. ISBN 0-313-23948-7.
- R. *The Music Man*, 1962. 176 minutes. Warner Brothers. Produced and Directed by Morton Da Costa.
- S. *My Fair Lady*, 1994 (G). 171 minutes. CBS, Inc. Jack L. Warner, Producer. George Cukor, Director.
- T. *Oklahoma!* 1955, 1983. Estate of Richard Rodgers, Estate of Oscar Hammerstein II. Arthur Hornblow, Jr., Producer. Fred Zinnemann, Director.
- U. *Oliver!*, 1968. 146 minutes. Warwick Film Productions, Ltd. John Woolf, Producer. Carol Reed, Director.

- V. *Show Boat*, 1951. Warner Studios, 107 minutes. ASIN 0790744848.
- W. Stacy, Lee. *The Story of Music, Vol. IV*. Danbury, CT: Grolier Educational, 2001. Set ISBN 0-7172-9559-1. Volume ISBN 0-7172-9566-4.
- X. *West Side Story*, 1961. United Artists. 151 minutes. Robert Wise, Producer. Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins, Directors.

APPENDIX A, page one

Teaching the History of American Musical Theater

While it is true that the musicals on Broadway began only a little over one hundred years ago, the roots of the “Broadway musical” were anchored long before. Theater companies existed in America from 1752, when The American Company arrived from England and started performing in Williamsburg, Virginia. By the end of the eighteenth century, this company contained over 50 members in addition to its own large orchestra. By 1838, Houston, Texas, had a company and Chicago had several by the 1850s. West of the Rocky Mountains, the earliest recorded performances were by military personnel in minstrel-type shows.

Around this time, circuses were constructing buildings, called hippodromes, which were configured both for equestrian events and theatrical performances. In addition, minstrel shows were largely responsible for spreading music and theater across America before the Civil War began. Between the 1850s-1860s, show boats provided entertainment, and not just on the Mississippi River as is often believed. Barges in New York and in other areas in the East often became floating theaters staging quite elaborate numbers for that day and time.

About 1900, stock companies began (see vocabulary), along with what was referred to as the “star system.” This did not necessarily imply *one* star, but might be an act such as an opera company, a singer, a dancer, acrobat troupe, etc., hired by the manager of another stock company for a specified run in an area. Appreciation for musical theater grew even among Puritans and Quakers in early America, who decidedly objected to straight dramatic theater. Music, however, was entertaining and was considered to be moral as well. “Ballad operas” became popular, and were a style of musical entertainment that could have some new music, as in today’s musicals, but must also contain some “old favorites” too. Recall America’s fascination with the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan, which arrived in America in the 1870s, the most popular of which even today remains *H.M.S. Pinafore*.

Since America herself was still so young, there was no precedent, no preconceived notion about what musical theater should be, particularly in repertory. Even as early as the 1830s in New Orleans, James H. Caldwell’s company was exemplified by exceptionally talented singers numbering about thirty, along with an accomplished orchestra of around 50 musicians and a separate ballet company. Already successful with his

opera productions, Caldwell added the capability of producing drama and ballet without ever hiring to resort to the “star system.”

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Musical theater in America was becoming enormously popular, and even the Civil War only stunted attendance numbers until around 1862 in the northern cities. While it was a while longer before the South recovered its audiences, even Richmond reopened a theater in 1863 that had burned the year before. It was after the Civil War, however, that more visible delineation between “legitimate” theater (i.e., dramatic performance) and musical theater was noticed.

By 1900, New York had become the hub of American theater, “legitimate” or otherwise. Even then, most productions had a trial run in New York before taking their show on the road. Still separate from the dramatic and musical theaters were the vaudeville (or variety) houses and burlesque houses. Growth continued in New York theater and the season between 1919-1920 hosted 150 new shows opening. Also around 1900, the popularity of dance skyrocketed, largely due to the efforts of Anna Pavlova and Isadora Duncan.

