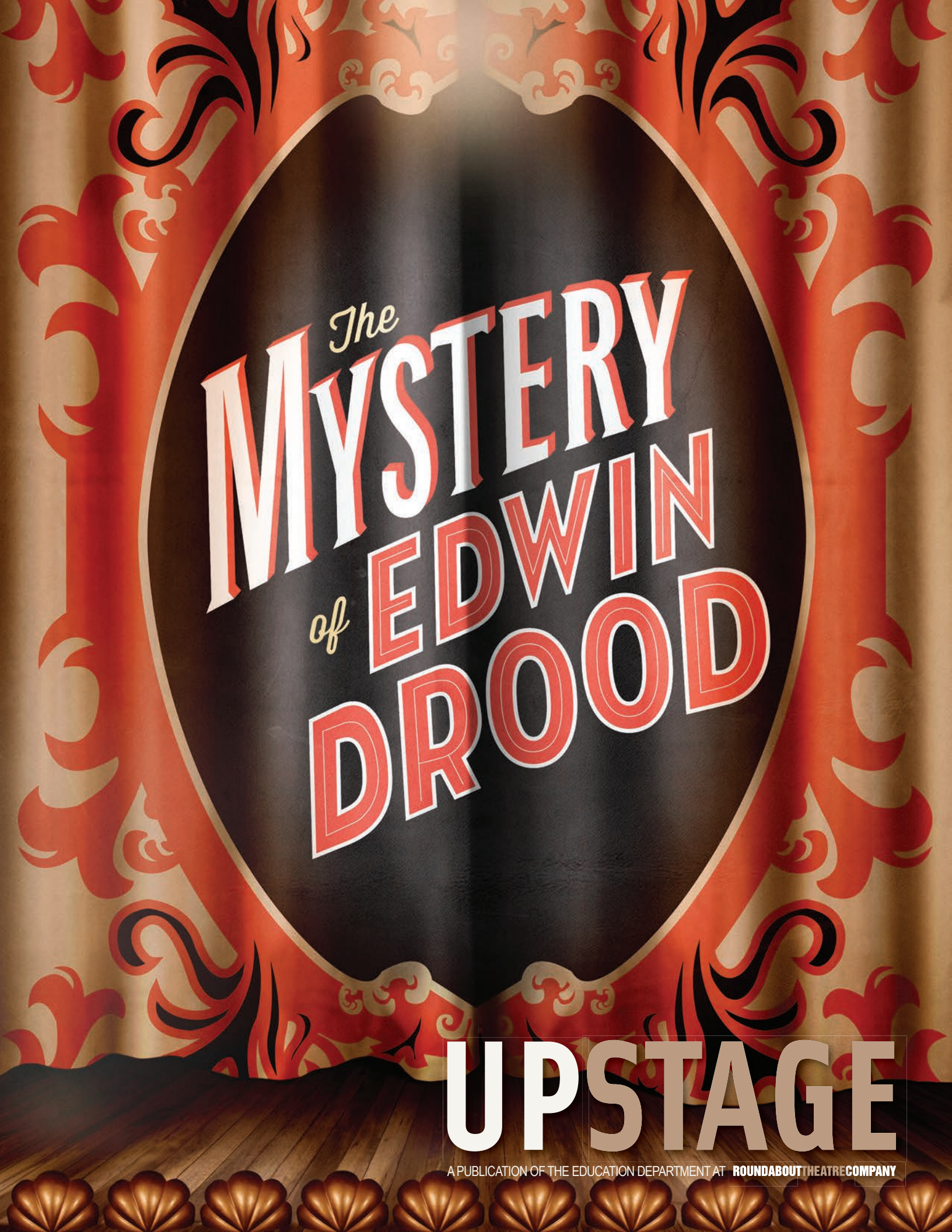


UPSTAGE

A PUBLICATION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AT ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY

UPSTAGE *Callboard*

Who killed Edwin Drood? It's a question that has stumped audiences for years—now it's your turn to answer one of Broadway's most baffling mysteries. Take a trip back in time to a Victorian music hall where a rowdy ensemble of actors mounts a staging of Charles Dickens' unfinished novel. Everyone on stage is a suspect in the murder of young Edwin Drood—and it's up to you to choose the killer!

