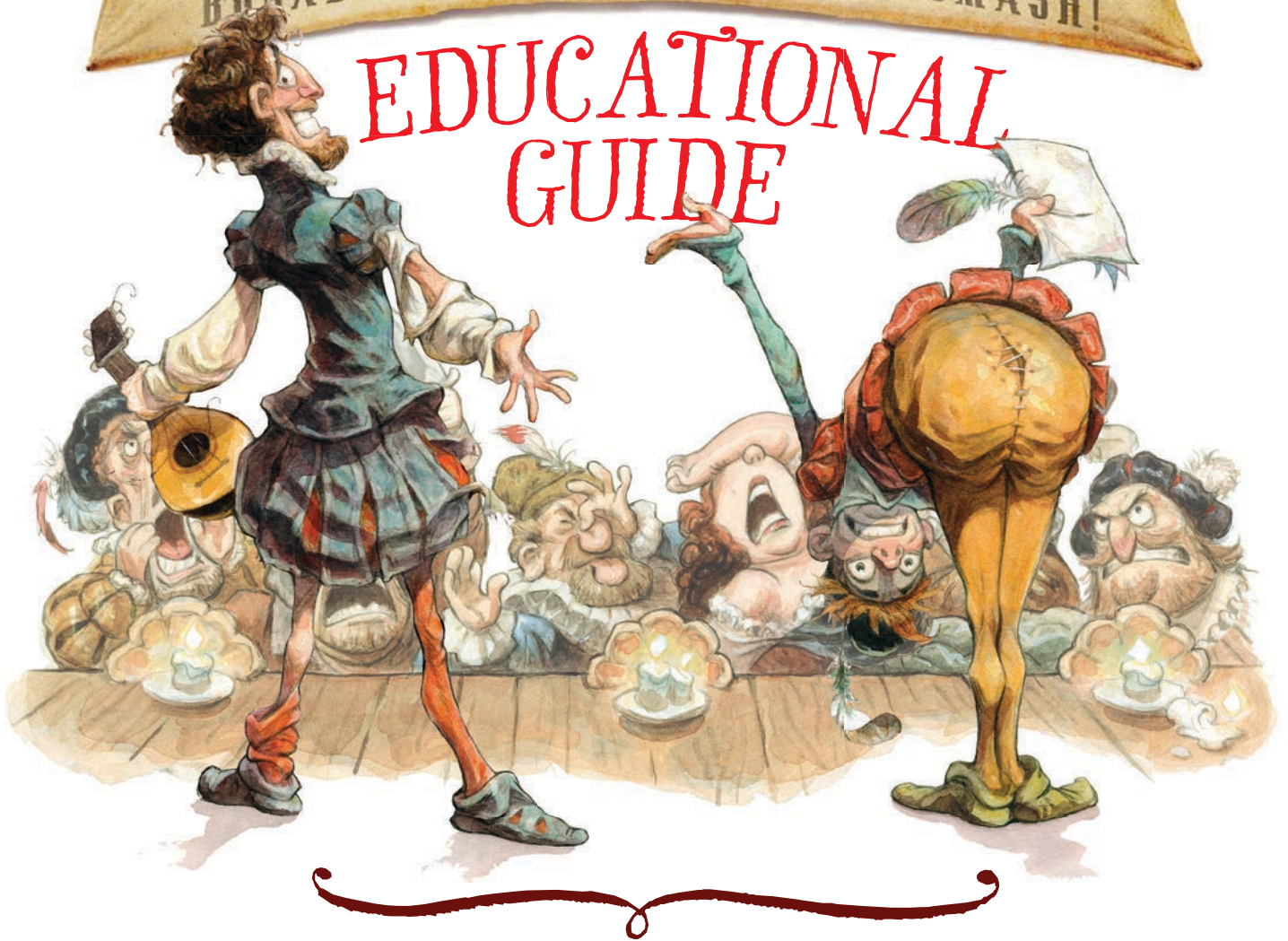


# SOMETHING ROTTEN!

BROADWAY'S HILARIOUS NEW SMASH!

## EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



BOOK BY

KAREY KIRKPATRICK & JOHN O'FARRELL

MUSIC & LYRICS BY

WAYNE KIRKPATRICK & KAREY KIRKPATRICK

Conceived by Karey Kirkpatrick & Wayne Kirkpatrick

Illustrations by Peter de Sève



# Welcome

**👉 HERE YE, HERE YE!** Welcome to the *Something Rotten!* Educational Guide, where quills and creative minds rule, and there's nothing wrong with going back to school... in the Renaissance. *Something Rotten!* follows Nick and Nigel Bottom, a pair of writing brothers who are trying desperately to find the perfect story to put on the stage. The show imaginatively explores the intersection of Elizabethan drama and modern musicals while teaching lessons about overcoming obstacles and achieving true collaboration and friendship. So, pack your quill and put on your tap shoes. Let's head to the Renaissance!



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# TABLE of CONTENTS

## ☞ PREPRODUCTION

Theater Etiquette.....	2
How to Use This Guide.....	2
Plot Synopsis.....	3
The Characters .....	5
The Writers & Composers .....	6
The World of the Show.....	8
The Writers of 1595 .....	10
Shakespeare	
The Man, The Myth.....	11
Musicals 101.....	14
Shakespeare Sings!.....	16

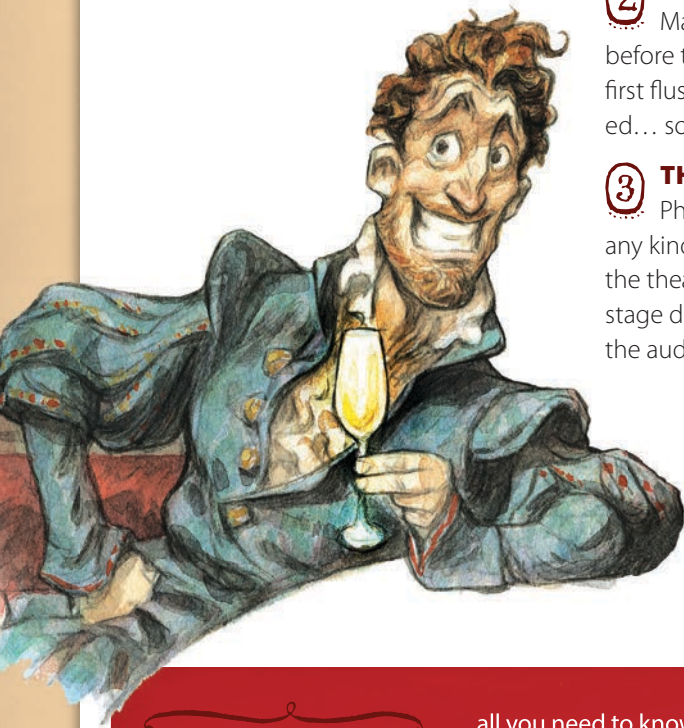
## ☞ POSTPRODUCTION

What Inspires the <i>Something Rotten!</i> Creative Team .....	18
Developing & Honing Your Creativity.....	22
Honoring Someone's Ideas .....	23
Poetic Writing.....	24
Creative Writing as Self-Expression.....	26
Writing for the Stage .....	27
Reaching Your Goal.....	28
Being Proud of Who You Are.....	29
Art and Religion Through the Ages.....	31
Careers in Theater .....	32



# Theater Etiquette

**H**ark! When you step into the theatre, just remember: this isn't exactly 1595. You are still in a theater. Here are a couple of tips to rock out in the Renaissance with proper etiquette.



## ① **THOU SHAN'T TWEETETH.**

No cell phones, no texting, no phone calls and no social media! The Renaissance created some pretty cool things... the cell phone is not one of them.

## ② **THOU SHALT FLUSHETH.**

Make sure to use the restroom before the show. By this point, the first flushing toilet had been invented... so flush away!

## ③ **THOU SHAN'T SELFIE TH.**

Photography and filming of any kind is strictly prohibited at the theater. Save your selfie for the stage door where the actors meet the audience members.

## ④ **THOU SHALT KEEP THY LIMBS TO THINE SELF.**

You're not a groundling or a standing patron at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. There are seats in the house, so remember to keep your feet off them.

## ⑤ **THOU SHALT APPLAUDETH.**

It is standard to applaud at the end of the show. The performers and everyone behind the scenes put together this show for you. Show them the proper support for all their hard work.

## ⑥ **THOU SHALT HAVE A GREAT TIME.**

The theater is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Unlike a movie or a television show, you're at the theater with audience members, performers, technicians, house staff and more, sharing this story in real time. Sit back and enjoy the show!

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

**The Educational Guide is broken into two parts: Preproduction and Postproduction.** The Preproduction section is crafted for teachers to share with their students and includes

all you need to know about the show. It gives you an in-depth look at the musical's story, characters, authors and background information on the Renaissance, the man and myth of Shakespeare, and the evolution of musicals.

The Postproduction section is specifically designed for students to ex-

plore further on their own or with minimal teacher guidance. This fun-filled section includes activities on developing a student's creativity, creating goals, cultivating self-confidence and investigating careers in the theater. Additionally, inside you'll find exclusive interviews with the show's creative team exploring

the imaginative and artistic journey. Created for all ages, this guide can be used independently or applied to enrich a pre-existing curriculum. Each page is built so the fun of *Something Rotten!* doesn't have to end at the theater. Use this guide in the classroom or at home – the Renaissance waits for you.

# Plot Synopsis

## ACT 1

Welcome to the Renaissance – where art and science reign and the bubonic plague is so yesterday. It's 1595 in South London, and the town's **MINSTREL** and the **TOWNSPEOPLE** are celebrating the Renaissance of England (*Welcome to the Renaissance*) with artists and writers like John Webster, Ben Johnson, Christopher Marlowe and several others. But who's the "whiz of the Elizabethan stage"? Who's "incredible, unforgettable, and just so freakin' awesome"? **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE!** All other writers might as well pack up their quills and go home.