Another important note is that Black theater’s first real break from the minstrel show came in the 1890s with *The Creole Show*. This show provided, also, the first opportunity for Black women to appear on stage, as all roles had previously been played by men. (NOTE: Remind students to recall the Globe Theatre in 17th century England.)

It is important to remember that American musicals reflect the times in which they are written and that while this can be viewed as a flexible strength, there still remain three key challenges to American musical theater. First, some have argued that changes in theater and in society change musicals about every ten years or so while “legitimate” artistic theatrical (and other) genres have not changed. Second, some still consider musical theater to be only a “popular” art form not to be taken seriously as a legitimate art form. Finally, the form itself, some argue, has no real “theatrical” merit insofar as compared with classical drama. Nevertheless, those who are devoted to musical theater categorically dismiss these criticisms and continue to march.

Many American musicals are based in comedy, and even in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, some traditions from the earliest productions remain. For example, an orchestra still accompanies the production, and generally plays an overture, an intermezzo, and sometimes a final reprise following the performance. Musical elements are still used to enhance an actor’s performance or to signal changes within the production.

In 1927, Jerome Kern became the impetus for a basic change in musical theatrical performance in that he employed popular dance rhythms

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rather than relying primarily on an arioso (operatic vocal solo) as had previously been the norm. Kern's melodies usually carried the AABA sequence, and his hit, *Show Boat*, written with Oscar Hammerstein II was a shocking success.

The 1920s saw the now-established list of hit makers such as Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, George and Ira Gershwin joined by two young upstarts, Vincent Youmans and Richard Rodgers. Talent abounded and by the 1930s, another change hit the musical world. New musicals now were written with a theme that remained consistent throughout the show. The next two decades saw some revivals of previously performed musicals, but primarily spawned what are still considered to be the masterpieces of American musical theater. Many of these huge hits were the product of collaboration between Rodgers and Hammerstein, Rodgers and Hart or Lerner and Lowe. This string of hits started in 1943 with the opening of *Oklahoma!* Critics acclaimed this production, saying that a "seamless web" had been formed, successfully blending the music with the theatrical performance. It was also with this play that ballet made a serious return to the stage, as Agnes de Mille created a "dream ballet" sequence that was to be imitated over and over.

By the early 1960s, musicals such as *Fiddler on the Roof* were startling audiences, as there was no more "happy ending" guarantee. *Fiddler* dealt with serious issues, including the "dissolution of a way of life," that audiences were not entirely prepared to see on their stages. This may have prompted them to ask for musical theater that was reminiscent of happier times, and so folio shows such as *Ain't Misbehavin'* (music of Fats Waller), and *Sophisticated Ladies* (music of Duke Ellington), were opened successfully.

By the mid- to late-1960s, musicals kept pace with our rapidly changing and diverse society, as shows like *Hair* and *Jesus Christ, Superstar* opened amid both acclaim and protest. (NOTE: There is more information about these two productions in **Appendix B: Controversy in American Musical Theater.**)

APPENDIX B

Surprise and Controversy in American Musical Theater

Many Broadway productions that would, in this current year, seem totally benign or even pristine came into popularity amid controversy, opposition, and sometimes shock!

SHOW BOAT: (1927) Set in the 1880s, the plot deals with issues that were not uncommon, but that were not commonly spoken about in “polite company.” These include a gambling addiction, failed marriages, an interracial couple and racism.

SOUTH PACIFIC: (1949) This musical, based on James A. Michener’s novel *Tales of the South Pacific*, is set during World War II. Again, the plot deals with racism and interracial couplings as well as nationalism as it affects the budding relationship between main character Nellie Forbush, an Army nurse, and Emil de Becque, a French plantation owner who was previously cohabitating with a Polynesian woman with whom he had two children. There is also the romance between Lt. Joe Cable, a blue blood from Philadelphia, and Liat, a young Polynesian girl. The song “You’ve Got to be Taught” addresses the attitudes of racism and prejudice that are taught to us.