When 1895

Where Music Hall Royale in London

Tonight's musical is a play within a play: you'll see modern actors playing actors from 1895 who play characters from the novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

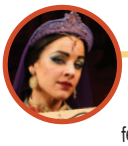
The evening is presided over by the Chairman (played by Mr. William Cartwright), who acts as the master of ceremonies.

The story centers around Edwin Drood (played by Miss Alice Nutting), an orphan who plans to marry Rosa Bud but mysteriously disappears on Christmas night.

—*The Suspects*—

Rosa Bud (Played by Miss Deirdre Peregrine)

An orphan, engaged to Edwin Drood. The engagement was arranged by Rosa and Edwin's fathers.



Helena and Neville Landless (Played by Miss Janet Conover and Mr. Victor Grinstead)

Orphaned twins raised by a cruel stepfather in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), a British colony in South Asia. They've recently moved to Cloisterham and feel discriminated against because of where they are from. Neville is in love with Rosa Bud, and he is the last person to see Edwin Drood alive.

Durdles (Played by Mr. Nick Cricker)

The stone carver and caretaker of Cloisterham Cathedral's cemetery. Durdles has a drinking problem.

John Jasper (Played by Mr. Clive Paget)

Edwin Drood's uncle and guardian. Jasper is the choirmaster at the Cloisterham Cathedral, where he teaches Rosa Bud.

Princess Puffer (Played by Mrs. Angela Prysock)

Manages the opium den frequented by John Jasper.

Bazzard (Played by Mr. Philip Bax)

A clerk in Cloisterham, desperate for attention.

The Rev. Mr. Crisparkle (Played by Mr. Cedric Moncrieffe)

The priest at Cloisterham Cathedral, guardian of Helena and Neville Landless.

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A NOTE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR TODD HAIMES:

At the point where Dickens left the novel, the show will literally stop, and the performers will ask the audience to decide how it should all turn out. It isn't up to Rupert (writer/composer) to decide what Charles Dickens might have written. Instead, the audience gets to vote on three different questions, and each performance can have a different outcome. With several characters or pairs of characters as options for each vote, Rupert wrote songs for each and every possibility, meaning that the show has hundreds of possible combinations of endings (some of which Rupert himself has yet to see!). The Mystery of Edwin Drood *is a show that relies on you, the audience, to make it all happen. I hope you'll have a great time deciding how the story will end!*

http://www.roundabouttheatre.org/Shows-Events/The-Mystery-of-Edwin-Drood.aspx

education
ROUNDABOUTTHEATRECOMPANY

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Ladies and Gentleman, Mister Rupert Holmes!

Ted Sod, Education Dramaturg, interviewed Rupert Holmes about his work on *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

Ted Sod: When were you born?
Rupert Holmes: I was born, much to my surprise, on February 24, 1947.

TS: Where are you from?
RH: Well, that's a bit tricky. Most of my youth was spent in and about the endearing Hudson River village of Nyack, New York, where I went to school and dreamed all my earliest dreams. I consider it to be my home town. But I was born in the county of Cheshire, England, the son of an American military band leader stationed overseas and the lovely and literate English girl he married, and so my memories during my first four years are of the hauntingly smoky factory town of Northwich about twenty-five miles outside of Manchester, fish markets in the street and purring green double-decker buses. The influence of my British mother, grandmother and my English family has never left me. However, I am very much an American, both by persuasion and passport, and have always lived no more than an hour from midtown Manhattan.