At a theater not too far away, a pair of playwright brothers, **NICK** and **NIGEL BOTTOM**, run rehearsal of their new play, *Richard II*, with fellow actors **TOM SNOT**, **ROBIN**, **PETER QUINCE** and the rest of the **TROUPE**. **LORD CLAPHAM** arrives to inform them that Shakespeare is doing the exact same idea – and his opens sooner! If the Bottom brothers don't come up with a new play 'on the morrow,' they'll lose Clapham's patronage. Nick, the older brother and driving force of the partnership, goes on a tirade about his hatred for Shakespeare (*God, I Hate Shakespeare*), while the rest of the gang, including Nigel, the shy, insecure and unrecognized poetic genius, are in complete adoration. The Bottom brothers are stumped for an original idea and head to Nick's home, where they find **SHYLOCK**, a

Jewish money lender, who is there to collect on Nick's debt. However, Shylock has an offer: he will forgive Nick of his loans if he can become an official investor in the Bottoms' next play. Unfortunately, having a Jewish patron is illegal, and with interest for Shylock's loan doubling soon, Nick is under a great deal of pressure. Inside the house, **BEA**, Nick's wife, is serving boiled cabbage she found at the stocks where the crowd was throwing it at criminals. Times are tough for the couple, which is why Bea suggests that she get a job and even suggests she could be an actor in one of the Bottoms' plays (even though it's against the law to put women onstage). Though Nick is proudly adamant that he can get them out of poverty on his own, Bea reminds him that she can be his second-in-command (*Right Hand Man*). Bea leaves to hunt for some meat to eat, and Nigel falls asleep, daunted by the idea of writing anymore. Nick is left with no good ideas (*God, I Hate Shakespeare – Reprise*)... except maybe for one.

Nick heads to Soothsayer Alley where he runs into an array of eccentric characters. He's looking for a soothsayer and inadvertently comes upon **NOSTRADAMUS**. But not *the* Nostradamus. This is his nephew, **THOMAS**. That's right. **THOMAS NOSTRADAMUS**, who



Nick employs to look into the future and foresee what the next big thing in the theater will be. The answer? Musicals! Nostradamus shares with Nick the most informational, spectacled premonition either of them have ever experienced (*A Musical*). Nick has his idea! The next day outside the theater, Nigel runs into a Puritan woman named **PORTIA** for whom he instantly falls. But before they can share their love of poetry, Portia is pulled away by her Puritan father, **BROTHER JEREMIAH**, who adamantly opposes the sinful ways of theatrical arts. Nick returns with a game plan while Nigel confesses his love for Portia. Nick warns Nigel against falling in love with a Puritan and then reveals that a musical is their ticket to success. All they need now is the perfect subject. At the theater, the Troupe rehearses their new idea, a musical about the bubonic plague called *The Black Death!* When Lord Clapham hears it, he is baffled and confused. He's not the only one. Brother Jeremiah has heard about the inclusion of singing in their show



and arrives to warn the brothers that if they continue sinning, he will use his relationship with the Master of the Justice to end their theatrical careers. With that pressure, Clapham withdraws his patronage.

Nick and Nigel leave to regroup and run into Bea, who is dressed as a man. Turns out all the good jobs in town are for men. This humiliation only spurs Nick on to find a new patron and leave Nigel to come up with a new idea. But Nigel runs into Portia again who has come to return a poem that was accidentally left with her after their initial encounter. Portia reveals to Nigel how much she loves poetry and how much she loves his writing (*I Love the Way*). While they bond over their love of literature, a **MESSENGER** arrives to invite Nigel to a private recitation in the park hosted by Shakespeare. The recitation is like a rock concert where Shakespeare is performing his greatest hits to a crowd of adoring fans (*Will Power*). Meanwhile, Nick pleads with Lord Clapham to reconsider, but Clapham won't budge. There, he runs into Bea, who has once again disguised herself as another man taking on a job helping break down Shakespeare's stage, and she unexpectedly reveals to Nick that she's pregnant. After Bea leaves, Nick runs into Shylock who informs him that Nigel is at a private party for Shakespeare, and Shylock can get him in if Nick reconsiders his former proposition.

At the star-studded party, Shakespeare uses his influence and star status with Nigel to get the inside scoop on what the brothers are writing. He manages to coerce Nigel's notebook of ideas away from him, but Nick arrives in time to question Shakespeare's ulterior motives. The rivalry between Nick and Shakespeare began when Nick kicked Shakespeare out of his acting troupe because of Shakespeare's less-than-desirable acting. Before Nick

and Shakespeare erupt into blows, Brother Jeremiah arrives to retrieve Portia, who has been drinking alcohol. Her father takes her away in a rage. Nick reprimands Nigel for falling for Shakespeare's false friendship and for falling in love with a Puritan. Nigel runs after Portia while Nick is left to figure out a solution fast. Desperate and out of options, he takes Shylock on as a financial backer, then returns to Nostradamus for one final prediction: what will Shakespeare's most famous play be? Though his fortune-telling skills are questionable, Nostradamus reveals that Shakespeare's most famous play will be called... *Omelette*. With this news, Nick envisions the paramount success he will soon have (*Bottom's Gonna Be On Top*).

## ACT 2

The Minstrel brings the audience back to Renaissance times, where the Bottom brothers are struggling to nail their hit musical (*Welcome to the Renaissance – Reprise*). Meanwhile, Shakespeare is caught expressing his own anxiety of having to stay on top (*Hard to Be the Bard*). His spy returns to Shakespeare to report that Nick Bottom was seen with Nostradamus asking what would be Shakespeare's biggest hit. Keen to know this himself, Shakespeare decides to disguise himself as an actor in hopes of joining Nick's acting troupe. Nick has brought Nostradamus to the theater in secrecy to consult about the plot. Shylock arrives to hear the first new song for *Omelette the Musical* called "It's Eggs!" He doesn't like it and neither does Nigel nor the rest of the Troupe. Shakespeare arrives disguised as Toby Belch, an actor from York, to join the company. After the disappointing rehearsal, Nick wants to keep writing, but Nigel has other plans and hastily leaves to see Portia. Once alone with her, Nigel shares a poem that he's written, and the two

imagine a life where their love is permissible with the Puritans (*We See the Light*). Unexpectedly, Brother Jeremiah and other Puritans find Portia and punish her by locking her in a tower where she will stay until her exile to Scotland.

As a result, a heartbroken and artistically inspired Nigel has written new pages for a dark and tragic play, which he presents at the next rehearsal (they are actual parts of the real *Hamlet*). When Nick hears the changes, he's baffled as to why they don't have singing, they're depressing and there are no eggs. The Bottom brothers can't agree on which play to write (*To Thine Own Self*), and Nigel leaves upset at the direction in which Nick is moving them. Shylock arrives to tell Nick that the show, which is one week away, is sold out. A deluded Nick is now convinced his *Omelette* idea will be a huge success while Nigel is stopped by Shakespeare, still dressed as Toby Belch, who is desperate to get the pages to Nigel's new play. When he hears Nigel's reverence for the Bard, Shakespeare leaves, and then promptly returns as himself, no longer in disguise. Feigning concern, he offers to read Nigel's pages and offer feedback. Shakespeare uses his status and influence to criticize Nigel's brilliant writing and create doubt and uncertainty about the work. He takes the precious pages, saying he doesn't want to see them performed with Nigel's name on it, and he encourages Nigel to write his own *Omelette*. A despondent Nigel then runs into Bea, who is with **HELENA** and **MIRANDA**, who've thrown a baby shower for her. When she hears that Nick and Nigel have had a fight that threatens the partnership, Bea reminds him that Nick is carrying the burden of the people he cares about most (*Right Hand Man – Reprise*).

Opening night arrives, and Nick, Nigel and the Troupe perform their



big number, "Something Rotten!/ Make an Omelette." But Shakespeare (as Toby) stops the show to reveal his true identity and inform the Troupe that Nick has been seeking help from Nostradamus to steal what should have been Shakespeare's greatest play. The whole Troupe is upset at the new discovery, especially Nigel, who is devastated that his brother lied and deceived him. Nick is left with the realization that his dishonesty hurt everyone he cares about, and now he has to pay the price.

On trial in court, Nick and his fellow defendants face a multitude of crimes with the **MASTER OF JUSTICE** abiding over the proceedings. Bea enters disguised as an old lawyer and makes a defense of temporary insanity for Nick. Nick admits that he's guilty of all of his wrongdoings and that he should have listened to the people around him, especially his brother (*To Thine Own Self – Reprise*). Unconvinced, the judge is about to pronounce a sentencing of beheading when Bea calls Master William Shakespeare to the stand. In a surprise twist, Shakespeare suggests that Nick should be exiled rather than beheaded. The star-struck Master of Justice agrees with the famous Bard and sentences Nick and Nigel to be banished to the New World – and to take their so-called 'musicals' with them. Portia arrives to say a final farewell... to her father. She tells him where her true love, Nigel, is going, she is going as well. In America, their new musical form is a smash (*Finale*). Shylock gets news from England that Shakespeare's new play has opened and is considered his masterpiece. It's called *Hamlet*, to which Nostradamus replies, "Hamlet! I was this close!" They sing (*Welcome to America*), happy with their new lives in the land of opportunity.

# The Characters

The **MINSTREL** welcomes the audience to the Renaissance and the world of *Something Rotten!* With a merry and ironic disposition, the Minstrel sets up the scene for the audience to enjoy all the show's twists and turns.

**NICK BOTTOM** is Nigel's brother and leader of the acting **TROUPE**, consisting of performers **TOM SNOOT, ROBIN** and **PETER QUINCE**. He's driven by success but above all, his ability to support his most loved ones. That pursuit leads him down a rabbit hole of trying to outwrite and outperform his arch nemesis, Shakespeare.

