

GYPSY

MUSIC BY JULE STYNE

LYRICS BY STEPHEN SONDHEIM

BOOK BY ARTHUR LAURENTS



Education Partner



Shaw FESTIVAL

PRESENTS

Gypsy

Music by Jule Styne, Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim
Book by Arthur Laurents

This study guide for *Gypsy* contains background information for the play, suggested themes and topics for discussion, and curriculum-based lessons that are designed by educators and theatre professionals.

The lessons and themes for discussion are organized in modules that can be used independently or interdependently according to your class's level and time availability.

THIS GUIDE WAS WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY BARBARA WORTHY, DEBRA McLAUCHLAN, AND DENIS JOHNSTON. ADDITIONAL MATERIALS WERE PROVIDED BY JACKIE MAXWELL AND KEVIN LAMOTTE.

COVER PHOTO OF ELODIE GILLETT AND
NORA McLELLANBY SHIN SUGINO

GYPSY

**Running time: 2hrs.45 mins approx.
including one intermission**

Previews April 12

Opens May 8

Closes October 29

For a calendar of performances please visit:
www.shawfest.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Players	3
The Story/The Creators	4-5
Director's Notes	6
The Music	7
Production History/Lighting	8
Backgrounder	9

Classroom Application

Before Attending the Play	10-18
After Attending the Play.....	19-23
Glossary of Theatre Terms.....	24
Response Sheet.....	25

The Players

Cigar.....	Neil Barclay
Father	Bernard Behrens
Weber	Anthony Bekenn
Dolores.....	Cathy Current
Pastey.....	Kevin Dennis
Thelma.....	Elodie Gillett
Miss Cratchitt/Rose alternate	Kate Hennig
Tessie Tura.....	Lisa Horner
Yonkers	Jeff Irving
Mazeppa.....	Gabrielle Jones
Agnes.....	Chilina Kennedy
Kansas	Andrew Kushnir
Tulsa	Jeff Lillico
June	Trish Lindstrom
Louise.....	Julie Martell
Momma Rose	Nora McLellan
Cochon.....	Micheal Querin
Herbie.....	Ric Reid
Marjorie.....	Kiera Sangster
LA	Sam Strasfeld
Electra	Patricia Vanstone
Jocko.....	William Vickers
Angie.....	Darren Voros
Baby June	Alexandra Beaton & Michaela Bekenn
Baby Louise	Jessica Benevides & Melissa Peters
Balloon Girls	Katie Cambone-Mannell & Jessie Hernder
Boys.....	Nigel Inneo, Jacob Stokl, David Aiello, Alex Race, Matthew Langelaan, Zachary Murphy



Costume design for Louise by Judith Bowden

Directed by Jackie Maxwell
Music Direction: Paul Sportelli
Choreography and Associate Director: Valerie Moore
Designed by Peter Hartwell
Costume Designer: Judith Bowden
Lighting Designer: Kevin Lamotte
Sound Designer: Peter McBoyle
Stage Manager: Judy Farthing
Assistant Stage Manager: Dora Tomassi
Technical Director: Jeff Scollon



Costume design for Momma Rose by Judith Bowden

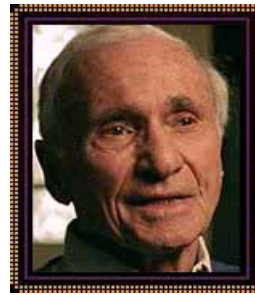
The Story

Gypsy is one of the great musicals of all time, with some of the most memorable tunes ever written - *Everything's Coming Up Roses*, *Let Me Entertain You* - and yet it is also the universal story of a mother and her relationships with her daughters. Set in the world of burlesque and vaudeville in the 1920s and 30s, this is a story of a domineering mother's determination to pursue fame and stardom for her two young daughters. Momma Rose is the classic stage-mother, outrageous, brash, tough and larger than life. And her dream for success is a dream she lives through her daughters. Of the two young singing and dancing girls, June is perceived by

her mother as the one with all the talent, while Louise remains the ugly duckling. But it is from this childhood obscurity that the awkward Louise transforms into the dynamic burlesque queen, Gypsy Rose Lee. As we witness this transformation, we see a clear-eyed celebration of the complex impulses that drive all dreamers and wanna-be performers.

Gypsy is a musical fable, suggested by the real-life memoirs of a great entertainer, Gypsy Rose Lee, whose mother Rose devoted herself to her children's stage careers.

Book by Arthur Laurents



"I think so many plays today stem from a notion rather than an idea. There's a great difference." **Arthur Laurents**

Arthur Laurents was born in New York City in 1918, and educated at Cornell University. He is best known as the playwright who penned such plays as *Home of the Brave* (1945), *West Side Story* (1957) and, of course, *Gypsy* (1959).

Laurents' career in Hollywood as a screenwriter seems almost separate from his career in the theatre, although he has sometimes been involved in the adaptation of his plays and musicals. His first screen credit was a shared one on *The Snake Pit* (1948), a harrowing study of mental illness starring Olivia de Havilland. Laurents then adapted Patrick Hamilton's play *Rope* (1948) for Alfred Hitchcock, which was loosely based on the Leopold-Loeb murder case. Other adaptations include *Anna Lucasta* (1949), *Anastasia* (1956), based on the play about a woman who may or may not be the surviving daughter of the executed Russian Czar, and *Bonjour Tristesse* (1958).

Laurents co-wrote most of the film adaptations of his stage work, beginning with 1949's *Home of the Brave*, which altered his original story that centred on a Jewish soldier to that of a black soldier.