THE KING AND I: (1951) Long one of America’s favorite Rodgers and Hammerstein productions, *The King and I* subtly addresses what has been called by music writer Stanley Green “semi-barbaric” rule by King Mongkut of Siam, as well as the issue of slavery through the play-within-a-play use of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s “*Uncle Tom’s Cabin*,” which is performed by the King’s slaves at the urging of their British tutor, Anna.

WEST SIDE STORY: (1957) Based on Shakespeare’s play, *Romeo and Juliet*, *West Side Story* addresses interracial discord between two rival street gangs in New York, one led by a Polish-American and the other, Puerto Rican.

CAMELOT: (1960) The timeless story of King Arthur, originally entitled “*The Once and Future King*,” *Camelot*, of course, deals directly with the marital

APPENDIX B, page two

infidelity of Queen Guenevere and Sir Lancelot du Lac, one of King Arthur's knights. The story has a not-so-happy ending for the endearing King Arthur, as he loses both his wife and his idyllic kingdom.

CABARET: (1966) Set in Berlin just before World War II, Cabaret addressed many controversial issues not previously dealt with openly in the musical theater, including promiscuity, cohabitation, out-of-wedlock pregnancy and abortion, greed, etc. (NOTE: This is probably NOT suitable for the viewing list for eighth grade students in any school.)

HAIR: (1968) Hair grew out of the tumultuous times surrounding American involvement in the Vietnam War, and brought issues such as anti-war sentiment, drug use and "free love" to the stage. Originally opening off Broadway, Hair eventually made its way to the Broadway stage and a long touring run in addition to being turned into a musical screenplay. Perhaps one of the most groundbreaking pieces of Hair is the fact that it ended the first act with the stage semi-dark and the entire cast totally naked.

GODSPELL and JESUS CHRIST, SUPERSTAR: (1971) two plays, both based on Bible stories, but from different composers. Godspell was written by Stephen Schwartz, while Superstar was the brainchild of Andrew Lloyd Weber (his American debut) and Tim Rice. Both musicals produced very popular tunes, but also bred contempt within many conservative religious groups who felt that the interpretation of the Biblical stories, coupled with ROCK MUSIC, was just sacrilege and unacceptable, despite the height of the "Jesus Movement" about that same time among young people in America, which included the rise of what is today called "contemporary" Christian music.

RAISIN: (1973) Raisin was adapted from the 1959 play, "A Raisin in the Sun," and the musical version continued with the racism/segregation theme. Both the play and the musical were taken from a line in a Langston Hughes poem, which says "What happens to a dream deferred?/Does it dry up/Line a raisin in the sun?"

APPENDIX B, page three

A CHORUS LINE: (1975) One of the longest-running musicals on Broadway, A Chorus Line is staged like an audition for, of course, a chorus for an upcoming production. The casting director is even seated in the regular theater audience seats, just as he would be for an audition. Rather than a linear plot, the play consists of songs and spoken dialogue from each of the hopefuls, speaking to the director, usually in response to his questions or urging, “Tell us about yourself.” In turn, each of the cast members tells his/her story, relating tales of dealing with everything from unhappy childhoods in broken homes to being humiliated as a drag queen.

SWEENEY TODD: (1979) Sweeney is a murderous barber who slits the throats of his customers, only to have them sliced, diced and made into meat pies. YICK! It does, however, have justice in its ending.

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS: (1982) While the music was much more popular and even up-beat than in its predecessor, Sweeney Todd, the plot of Little Shop of Horrors also involves murder. This time, however, it’s a “nerdy” shopkeeper who raises a carnivorous alien plant and is forced to kill people to feed to “Audrey II.” Unlike the movie ending, in the musical, the last scene with the gigantic plant has “it” about to devour the audience.

LA CAGE AUX FOLLES: (1983) La Cage, the basis for a recent comedy film starring Robin Williams and Gene Hackman, addresses female impersonation shows and homosexuality. (NOTE: Again, this play is not appropriate for listing for student viewing.)

APPENDIX C, page one
Permission Form (Page 1) and Outline of Project (Page 2)

PERMISSION TO VIEW MUSICALS ON VIDEO

My child, _____, has permission to participate in discussion and view the musicals on video from the list provided by the teacher.