**NIGEL BOTTOM** is the Troupe's primary writer, and there's little doubt that his talent rivals and perhaps outshines Shakespeare's. Nigel is very sensitive, so when he meets Portia, he falls fast. The younger of the two brothers, Nigel has two great passions – to love and write about it.

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE** is the ultimate rock star of the Renaissance... and beginning to feel the pressure of it all. Though outwardly confident, Shakespeare is gradually losing his cool, trying to maintain his success by copying work from others.

**BEA** is Nick's wife, and she does her best to defy the limited role of Elizabethan women to help support the household. She even disguises herself as a man to take on different jobs despite her husband's opinion.

**LORD CLAPHAM** begins as the Bottom brothers' primary patron, but that changes quickly once he hears that Shakespeare is performing the same play. Clapham is excited by the arts and certainly not ashamed to share his sometimes zealous opinions about the Bottoms' shows.

**SHYLOCK** is a Jewish money-lender who wants nothing more than to be considered a patron of the arts but by law, can't be considered an official investor. Regardless, he continues to help Nick because he can't stand to be anywhere else besides the theater.

**THOMAS NOSTRADAMUS** is Nostradamus' nephew and not quite as talented or adept at telling the future like his uncle. In fact, he gets Nick's premonition for the greatest play of all time very, very wrong.

**PORTIA** is Brother Jeremiah's Puritan daughter, and while she has grown up in a conservative and incredibly religious household, she has a great love for poetry and the arts. When she meets Nigel, she has to decide whether or not her love for the poet is enough to disobey her father and her life.

**BROTHER JEREMIAH** is a Puritan who cares for nothing more than to maintain a completely virtuous life. His conviction takes priority over all things, including his daughter, the theater and the other ills of society.





# The Writers & Composers



**KAREY  
KIRKPATRICK**  
(*Book, Music  
and Lyrics*)

Karey Kirkpatrick is an American screenwriter and director originally from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. His comedy background began first at the SAK Comedy Lab improvisational theater in Orlando, Florida, and after graduating in 1988 from the University of Southern California, he

performed improvisation on the streets of Walt Disney World's EPCOT Center.

He went to on the USC School of Cinema-Television's Filmic Writing Program (now known as the "USC School of Cinematic Arts") and there won the Jack Nicholson Screenwriting Award and Robert Riskin Screenwriting Award. Quickly after, he became a staff writer for Walt Disney Feature animation with his first writing credit with *The Rescuers Down Under*. His early credits include *Honey, We Shrank Ourselves*; *James and the Giant Peach*; *The Little Vampire*; *Chicken Run*; *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*; *The Road to El Dorado*; *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron* and *Madagascar*.



Kirkpatrick began directing with Dreamworks Animation's *Over the Hedge*, for which he also co-wrote the screenplay with Tim Johnson. He also directed Paramount Picture's *Imagine That* in 2009. His most notable recent credits include *Charlotte's Web*, *The Secret World of Arrietty*, *From Up on Poppy Hill* and *Smurfs 2*.

Karey Kirkpatrick began work on *Something Rotten!* with brother Wayne Kirkpatrick in 2010, and the show went on to open in 2015 on Broadway. Kirkpatrick, alongside John O'Farrell, was nominated for Best Book of a Musical and Best Original Score (Music and/or Lyrics) Written for the Theatre.



### WAYNE KIRKPATRICK (Music and Lyrics)

Wayne Kirkpatrick is an American songwriter, musician and brother to Karey Kirkpatrick. The brothers grew up in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and later, Kirkpatrick found a career in Nashville as a musician

performing background vocals, guitar and keyboards. He also wrote music for several famous artists, such as Faith Hill, Garth Brooks, Babyface, Amy Grant, Joe Cocker, Wynonna Judd, Bonnie Raitt and many others. Kirkpatrick most intimately worked with the country band *Little Big Town* beginning in 2005 with their second album, *The Road to Here*. He continued to work and write on *A Place to Land*, *The Reason Why* and *The Road to Here*.

Other notable works include a solo project called *The Maple Room*, with songs "Wrapped Up in You" and "My Armageddon," which later became hits for Garth Brooks. In 2000, he worked with songwriters Gordon Kennedy, Phil Madeira and Billy Sprague on the album *Coming From Somewhere Else*, including Kirkpatrick's song "Change the World" with Eric Clapton, which won the Grammy Award for Song of the Year in 2002.

Wayne began working with his brother, Karey, on *Something Rotten!* in 2010, which opened on Broadway in 2015. The Kirkpatricks and book writer John O'Farrell, were nominated for Best Book of a Musical and Best

Original Score (Music and/or Lyrics) Written for the Theatre.



### JOHN O'FARRELL (Book)

John O'Farrell is a British comic author and scriptwriter who grew up in Maidenhead, Berkshire, and attended a number of distinguished schools in England. His interests in the

theater began early at the age of ten when he played Christopher Robin in a production of *Winnie the Pooh* in the West End. He continued his studies in drama and writing at Exeter University.

He moved to London in 1985 and first began as a stand-up comic, winning a competition at Jongleurs, one of a string of comedy clubs throughout the United Kingdom. O'Farrell eventually partnered with Mark Burton, and thereafter, the pair was commissioned by English television and radio producer Harry Thompson. O'Farrell and Burton won a BBC Light Entertainment Contract Award and went on to write for prominent radio shows, including *Little Blihtly on the Down*, *McKay the New*, *A Look Back at the Nineties* and *Look Back at the Future*. In 1988, the pair became head writers for *Splitting Image*, and their various screenwriting credits include *Clive Anderson Talks Back*, *Room 101*, *Murder Most Horrid*, *Have I Got News For You*, *The Peter Principle*, *Chicken Run* and several more.

O'Farrell moved into books, publishing *Things Can Only Get Better: Eighteen Miserable Years in the Life of a Labour Supporter* in 1998, which became a number-one bestseller and eventually became the third-best-selling political memoir in 2010. He later went on to publish his first own book entitled *The Best A Man Can Get*, which became a best seller in 2002. His other books include *This is Your Life*, *May Contain Nuts*, *The Man Who Forgot His Wife*, *Things Can Only Get Better*, *An Utterly Impartial History of Britain* and three collections of columns for *The Guardian* newspaper.



# The World of the Show

## The Renaissance

*Something Rotten!* transports today's audiences from the seats of a Broadway house across the Atlantic and back through the history book pages to Renaissance England. But what is the Renaissance, and how did it change England in the 16th century? The word "renaissance" is French for "rebirth" and was a term used to describe the period roughly between the 14th and 17th centuries when society was marked by great advancements in art, science and culture. It is believed that the Renaissance began in Florence, Italy, in the 14th century after the Fall of Constantinople and the Roman Empire. During this period, artists, scholars and scientists moved to Italy to continue their work. Patrons, wealthy families of renown in Italy, like the Medicis, provided creative minds with great sums of money to create art and innovate to further advance the family's popularity and power. The period saw advancements in art, literature, music, politics, religion, science, philosophy and a revived interest in the humanism of the Greeks and Romans. Some of the most notable inventions of the time were the telescope, microscope, printing press, advanced uses of gunpowder and artillery, and a flushing toilet. The most prominent

artists and figures of the time include Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas More, Galileo, Martin Luther and several more. In the next few hundred years, the Renaissance moved outward from Italy to its neighboring countries, including England.

## England in 1595

It is believed that the Renaissance first moved to England in the late 14th century, but the peak of the Renaissance in England occurred during the Elizabethan Age in the 16th century with Queen Elizabeth at the throne. During this time, England was marked by nationalism, expansion and a great devotion to classical ideas. The British had their sights across the Atlantic and beyond as exploration and colonization of new lands was well underway. In 1580, Sir Francis Drake became the first man to circumnavigate the globe, or sail around the world, and in 1584, Elizabeth sent Sir Walter Raleigh to stake land in the Americas and start a colony called Virginia. England was a dominant power on the global stage, and that position of status made way for advancements in culture – specifically literature and music.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Theatrical performances at outdoor theaters began during the day,** usually at 3pm since that was the point at which there was the most sunlight.

**Jousting was a popular sport** of the era. This pastime involved two men in full armor racing towards each other on horseback to try to knock the other off with their lances.

**English merchant Sir Thomas Gresham** proposed the first stock exchange in England in 1565—the Royal Exchange.

**Coaches were a popular form of transportation** for the wealthy and royal.

**People drank alcohol** instead of water. Water was considered unsafe to drink because it was contaminated. The English drank beer, ale, wine and cider because the alcohol content killed the bacteria.

**Like most of Europe,** people were accused of being witches and hanged if found guilty in England during the time.

**Queen Elizabeth I never married or had children,** despite political pressure. She vowed to be married to England.



## The Puritans

In 1558, Elizabeth ascended the English throne, removing the former Roman Catholic Church as the religion of the state. The Religious Settlement of 1559 gave Elizabeth the title as the Supreme Head of the Church. Services at the Church of England were mandatory, and people were punished for being absent. With fears of the Catholic Church secretly uprising again, some Protestants and zealots became progressively strict about moral codes and behaviors. A group called the Puritans emerged and hoped to separate from the Anglicans and return to Calvinism. They desired for the Church of England to adopt a rigid structure similar to Roman Catholicism and a plain church model.

They forbade sinful practices in everyday life and loathed the theater for attracting such sinful behaviors. Theaters like The Globe became social centers where people gambled, including the practice of bearbaiting, where bears were pitted against dogs, and people took bets on which animals would survive. Theaters attracted an array of characters, including thieves, prostitutes, beggars and more. Despite the advancements in theater, the Puritans sought to abolish theater and its sinful practices.

Eventually in 1642, the English Parliament issued an ordinance to halt all plays, and later, in 1648, all theatres were ordered to close. But the work had been done – these plays of the English Renaissance would be performed and cherished centuries later.