With Ernest Lehman he adapted the hugely successful *West Side Story* (1961), and with Leonard Spigelglass he wrote the screenplay of *Gypsy* (1962) that featured a non-singing Rosalind Russell. He also worked on the screen version of *The Time of the Cuckoo* which became David Lean's *Summertime* (1965). In 1973, Laurents adapted his own novel, *The Way We Were*, the story of the romance between a Jewish woman and a WASP gentleman broken apart by cultural and political differences. The result, starring Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford, was a huge box-office success. Laurents followed with *The Turning Point* (1977) which he produced with its director Herbert Ross. Also a critical and commercial success, this film told the tale of two fortyish women, one an aging ballet star (Anne Bancroft), the other (Shirley MacLaine) who gave up dancing to raise a family and have a life of regrets.

Although his books for the musicals *West Side Story* and *Gypsy* were nominated for Tony Awards, Laurents did not win until *Hallelujah, Baby!* in 1967 and *La Cage aux Folles* in 1984.

Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

The name of composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim (b.1930) has become synonymous with experimentation and excellence in the field of musical theatre. Born in New York City, he moved to rural Pennsylvania with his mother when his parents separated, where their neighbours included the famous lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II. Sondheim began piano lessons at age seven, wrote original musicals in high school and college, and after graduation wrote several episodes of the television series *Topper*. After a couple of attempts at Broadway musicals, Sondheim was chosen to write lyrics for Leonard Bernstein's music in *West Side Story* (1957), one of the great landmarks of the American musical theatre.

The success of Sondheim's lyrics for *Gypsy* (1959) and *Do I Hear a Waltz* (1965), and of his music and lyrics for *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), established him as a new leader on the Broadway scene. Soon came a spectacularly successful series of productions with music and lyrics by Sondheim and directed by another Broadway legend,

The Composer Jule Styne

It was 1912 when the young Londoner Julius Stein, who would become Jule Styne, arrived in America's heartland, Chicago. Several years before, the youngster had been taken to the London Hippodrome to see the great Scottish star Harry Lauder, and was so excited by the music that he jumped onto the stage and began prancing about with Lauder. Amused and impressed, the singer advised musical training for the lad. And so, once in Chicago, his father, Isadore Stein, virtually bankrupted himself on a second-hand upright piano. From that moment on Julius began performing. He showed such a talent for the piano that he performed with the Chicago, St Louis, and Detroit symphonies before age 10.

By 1934 Styne and his wife of six years were tired of the gang wars of Chicago and moved to New York. There, he was discovered by 20th Century Fox president, Joseph Schenck, who brought him to Hollywood; the world has been listening



Broadway will celebrate Stephen Sondheim's 75th birthday in March 2005 with a gala celebration featuring a parade of stars.

Hal Prince. These included *Company* (1970), *Follies* (1971), *A Little Night Music* (1973), *Pacific Overtures* (1976), and *Sweeney Todd* (1979). In 1981, the failure of the Broadway premiere of *Merrily We Roll Along* brought an end to the Sondheim-Prince partnership, though both continued to have successful shows with other collaborators. Sondheim's subsequent hits included three productions with director/writer James Lapine - *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984), which won the Pulitzer Prize for drama, *Into the Woods* (1987), and *Passion* (1994). His latest works include *Frogs* and *Assassins*. Among the many tributes Sondheim has received was in Toronto in 2001 for a World Leaders Festival "hommage" with musical direction by Paul Sportelli, the Shaw Festival's Music Director. In 2000 Sondheim was honoured with the Praemium Imperiale award by the Japan Art Association for his work in film and theatre. In addition to his Pulitzer Prize, Sondheim has won six Tony awards, seven Grammy awards, an Edgar award (for a mystery screenplay written with Anthony Perkins) and an Oscar (for the song "Sooner or Later" from *Dick Tracy*, 1990).



Did you know that Jule Styne was also the composer of that seasonal classic, "Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow"?

to Styne songs ever since - 1,500 published songs, to be exact. In Hollywood, where Styne found a champion in Frank Sinatra, his collaboration with Sammy Cahn yielded a string of unforgettable hits plus the exuberant score for MGM's *Anchors Away* and the Oscar-winning *Three Coins in a Fountain*. The genius of Jule Styne has sparked the theatrical careers of Broadway legends such as Carol Channing, Judy Holliday, Mary Martin, Ethel Merman, Carol Burnett, Nanette Fabray, Phil Silvers, and Barbra Streisand. His unforgettable hits include some of Broadway's most memorable songs - "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," "The Party's Over," "Don't Rain On My Parade" "People" and of course, from his collaboration with Stephen Sondheim, "Let Me Entertain You," "Everything's Coming Up Roses," and "Some People" from *Gypsy*, (1959).

Jule Styne was one of America's most prolific songwriters; he died, aged 88, of heart failure on September 21, 1994, in New York City.

An Interview with the Director

Jackie Maxwell

From an Interview with Jackie Maxwell, Artistic Director of the Shaw Festival and director of *Gypsy*.

Q: How appropriate is *Gypsy* for student audiences?

A: There is no doubt in my mind that *Gypsy* *should* be seen by all teens. It's all about a family, and every teen I know will be able to identify with the dynamics in this play. It's timeless.