I have lined through any videos that I feel are inappropriate for my child to see as part of his/her music class.

In addition, I understand that my child will be required to view at least TWO of the listed videos, one of which must include *Show Boat*, *Oklahoma!*, or *West Side Story*. This may be done via the “Evening at the Theater” presentations at the school, or I may arrange with the teacher to have one or more of the videos available at home for my child to see. I also understand that I am invited to attend the “Evenings at the Theater” as well, at no cost.

Finally, I acknowledge that these viewings are not a social event and will be considered part of my child’s music education. Behavior expectations are the same as for any school event, and if my child acts inappropriately, I will be called to pick him/her up from the event, and will then become responsible for ensuring that s/he has the appropriate number of musicals on video at home for viewing and completing his/her project. The project will also constitute a writing grade in addition to a grade for music.

PARENT SIGNATURE

PARENT NAME (Printed)

Parent Phone Number

DATE OF SIGNATURE

WRITING ASSIGNMENT EXPECTATIONS

As part of this unit in music, AMERICAN MUSICAL THEATER, you will study the historical background of musical theater in this country as well as the contributions of various composers, lyricists and specific productions. You will be given a written assessment covering the historical material, but in keeping with our school's policy of writing in ALL content areas, you will also be required to view at least TWO musicals and create an essay contrasting and comparing the two. At least one of the musicals must be selected from the following list:

SHOW BOAT

OKLAHOMA!

WEST SIDE STORY

In addition, you must select one other video and see it either at home (with prior approval from the teacher) or at school during one of the pre-scheduled EVENING AT THE THEATER showings in the music room.

Your essay must be written using the rubrics for Six-Trait Writing*, and you will receive a grade in both music and in writing for your work. Your essay should address the similarities and differences between the two musicals you selected in regard to the music, the theme, the lyrics, and the message or significance you believe the composer/lyricist was/were attempting to convey.

You will be expected to turn in only your final copy, which should be typed, double-spaced, and should be no fewer than five solid paragraphs. You are also free to include any drawings, sheet music, etc., that you feel would enhance your own points. All of these materials will be returned to you. (Please do not photocopy music!) Your essay should also reflect your own opinions, but these should be supported by fact and by what you know about music genres and elements of music.

Please proofread your essay carefully prior to submitting it. This essay will constitute 50% of your grade for this unit. In addition, 25% will come from your participation (in some capacity) in the 8th Grade Music performance of Broadway music, and the remaining 25% will come from your score on the written test over the historical portion of the unit.

The project will be due on: _____.

If you have ANY questions, please ask me as soon as possible.

Finally, your selections for the two musicals are due to me no later than _____. You may see me about your selections any time before school, just before or after your music class, or after school. Please respect my time with other classes and grade levels by not interrupting my other class times in order to sign up. Thank you.

APPENDIX D, page one

Written Assessment for History of American Musical Theater

NAME _____

DATE _____ HOMEROOM _____

1. Define the following terms.

MINSTREL SHOW:

REPERTORY:

CHOREOGRAPHER:

OVERTURE:

INTERMEZZO:

LIBRETTO:

2. Using complete sentences, explain the main difference between an operetta and a musical.

3. List two of the three common criticisms of musical theater through the years.

4. Explain how Jerome Kern changed the music in theatrical productions in the 1920s.

5. List one way in which musical theater (comedy) is the same today as it was from the beginning.

6. Why is the musical *Ain't Misbehavin'* called a "folio show?" In general, what IS a folio show?

APPENDIX D, page two

(Assessment, continued)

DISCUSSION: Construct a paragraph in which you discuss some of the changes and popular shows over the two to three hundred years in America's use and appreciation of music in theater. Who were some of the "pioneers" of American musicals? Why was their work so groundbreaking for its time? (For example, what are some of the changes that have taken place from the time of Flo Ziegfeld to Rodgers and Hammerstein to Sir Andrew Lloyd Weber?)

Why was OKLAHOMA! Such an instant hit, and what are some of the innovations that made it so?