# The Writers of 1595

Art and Literature emerged as a way to honor the pride and legacy of England, with works like Edmund Spenser's poem *The Faerie Queene* and Thomas Wyatt's first sonnets. Meanwhile, theater quickly became the premier art form and social event of the time. The style of theater moved away from the religious narratives of miracle and mystery plays of the Middle Ages, and plays became much more humanistic like those of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The first English plays that followed this new style were *Gorboduc* by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton and *The Spanish Tragedy* by Thomas Kyd. Queen Elizabeth cherished the theater, and with her permission, professional theaters like the Red Lion Theatre, The Rose, The Swan, The Globe and countless more were built with around 15,000 theatergoers per week in London alone. Plays moved from serving a religious function and were written to be enjoyed leisurely. Notable playwrights of the time included Thomas Dekker, John Webster, Ben Jonson, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd, Thomas Middleton, Thomas Moore and the most famous of them all, William Shakespeare. These plays would be written and rehearsed by various acting troupes that traveled across England and often stopped for longer periods in London for performance. Some of the most popular troupes of the time include Queen Elizabeth's Men, the King's Men and Lord Chamberlain's Men. With the financial backing of wealthy English patrons, theater became the touchstone of art and culture of the Elizabethan era.



# Shakespeare

## THE MAN, THE MYTH



### Shakespeare's Life

William Shakespeare is considered by many the greatest English writer and playwright of all time. He wrote approximately 154 sonnets, 38 plays, two narrative poems and many verses in the late 16th

century. His reputation made him known as "The Bard of Avon" and England's national poet.

Born in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, Shakespeare's parents were John Shakespeare, a glover and a member of the municipal council, and Mary Arden, the daughter of a rich landowning farmer. He had two older sisters, Judith and Joan, and three younger brothers – Edmund, Richard and Gilbert. He was baptized on April 26, 1564, and though his actual birthdate is undetermined, most celebrate his birthday on April 23 on Saint George's Day. Much is unknown of his childhood, but he was believed to attend King's New School in Stratford and there learned the basic tenets of a Latin education. At eighteen, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway on November 27, 1582, and later went on to have three children: Susanna and twins Judith and Hamnet. At the age of eleven, Hamnet died for unknown reasons and was buried on August 11, 1596.

The years following the twins' births are considered the lost years, with little evidence of Shakespeare's whereabouts until 1592 in London. By that point, Shake-

peare's plays had found a home on the London stage, and his name was mentioned in the *Stationers' Register* by playwright Robert Greene with a quote from *Henry VI, Part 3*. In the paper, Greene accuses Shakespeare for overreaching in the presence of more established and successful writers like Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nashe. Many scholars believe he began his career in the mid-1580s with Lord Chamberlain's Men, which became the premier troupe in London. The company changed its name to the King's Men after receiving a royal patent by King James I after Elizabeth's death in 1603.

By 1594, some of Shakespeare's plays had been published in early quarto editions, and by 1598, his name was printed on the title pages. Meanwhile, he continued to act in his plays and his contemporaries'. During this time, he was divided between Stratford, where he bought the second-largest house in the city, and London, where he spent the majority of his time. In 1599, Shakespeare and his business partners built The Globe Theatre on the Thames River, which would later become a symbol of his legacy. Shakespeare was thought to have died on April 23, 1616, at the age of 52 for reasons unknown. There were allusions to the idea that perhaps he drank too much alcohol and caught a fever, but there are no specific records detailing cause of death.

Though there's been much speculation about whether or not Shakespeare was the true and sole author of his many plays, most scholars believe that he was indeed the man with the quill. Without a doubt, Shakespeare's legacy continues to inspire literature, art and entertainment to this very day.



# Shakespeare's Writings

William Shakespeare is credited with writing plays, sonnets and poetry with stories of love, war, adventure, politics, loss and so much more. Here's an entire breakdown of all of his works that have been celebrated throughout history.

## PLAYS

### COMEDIES

*The Tempest*  
*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*  
*The Merry Wives of Windsor*  
*Measure for Measure*  
*The Comedy of Errors*  
*Much Ado About Nothing*  
*Love's Labour's Lost*  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream*  
*The Merchant of Venice*  
*As You Like It*  
*The Taming of the Shrew*  
*All's Well That Ends Well*  
*Twelfth Night (What You Will)*  
*The Winter's Tale*  
*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*  
*The Two Noble Kinsmen*

### TRAGEDIES

*Troilus and Cressida*  
*Coriolanus*  
*Titus Andronicus*  
*Romeo and Juliet*  
*Timon of Athens*  
*Julius Caesar*  
*Macbeth*  
*Hamlet*  
*King Lear*  
*Othello*  
*Antony and Cleopatra*  
*Cymbeline*

### HISTORIES

*King John*  
*Richard II*  
*Henry IV, Part 1*  
*Henry IV, Part 2*  
*Henry V*  
*Henry VI, Part 1*  
*Henry VI, Part 2*  
*Henry VI, Part 3*  
*Richard III*  
*Henry VIII*

## POETRY

### THE SONNETS

*A Lover's Complaint*  
*The Rape of Lucrece*  
*Venus and Adonis*  
*Funeral Elegy by W.S.*

### COMMON SHAKESPEAREAN WORDS

**Zounds:** An exclamation that serves as an oath; an abbreviation of "God's wounds!"

**Sirrah:** An address to call someone who is socially inferior to you

**Ode:** A lyrical poem usually expressed with feeling and style

**Fie:** An exclamation expressing frustration or annoyance

**Prithee:** A synonym for "please"

**Sooth:** A synonym for "in fact"

**Cozen:** To cheat or trick or commit something deceitful

**Anon:** To happen soon or quickly

**Huggermugger:** An act done secretly without thoroughness

### WORDS THAT SHAKESPEARE INVENTED

**Eyeball** (*The Tempest*)

**Swagger** (*Henry IV, Part II*)

**New-fangled** (*Love's Labour's Lost*)

**Bedazzled** (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

**Fashionable** (*Troilus and Cressida*)

**Cold-blooded** (*King John*)

**Champion** (*Macbeth*)

**Buzzer** (*Hamlet*)

**Zany** (*Love's Labour's Lost*)

**Dawn** (*Henry V*)

## Adapted Shakespeare

Countless productions, television shows and films have tried their hand at taking a modern look at Shakespeare's classics. Hamlet has inspired countless stories, including Disney's film and musical *The Lion King*, Tom Stoppard's play and movie *Rosencrantz and Guilden-*

*stern Are Dead*, the film *Let the Devil Wear Black* and countless more.

*Romeo and Juliet*, the classic tale of star-crossed lovers, has seen many adaptations, including the musical and movie *West Side Story*, the Baz Luhrmann film *Romeo + Juliet* and even Disney's *High School Musical*, which replaces warring families with warring high school cliques. Other notable adaptations include *10 Things I Hate About You* and *Kiss Me, Kate* inspired by *Taming of the Shrew*, *She's the Man* inspired by

*Twelfth Night*, *O* inspired by *Othello*, *Big Business* and *The Boys from Syracuse* inspired by *The Comedy of Errors* and countless others. The film *Shakespeare in Love*, starring Gwyneth Paltrow and Joseph Fiennes, combines many of his plays to create a fictional and imagined narrative of Shakespeare's life. And with a stage adaptation of the film that premiered in London in 2014, there's little slowing down the curiosity and love for Shakespeare's plays.

# Shakespearean References

## IN THE SHOW

**S**omething Rotten! is jam-packed with references from William Shakespeare's plays and life. How many can you spot? Here are a few of those quotes, characters and parts of plays that will help you unlock the topsy-turvy world of the Renaissance.

**Richard II:** At the beginning of the play, the Bottom brothers are rehearsing the story of Richard II and actually quote from Shakespeare's *King Richard the Second*.

"Let us talk of graves, of worms, of epitaphs;  
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes  
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth."

*Richard II* was a history play believed to be written around 1595 and is based on England's King Richard II, who ruled from 1377 to 1399.

**Nick and Nigel Bottom:** The Bottom brothers are named after the character Bottom from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Bottom is an Athenian weaver who is part of the Mechanicals who rehearse the tale of *Pyramus and Thisbe*. Bottom begins the play as an earnest performer who eventually falls victim to a little bit of fairy magic.

**Bea:** Nick's wife takes on several disguises as men to earn extra income for the house. Throughout Shakespeare's plays, there are several heroines that don male personas to get what they want or need. The most important examples include Imogen (*Cymbeline*), Rosalind (*As You Like It*), Portia (*The Merchant of Venice*), Viola (*Twelfth Night*) and Julia (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*).

**The Bard:** Shakespeare claims it's "hard to be the bard, and he might just be right. "Bard" means poet, and during the period, bards were poets that made a career from travelling and telling stories. Through his cannon of work, Shakespeare became known as "The Bard of Avon."

**Romeo and Juliet:** This play is one of Shakespeare's most famous stories, written somewhere between 1591 and 1595. *Romeo and Juliet* follows two "star-crossed lov-

ers" whose love comes to a tragic end. Nigel and Portia's secret relationship is somewhat modeled after the original young lovers, with Nick and the Puritans indicating the warring families of the Montagues and the Capulets.

**Shylock:** The character of Shylock comes from *The Merchant of Venice*, written somewhere between 1596 and 1598. In both stories, Shylock is a Jewish moneylender who loans a sum of money that must be paid.

**Portia:** Like Shylock, the character of Portia is derived from *The Merchant of Venice*. While Portia in *Something Rotten!* is a Puritan who falls in love with Nigel, Portia from Shakespeare's play is an heiress who is forced by her father to attain the suitor who chooses the appropriate casket containing her portrait and a scroll.