The play is really two stories - one is the backstage life of theatre and vaudeville in the 20s and 30s. And the other story, the one that I think is the heart of the play, is the classic story of a mother who believes she knows what's best for her children. Of course every teenager will recognize the problems with that, and in the play you see how each of her two daughters react to their mother's determination. Momma Rose is an incredibly powerful woman, overwhelmingly so. We had a domineering father last year in *Rutherford and Son*, and now this year we have Momma Rose. She's played by Nora McLellan, who has both the voice and acting 'chops'

(as we call it), to handle this woman. She's powerful! But is she tyrannical? I mean, is she doing this for herself, or for her daughters? You have to look at why she makes the choices she does. She's not planning on deserting those kids, like her own mother did; she's determined to see them through everything. There is something both scary and attractive about her behaviour.



In the song "If Momma Was Married" you get to see what it's like for the sisters, what it's like being the daughter of such a strong-willed woman and how it both pulls the girls together and drives them apart. And it's funny, the song is very funny. You have to see the positive and the negative. So teachers shouldn't be fearful about bringing their students to see *Gypsy*. Sure, we visit the backstage world of burlesque, but just wait till you see Momma Rose's reaction when she's confronted with that world!

Gypsy is a real story. It's set in the world of vaudeville and burlesque, but the real heart of it is the relationship between a mother and her two daughters - that can happen anywhere.



Nora McLellan as Momma Rose Photo by Shin Sugino



Musical Director Paul Sportelli

The Music

Here are some of the memorable song titles from *Gypsy*

Let Me Entertain You

Some People

Small World

Mr Goldstone

You'll Never Get Away From Me

If Momma Was Married

All I Need Is The Girl

Everything's Coming Up Roses

Together Wherever We Go

You Gotta Get a Gimmick

Rose's Turn



Costume Design for Louise by Judith Bowden



Costume Design for Dainty June by Judith Bowden

And here are the words to one of the great showstoppers: *Everything's Coming Up Roses* (Styne/Sondheim)

You'll be swell, you'll be great,
Gonna have the whole world on a plate!
Starting here, starting now,
Honey, everything's coming up roses!

Clear the decks, clear the tracks,
You got nothing to do but relax!
Blow a kiss, take a bow –
Honey, everything's coming up roses!

Now's your inning –
Stand the world on its ear!
Set it spinning,
That'll be just the beginning!

Curtain up, light the lights,
You got nothing to hit but the heights!
You'll be swell,
You'll be great,
I can tell –

Just you wait!
That lucky star I talk about is due!
Honey, everything's coming up roses for me and for you!

You can do it,
All you need is a hand.
We can do it,
Momma is gonna see to it!
Curtain up, light the lights,
We got nothing to hit but the heights!
I can tell,
Wait and see!
There's the bell,
Follow me,
And nothing's gonna stop us till we're through!

Honey, everything's coming up roses and daffodils,
Everything's coming up sunshine and Santa Claus,
Everything's coming up bright lights and lollipops,
Everything's coming up roses for me and for you!

Production History

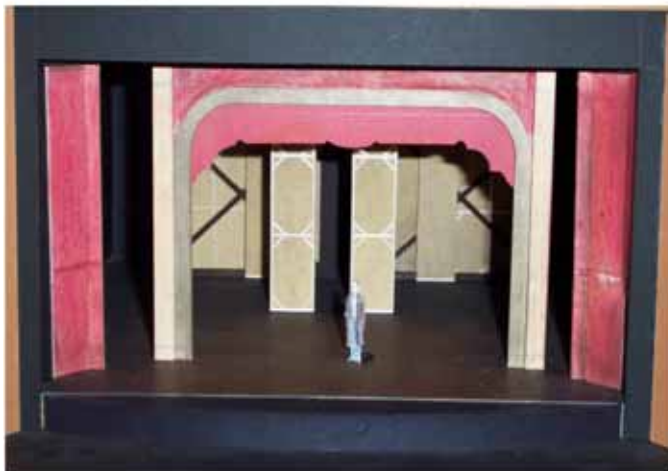
Gypsy's original production in 1959 was directed by the legendary director/choreographer Jerome Robbins, and starred Ethel Merman as Momma Rose. It has been revived several times: a 1973 London production, featuring Angela Lansbury as Rose, transferred to Broadway the next year, while subsequent Broadway revivals starred Tyne Daly (1989) and Bernadette Peters (2003). (Both Lansbury and Daly won Tony awards for their performances, and Merman and Peters too received nominations.) *Gypsy* was made into a motion picture with Rosalind Russell as Rose and Natalie Wood as Louise in 1962, and into a TV movie starring Bette Midler in 1993.

Below is a rendering for Act One, Scene One for the Shaw Festival's production of *Gypsy* 2005, complete with set notes.

Set Designer: Peter Hartwell

Lighting Designer: Kevin Lamotte

Act 1 Scene 1



On Stage Vaudeville House, LA

1A- House Curtain In - House Tabs Fly to reveal:

Scene 1

- Proc Maskers in position- Stays for whole show
- False Back Wall with flats attached- In, Stays til End
- 4 Pairs Hard Masking Legs in position- 3 Pairs stay til End
- "Royal George" False Proc In- Flies out at end of Sc. 1
- Mid Stage Pair of flats in position- (Defining Upstage Entrance for Rose)
- Fly out at end of Sc. 1
- Uncle Jocko Cloth crumpled up on floor, with "Stagehands" making adjustments- Eventually, it is flown up to scene position after Rose's entrance, Flies out at end of Sc. 1
- Directors Chair with Plaid on it- "uncle Jocko"

On Lighting

Kevin Lamotte, Director of Lighting Design for the Shaw Festival, and Lighting Designer for *Gypsy*, discusses a career in Lighting

Q: What do you do? I oversee the lighting departments at the Shaw Festival and design the lighting for three productions each year. I also freelance with many other theatre, dance and opera companies. The Shaw Festival employs as many as six lighting designers, three lighting design assistants and 12 electricians each season. Lighting designers are responsible for the intensity, colour, distribution and control of the lighting for a production. In artistic terms - visibility, composition, mood, movement, form.

