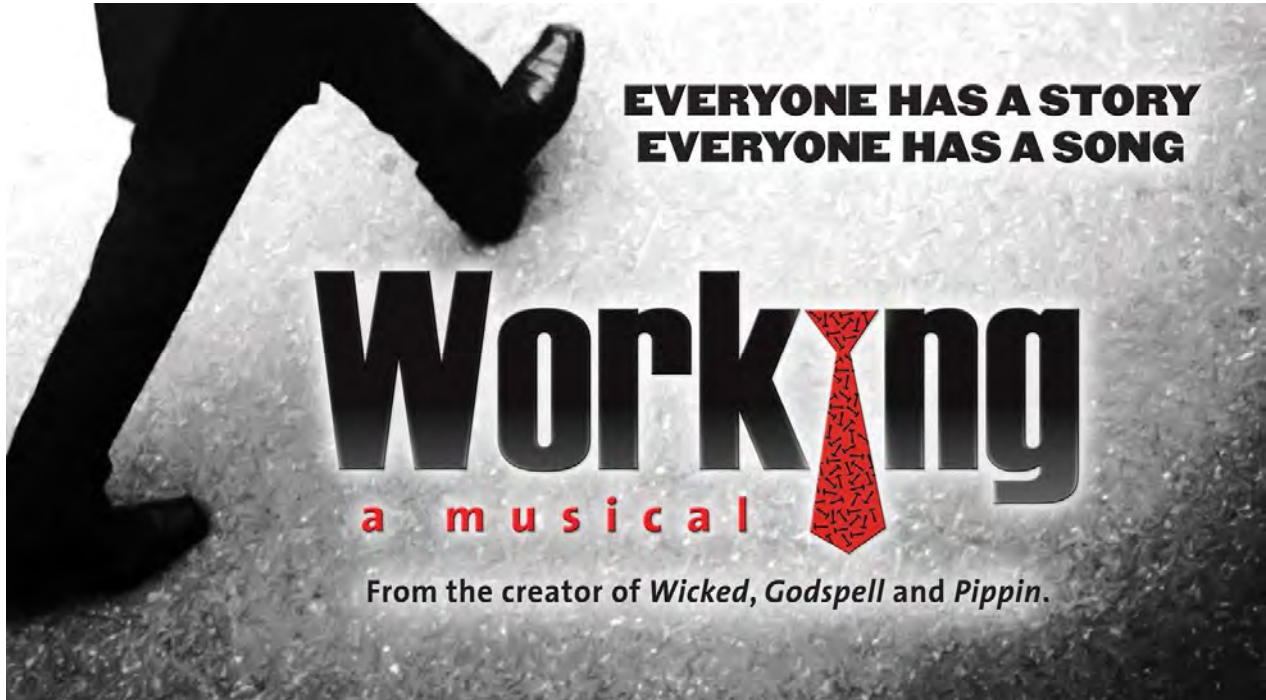




THE OLD GLOBE

Presents



From the book by Studs Terkel
Adapted by Stephen Schwartz and Nina Faso
Directed by Gordon Greenberg

March 17 – April 12, 2009

This Study Guide was created by The Old Globe Education Department

www.TheOldGlobe.org/Education

This play contains strong language and mature themes

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Our Teaching Artists

The Old Globe's professional Teaching Artists conduct in-classroom workshops in the days before students attend our Student Matinee performances of our shows. These workshops provide students the opportunity to learn about the show and its themes. The workshops also help students understand some elements of the plays that may be confusing or outside of their experience.

Our Teaching Artists are theatre professionals who work with our Education Department to prepare lesson plans for each production. They lead students in theatre games, improvisations, writing and listening activities and other activities in their experiential workshops.

Teaching Artists for this production were: Amy Biedel, Marisela De la Parra, Jensen Olaya, Monique Gaffney, Jamie Koottarappallil, Sarah Price, and David Tierney

The Non-Fiction Musical

(VAPA STANDARD #5 CONNECTION, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATION, VAPA STANDARD #3 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT)

There are many different sources for musicals: novels (*The Pajama Game*), plays (*Oklahoma!*) story collections (*Guys and Dolls*), and even comic strips (*Annie*). Recently it seems as if popular films have been the main inspiration for Broadway musicals, but as often happens the exception belies the rule. Recent Tony winners have been *In the Heights* (original story) and *Spring Awakening* (a 19th century play).