**Sonnet:** William Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets that were first published in a 1609 quarto titled "SHAKESPEARS SONNETS." Most sonnets possessed three quatrains with the final couplet in iambic pentameter.

**"Now is the winter of our discontent! Made glorious summer by this son of York.":** This quote comes from act one, scene one of *The Life and Death of Richard the Third* from the character of Richard. The play was believed to be written in 1592 and follows the rise and fall of King Richard III of England.

**"And if music be the food of love—play on!":** These lines open *Twelfth Night*, or *What You Will*, a comedy of Shakespeare's written around 1601 to 1602. In the play, Duke Orsino is deeply in love with the Countess Olivia, who lacks mutual affection, and seeks melancholy to console him.

**Omelette:** Nostradamus's unfortunate premonition for Shakespeare's greatest play, *Omelette*, was, in actuality, supposed to be *Hamlet*. In fact, when Nigel deals with his heartbreak by writing from his truth, much of what he shares with the Troupe is Hamlet's actual soliloquies. *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* was written somewhere between 1599 and 1602.



# Musicals 101



## The History of Musical Theater

In *Something Rotten!*, Nostradamus foretells that a new form of drama entitled “musicals” will be the next big thing in theater. With no experience or knowledge of musicals, the Bottom brothers set out to create the first. However, this wasn’t exactly the way musicals came to be, and the story falls short of how the musical form continued to change through the years. Here, we’ll follow the birth and evolution of musicals.

### EARLY FORMS

Since ancient Greece, dating back to the 5th century BCE, performance combined language, music and dance, with dramatists like Aeschylus and Sophocles. In ancient Rome, around the 3rd century BCE, the dramatist Plautus wrote orchestrations for performance with song and dance. The Romans too created the first tapshoes by attaching pieces of metal called sabilla to their shoes, beginning a long musical theater tradition of tap dance that can even be found in *Something Rotten!* In the Middle Ages throughout Europe, minstrels and troupes travelled from city to city presenting comedies with music. Mystery and miracle plays emerged during this period, presenting religious narratives and parables with alternating liturgical chanting and prose. During the Renaissance, the Italian courts would present plays broken by an intermezzo – a short dramatic piece with music that became an important form of drama in the late 16th century and the beginning of opera.

### OPERA AND OPERETTAS

During the Tudor dynasty and the Elizabethan Age, some plays included extravagant numbers with song

and dance called court masques. These masques became the first sung plays and arguably the first English operas. William Davenant’s *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656) and John Blow’s *Venus and Adonis* (1683) are considered the first English operas. During the 18th century in England, two major musical theater forms emerged: ballad operas and comic operas. Ballad operas, like John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* (1728), penned lyrics to contemporary music of the time, while comic operas, like Michael Balfe’s *The Bohemian Girl* (1845), combined original lyrics with mostly romantic plots. Around 1850, French composer Hervé composed the first comic musical theater piece called the operetta. French composer Jacques Offenbach continued to develop the form. Many scholars credit his music and satirical narrative to be the model for the musical comedy form that inspired Gilbert and Sullivan and many thereafter.

### THE MUSICAL COMEDY

The first musical considered to land in America was *The Black Crook*, with a book by Charles M. Barras and music and lyrics by Giuseppe Operti, George Bickwell and Theodore Kennick. It premiered in New York on September 12, 1866, and ran for 474 performances. That same year, comedians Edward Harrigan and Tony Hart’s *The Black Domino/Between You, Me and the Post* was the first show to actually call itself a “musical comedy.” Gilbert and Sullivan’s operas *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878) and *The Mikado* (1885) did much for the genre, proving that the music and lyrics could work together to create perfectly cohesive stories. Their perfectly paired form would inspire musical composers and writers such as P.G. Wodehouse, Jerome Kern, Ira Gershwin, Lorenz Hart, Ivor Novello, Oscar Hammerstein II, Andrew Lloyd Webber and without a doubt, countless more.



## ⌘ The Components of a Musical ⌘

The musical was revolutionary in the evolution of theater for its fusion of all parts of performance, including music, dance and language. Here's a breakdown of the components of today's modern musical.

**BOOK:** Also called the libretto, the scripted narrative of the musical that logically connects all the songs together. For some time, the book was loosely crafted to showcase the score, but by the 1940s, the book became a more sophisticated, cohesive and integral part of the storytelling.

**THE BOOK WRITER:** The person working on the musical's script or book.

**SCORE:** The songs and music contained within a musical. Musical songs should serve the function of furthering the storytelling or help to deepen and strengthen the characters' wants and desires in the play.

**THE COMPOSER:** The person who creates the music portion of the score.

**THE LYRICIST:** The person who writes the words or lyrics of the score.

**ORCHESTRATIONS:** The additional music to support the primary vocal parts that will be eventually played by the pit or orchestra.

**SEGUE:** A short musical section that follows (and resembles) the previous song used to transition into the next scene or song.

**THE PIT:** The orchestra consisting of the necessary instruments to play the score of the musical.

**CHOREOGRAPHY:** The dance or choreography that helps to theatricalize the storytelling of songs. Choreography in musicals includes all types and forms of dance, including jazz, ballet, tap, hip-hop and modern.

**THE CHOREOGRAPHER:** The person responsible for creating the dance and movement for the play.

**THE DANCE CAPTAIN:** An actor within the musical responsible for leading and maintaining the choreography set in place.

**DANCE BREAKS:** Instrumental sections reserved just to showcase elaborate choreography.

**PRINCIPALS:** Actors with usually named parts that are the central focus of a musical's story. Often, these actors will perform several solos or duets throughout the musical.

**THE CHORUS:** Actors who portray the ensemble roles and often perform the more grander, more theatrical songs in a musical.

## Timeline of the Musical

**1900s:** Operettas like *Babes in Toyland* (1903) and *The Merry Widow* (1907) re-emerged, challenging the budding popularity of musical comedies until the 1920s.

**1920s:** Musicals were driven less by plot and more by vaudeville forms, with big dance numbers and standards from George and Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein II. Notable musicals include *Ziegfeld Follies* and *Shuffle Along* (1921) with an all African-American cast.

**In 1927,** *Show Boat* premiered on Broadway with music from Jerome Kern and book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. Based on the Edna Ferber's novel of the same name, this was a departure from the previous light-hearted shows and tackled tough subjects like racial injustice.

**1930s:** Despite the hard times of the Great Depression, several light-hearted song-and-dance musicals emerged, including *The Band Wagon* (1931) and *Anything Goes* (1934).

**1940s:** This decade was considered the beginning of The Golden Age of musicals with the birth of the Rodgers and Hammerstein legacy with shows such as *Oklahoma!* (1943), *Carousel* (1945) and *South Pacific* (1949). Other notable musicals include *On the Town* (1944), *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946) and *Finian's Rainbow* (1947).



# Shakespeare Sings!

**S**omething Rotten! is brimming with countless references from some of the most beloved modern musicals throughout history. Jazz hands out! Below is a list of our favorites from the two songs “A Musical” and “Something Rotten!/Make an Omelette.”

## 👉 “A Musical”

**“Some musicals have no talking at all”:** Several musicals are more akin to operas, possessing no spoken dialogue, including *Les Misérables*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Rent* and several others.

**“I believe it’s called ‘Miser-ahh-bluh’”:** This is directly referring to *Les Misérables*, with music by Claude-Michel Schönberg, original French lyrics by Alain Boubil and Jean-Marc Natel and an English libretto by Herbert Kretzmer.

**“Feel that fascinating rhythm move into your feet”:** These lyrics are from George and Ira Gershwin’s “Fascinating Rhythm,” which was first included in the Broadway musical *Lady Be Good* in 1924 with Fred and Adele Astaire.

**“It’s a musical, a Seussical?”:** *Seussical* was a musical that debuted on Broadway in 2000 and was based on the books of Dr. Seuss. Stephen Flaherty independently composed the music and co-wrote the book with Lynn Ahrens, who also wrote the lyrics.

**Sailor Hats:** During “A musical,” Nostradamus and the chorus men don sailor hats, which harkens to several nautical-themed musicals, including *South Pacific*, *Anything Goes*, *On the Town* and *Dames at Sea*.

**“All That Jazz” Number:** This number comes from the John Kander and Fred Ebb musical *Chicago*, featuring the iconic Broadway choreography of Bob Fosse.

**“525,600 Minutes” Excerpt:** This moment comes from the song “Seasons of Love” from Jonathan Larson’s *Rent*, which won the Tony Award for Best Musical in 1996.

**Wash Buckets:** The ensemble brings on cleaning buckets and emulates the iconic staging of the song “It’s the Hard Knock Life” from Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin’s *Annie*.

**“When dancers kick in unison in one big wonderful line”:** The lyrics refer to the tradition of a chorus or ensemble dancing in a line in synchronized fashion. This can be seen with the world-famous Radio City Music Hall’s Rockettes and the musical *A Chorus Line*.

**A Chorus Line:** At the end of the song “A Musical,” the entire company crosses to one line downstage with headshots (or rather head... sketches) in front of their faces. This is a replication of the iconic staging from the musical *A Chorus Line*.

## 👉 “Something Rotten!/Make an Omelette”

**“Where is Macavity?”:** Macavity is one of the many cats in Andrew Lloyd Webber’s *Cats*, which first premiered in the West End in 1981.

**“An impossible dream”:** The line comes from the 1964 musical *Man of La Mancha*, with a book by Dale Wasserman, lyrics by Joe Darion and music by Mitch Leigh.



**“There were wheels upon  
yon dream.”:** The line is derived from the 1996 musical *Ragtime*, with a book by Terrence McNally, lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and music by Stephen Flaherty.

**“And raindrops upon  
Rosencrantz and whiskers  
on his kitten”:** These lyrics and the mention of Nazis in the scene come from the Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II musical *The Sound of Music*, with a book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse.