Q: In your field, what schools or training do you recommend? In Toronto I recommend Ryerson, York, or the University of Toronto; across the country, the University of Alberta, University of Victoria (BC), National Theatre School (Que.), and the Banff Centre (Alta.); in the US, Yale, or NYU, and UCLA for design. And for some good 'tech' programs, I'd say Ryerson, the National Theatre School, Sheridan College (Ont.) and Red Deer College (Alta.).

Q: What do you NOT recommend? Dropping out and not completing a post-secondary education.

Q: In your field, if you were hiring someone, what do you look for? I look for experience and a good reputation with other peers that I respect. Mostly I look for enthusiasm, self-motivation and curiosity.

Q: What DON'T you want? Complainers - cynical and pessimistic points of view don't help when you're creating something new.

Q: In your field, where do you find the most work? Stage? Film? Ontario? Community theatres? I work entirely in live theatre on plays, modern dance/ballet and opera. My career is mostly national although I do work in the US a few times each year.

Q: Best job/Worst job? Best: Lighting design - I enjoy the collaboration with other artists. It's very rewarding to create something new and know that it's good. And when the final lighting looks as if it couldn't be better any other way.

Worst: Jobs I had during high school - loading thousands of live chickens on a truck by hand. Picking tomatoes in the sun all day, all week, all month.

The Real June and Louise

Burlesque, Broadway, and Hollywood

Gypsy Rose Lee was born in Seattle, Washington, as **Ellen June Hovick**, the same name that was later given to her younger sister, actress June Havoc. Later, her mother Rose renamed her Louise. Rose had married John Hovick, a newspaperman, at the age of fifteen, and became the classic example of a smothering stage mother - domineering, aggressive and driven - and stories of her eccentricities abound. Her two daughters earned the family's money by appearing in vaudeville, where June's talent shone while Louise remained in the background. At 16, June married a boy in the act named Bobby Reed. The story is told that Rose had Bobby arrested and met him at the police station carrying a hidden gun. Apparently she pulled the trigger, but the safety catch was on, and Bobby was freed. Not surprisingly, June left the act. She continued to work in show business though, both on stage and screen, and made a number of films for Hollywood. Her work was mostly in comedies and musicals, but she never achieved the fame (or the notoriety) enjoyed by her big sister, Gypsy. Interestingly, Neil Barclay, who plays Cigar in the Shaw Festival production, saw June Havoc appear in *Sweeney Todd* at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa in the early eighties. "She was an interesting kind of actress," he remembers, "and kind of puckish." June Havoc is currently living in the United States, and is the owner of a town, the Civil War town of Canning Crossing in Connecticut.



June Havoc

Louise's singing and dancing talents were insufficient to sustain the act without June. Eventually though, it became apparent that Louise could earn money in burlesque. Her innovation here was her sense of humour, for while she stripped quite as thoroughly as any burlesque star, she made the crowd laugh. She took the name Gypsy Rose Lee, became known as the "intellectual stripper"

and stripped at Minsky's for four years, where she was frequently arrested, and had relationships with unsavory characters such as Rags Ragland and Eddy Braun, sometime actors/thugs. But Minsky's also gave her the big break as a Ziegfeld girl in *Hot Cha*, and she went on to theatre, twelve movies and eventually her own television show, "The Gypsy Rose Lee Show" in 1958.

In 1941, Gypsy wrote a thriller called *The G-String Murders*. Her second murder mystery, *Mother Finds a Body*, was published in 1942. But it's widely assumed that both books were ghost-penned by another author, Craig Rice. Regardless of who wrote them, the public seemed to enjoy them. A movie adaptation of the first book under the title *Lady of Burlesque*, starring Barbara Stanwyck, did extremely well, even garnering an Oscar nomination in 1944 for Best Music Score. In 1942 Gypsy married William Alexander Kirkland, but by 1944 they were divorced. While married to Kirkland, she had a son with Otto Preminger, Erik Lee, who was known by three different names throughout his life - Erik Kirkland, Erik de Diego, and Erik Preminger. Gypsy was married for a third time in 1948 to Julio de Diego. That marriage also ended in divorce.



Gypsy Rose Lee

In 1954, as the girls' mother Rose was dying of colon cancer, her final words were for Gypsy: "Wherever you go... I'll be right there. When you get your own private kick in the ass, just remember - it's a present from me to you." With their mother dead, the sisters now felt free to write about her without risking a lawsuit. Gypsy's memoirs, entitled *Gypsy*, were published in 1957, and were the inspiration for the musical *Gypsy*. June did not like the way she was portrayed in the piece, and the conflict between the sisters lasted a decade. The incredible success of the play and the subsequent movie secured Gypsy's future. A smoker, she was diagnosed in 1969 with metastatic lung cancer. "This is my present, you know," she told June. "My present from mother." She died in Los Angeles, California, in 1970.

Classroom Applications

The following pages suggest questions and activities students might explore

BEFORE attending the play.