TS: Where were you educated?
RH: First in the Nyack Public School system, where I played the sax and sang in my band The Nomads, for whom I started writing songs because we didn't know enough chords to play other people's songs. It was also where my first play premiered, a one-act entitled *Countdown for George*, performed by my fellow seniors… a life-changing experience.
After high school, I went to Crouse College of Music at Syracuse University for my freshman year, then transferred to the Manhattan School of Music, where I also changed my major from clarinet to music theory. At both schools, I found myself just as interested in studying drama as composition. While still at MSM, I started arranging pop recording sessions for groups like the Drifters and the Platters, and from then on, my education came largely from on-the-job training. Sometimes I even got paid.

TS: When did you decide to write music and lyrics?
RH: By the time I was fifteen, I longed to be both a composer and a writer, preferably in some populist form. It eventually dawned on me that writing story songs might be an achievable first step. My lyrics could serve as narrative or character study, while my music and arrangements could carry or underscore my story. It wasn't theatre, but each song could at least feel to me like a short musical scene or monologue.

TS: How did you get involved with creating work for the theatre?
RH: By 1983, I'd had almost a decade of decent success as a songwriter. My words and music had been recorded by many of the top vocalists of the time. I'd written, arranged, and conducted platinum albums for Barbra Streisand, contributed to the score of the movie *A Star is Born*, I'd even had a couple of hit records of my own. But I still yearned to write for theatre, not just musicals but comedies and stage thrillers as well. I hoped that someone would notice that I'd been writing mini-musicals on my own record albums in a range of musical styles with self-penned orchestrations. In 1983, I was performing at Rodney Dangerfield's club in Manhattan (back when Rodney still performed there) and got a nice review from Stephen Holden in the New York Times. Gail Merrifield,

Andy Karl, Will Chase and Stephanie J. Block. Photo by Joan Marcus.

who was the director of play development for the New York Shakespeare Festival and the wife of its illustrious founder Joe Papp, came to see me perform. After the show, she sent me a card saying, "Have you ever thought about writing a musical? If so, we should talk." It had taken me years, but finally a window into theatre had opened for me, one as impressive and illuminating as stained glass. I met with Gail shortly thereafter and told her of an idea I'd been mulling over since the early seventies, of a musical based on an unfinished novel by Charles Dickens. Gail was intrigued, and with her encouragement and that of Joe Papp, I devoted the next two years of my life to writing and composing *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

TS: What inspired you to write a musical version of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*?
RH: I think I most fully answered this question in an essay I wrote for Canada's Shaw Festival (www.rupertholmes.com/theatre/essdrood.html). However, the much shorter answer is that I had been fascinated since boyhood by Charles Dickens' maddeningly uncompleted work and had always felt it might adapt well for the stage, particularly because of the musical elements of the story: its protagonist John Jasper is an emotionally-disturbed choirmaster and organist, madly in love with his vocal student Rosa Bud, and during his flights of opium-induced fantasy, he hears the music of the spheres. When I pondered how I would have the audacity to write an ending for the piece, I suddenly realized it would be mega-and-meta-theatrical to have the live audience help determine the outcome of the evening's performance. And by framing the tale as if it were being performed by a London music hall company in 1895, who have concocted their own script and score to best suit their regular troupe of entertainers, it would free the show from having to be an authentic representation of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (a very somber work to be sure) and allow it to be as high-spirited and comical as the Music Hall Royale performers themselves.

TS: What do you feel the musical is about?

RH: Like its protagonist John Jasper, my *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* has dual personalities: that of London's boisterous Music Hall Royale in 1895 and that of the gothic mystery Mr. Dickens wrote some twenty-five years earlier. For me, each of those worlds has its own inherent theme. For the Music Hall Royale, as well as for me, it is about the privilege of putting on a show, about the communion between actors and audiences, and the gratitude most performers feel to be gainfully employed in their most extraordinary of professions. Most opening numbers are about "here we are" or "look at us" or "we're going to give you a good time." *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*'s opening number is "There You Are," which acknowledges the thrill and honor of seeing that someone has actually shown up to hear you sing. "Not a lot we care for where you've been, and not a lot we care how you got in, we but care that there you are!"