**“I could have danced all  
night!”:** This lyric comes from the song of the same name from the Frederick Loewe and Alan Jay Lerner musical *My Fair Lady*.

**“Gentle prince, thine  
absence ‘twas worrisome  
for the King and I.”:** *The King and I* was one of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s most famous musicals, debuting on Broadway in 1951.

**“With their succor, we  
shall make war against the  
Puerto Ricans. TONIGHT!”:** The line is based on the primary conflict in the American musical *West Side Story*, with a book by Arthur Laurents, music by Leonard Bernstein and libretto and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. In the play, the Jets, comprised of Caucasian

Americans, and the Sharks, comprised of Puerto Ricans, battle one another for territory in New York City.

**“Oh luck, be thy a lady  
tonight.”:** The lyric is based on the song “Luck Be a Lady” from the 1950 musical *Guys and Dolls*, with a book by Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows and music and lyrics by Frank Loesser.

**“Fair guests – willkommen,  
bienvenue, welcome.”:** The German welcome comes from the 1966 musical *Cabaret*, with music by John Kander, lyrics by Fred Ebb and a book by Joe Masteroff.

**“Right here in River City,  
Shipooopi...”:** River City is the town mentioned in the 1957 musical *The Music Man*, with music and lyrics by Meredith Willson and a book co-written by Willson and Franklin Lacey. “Shipooopi” is a song featured in the musical.

**“And I am telling you I’m  
not going to be an om-  
elette...”:** This iconic moment comes from the song “And I Am Telling You I’m Not Going” from the 1981 musical *Dreamgirls*.

## Timeline, continued

**1950s:** Rodgers and Hammerstein’s collaborations continue with *The King and I* (1951) and *The Sound of Music* (1959). Other notable musicals include *Guys and Dolls* (1950), *My Fair Lady* (1956), *West Side Story* (1957) and *Gypsy* (1959).

**1960s:** Notable musicals include *The Fantasticks* (1960), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), *Funny Girl* (1964) and *Cabaret* (1966). Though having considerable success before, Stephen Sondheim emerges now as an important voice in musical theater.

**1970s:** Rock musicals emerged with *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1970), *Godspell* (1971) and *The Rocky Horror Show* (1973). Other important musicals of the decade include *Pippin* (1972), *The Wiz* (1974), *A Chorus Line* (1975) and *Chicago* (1975).

**1980s:** Pop mega-musicals reigned with Andrew Lloyd Webber’s *Cats* (1981) and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) and Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg’s *Les Misérables* (1980) and *Miss Saigon* (1989).

**1990s–Today:** Musicals today range from large-scale spectacles, such as Disney’s *The Lion King* (1997) and *Wicked* (2003), to cutting edge, innovative works, like Jonathan Larson’s *Rent* (1996) and *Spring Awakening* (2006). Jukebox musicals celebrated the life and discography of musicians, like *Jersey Boys* (2006) and *Mamma Mia* (1999). The musical form continues to be pushed as modern composers continue to look for new ways to tell new stories.



# WHAT INSPIRES THE *Something Rotten!* Creative Team?



John O'Farrell, book writer



Wayne Kirkpatrick, composer



Karey Kirkpatrick, composer

We asked the creative team of *Something Rotten!* a couple of questions about the development of their Broadway hit and how they came into the arts. Book writer **John O'Farrell (JO)**, and composers **Karey Kirkpatrick (KK)** and **Wayne Kirkpatrick (WK)** chat about what inspires them!

## What teacher or educator inspired you?

**JO:** I had an English teacher called Mr. Williams who not only laughed at my stupid jokes but used lesson time with the whole class to talk about the comedy shows that had been on TV the night before. It made me feel that my sense of humor had value, and that

comedy was a worthwhile, grown-up pursuit.

**KK:** I had a really great drama teacher in high school – Sylvia Martinez; I keep in touch with her to this day. She was so passionate about what she did, about theater, and about sharing it with kids. I also had a great creative writing teacher, Scott Kaple, who was the first person who said to me, “You really know how to tell a story. Keep it up.” Teachers have no idea how a statement like that can impact a kid’s life. It sure impacted mine.

**WK:** My freshman year of high school was when I first got into theater. My first drama teacher was a woman named Virginia Hill. She taught me my first lesson about being in the theatre: if you’re going to do it, give it all you’ve got. And mean it.





**Growing up, was there something that inspired you artistically? What brought you to the arts?**

**JO:** I loved the popular comedy of the age – Monty Python and all sorts of British sitcoms that I recited on the playground the next morning with my friends. I also did a bit of acting – when I was ten, I played Christopher Robin in a West End musical of Winnie the Pooh. Rather prophetically, I opened the show by singing the lines “Wherever I go, there’s always Pooh!”

**KK:** I was inspired by many things. It probably started in church – performing in church choir, church variety shows, singing those great Baptist hymns and realizing that I could carry a tune... and then even

write some. I was inspired by Disney animated movies, particularly ones with songs written by the Sherman Brothers. My high school (Baton Rouge Magnet High) had a really fantastic performing arts program. You could actually choose a major, and mine was performing arts. So I drew a lot of inspiration and validation there... just knowing that pursuing the arts was valued was tremendously inspiring.

**WK:** I was a self-taught musician/writer, so I became inspired by the recording artists/writers I was trying to emulate: James Taylor, Dan Fogelberg, Jackson Browne and Billy Joel to name a few. The songs of Rodgers and Hammerstein, Meredith Willson, Lerner and Loewe, and Kander and Ebb all had an influence on me. All of this brought me to the arts as I had a





desire to create songs and stories like these writers had done.

**When you were young, what did you think you'd be doing for a career?**

**JO:** I always wanted to write comedy for a living but never believed I would be allowed or could succeed in such an ambitious and unconventional career path. I wasted years not really pursuing this dream with any vigor after college but eventually was driven to give it a go after realizing I really wasn't very good at anything else!

**KK:** At age 14, I knew I wanted to do something in the arts. At that time, I wanted to be an actor, and by the time I left high school four years later, I had 36 credits on my resume – and two of them were professional (local dinner theater). When I was 20, I switched my focus to writing.

**WK:** When very young, I thought I might be a

veterinarian because I liked animals. Then I thought I might be a landscape architect, which I studied for a few years in college before deciding to follow my love of music and pursue songwriting as a profession.

**What was the inspiration for *Something Rotten!*?**

**JO:** There was the initial inspiration of the actual idea, which came from Karey and Wayne before I came on board. But creativity requires constant inspiration each time you go back to your computer or sit in a room with collaborators; with each scene or line, you are seeking to invent something out of thin air. Ultimately, finishing a project like this is more about perspiration than inspiration. A writer who says he or she is 'waiting for inspiration' isn't a writer! You just have to keep turning up at your desk to stare at that blank page until you have something to work with.



**KK:** Wayne and I came up with this idea back in 1993/94. We're both big history buffs, and I think we said something like, "What would it have been like to be a struggling writer in the days of Shakespeare, and what if the theater scene back then was a lot like the NY theater scene in the 20s and 30s where writers had agents and lawyers and producers? But what if, in the Renaissance theater world, the agents are the original agents, and their names are William and Morris? And Shakespeare's lawyers were at the law firm of Rosen, Crantz, and Guildenstern?" Those early jokes helped us set the tone. And we thought that was a funny idea – two Renaissance writers grappling with the idea that in the middle of a play, people just break into song. What would it be like to write the very first musical? Once we had those ideas in place, we were off to the races.

**WK:** Our love of history and our love of theater prompted us to eventually combine the two with a series of "What if?" questions: What if we focused on a couple of writers who were trying to write in Shakespeare's shadow? What if Renaissance England was like modern-day show business? What if our writers went to a soothsayer to look into the future and get a head start on what to write? It was a very organic and casual idea that we entertained for a long time before getting serious about it. But the idea never left us, so, eventually, we decided to pursue it with vigor.

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**Inside the rehearsal room, how did you shape your ideas, and how did you come up with new ones?**

**JO:** It was great to have such a talented cast and director to work with, and the process of collaborating with others is exciting and sometimes very testing. You can't be precious about your ideas. You have to be open to changes and rewrites, while keeping a clear head about which notes are on point and which are not. So we listened to our director and actors, we cut sections we had always loved and wrote new material, and we watched how the team

worked with the new sections. It becomes a much more collaborative process once you have a cast. There was a phrase I learnt during this process: "The show will tell you." And it's true: you can feel when the energy dips or the plot wanders off point, so you just have to keep listening to the show, from that very first table-read to the last night of previews!

**KK:** Our song list became our outline, and if something wasn't working, it was usually because it was the wrong song in the wrong place, or the song was saying the wrong thing. So after doing a table-read, a semi-staged reading and then a four-week lab, which was fully staged and choreographed, we entered rehearsal in pretty good shape – though there were still three or four songs that weren't quite working. But now we had the actors who would actually be bringing these characters and these songs to life – and their input was really valuable because they could communicate to us what was feeling right and easy to play and what wasn't ringing true to them. So we would tweak the scenes and add new jokes one day and then get to see them on their feet the next. Then, we moved out of rehearsals and into previews where we could see the scenes and songs played before an audience. And the audience really lets you know what's working and what isn't. So we made many changes during previews as well. Once rehearsals started, we wrote for 85 straight days without taking a break until they finally said to us we had to lock the script and couldn't make any more changes. If they hadn't said that, we would probably still be making changes to this day!

**WK:** It was a very collaborative effort. As we watched the show being rehearsed, we were able to see what was working and what wasn't. We benefitted from an incredible cast that we could now write for as we saw how they interpreted the songs and dialogue. We also had the benefit of working with seasoned director Casey Nicholaw and producer Kevin McCollum, who had valuable input and guidance on how to make it better. It continued to evolve and get tighter, not only in the rehearsal room but all the way through previews and up until it opened.