NAME: _____ Page Two

Synopses of WEST SIDE STORY, OKLAHOMA! and SHOW BOAT

SHOW BOAT: The story covers the years between 1880 and 1927 and involves the lives of four main characters: Magnolia Hawks, a young naïve girl; her father, Cap'n Andy Hawks, who runs the showboat in the story (The Cotton Blossom); Gaylord Ravenal, Magnolia's love interest and a notorious gambler; and Julie LaVerne, Magnolia's mulatto friend. Magnolia and Gaylord meet on the levee, fall in love and become performers on her father's Cotton Blossom. They marry and move to Chicago where Gaylord loses all his money gambling. The couple then separates. Magnolia has a sentimental reunion with her father at one of her singing performances, then goes on to become a star, as does the daughter she had with Gaylord, Kim. Magnolia and Gaylord are later reunited again aboard the showboat (Cotton Blossom). There is also a secondary plot with the musical that involves Julie and her love, Steve Baker. There were three movie versions of this musical including a 1929 version that was only partly in sound, as well as another edition in 1936. The most familiar and readily available version of Show Boat, however, was released in 1951. Popular songs from the stage production include "Ol' Man River," "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," and "Life Upon the Wicked Stage." In the 1946 stage revival, an additional song was added, entitled, "Nobody Else but Me." This was the second longest running musical of the 1920s. This was also the first musical to depart successfully from the opposite extremes of very light-hearted musical variety or heavy-plot operetta and more seamlessly integrate the music and story line.

OKLAHOMA!: Oklahoma! was not only the first collaboration between Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, but it was also a masterful integration of the songs, story and dances. This play introduced the use of the dream ballet sequence to illustrate hidden hopes, fears and ideas of the characters, and was skillfully choreographed by Agnes De Mille. This musical was based on Lynn Riggs' 1931 novel, "Green Grow the Lilacs" and was set in the American Midwest around 1900. The primary characters are Laurie Williams, a farm girl; Curly McLain, a cowboy and admirer of Laurie; Jud Fry, a farm hand on the Williams family's farm. The primary plot revolves around the relationship between Laurie and Curly in that both care for each other but won't admit it. Jud loves Laurie, too, and when she agrees to attend a box social with Jud just to spite Curly, trouble ensues. There is a fight, and Curly accidentally kills Jud after Jud has set fire to haystacks trying to burn Laurie and Curly out. Supporting characters that add tremendously to the

APPENDIX E, page two

story's comedy are Laurie's Aunt Eller; a boy-crazy character called Ado Annie Carnes; Ado Annie's admirer, cowboy Will Parker; and a traveling peddler named Ali Hakim. *Oklahoma!* ran five years and nine months after its initial opening on Broadway, and it has enjoyed several successful revivals through the years since it opened in 1943. Popular songs included the title song, as well as "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning," "Kansas City," "People Will Say We're In Love," and "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top." In 1955, a movie version was released, starring a very young Shirley Jones and Gordon McRae.

WEST SIDE STORY: When Jerome Robbins paired Leonard Bernstein and Arthur Laurents in 1949 to work on this musical based on Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," the play was originally to be titled *East Side Story*, and was to have chronicled a romance between a Jewish boy and an Italian Catholic girl. This romance would have been the foreground to the youth gang activity taking place in New York's lower East Side. However, because of scheduling delays, six years time passed before Bernstein and Laurents could actually get the work done, and everyone then felt that the original ethnic pairings were dated in 1954. Therefore, the title was changed to *West Side Story*, and the characters were changed from Jew and Catholic to Polish-American and Puerto Rican. The production's two gangs, the Sharks and the Jets, were battling for turf in the West Side of New York City. Stephen Sondheim was hired to write the lyrics with Bernstein's music, and at the time, he was a mere 27 years old. (Sondheim would go on to turn out his own Broadway hits in later years.)