Working is in a class almost by itself. It is based on Studs Terkel's best selling book, *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do* (1974) which consists of a series of interviews with Americans across regions, social lines and racial divides. So a non-fiction musical. The only work comparable was the 1948 revue, *Inside USA* based on John Gunther's collection of essays about post war America. *Inside USA* had music and lyrics by Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz, whose songs were in last season's *Dancing in the Dark* here at the Globe. *Inside USA* was a traditional revue, a cavalcade of song interspersed with written sketches. It starred Beatrice Lillie, Clifton Webb and Perry Como so apparently ordinary Americans weren't part of the mix.

Stylistically *Working* is different in that it is the work of a number of song writers and though seemingly a revue, it has a strong thematic connection between the musical numbers. One worker's story blends into another's in a way to show how interconnected we all are. *Working* also presents working men and women in a more realistic manner than we are used to in a musical entertainment. The song writers use the workers' interviews and find the poetry and power in their words. It's rare to find a musical entertainment that depicts real, ordinary people in their own words as they reflect not only on their jobs which some love, some hate and some just tolerate but also their musings about the greater meaning of work and its place in our lives and in our society.

As you can see from these excerpts, the song writers who have contributed to *Working* have skillfully raised the words of the men and women that were interviewed for his book into the poetry of the musical theater without losing the connection to the spare and revealing and honest words that were originally spoken to Studs Terkel.

From Studs Terkel's interviews

(VAPA STANDARD #3 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT)

The following are quotes from the book and songs from the musical. The lyricists sometimes borrowed directly from the quotes while others took the essence of what the person was trying to express to create the song.

Maggie Holmes – Domestic Worker

When people come in the room – that's what bugs me – they give you that look: You just a maid. It do somethin' to me. It really gets into me. Lotta times I'm tellin' (my kids) about things, they'll be saying, "Mom, that's olden days." They don't understand because it's so far from what's happening now. Mighty few young black women are doin' domestic work. And I'm glad. That's why I want my kids to go to school. This one lady told me, "All you people are getting' like that." I said, 'I'm glad' There's no more gettin' on their knees.

Cleanin' Woman by Micki Grant

*I've got a daughter with a
head on her shoulders,
Pretty as a picture too!
She ain't gonna hide that
face and head
Behind doors, scrubbin'
floors like her Mama do,
If my legs don't give out and
my back hold up.*



Joe by Craig Carnelia

*You wake at ten; Fold up the bed
You cook an egg; You toast some bread
You think about the day ahead; It's like I said
You take a walk; You meet a chum
You shoot the bull; You argue some
You lose at gin*

Joe Zmuda – Retiree

The day goes pretty fast for me now. I don't regret it at all that I've got all this time on hand. I'm enjoying it to the best of my ability. I don't daydream at all. I just think of something and I forget it. That daydreaming don't do you any good. I sleep late. I get up between nine and ten thirty in the morning. The first thing you do is take ahold of the coffee pot handle and you find out it's empty, so you gotta make coffee. I just had three soft boiled eggs about an hour ago.

Grace Clements – Felter

We work eight straight hours, with two ten minute breaks and one twenty-minute break for lunch. If you want to use the washroom, you have to do that in that time. By the time you leave your tank, you go to the washroom, freshen up a bit, go into the recreation room, it makes it very difficult to finish a small lunch and be back in the tank in twenty minutes.

Mill Worker by James Taylor

*Millwork ain't easy
Millwork ain't hard
Millwork most often is
A goddam awful boring job
I'm waiting for a daydream
To take me through the
morning
And put me in my coffee
break*



The Mason by Craig Carnelia

*He does his work
His workday flies
Quittin' time's a big
surprise
And then it's one
more stone
To get just right
It's always one more
stone*



Carl Murray Bates – Stone Mason

It's pretty good day layin' stone or brick. Not tiring. Anything you like to do isn't tiresome. It's hard work; stone is heavy. At the same time, you get interested in what you're doing and you usually fight the clock the other way. You're not lookin' for quittin'. You're wondering you haven't got enough done and it's almost quittin' time.