Theme One GYPSY IMAGES



ACTIVITY

- * In pairs, list eight words associated with the word “gypsy”.
- * Pair up with another pair, forming groups of 4.
- * Combine and/or eliminate words from each pair’s list so that the group of 4 shares a common set of eight words associated with the word “gypsy”.
- * The task for each group is to portray their eight words in a two-minute scene about gypsies. All objects used in the scene are to be mimed.
- * Preliminary decisions include: What role will each person play? Where and when will the scene occur?
- * The scene begins with only one character. Decide who the character will be and what he or she will be doing.
- * Decide on the most appropriate second character to enter the scene.
- * Decide on the third and fourth character to enter.
- * The scene does not need to tell a complete story. The goal is to use all 4 characters to convey the eight words your group has selected.
- * After a brief rehearsal time, show the scenes to the class.
- * After watching the scenes, decide on eight words that most accurately identify your class perceptions of the word “gypsy”.
- * How many of the words have positive connotations?
- * After watching *Gypsy*, determine which of your words apply to the play.

Theme Two

STAGE MOTHERS

Gypsy is based on the real-life memoirs of a 1930s entertainer named **Gypsy Rose Lee**, whose mother **Rose** devoted herself to her children's stage careers.

DISCUSSION

The first scene of *Gypsy* shows the rehearsal of a children's talent show. The first line of the play is: "Everybody shut up. Mothers out."

- * What attitude does this line convey about mothers in the theatre?
- * When you think of the term "stage mother", what impressions come to mind?
- * Do "stage fathers" exist?
- * What is the difference between showing interest in your child and becoming a stage mother?
- * In her memoirs, Gypsy Rose Lee calls her mother a "jungle mother". What does the expression "It's a jungle out there" mean to you?

RESEARCH

On the internet, research one of the following:

- * Wanda Holloway
- * Jon Benet Ramsey
- * Thomas Junta
- * The Annual Stage Mother Awards

BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

Imagine yourself as a parent whose primary goal has been achieving success in the entertainment industry for your children. In pairs, decide how you would solve the following problems:

- * You want your children to shine at an audition for which you have spent hours planning, rehearsing, and making costumes. At the theatre, you witness favoritism to an untalented child and realize that the audition is unfair. How do you handle the situation?
- * You need money to travel to Los Angeles where you hope to arrange meetings for your children with agents and producers. Your father has given you money in the past, but refuses to give you any more. How do you get the money from him?
- * You need to get your children across the country so that important theatre people can meet them. You have no car and very little money. What do you do?
- * You think your daughters would have a better chance of success if their act included back-up singers and dancers. Without money or connections, how will you recruit youngsters for the act?
- * You have rented hotel accommodation for yourself and your two daughters. When the manager discovers that you also have three boys and a number of pets with you, he makes an angry appearance to evict you. What do you do?

HOTSEAT ACTIVITY

In this activity, characters sit in chairs called “hotseats” at the front of the class. By questioning these characters, circumstances of a story are gradually built.

The background to the exercise is this. A single mother has been staying in a hotel with her children who have been singing and dancing in a show at a nearby theatre. After performing twice a day for three weeks, the children’s contract has now ended. While checking out of the hotel, the mother is caught with hotel silverware and linen.

Characters in the “hotseats” will include:

- * the mother
- * the children
- * someone who wants to marry the mother and settle down
- * a police officer
- * the theatre manager
- * the hotel manager

Select volunteers from the class to play each of the hotseat characters.

Everyone else in the class should think of a question or two to ask the hotseat characters.

In asking and answering questions, remember that you are working together to build both background information and a story.

After several people have been questioned, summarize the story devised by the class.

Theme Three

THEATRE TERMS AND REFERENCES

RESEARCH

Much of *Gypsy's* action occurs in historical theatres across the United States, and characters often refer to areas or objects found within theatre settings.

- * Define the theatrical meaning of flies, floods, and wings.
- * What is meant by the line: "Kill the floods and bring in #4"?
- * List and describe the uses for various types of theatre curtains and lights.

In chronicling events of American theatre in the 1920s and 1930s, *Gypsy* introduces significant names and terms in 20th century performance history. Research the following references from the play:

- * Vaudeville
- * Burlesque
- * The Pantages Circuit and Alexander Pantages
- * The Orpheum Circuit and Marcus Heiman
- * Louis, Billy and Harold Minsky
- * Ziegfeld Follies
- * Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne

DISCUSSION

Advances in audio technology, including sound recording and movie projection, were major causes of vaudeville's decline in the 1930s. Almost eight decades later, advances in computer technology are greatly affecting today's music recording industry. What are your predictions for the next decade in terms of:

- * how music will be recorded
- * how recorded music will be obtained and played by the public
- * how recording artists will be paid, and how record companies will earn money

Theme Four

CHANGES IN TIME AND LOCATION

Gypsy depicts life “on the road” for performers who traveled the United States over a period of at least a decade.

PROBLEM SOLVING ACTIVITY

In groups of 5, imagine you are the director, choreographer, lighting designer, costume designer, and set designer for the play. As a team, you have been called together to solve a complex staging problem.

Read the following production memo:

Memo to the Production Team for *Gypsy*

Hey geniuses, here’s the latest curve we’ve been thrown. The script calls for a song-and-dance routine to be performed by a group of 5 child actors. At the beginning of the number these kids have to be about 7 years old and it has to look like they’re in a tacky theatre in Los Angeles. During the two minutes it takes to do their routine, we’ve got to change time and place rapidly. By the end of the song and dance, we’re supposed to show two things. One, at least five years have passed. And two, the kids have performed the same routine over and over again in tacky theatres all around the country, the final one being Akron, Ohio. Any ideas??? We need answers by tomorrow.