Where Mr. Dickens' sad tale is concerned, at least in the hands of the Music Hall Royale, I think this musical is ultimately about how fragile and precious each moment of life is. We should make no assumptions about what the future may hold or whether we have a place in it. Edwin Drood is an optimistic young man with his entire life before him. He will do fine things and shake the world a bit. One night, he vanishes, and may have met some sinister fate for no reason of his own doing. The lyrics that mean the most to me in this show come in its very last moments: "Is it clear? If you hear my voice, then you're alive. What a bloody marvel we survive when you think of every risk we face in our mad human race." Simply surviving and savoring each blessed moment of life is reason enough to go on. This has great personal resonance to me because of a tragic, unexpected loss in my own life less than a year after the show first opened. It was almost as if the lyric of "The Writing on the Wall" was a warning written clairvoyantly by some part of my subconscious that sensed the terrible darkness ahead.

TS: How did you research the world of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*?

RH: Keep in mind that there was no Internet at the time. So before and during the writing of this musical, I spent many a long afternoon and evening at the Fifth Avenue Public Library poring over countless old Dickensian biographies, critiques, publications of the period, memoirs of his friends and associates, comparisons of *Edwin Drood* to *The Moonstone*. I did this with particular emphasis on any theories or clues regarding the many mysteries in Dickens' story: Was Edwin Drood dead? If so, who killed him? Who is beneath the obvious disguise of Dick Datchery? What is Puffer's connection to the world of Cloisterham? Ultimately I agreed with Mark Twain, whose own comment about such theories was that a great number of researchers had already thrown considerable darkness on the subject, and if they continued their work, we would soon know nothing about it at all.

TS: Will you give us some insight into your process? Did you write the libretto first and then the songs?

RH: No, with few exceptions, I wrote *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* as one bolt of fabric starting from Act One, Scene One to the final curtain, in order. I would come to the moment in the script where the characters were clearly demanding to sing, and I'd stop to create the music and lyrics they needed. When I was done, I'd continue the script. There were very few exceptions. However, I did know from the outset that I would have Jasper compose a song as a birthday present for Rosa, this insidious gift forcing her to sing the words he'd long fantasized hearing. I moved past that point in the story and simply held a place for it in the script until I felt ready to write it. One day, I came back to my piano after lunch and played the entire piece almost as you hear it today. I called it "Moonfall." Except for that, though, almost everything in the show was written in the order you hear it. It all seemed very sensible. But writing for theatre for the first time, I felt honor bound to write songs only as their dramatic or comedic need arose, rather than thinking "Today I really ought to write the ballad that will be a hit from the show." I doubt that I could have worked this way if I'd been collaborating with other writers.

TS: What was the most challenging part of writing *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*?

RH: Well, writing the book, music, lyrics and orchestrations was both the most challenging and, honestly, the most fun. But creating the orchestrations over the course of two sleep-deprived months was certainly the most grueling part of my assignment, especially since I had to orchestrate every possible ending—meaning that I had to arrange and orchestrate a great deal of music that I knew would not be heard at every performance! Penciling every individual note and dynamic mark turned out to be mentally and physically the hardest single task I've ever performed in my career.

TS: Can you describe what you look for in a director?

RH: Scott Ellis is my favorite director to work with, and he has all the traits I would ever look for. I appreciate directors who were at one time gifted performers themselves. Scott, Rob and Kathleen Marshall, Rob Ashford—they bring a wealth of personal insight and empathy to the challenges faced by the cast. I like directors who are funny, because there is comedy in all my work and I don't see


Photo by Joan Marcus.

"WHEN I PONDERED HOW I WOULD HAVE THE AUDACITY TO WRITE AN ENDING FOR THE PIECE, I SUDDENLY REALIZED IT WOULD BE MEGA-AND-META-THEATRICAL TO HAVE THE LIVE AUDIENCE HELP DETERMINE THE OUTCOME OF THE EVENING'S PERFORMANCE."