Rose Hoffman – Teacher

In the old days, kids would sit in their seats. If I had to leave the room for a few minutes, I'd say, "Will you please be good?" And they were. Today they have these multiple chairs instead of the pedestals, seats that were attached. The kids slide all over the room. Anything to make life more difficult. The language! I could never use some of the words I hear. Up to five years ago I could never spell a four letter word. These children know everything. It's shocking to me because I think that anyone that uses that language doesn't know any better. They don't have command of any language. But maybe I'm wrong; because brilliant people use it nowadays too. I must be a square.

Nobody Tells Me How - lyrics by Susan Birkenhead

*My children were always
respectful
When the principal came,
they would rise
If I had to leave for a minute
or two
They always found
somethina "constructive" to*



Fathers and Sons by Stephen Schwartz

*I heard a lot of songs say, "Where you goin' my son?"
Now I know they're for real,
Boy you never stop to think how fast the years run,
And the things they steal.
Now it seems I always knew,
Why I do the things I do
And the things I never did,
Why I worked my whole damn life,
So's I could give the better life
Than the one my dad could give me,
I give it
To my kid*



Mike LeFevre – Ironworker

This is gonna sound square, but my kid is my imprint. He's my freedom. This is why I work. Every time I see a young guy walk by with a shirt and tie and dressed up real sharp, I'm lookin' at my kid, you know? That's it.

The Production

Working, adapted by Stephen Schwartz and Nina Faso from the book by Studs Terkel, *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do* (1974), is a musical that focuses on the workers of the USA. New elements have been added to the production since it first opened in New York in the 1970s. The play has been updated to fit 21st century audiences and The Old Globe's production enhances that modern feeling with set that utilizes multi media technology. The rhythm of the show is very fast, almost like the editing for a television show or film.

The first image audiences observe, before the announcement is even made to turn off cell phones, is a three level steel structure representing the bones of a building. On each level are dressing rooms for a theatre and the audience sees the actors getting ready for their performance. They are changing, putting on makeup, practicing choreography, and warming up their voices.

At the very top of this three level structure is what the audience comes to find out is the stage manager, who calls the cues of the show, and the musical director and his musicians, who accompany the actors as they sing. The director, Gordon Greenberg, chose to give the audience a glimpse into the preparations of the actors, the stage manager, the musical director, and the musicians: the *work* of theatre professionals.

Once the show begins, the audience discovers that multimedia will be a consistent aspect of the show. Projections are used to provide information on Studs Terkel and the stories that he collected. Next the audience sees pictures of faces of people from across America projected onto the set. These faces become part of the scenery as they are a part of the story. Finally, the actors appear as their characters. They dance and act with cell phones and lap tops, and dress in modern clothing.

Along with the modern technical additions, the musical has also been updated with modern character additions such as the hedge fund manager, the UPS Delivery man, and the customer service representative from India.

Not only does Greenberg focus on the characters of *Working*, but he chooses to show the transitions in between scenes as well. This is not the conventional approach to this (or any) musical. Normally, directors of *Working* choose to focus on the characters only. But in this production, the director focuses on what the actors, dressers, stage manager, and musicians are doing in this production in order to get ready for the next number.

Here, Greenberg focuses on what has been typically neglected in past productions of *Working*: the jobs that go into making a theatrical production function as a whole. Ironically, he glorifies jobs in the theatre by focusing on jobs outside of the theatre. In Brechtian fashion, Greenberg breaks the fourth wall and reminds the audience that this is theatre. This juggling between romanticism and realism keeps the audience engaged and attentive while reflecting on their own lives and work.



Nehal Joshi and the Cast of *WORKING*, directed by Gordon Greenberg, Based on the book by Studs Terkel, Adapted by Stephen Schwartz and Nina Faso, Music and Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, James Taylor, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Micki Grant, Mary Rodgers, Craig Carnelia, Susan Birkenhead, Matt Landers and Graciela Daniele, playing in the Old Globe Theatre March 7 - April 12; photo by Craig Schwartz.

Jobs in the Theatre

(VAPA Standard #1)

Director: Responsible for the overall vision of the show.

Stage Manager: Manages and coordinate the behind the scene aspects of the show. Call the cues during the show, supervises the actors and technical staff and maintains director's vision for the production.

Assistant Stage Manager: Assists the stage manager and generally works backstage during the production receiving cues from stage manager throughout the performance. Sometimes calls the show in the stage manager's absence.