Good luck folks.

- * Brainstorm ideas from the perspective of each team member (director, choreographer, lighting designer, costume designer and set designer) to solve this staging challenge.
- * Present your ideas as a “pitching” session to a theatre producer.

Theme Five

SHOW BUSINESS SIBLINGS

Gypsy tells the story of two young singing and dancing sisters (June and Louise) and their aggressive mother (Rose) who manages every aspect of their lives. Rose vows to make June a star, while it is commonly agreed that Louise has no talent and will never emerge from the background. A New York City producer (Mr. Grantziger) has offered June a chance to work for him on the condition that she leaves her mother and the act behind. Rose refuses the offer, declaring: “He’s trying to take my baby away from me, that’s what he’s trying to do. Well, over my dead body, he will!”

In the following short excerpt from the play, the sisters react to Rose’s refusal of Mr. Grantziger’s offer.

Louise: Momma’s just talking big, June. She won’t really—

June: Yes, she will.

Louise: Maybe Mr. Grantziger will—

June: No, he won’t—Well, that’s show business.

Louise: Aren’t you happy someone like Mr. T. T. Grantziger thinks you can be a star?

June: You’re funny.

Louise: Why?

June: Well, you’re never jealous.

Louise: Oh. Well, I don’t have any talent. I don’t mind really—except Momma would like it better if I did.

June: I guess that’s what she likes about me. Momma’s no fool. I’m not a star.

Louise: You are.

June: Mr. Grantziger could make me one if – *(Her voice cracks. Louise puts an arm around her.)*

Louise: Momma can make you a star, too.

June: *(In control again. Moves away.)* Momma can do one thing. She can make herself believe anything she makes up. Like with that rhinestone finale dress you sewed for me. Momma wants publicity so she makes up a story that three nuns went blind sewing it. Now she believes it. She even believes the act is good.

Louise: Isn’t it?

June: *(Cold anger)* It’s a terrible act and I hate it! I’ve hated it from the beginning and I hate it more now. I hate pretending I’m two years old. I hate singing those same awful songs, doing those some awful dances, wearing those same awful costumes—I didn’t mean it about the costumes.

Louise: No. You just meant you’re too big for them now.

June: Did you ever feel like you didn’t have a sister?

Louise: ...Sometimes.

June: It’s Momma’s fault.

Louise: You can’t blame everything on Momma.

June: You can’t maybe.

PERSPECTIVE-TAKING ACTIVITY

- * Have volunteers read the excerpt aloud four times.
- * For the first reading, ask the class to focus on initial impressions.
- * For the second reading, ask the class to focus on June's perspective and emotions.
- * For the third reading, ask the class to focus on Louise's perspective and emotions.
- * For the fourth reading, ask the class to focus on Rose's perspective and emotions.
- * Assign students to defend the various perspectives of June, Louise and Rose.
- * As a class, predict what will happen next. What will Mr. Grantziger do? What will Rose do? What will June do? What will Louise do?

DISCUSSION

- * When you think of child performers, what images come to mind?
- * What stereotypes exist about child stars?
- * What child-stars' families have you heard of?

RESEARCH

- * On the internet, find out what happened to Gypsy Rose Lee's sister, June Havoc.
- * Watch the movie "*Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*" to see a fictional account of child-star siblings.
- * Investigate the following contemporary performing siblings: The Jackson Five, Ashley and Jessica Simpson, and Oasis.

Theme Six

THE STAGE MUSICAL TRADITION

The dictionary defines *stage musical* as “a play in which the story line is interspersed with or developed by songs”. For most of the 20th century, the stage musical was primarily an American creation, with performance on Broadway its goal. Written in 1959 by Arthur Laurents, Jule Styne, and Stephen Sondheim, and produced for the Broadway stage by David Merrick and Leland Hayward, *Gypsy* is a definitive representation of the stage musical tradition.

RESEARCH

The writers and producers of *Gypsy* were extremely important forces in stage musical history. Research the careers of:

- * Arthur Laurents
- * Jule Styne
- * Stephen Sondheim
- * David Merrick
- * Leland Hayward

THE FUNCTION OF SONGS

Songs clearly add entertainment value to the stage musical. But songs are also important in communicating the meaning of the play. In *Gypsy*, notice the function of songs in:

- * expressing personal beliefs and attitudes
- * revealing dreams and desires
- * developing character relationships
- * making plans and promises
- * foreshadowing events

The following pages suggest questions and activities students might explore

AFTER attending *Gypsy*

Theme Seven

DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES

The importance of dreams is a thread that runs through *Gypsy*. Guided by visions of success for her children, Rose calls her dreams “real dreams” and devotes her life to making them come true. Louise confides to Tulsa that she makes up secret dreams about people. Other characters have their own dreams, some more secret than others.

DISCUSSION

- * What does Rose mean when she says her dreams are “real dreams”?
- * What distinguishes “real dreams” from ordinary dreams?
- * What does the sick cow in Rose’s dream symbolize?
- * Have you ever had a dream that offered guidance or solved a problem for you?