Ladies and Gentleman, Mister Rupert Holmes!

continued...

how someone can direct humor if they themselves can't get a laugh. And finally I want them to have good hearts. Directors who enjoy wielding their power over the cast in a hurtful or demeaning way…well, they're not for me.

TS: What did you look for in casting this production?

RH: *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* is very much an ensemble piece, but one where any principal may have to deliver a star turn finale at any given performance. So it requires actors who are gracious enough to create a team spirit, yet who can become The Star at the drop of a hat. We have such a cast for this production, I'm honored to say.

TS: Will you be involved in rehearsals?

RH: Yes, I will be involved with rehearsals every day. Great new cast, wonderful director, choreographer and designers. I'm excited to be collaborating with all involved and supporting all the creativity they're bringing to the table.

TS: Will there be any changes to the script or score for the Roundabout production?

RH: Well, it's not as if we're changing the time or place of the show, making *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* into a rebel pitted against a drug cartel in post-Apocalyptic Pittsburgh. This new production is particularly intended for a generation that never got to see the show on Broadway, and so there's a limit to how much we would change. We will be experimenting with restoring two numbers that were cut from the show when it transferred from the Delacorte Theatre in Central Park to Broadway. And we will of course have some new dance music for Warren's newly-created choreography that I will be orchestrating anew.

TS: Who do you think killed Edwin Drood?

RH: After years of research and much consideration, I strongly believe that had Charles Dickens lived to complete *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Robert Louis Stevenson might not have bothered to write Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde some ten years later. I think what Dickens intended to spotlight was the unusual mental state of the culprit. There was no word "schizophrenia" in 1870, but I think the depiction of a split-personality who might keep his criminality secret from even himself was where Dickens was going with his story. I refer, of course, to the character of John Jasper. However, that is certainly not always the choice of audiences watching the Music Hall Royale's more light-hearted rendering of the tale.

TS: How do you keep yourself inspired as an artist?

RH: Honestly, everything in life inspires me, particularly all the people I see on the street, on a train, at airports, in restaurants. I wonder "What's their story?" and soon I'm inventing one. It was said of Charles Dickens that he would allow no man to be a bore. For me, no moment is a bore. It sounds corny as all hell but I don't have to go to a concert hall to attend a symphony, as you suggest, because there's music in every sound I hear, especially in the way people talk to each other. And as for drama, sadly, there's heartbreak almost everywhere I turn. Tragedy is what life hands us and comedy is what we invented to cope with it. The details of life can be delightfully funny and I feel privileged I get to tune in. So I never lack for sources of inspiration; I only lack for time to write everything I'd like.

TS: What advice would you give to a young person who wants to write for the theatre?

RH: Know your characters so well that they write their own dialogue. It makes the job much easier.

TS: What are you working on now?

RH: A new novel for Simon and Schuster, the first of a series. The play *A Time to Kill*, which I've adapted from the novel by John Grisham. A new stage adaptation of the classic courtroom drama *Witness for the Prosecution* by Agatha Christie. The musicals of *The Nutty Professor* (for which I wrote book and lyrics with the late and dearly-missed Marvin Hamlisch), *Secondhand Lions* (score by Alan Zachary and Michael Weiner), *Sweet Potato Queens* (score by Melissa Manchester and Sharon Vaughn), *My Man Godfrey* (score by Mark Hollman), a new Australian production of *First Wives Club* (score with Motown greats Holland-Dozier-Holland), and my own solely-written musical of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. ■

Backdrops by Set Designer Anna Louizos

Welcome to the Music Hall Royale!

THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD takes place in the Music Hall Royale, a traditional English music hall, in 1895. The actors are excited: tonight, they premiere a new musical, based on Charles Dickens' famous, unfinished novel. This is a play within a play: you, the audience, will watch as modern actors play Victorian actors, who play characters from the novel.