Technical Director: Coordinates the technical aspects of a production.

Musical Director/Conductor: Arranges the musical score, teaches the music to cast and musicians, directs the orchestra/band.

Musicians: Professional violinists, pianists, drummers, etc. who perform either the orchestra pit or onstage during the show.

Actors: The most visible members of the creative team, they rehearse and perform the play.

Dresser: Assists in quick costume changes of an actor during a performance. Plans with actor the most efficient way to change and ensures that all costume pieces are ready when the actor needs them.

Author: Writes the words/lines the actors will say

Composer/Songwriter/Lyricist: Write the music and words of the songs.

Choreographer: Creates and develops movement and dances.

Scenic Designer: Works with director to create a plan for the setting of the play. Creates drawings and a scale model of the set to be used by production staff to build the set.

Costume Designer: Creates the clothing design that actors wear in a play or musical.

Lighting Designer: Plans the illumination for a play or musical.

Sound Designer: Creates the soundscape and designs all audio aspects of the production.

Casting Director: Selects actors who will be hired to perform in the show.

Producer: Manages the financing and marketing of the production.

Tools for Reflection

Questions to Consider and Activities to Try in Class

Have you ever had a job? (VAPA Standards #2, 5)
Imagine that someone will pay you a million dollars to tell your story. Write a paragraph describing what you do on the job and how you feel about it. Turn your paragraph into a poem or song. It doesn't need to rhyme but it should have a rhythm to it. The rhythm might give the listener the feel of the job. For example; a fast/repeating phrase might fit for a job in a factory where the worker repeats motions over and over.

Draw a picture of an office cubicle.
(VAPA Standards #1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
Decorate your cubicle the way you would want it to be if you had to work there every day. Why did you choose the things you put there? Why do people decorate their cubicles?

Select pictures of people from a variety of magazines.

(VAPA Standards #1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Pass the pictures around and write down what you can tell about the person just by looking at him/her. Discuss why you made your assumptions and consider alternative "truths" about the person.

One of the characters in the play works in the service industry.

(VAPA Standards #3, 4)

The character says, "I give service, I can't be servile – there's a difference." What does this mean? Discuss the difference.

Have a student stand in front of the class and pantomime specific movements of doing some type of job. (VAPA Standards # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Once he/she has established the specific movements for the job have him/her teach the rest of the class the movements without saying what the job is. Once everyone has learned the movements ask what they think the job is. Try this with several more jobs.

In the play, one of the characters tells us, "What you do is what you are."
Do you agree with this statement? What does it mean? How can a job become a person's life? Is this something you want for your life? Why or why not?

More Ideas for Classroom Activities and Discussion

How do you define yourself? VAPA Standards # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Write a short description of yourself. Improvise a party where you are all meeting each other for the first time. Mingle with the other “guests” and ask the others to tell about themselves. How did you decide what to tell about yourself? What makes a person who he/she is?

Imagine you are a chef;
(VAPA Standards #1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
a teacher; a construction worker;
a minister; a lifeguard; a police
officer; an actor; or any other
professional. Improvise a
monologue in which you tell
about your work and how you
feel about it.
Team up with a classmate to
turn each other’s monologues
into short poems or songs.

Consider what your future will be.
(VAPA Standards #3)
Write a short list that describes your
age, parent’s job, your skills, your job
goals, your future partner, your future
home. In groups of six read what you
have written about your future.

Imagine you are ninety years old. Write three sentences that complete the thought: “If I could have been...” (VAPA Standards #2, 4, 5)
Have students stand in different parts of the room. Speaking as if they are very old, have students take turns reading their three sentences. Next have one student start reading his/her sentences and then have others join in one at a time so that all students are talking at once by the time everyone has joined in. Have the first person watch for when the last person has joined in; this is his/her cue to stop. One by one, students will go silent until all are silent.

Look around your classroom. (VAPA Standards # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
Try to consider all of the workers it took to create everything in the room and list them. Select one of the workers and become a statue that honors that person. Have the whole class become statues around the room as a memorial to the workers. Assign yourself the task of finding out the name of at least one of the people who created something in the room. How might you go about finding the name? How difficult or easy do you think it will be to find out? Why? Try to create a wall of the names of the workers.

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