ACTIVITY

- * In groups of 4, select a character from the following: Herbie, June, Tulsa, Louise.
- * Imagine a dream that would represent your character’s desired future.
- * Create a sequence of movement, speech, and music to enact the dream.
- * The sequence should have a dreamlike form. It should not be presented as a logical story, but rather as a series of actions and words focused on the character’s dream future.
- * Now imagine a nightmare of your character’s future.
- * Create a sequence of movement, speech, and music to enact the nightmare.
- * Combine the dream and the nightmare, so that one turns into the other. Decide whether you want the dream to turn into a nightmare or the nightmare to turn into the dream.

Theme Eight

A BRAND NEW ACT

The memoirs of Gypsy Rose Lee contain episodes that were not included in *Gypsy*, and parts of the story might be developed into a new act for the play. Also, many components of *Gypsy* deviate from the factual memoirs. The character of Herbie, for example, did not exist in reality, while some important real characters are omitted from the play altogether. Events in the play are also sometimes portrayed inaccurately. The birthday scene, full of pathos in the play, is described very differently in the memoirs as a joyous celebration.

DISCUSSION

- * In portraying the life of a real person, do you think a playwright has a duty to recreate events as they really occurred? Why or why not?
- * Why do you think the playwright invented the character of Herbie? What important functions does Herbie fulfill?
- * Why do you think the birthday scene was changed from a happy to a wistful memory?

SCRIPT WRITING ACTIVITY

Imagine yourselves as script-writers who have been given the task of adding scenes to *Gypsy*. Using the following plot summaries as sources, create scenes to insert into Act 1. Improvise the scenes in groups before writing them out. The scenes are linked sequentially.

Scene 1

Setting: A theatre in Minneapolis

Characters: Rose, June, Louise, Miss Tompkins, newspaper reporter, photographer

Summary: Rose has been warned that the child welfare agency will take June and Louise away from her if they don't receive an education. To prevent losing her children, Rose hires a teacher, Miss Tompkins, to tutor the girls on the road. The teacher, a pretty young woman, is told by Rose to dress and behave as a "proper schoolteacher", including wearing sensible shoes and glasses. Rose hires a newspaper reporter and photographer to cover the story of her daughters studying in a make-shift schoolroom in the theatre. To prepare for the press, Rose and the girls use props from the storage room to create the impression of a classroom. Rose worries that the teacher will make a stronger impression on the photographer than her daughters. Although the girls have trouble reciting the four times table, June, Louise and the teacher make a great story for the paper. Rose is happy in the end.

Continued on next page



SCRIPT WRITING
continued

Scene 2

Setting: A department store

Characters: June, Louise, Miss Tompkins, store clerk, store owner

Summary: At lunch one day, June and Louise invite Miss Tompkins to go to a department store with them. While there, the girls shoplift a large number of items without the teacher's knowledge. The sisters have shoplifted many times before and have a foolproof strategy. One of them distracts the store clerk while the other one steals, and then they switch. Outside the store, June and Louise show Miss Tompkins their loot. Horrified, the teacher takes the girls back inside. She makes them return the merchandise to each clerk they stole from, apologize to the store owner, and publicly swear never to steal again.

Scene 3

Setting: A theatre in Minneapolis

Characters: Rose, Louise, June, Miss Tompkins, a stage electrician

Summary: After returning from the store with their teacher, June and Louise get ready to go onstage. Rose instructs Miss Tompkins about curling June's hair with a curling iron. An electrician arrives and talks to Rose about a lighting problem. Rose and the electrician leave. While they're gone, June gets very upset—almost hysterical. When Rose returns, June blurts out the whole story of what happened at the store. Rose reacts angrily toward the teacher. She accuses her of traumatizing June by embarrassing her so greatly. She says that Miss Tompkins has mistreated her daughters and failed to consider June's sensitive nature. After a heated argument, Rose fires the teacher and curls June's hair. June recovers from her emotional trauma quickly and painlessly.

Theme Nine

A STAR IS BORN

FROM LOUISE TO GYPSY ROSE LEE

Gypsy follows Louise's career from childhood obscurity in small town "kiddie shows" to teenage stardom as Gypsy Rose Lee.

ACTIVITY: MY MEMORY ALBUM

Imagine that Louise has kept a scrapbook album of pictures and personal diary entries about her career from childhood on. Your group task is to create and perform the album contents, showing the pictures in tableaux form and the accompanying diary entries as short monologues. The monologues should explain the pictures and also reveal Louise's reactions to the episode portrayed. The following events will be included in the album:

- * At a rehearsal of the Uncle Jocko Kiddie Show, Louise plays a Dutch boy in the "3'3" bundle of dynamite" Baby June and Company sister act. While the girls are rehearsing, Rose scolds Louise for her poor timing and weak voice.
- * In Akron, the sister act has grown to include young boys as well as Louise and June. Louise performs as one of the newsboys in the Dainty June and her Newsboys act.
- * After receiving a sewing kit from June for her birthday, Louise makes costumes for the act. Most often, she sews beautiful dresses for June.
- * At an Orpheum Circuit audition for Mr. Goldstone, Louise plays the back of a cow in the "5'2" bundle of dynamite" Dainty June and her Farmboys act. The act now includes a monkey and a dog.
- * In Buffalo, Tulsa confesses to Louise that he is secretly rehearsing his own act. As he teaches her to dance, Louise begins to trade awkwardness for grace, and dreams of becoming Tulsa's partner. Louise reads Tulsa's palm and describes her vivid ideas about costumes for his act.
- * In Omaha, after June elopes and the boys desert, Rose vows to make Louise a star. Rose, Herbie and Louise promise to work together as a team.
- * In Texas, Louise headlines as "5'4" bundle of dynamite Senorita Louise" in an all-girl act called Mme. Rosa's Toreadorables. Rose wants Louise to copy June's specialties of baton twirling and splits.
- * In a burlesque house in Witchita, Louise performs in a comedian's act after the girl who was supposed to do the show fails to arrive.
- * When the headline stripper doesn't show up, Rose insists that Louise can fill in. Rose "borrows" a dress, gloves and shoes from a stripper named Tessie. Before going onstage, Louise sees herself in the mirror and knows that she's beautiful.
- * Louise changes her name to Gypsy Rose Lee and becomes a famous star. Photographers, agents and fans all clamour for her attention. Rose feels abandoned, useless, and resentful.
- * Louise and her mother reconcile. Rose admits that she pushed her daughters to achieve for selfish reasons. Louise reveals that she always sought her mother's approval. Mother and daughter share a dream of performing as a team.