In the play, the main character, Tony, who was once the leader of the Jets gang, decided to keep away from his former gang and their rival, the Puerto Rican Sharks. He meets and falls in love with Maria, a Puerto Rican girl, at a high school dance. Instead of Shakespeare's balcony, the audience is treated to the love song, "Tonight," sung from Maria's fire escape. As the story progresses, Tony accidentally kills Maria's brother as he is trying to break up a fight. Maria's friend, Anita, begs Maria to stay away from Tony now, as the old gang battle re-ignites. In the end, Tony is killed by one of the Sharks, so the ending is not a happy one. A film version of the play was released in 1961. Popular songs from the play include, "Maria," "Tonight," "America," "I Feel Pretty," and "Somewhere." Many of these songs have been immortalized as they have been recorded over and over again by popular recording artists.

BLOCKBUSTER SYNOPSES

The Music Man: Set in 1912 in River City, Iowa, one "Professor" Harold Hill arrives in town under the guise of creating a boys' band for the town. He intends to collect money for instruments and uniforms and skedaddle with the money. His plan is foiled, though, as he falls for the town librarian, Marian Paroo. Instead of leaving town, as was his usual con-man custom, he stays and a band is really organized, complete with instruments and uniforms. Some of the most popular songs from this very popular musical include, "76 Trombones," "Till There Was You," "Marian the Librarian," "Trouble," and "The Wells Fargo Wagon."

My Fair Lady: Based on George Bernard Shaw's story, "Pygmalion," My Fair Lady remains one of the longest running plays in Broadway history. The story centers around a Cockney English flower girl, uncultured and of low social class and her mentor, Professor Henry Higgins, an expert in English language. Higgins makes a wager that he can train Eliza and pass her off at an official state function as royalty, with his intention being to simply return her to the street after his project is complete. As things usually go in these musicals, however, Higgins falls in love with Eliza while turning her into a "lady," and in the end, she returns to his home and the curtain falls with the assumption being that they continue their relationship in a different capacity than mentor-learner. Several wonderful songs came from My Fair Lady, including "On the Street Where You Live," "Wouldn't it be Lovely," "I Could Have Danced All Night," "Get Me to the Church on Time," and "I've Grown Accustomed to her Face."

Annie: Adapted from Harold Gray's comic strip "Little Orphan Annie," this musical enjoyed instant popularity, especially with young people. It is set in Depression-era New York, and Annie is an eleven-year-old orphan who is taken in by "Daddy" Oliver Warbucks, a millionaire, as a sort of "charity project." His intent is to keep Annie only for a short time as a publicity stunt, but he becomes attached to her. In the meantime, the woman who is the manager of the orphanage and her brother intend to use Annie to extort money from Warbucks. Luckily, their plan is thwarted, Annie returns to Daddy Warbucks and his adoring assistant, Grace Farrell, where everyone lives happily every after. The most popular song from the play was, "Tomorrow."

Hello Dolly: In 1955, Thornton Wilder wrote a play called "The Matchmaker" on which this musical is based. It's set at the turn of the century (around 1900) and tells the story of one Dolly Levi, a New York matchmaker who is hired to help find a wife for a merchant named Horace Vandergelder. Instead, she decided to stall the process and keep Vandergelder for herself. In the meantime, Dolly works her matchmaking magic with two of Vandergelder's shop employees, and all along the way, the audience is

APPENDIX F, page two

treated to some truly wonderful music. Numbers include the title song, "Put on Your Sunday Clothes," "Dancing," and "It Only Takes a Moment."

Guys and Dolls: Although a hilarious musical, this was originally planned to be a dramatic romance. The producers felt that if South Pacific could be so successful as a musical comedy about mismatched love interests, they certainly could do the same. The story involves a goody-goody lady and a cool-customer gambler. She wants him to marry her and settle down, and as much as Nathan Detroit tries to fight settling down, in the end, Miss Adelaide wins him over. The choreography, the songs and the story line all create an outstanding toe-tapper that includes old favorites such as "A Bushel and A Peck," "Luck Be A Lady," and "Sit Down, You're Rockin' the Boat."