# DEVELOPING AND HONING Your Creativity

**A**s the famous quote attributed to Thomas Edison goes, “Genius is 1% inspiration, 99% perspiration.” Substitute “creativity” for “genius” in that saying and you can understand why it is “Hard to Be the Bard” or why Nick Bottom hasn’t written a hit. Shakespeare just wants to be a celebrity while he pilfers other people’s writing, and Nick is spending his time paying soothsayers in order to “borrow” ideas from the future. Meanwhile, Nigel Bottom’s writing is getting better and better because he is working at it every day with all of his heart and soul (it doesn’t hurt that he has Portia for inspiration). Creativity is not fixed; it is boundless. The more effort you put into it, the more potential there is for what you are able to produce. Not only will you feel good about yourself, and possibly find opportunities for personal growth or advancement, but you may help others in the process. Creative inspiration has helped organizations provide fresh water to villages in third-world countries. Creative inspiration is what made air travel possible. The light bulb – the very symbol used to represent an idea – was the result of Thomas Edison’s creative inspiration.



## PRACTICE

Set aside time every day to explore your creativity, even if it is only five minutes at first. Push yourself. Always settling on what you can already do will not help you expand your abilities. Do you play an instrument? Try a new piece or a different genre. Do you like to sketch? Try sketching something you’ve never drawn before or use a new medium. Do you like to cook? Experiment with a new spice or unfamiliar vegetable. Challenge yourself.

## LEARN FROM OTHERS

A teacher can help you to develop your creativity. Someone else to push you when you want to play it safe, or help you notice something you are overlooking (good or bad), can have a positive influence on your work. This doesn’t mean you have to take a class. Find someone in your school or community (older, younger, friend, acquaintance) who shares a creative interest. If there isn’t someone with whom you can work, go to see people do what you like to do. Observing someone else can be a powerful tool for expanding your own skills.



# Honoring Someone's Ideas

## (INTELLECTUAL COPYRIGHT)

Giving credit where credit is due, especially when it comes to creative endeavors, is very important. In fact, it's the law. Of course, Shakespeare's time was a time before copyright laws (those didn't come until the early 18th century). As portrayed in *Something Rotten!*, Shakespeare is not interested in "intellectual property." If he can put an idea or soliloquy onstage before another writer, then the idea belongs to him, as far as he is concerned. Today, if you wanted to take what someone else has written and adapt it for the stage, you would need permission. Or if you wanted to sample an existing song in a new song you were writing, you would have to get legal clearance to do so.

When we talk about intellectual property, there are three major categories of protection that exist depending on what is being protected: copyright, patent and trademark.

Copyright covers the work of authors and artists by protecting the expression of ideas (through literature, music, visual art, etc.) but not necessarily the ideas themselves. For instance, a cookbook would be copyrighted, and you would not be allowed to reproduce the pages of the book without permission. However, you don't need to get permission from the publisher to make the recipes because the copyright covers the way the recipes are presented but not the recipes themselves. A recipe can't be given a copyright because it is a combination of ingredients. A recipe would need to be protected with a patent.

A patent is legal protection given to an invention.



Patents are issued by the U.S. government and give an inventor a 20-year period of exclusive production of the invention.

A trademark protects a specific name, image, slogan, etc., that identifies the source of a product and distinguishes it from other similar products. For example, many companies make facial tissues, but only one company has the right to use the name that most Americans use to refer to facial tissues.

Returning to works of art (since that's what *Something Rotten!* would be considered), copyright laws help to protect the interests of artists when it comes to their original work. Think about what constitutes "intellectual property." Right now, in your immediate vicinity, how many things can you identify that are someone's original idea protected by a copyright? Why is this important to the copyright holder in each case? How might copyright laws have changed the events of *Something Rotten!* for Shakespeare, Nick Bottom and Nigel Bottom?



# Poetic Writing

**W**hen you were a young child, you probably had a very simple definition for poetry: it's writing that rhymes. As you grew older, you most likely discovered that this wasn't true as you learned about various forms that poetry can take, from free verse to blank verse to haiku to sonnets.

## TOOLS FOR POETIC WRITING

There are different tools for different jobs. Saws, hammers and screwdrivers will help you build things. Pots, pans, whisks, tongs and knives will help you cook things. There are also tools that will help you write poetry. Since poetry is all about using the power of words to evoke emotion or provoke thought, the tools for poetic writing involve words and how we use them, and these include:

### TOOLS FOR POETIC WRITING

#### Figurative Language

**Simile** – making a comparison using the word “like” or the word “as”

**Metaphor** – making a comparison by saying that one thing is something else (no “like” or “as”)

**Imagery** – “painting a picture” with your words to help the reader create a mental image

**Personification** – giving human traits or characteristics to a non-human thing

**Hyperbole** – extreme exaggeration that is not intended to be taken literally

#### Alliteration

Using consecutive words that begin with the same sound

#### Line Breaks

Making choices about how you divide the text in order to dictate how it is read

#### Rhyme

Using words that sound the same or have the same ending sound

#### Rhythm/Meter

The pattern or arrangement of words or syllables, often repeated throughout a work of poetry. This last tool is especially important in Shakespeare's writing.



## WRITING IN IAMBIC PENTAMETER

What is iambic pentameter? You could probably describe it with sounds because you've heard Shakespeare's writing (da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM). Let's break it down. Meter in poetry is composed of syllables. Two syllables together form a "foot." A foot that has an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable (da DUM) is called an "iamb." "Penta" is the prefix for five (ever seen a pentagon?). So, pentameter is a line with five feet. Iambic pentameter is written with lines of five iambs, or ten syllables in the pattern of unstressed followed by stressed.

**For example, the following lines from Sonnet 18 (sung in the show as lyrics to "Will Power") demonstrate the pattern:**

Shall I com**PARE** thee **TO** a **SUM**mer's **DAY**?  
Thou **ART** more **LOVE**ly **AND** more **TEM**per**ATE**:  
Rough **WINDS** do **SHAKE** the **DAR**ling **BUDS** of **MAY**,  
And **SUM**mer's **LEASE** hath **ALL** too **SHORT** a **DATE**;

Speaking the lines in this pattern puts emphasis on certain words and makes them more important. What would happen if the stressed syllables shifted? Try speaking the four lines in the example above with opposite stress. Does it work? Does the meaning change? Copy the text over or search Sonnet 18 on the internet to get a printed copy without any of the stressed syllables illustrated. Try to read it as you would normally, if it were prose, stressing the words that you think are important. Did you stress the same words that are stressed in the iambic pentameter?

Now try writing a few lines in iambic pentameter. Remember, 10 syllables (5 iambs) with unstressed followed by stressed syllables make up a line. Be sure to keep in mind what words are falling on the stressed syllables and make sure that the sound and meaning are working.

## LEARN ABOUT SHAKESPEAREAN SONNETS

Shakespeare's sonnets were written in iambic pentameter. There are a few more rules for this form: Shakespearean sonnets have 14 lines divided into 3 quatrains (four lines) and one couplet (two lines). The rhyme scheme is as follows: abab cdcd efef gg

**John O'Farrell (one of the book writers) wrote Nigel's sonnet that he reads for Portia in Act Two. The text, as it appears in the show, is below:**

Like stars and sun together never seen,  
Yet heaven made us one our flames to shine.  
Through night and day, no dusk nor dawn between,  
And none could dim our light nor love divine.

Astronomers - behold these starry eyes!  
Forbidden love - bid secret hearts beat loud!  
If laws of man our stately love denies,  
In laws of nature is our love allowed.

*(Missing Quatrain...)*

And to the stars will fly the elusive dove,  
To heaven's gate with my eternal love!

You'll notice that there are four lines missing. Nigel gets carried away and skips the third quatrain, going straight to the final couplet. Can you fill in the missing quatrain? Remember, you need four lines in iambic pentameter (10 syllables, unstressed-stressed). The first and third lines should rhyme with each other, and the second and fourth lines should rhyme with each other (efef). Also, you cannot use the rhymes that have already been used in the first two quatrains or in the final couplet.



# CREATIVE WRITING AS Self-Expression

**N**ick Bottom writes for one purpose – to make money. Nigel, on the other hand, writes to express his feelings. His writing is his creative outlet. Creative writing provides a wonderful opportunity for you to express yourself, share your feelings, make your opinions known or entertain others. Poetry works for some people, and there are many forms to choose from, but you don't have to be limited to poetry. You can write prose, as well.

What inspires you? What troubles you? What are you struggling with? What successes have you had? These questions can provide the basis for self-expression through writing. Give it a try. You can give yourself a lot of structure by choosing a form like haiku or sonnet with rules about lines and syllables. Or, you can leave it more open with prose or free verse poetry (which has no meter or rhyme). You can share your writing with others or keep it to yourself. Start a writing journal. Many people keep diaries or journals that chronicle their experiences, but you could also keep a writing journal to collect your creative output.





## Writing for the Stage

Just like poetry, writing for the stage is an individual genre that has special characteristics. The major difference between writing for the stage and writing for the page is that a play is intended to be seen and heard, not read. Authors of books spend a lot of time describing visuals and “painting a picture” with their words. That mental image is not necessary in the theater because the audience will see it realized on the stage. Theater is also a very collaborative art. After the playwright has written the work, the final production is created by directors, designers and actors through an extensive process. Writing a scene for the stage is more about crafting the storytelling arc and then writing the dialogue (or monologues) that the characters say. Details about what the room looks like or the expression on a character’s face are not necessary to include on the page.

### TRY IT

**Adaptation:** Pick a scene from a book that is full of dialogue. Try to turn that scene into a stage script by

eliminating all of the extra “stuff” that you find in a book (description, things like “he said” after a quotation). Get some friends and act out the scene using your script.