Oxford Music Hall

Music halls were the most popular form of entertainment in England from around 1850 through World War I. For hundreds of years, traditional taverns, which sold food and alcohol, offered musical entertainment as well. Taverns were popular because patrons could eat, drink, and smoke while they saw a show.

In 1843, the British government passed the Theatres Act, which outlawed drinking in theaters but allowed local officials to grant licenses for taverns to function as "music halls." Tavern owners began adding official concert spaces and booking acts, and the "English music hall" was born. It soon became profitable to build freestanding music halls, unattached to taverns. At one point, there were 300 music halls in London.

Music halls were entertainment for the masses. Factory workers and laborers were the earliest audiences, though middle and upper class people were soon drawn to the performances. Audiences sat around tables and ate, drank, talked, read, and conversed with the performers during shows. Performers had to be able to hold the audience's attention or risk being booed off the stage.

A typical music hall would feature a master of ceremonies called the Chairman, who introduced the acts and made small talk with the audience. Singers, jugglers, knife-throwers, sword swallowers, comedy acts, puppeteers, magicians, and burlesque dancers were all popular. Original songs were an important feature of music halls—between forty and fifty new songs, many of them comic, were published every month during the height of music halls' popularity.

Like all popular entertainment, music halls borrowed freely from other styles. *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* uses conventions from another type of traditional English entertainment, the pantomime. "Pantos" are comic fairy tales that feature slapstick, elaborate scenery, and popular songs, typically performed at Christmas time.

At a panto, audiences are encouraged to boo the villains, cheer the heroes, and sing along to the choruses. A young woman plays the principle male role, called the "lead boy." These roles are known as "breeches parts" or "pants parts," because the young actress wears tight-fitting pants, making her real gender obvious. In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood,* Stephanie J. Block plays Alice Nutting, an actress at the Music Hall Royale, who performs the "lead boy" role of Edwin Drood.

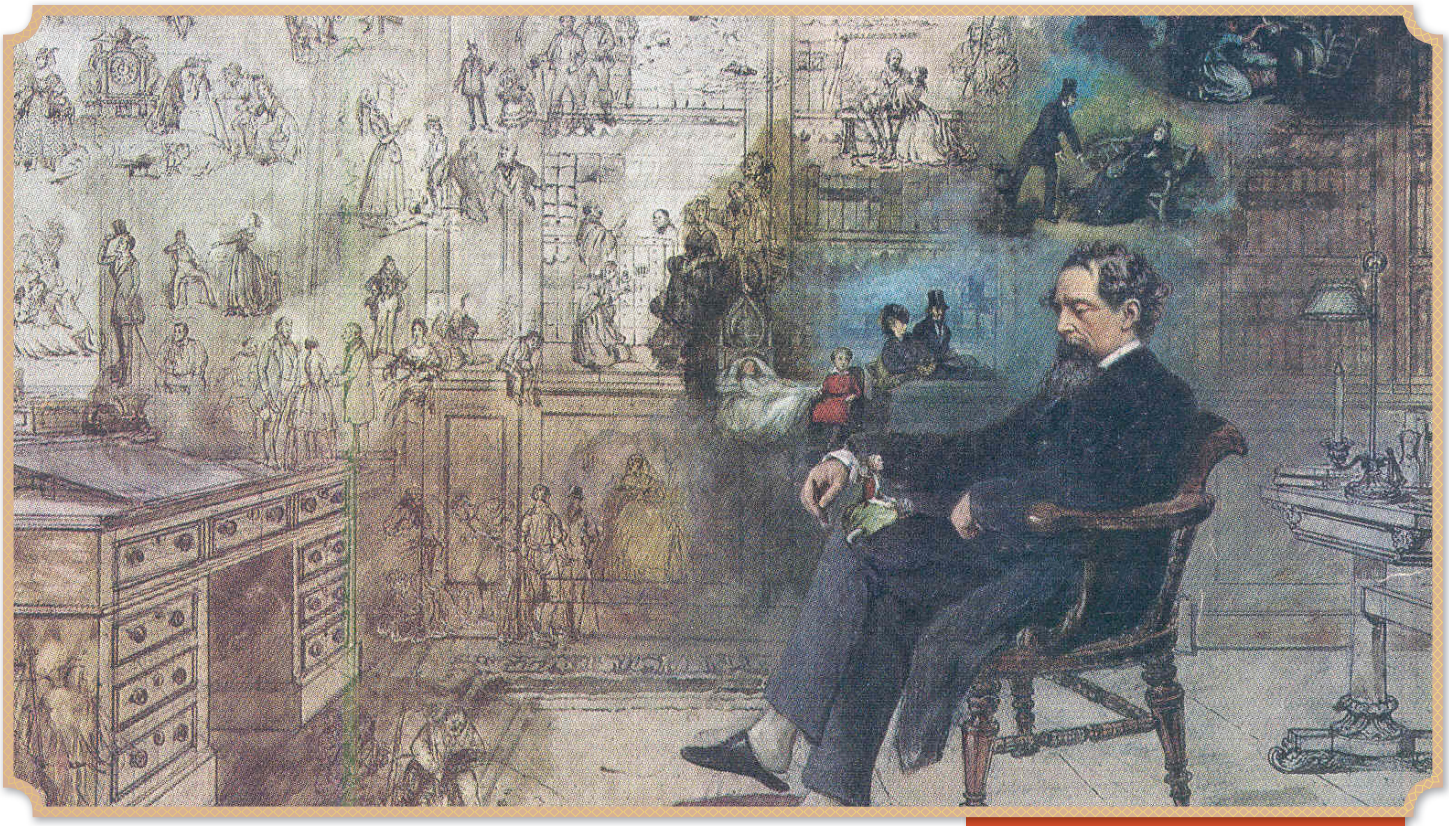
DENOUENMENT The final outcome of the main dramatic complication in a play or literary work
The Chairman wants the denouement of the play to be a surprise for everyone.