Bye Bye Birdie: When heartthrob Elvis Presley was called up to military service, it turned out to be a huge publicity-getter. This musical gets its story from that event and has a teen idol, Conrad Birdie, being sent away. His agents use the whole affair to create publicity by arranging for Conrad to have a young woman kiss him on the Ed Sullivan Show just before he is to leave for service. The plot is complicated and humor added by the young woman's jealous boyfriend, her doting father, and Conrad's manager's mother who really wants him to stop managing musicians, settle down and become a teacher. While not as many of the songs from this musical are a recognizable as those from other musicals, "Put on a Happy Face" remains popular as a standard.

Carousel: Even Richard Rodgers' daughter admits that he was the "dark side" of the Rodgers and Hammerstein coupling, and this musical, Rodgers' own favorite, is evidence of that fact. The play is about a love story between a carnival barker and a factory worker. They fall in love, marry and when Billy learns that his wife Julie is expecting a child, he becomes so desperate for money that he tries robbery and is killed in the process. After dying, Billy is allowed to return to earth to perform one good deed, and he chooses to appear to his daughter at her high school graduation to perform the showstopper from the musical, "You'll Never Walk Alone." Also from Carousel, "If I Loved You," and "June is Bustin' Out All Over."

Grease: One of the more modern musicals in this listing, Grease is set in the early 1960s and follows a group of high schoolers through their senior year at Rydell High. During the summer before the start of senior year, Danny and Sandy (an Australian exchange student), meet on the beach and without the pressures they place on themselves to be "cool" at school, fall for each other. Once school begins, however, Sandy bumps into Danny in his "school persona," which is the slicked-down, too-cool-for-his-own-good guy. Much like O. Henry's story of "The Gift of the Magi," both decide that if the relationship is to work, they have to be more like the other. So, Sandy learns to smoke and curl her hair and starts to dress more loosely while Danny turns himself

APPENDIX F, page three

into the quintessential “prep” boy. They meet up at the school carnival, both shocked to see the other so changed. They realize that they love each other regardless of how they dress or act, and we have ourselves another happy ending. Songs include “Summer Nights,” “Greased Lightnin’,” “Beauty School Dropout,” and of course, the title song.

Fiddler on the Roof: Fiddler is set in a Jewish village in Russia in 1905, shortly before the Bolshevik revolution. The two parents in the story, Tevye and Golde are faced with their own meager existence as well as dealing with their five daughters. The oldest marries a struggling tailor after Tevye has promised her to a wealthy butcher. The next oldest marries a revolutionary rebel and moves away to Siberia. The third marries a non-Jewish man. In the end of the story, the Cossacks destroy the village and Tevye and Golde are preparing to move what remains of their once-happy family to America. The original staging of this musical saw 3242 performances, and the play has had several touring companies and revivals since its opening in 1964. The many familiar songs include “If I Were a Rich Man,” “Sunrise, Sunset,” “Matchmaker, Matchmaker,” and “Tradition.”

Jesus Christ, Superstar: While you may need to secure school permission to use this musical, it is one of the few actually rated “G” as opposed to “PG” or “PG-13.” Based on the Bible’s account of the last seven days of Christ’s life on earth, the music, described as “rock opera,” was very popular. Songs include the title song, “I Don’t Know How to Love Him,” and “Everything’s Alright.” The original cast included several big-name performers including Ben Vereen, Jeff Fenholt and Yvonne Elliman.

APPENDIX G

Musicals Approved List

Dear Parent:

You have indicated that your son/daughter will be unable to complete the viewing of two musicals on video here at school. I have listed below the musicals that are approved for use on this project. If you have additional musicals you would like to offer your child, please let me know first, as I must keep this assignment within the reasonable guidelines of our district while still respecting your choices. Please don't hesitate to call me with any questions. The video musicals must be viewed in their entirety and the total written project turned in no later than: _____ . Thank you.

MUSICALS:

Two musicals, one of which must be:

Show Boat

West Side Story

Oklahoma!