DISCUSSION

Fame and stardom are sought by many but achieved by few. Examine your opinions about fame by discussing the following questions:

- * What combination of factors made Louise a star?
- * Why did June, with more talent and attention from her mother, never become as famous as her sister?
- * What did Rose, Louise and June sacrifice in their search for stardom? What did they gain?
- * Is talent necessary for stardom?
- * Are any untalented people currently famous in the entertainment industry? If so, what makes them famous?
- * Would you like to have fame? If so, what would you be willing to do for it?
- * What would you refuse to do?

Rose devoted her life to pursuing fame for her daughters. Examine your opinions about her actions by discussing the following questions:

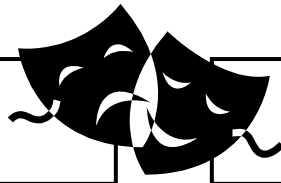
- * What motivated Rose to focus her attention on the careers of her children?
- * Was Rose obsessive or merely persistent and determined?
- * As a mother, what aspects of Rose's behavior were praiseworthy?
- * As a mother, what aspects of Rose's behavior were reprehensible?



Costume design for Electra by Judith Bowden



Costume design for Mazeppa by Judith Bowden



BLOCKING: The actor's movement on stage is known as "blocking". The Stage Manager writes the blocking notation into the Prompt Script.

COSTUME: Anything that an actor wears on stage is referred to as a costume. The Wardrobe department (the department responsible for creating costumes) provides clothes, shoes, hats, and any personal accessories such as umbrellas, purses and eyeglasses.

DROP: A drop is a large piece of painted canvas that is "flown in" by the flyman (see FLYMAN).

GREEN ROOM: The green room, usually near the entrance to the stage, is where the actors and crew sit while waiting for their turn to go on stage. One possible explanation of how the green room got its name is that actors used to wait for their entrances at the back of the theatre in an area where the scenery was stored. Perhaps the scenery was green, or the name "scene room" evolved into "green room".

ORCHESTRA PIT: The orchestra pit is the place where the musicians perform during a musical. Usually the orchestra pit is between the front row of the audience and the stage.

PROPS: A property or "prop" is anything that the audience sees that is not worn by an actor and is not a structural part of the set. Some examples are: tables, chairs, couches, carpets, pictures, lamps, weapons, food eaten during a play, dishes, cutlery, briefcases, books, newspapers, pens, telephones, curtains and anything else you can imagine.

PROSCENIUM: A term describing the physical characteristics of a theatre. A proscenium theatre is one in which the audience and the actors are separated by a picture-frame opening that the audience looks through to see the actors. Surrounding this opening is the PROSCENIUM ARCH. If there is an acting area on the audience side of the proscenium arch, it is referred to as the APRON or FORESTAGE.

SCRIM: A scrim is a piece of gauze that is painted and used as part of the scenery. When a scrim is lit from in front it is opaque, you cannot see through it. When a scrim is lit from behind it is transparent, you can see through it. This allows for many different visual effects to be created by the lighting and set designers.

THRUST STAGE: A thrust stage is a stage that is surrounded on three sides by the audience.

DIRECTOR: The person who guides the actors during the rehearsal period. The director decides what the important messages of the play are and how they will be conveyed to the audience.

DESIGNERS: The people who work with the director to decide what the production will look like. Designers must choose the colour, shape and texture of everything you see on the stage. There are several areas that need to have designers: costumes, set, lighting and sometimes sound. The designers work very closely with the director to create the environment in which the play will take place.

DYER: The person who dyes fabrics for the Wardrobe department.

FLYMAN: The person responsible for the manipulation of the scenery which is in the fly gallery (the space above the stage). The scenery is manipulated by ropes attached to a counterweight system.

MILLINER: The person who makes the hats which the actors wear on stage.

PROPS BUYER: The person who buys items that will be used or adapted to become props. Props buyers also purchase the raw material used to build props.

SCENIC ARTISTS: The people who are responsible for painting and decorating the surfaces of the set. Some of the techniques they use include: wood graining, stenciling, marbling and brickwork. They also paint the drops and scrims that are flown in.

STAGE CARPENTER: The person who ensures that everything runs smoothly on stage during a performance. The stage carpenter and stage crew are responsible for changing the sets between scenes and acts.

STAGE MANAGER: The person who makes sure that all rehearsals and performances run smoothly. During a performance the stage manager also makes sure that all of the technical elements (e.g. lights, sound, curtains flying in and out) happen at exactly the right time.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR: The person who is responsible for coordinating all of the technical elements of a production. Technical directors work with the people who build the sets, props, costumes, wigs and special effects to make sure that everything runs smoothly.