**Adding Text to Subtext:** Write a new scene for *Something Rotten!* based on things we learn throughout the show. For example: Write a scene showing Nick and Bea deciding to start putting money in the money box. Write the scene in which Nigel comes to live with Bea and Nick. Write a scene with the Puritans at a meeting or with Portia and Jeremiah at home discussing the state of society. Write the scene in which Shakespeare gets kicked out of Nick’s acting troupe. Or, write a scene in America that takes place after the musical ends.

**Original Work:** Try writing an original scene. Pick something familiar – a realistic event that might happen during your school day. Think about what the actors need in order to successfully act out the scene – that’s what you need on the page.



# Reaching Your Goal

A goal is something you strive for or work towards. For Nick and Bea, their joint goal is to own a small cottage in the country one day. Individually, Nick wants to write the greatest play that has ever been written, while Bea pursues equality for women. Throughout the show, you saw some positive examples (Bea taking men's jobs to show that she is just as capable) of how to work toward your goal and some negative examples (Nick trying to cheat by paying a soothsayer to tell him about the future).

## IDENTIFYING YOUR GOAL AND MAKING A PLAN

In order to achieve a goal, you first have to identify the goal. Your goal should be specific, achievable and within your control (setting your sights on taking part in a lunar landing before you graduate is not likely to lead to success). Next, make a plan with action steps to help you achieve the goal. Once you have your plan in place, get to work. This doesn't guarantee success; it just sets up the framework. As you work toward your goal, you have to periodically check in on your progress. Are your action steps working? Are you getting closer to your goal? If the answer is yes, keep up the good work. If you haven't made any progress toward your goal, it's time to re-evaluate and change the plan. Think about Nick and Bea's goal of buying a cottage. Their plan involved putting extra money into the money box whenever possible. Checking in on their progress, Bea acknowledges that they haven't put any money in the box for a while, so she comes up with a new plan – get a job to provide more family income.

## TAKING THE UNEXPECTED PATH

There are certainly a lot of unexpected paths taken in *Something Rotten!* Certainly hiring a soothsayer to look into the future of theater is not how most playwrights go about finding that next great idea. On a more practical level, think about professional football players. In order to be the best they can be on the field, some of these athletes take ballet classes. They could just practice more, but doing ballet provides another method for strengthening the muscles they need for football while building their endurance and mental focus. Can you think of other examples like football players taking ballet? As a class, brainstorm a list of examples that you have read about, heard about or experienced yourself. Keeping these innovative strategies in mind, re-examine the goal and action steps you have created for yourself. Is there another path? Think outside the box. **What else could you be doing to work toward your goal?**





# Being Proud OF WHO YOU ARE

**Y**ou are an individual. There is only one you. There was only one Shakespeare (though that has been widely debated, but that's not for us to solve). It's important to recognize your individuality and be proud to be you. Sometimes that will be easy, sometimes not. Portia and Nigel struggle with this through the entire show. In the fantasy sequence during Act Two, the Puritans sing lyrics that illustrate the power of taking pride in yourself and standing up for your beliefs. They sing:

YEAH, WE SEE, THE LIGHT  
YOU CHANGED HOW WE'RE THINKIN'  
CUZ WE WERE BLIND,  
BUT YOU SHOWED US THE WAY  
WE'RE WRONG, YOU'RE RIGHT  
SALVATION IS YOURS  
IF YOU DO WHAT IS TRUE TO YOU  
AND YOU DO IT WITH LUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-OVE



Now, this is just a fantasy sequence, but it demonstrates the potential power of taking pride in yourself and your beliefs. What do you think would have happened if Portia had actually told her father and the other Puritans how she felt and had Nigel shared what's inside his heart? Would the outcome have been the same as the end of the show or different?

## CONFIDENCE VERSUS ARROGANCE

While confidence is the positive outcome of having pride in yourself, arrogance can be the negative outcome. Confidence, like Bea demonstrates through the entire musical, and Nigel develops over the course of the show (and that Nigel and Portia relied on in the fantasy described above), is a belief in yourself and your skills. It's knowing what you are capable of and can be counted on to do. It's approaching a task without fear of failure. Nigel and Portia only had enough confidence to think about confronting Portia's father but not enough to actually do it until the end of the show. Arrogance, which can be seen in Shakespeare (it's what the song "Will Power" is all about) and Nick, once he deludes himself into believing that he is writing the greatest show ever, is believing or acting as though you are better than others. Put more simply, confidence is believing in yourself and arrogance is believing you are better than everyone else. If Nigel and Portia approached the Puritans with arrogance, fantasy or not, they would not have received a positive reaction.

Can you think of other characters or situations in *Something Rotten!* that demonstrate confidence or arrogance? How do other characters respond to each of these situations? Now, think about situations you have been in where you have witnessed each of these different traits. Have you ever exhibited arrogance? Has someone been arrogant toward you? How does that make others feel? What was the result?

## UNDERSTANDING WHAT MAKES YOU SPECIAL

As Nigel's confidence grows (along with his love for Portia), he starts to realize his talents and take pride in his work. He gains the confidence to tell Nick that he no longer wants to write *Omelette*. He realizes that his passion for his work is what makes him special, and he wants to be true to that, and himself. Think about the other characters (Nick, Bea, Portia, etc.). What makes them special? Are they aware of what makes them special from the beginning of the show, or do they learn something new over the course of the musical about what makes them special?

Now it's your turn... What makes you special? There are lots of traits and talents that we share with others. That's great! Common interests help us form friendships and create bonds. However, it is our uniqueness that sets us apart. Make an inventory of your talents and skills. Spend some time observing others in your life or learning more about their talents and skills through conversation. The commonalities are probably already obvious, but what sets you apart? What sets your friends apart? Once you understand what makes you special or different, you can begin to celebrate that.

### **How can you celebrate what makes you special? That all depends on you.**

- If it is a talent for performing, enter a talent show, hold a recital or join a performing group.
- If you are special because you are able to make things, give away your creations to people who are special to you or share pictures of what you have done with your friends, teachers and community.
- If you are special because you have a lot to offer others, let everyone know that you can be counted on to lend a hand or lend an ear.
- Host a fair in your class that allows everyone to share what makes them special and celebrate each other.



# Art and Religion Through *the* Ages

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ART FOUND IN RELIGION

**B**rother Jeremiah and the Puritans express their disdain for the theater because of their strong religious convictions. Throughout history, too, the worlds of religion and the arts have often come into conflict. But not always! Religion is responsible for some of the most important and iconic artwork that exists today. In this section, we'll explore art and religion throughout history and the world.

For centuries, patronage was the primary way art was created in the western world. Patronage is when a person or institution of power or money offers support to an artist. An early example was when the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great came into power. In the 300s, the emperor began to support the church financially and went on to build a good number of basilicas. During this time, Christian art found form in iconography or images of Christian figures. During the Renaissance, a great volume of Christian art also emerged, including Michelangelo Buonarroti's *The Sistine Chapel* and the *Pietà*, Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, Gianlorenzo Bernini's columns in the *St. Peter's Basilica* and countless more. In Islamic countries, Islam prohibited representational imagery in art, so calligraphy and geometric designs became the religion's primary art forms. In the 7th century, Arabic script developed into two main calligraphy families: the dry styles and the soft, cursive styles. Geometric artwork with complex

geometric shapes and designs were placed on Islamic architecture and items. These shapes were repeated and arranged to reflect the desire for order and balance in the world and faith. In the Buddhist faith, the life of Guatama Buddha inspired art in India from the 6th to 5th century BC. Ancient cave paintings can be found in Anjata Cave in India and the Dunhuang Caves in China – each detailed with images of the Buddha. The practice of art was often tied to the practice of Buddhist tantra or meditation, and metal ritual objects were crafted to help with the practice of meditation. Religion has undoubtedly created centuries of art that ranges from being hung in museums to being used in religious practice. Without religion, art would not be as vast or as diverse as it is today.

**Here are some questions and activities for students to further explore the intersection between art and religion.**

- What are some similarities between religion and art?
- What are examples of patronage in your city or state?
- What are other examples of art in other religions? Judaism? Hinduism? Taoism?
- Create a collage of some of your favorite images of artwork found in various religions.
- Create your own work of art based on a specific religion.



# Careers in Theater

## INVESTIGATE YOUR PLAYBILL (Discover More Career Opportunities in the Arts)

### Wonder what it takes to make a Broadway show?

Lots of people! Just check your Playbill: inside its pages, you'll find that there are many more roles in the theater besides the performers. The creative team consists of a composer (lyrics and music), book writer, director, music director and choreographer. The designers, including the set designer, costume designer, lighting designer and sound designer, develop their specific areas of design in relationship with the others to create a cohesive and fully imagined show. The casting director gathers the perfect performers for the parts and administers the audition process. The stage manager facilitates all rehearsals and makes sure that every rehearsed element is performed accordingly during performances. The publicity and marketing team are charged with the important task of filling the seats by getting the word out there. They work with the advertising team to develop creative ways to get people into the theater. Once you've arrived at the theater, the box office, the house manager and the ushers have the great responsibility every evening to make sure all the audience members have their tickets and are in their seats to enjoy their night on Broadway. And beyond that, there are countless jobs behind the scenes, in the dressing rooms, on the grid and in offices making sure the show goes off without a hitch. If you're a student, just remember that any of these roles could be the perfect career opportunity to pursue your passion. At the theater, there's a place for everyone!





# Additional Resources

For more information about Shakespeare and musicals,  
check out the websites below!

[shakespeare.mit.edu](http://shakespeare.mit.edu)

[shakespeareinamericancommunities.org](http://shakespeareinamericancommunities.org)

[shakespearepost.com](http://shakespearepost.com)

[shakespeareteacher.com/blog](http://shakespeareteacher.com/blog)

[musicals101.com](http://musicals101.com)

[broadwaymusicalhome.com](http://broadwaymusicalhome.com)

[playbill.com](http://playbill.com)

[broadway.com](http://broadway.com)



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