The remaining may be selected either from the list above or the list below:

Jesus Christ Superstar

My Fair Lady

South Pacific

Fiddler on the Roof

The Fantasticks

Guys and Dolls

The King and I

How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying

Oliver!

Hello Dolly

Bye Bye Birdie

Carousel

Grease (NOT Grease II)

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

The Music Man

Annie

Godspell

Appendix H

Suggested Performance Pieces

Here is a short list of suggested performance pieces, based on both popularity and ready availability.

SHOW BOAT

Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man
Ol' Man River
Life Upon the Wicked Stage

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma
Oh What a Beautiful Mornin'

WEST SIDE STORY

Maria
Tonight
America
I Feel Pretty

SOUTH PACIFIC

Bali Hai
I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outta My Hair
Some Enchanted Evening

MY FAIR LADY

Wouldn't It Be Lovely?
On the Street Where You Live
I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face

THE MUSIC MAN

76 Trombones

A CHORUS LINE

One

HELLO DOLLY

Hello Dolly
Put On Your Sunday Clothes

ANNIE

Tomorrow
It's A Hard Knocks Life

THE KING AND I

Shall We Dance

GUYS AND DOLLS

Luck Be A Lady
Sit Down, You're Rockin' the Boat

GREASE

Grease
Beauty School Dropout

GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES

Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend

THE FANTASTICKS

Try to Remember

Appendix I, page 1

Suggested Answer Key for Assessment in Appendix D **The answers given below are in “bulleted” form and are merely suggested guidelines for what you may wish to require from your own students.**

1. Define the following terms.

MINSTREL SHOW: performance by a troupe of minstrels, or performers, usually consisting of melodies, jokes and impersonations (usually done in black face) in the style of black performers (e.g., Al Jolson)

REPERTORY: a theater in which several different plays/musicals are performed in a season by the same company of performers

CHOREOGRAPHER: the person who creates the dance numbers and coordinates much of the physical movement of the actors/singers/dancers in a musical production

OVERTURE: orchestral music played before a music begins, usually consisting of some or all of the primary songs from the musical

INTERMEZZO: orchestral music played between acts of a musical

LIBRETTO: the text, or story, in written format for a musical production

2. Using complete sentences, explain the main difference between an operetta and a musical.

****Operettas have ONLY sung dialogue, while musicals contain both spoken and sung dialogue.**

3. List two of the three common criticisms of musical theater through the years.

A. Not realistic/relevant after about 10 years...too trendy to be culturally relevant whereas “legitimate theater” remains relevant.

B. Not “legitimate” theater (as compared with the purely dramatic production). No theatrical merit.

C. Not to be taken seriously as an artform.

4. Explain how Jerome Kern changed the music in theatrical productions in the 1920s.

Kern was one of the first to use the musical composition to foreshadow action, to complement choreography (which also became more elaborate at this time), etc.

5. List one way in which musical theater (comedy) is the same today as it was from the beginning.

There is still a live orchestral accompaniment; there is still an overture, an intermezzo, and a reprise.

6. Why is the musical *Ain't Misbehavin'* called a “folio show?” In general, what IS a folio show?

A “Folio Show” is one in which a particular artist(s) work is showcased.

Appendix I, page 2

DISCUSSION: Construct a paragraph in which you discuss some of the changes and popular shows over the two to three hundred years in America's use and appreciation of music in theater. Who were some of the "pioneers" of American musicals? Why was their work so groundbreaking for its time? (For example, what are some of the changes that have taken place from the time of Flo Ziegfeld to Rodgers and Hammerstein to Sir Andrew Lloyd Weber?)

THIS RESPONSE WILL VARY BASED ON STUDENT CHOICE. IT SHOULD, HOWEVER, CONTAIN DIRECT REFERENCES AND EXAMPLES FROM THE UNIT THAT SUPPORT THE ANSWER/

Why was OKLAHOMA! Such an instant hit, and what are some of the innovations that made it so? **The music, the introduction of Agnes de Mille's "dream sequence" ballet, and the upbeat story with the happy ending were all attractive to Americans. The musical is still quite popular.**