DIVERSION An entertainment or amusement
The Chairman refers to the play as this evening's diversion.

PROSCENIUM The arch opening that separates the stage from the auditorium and that frames the stage
Mr. Bazzard, a frustrated actor, accepts that he must live his life beyond the proscenium.

PORTRAY To play the role of (for an actor)
The Chairman introduces us to the actors who portray the characters in the play.

And now... Our great novelist, Charles Dickens!



Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth, England on February 7, 1812 and lived for a short time near Rochester, the cathedral town on which *Drood*'s Cloisterham is based. The second of eight children born to a naval clerk, he had a poor but happy childhood until the age of 12, when his father was imprisoned for debt and Charles was sent to work in a factory. This traumatic event sparked feelings of betrayal, fear of poverty, and sensitivity to England's harsh living conditions that would inform much of his writing. Dickens was driven to succeed, and with little formal education he worked his way up to become a reporter in London's legal courts. Known by his nickname, Boz, he published journalistic essays prior to his first fictional work, *The Pickwick Papers*. This was followed by *Oliver Twist* and a total of 15 novels, which featured some of the most memorable characters in fiction such as Fagin, Scrooge, Miss Havisham and David Copperfield. His novels were published in serial form—weekly or monthly installments distributed over an extended time period—sometimes in self-contained publications and other times within journals. He also wrote hundreds of articles, edited journals, gave public lectures, and did philanthropic work for social causes he cared about. With his wife Catherine he had 10 children but left their marriage after 20 years when he fell in love with actress Ellen Ternan. After surviving a severe train accident at age 53, Dickens struggled with health issues and died of a stroke at age 58. In the 20th century, critics and scholars affirmed Dickens' literary genius, and his books continue to be read and to inspire adaptations for film, television, and stage.

Go here to watch a complete Biography episode about Charles Dickens:
http://www.biography.com/people/charles-dickens-9274087/videos/charles-dickens-full-episode-2073085321

2012 MARKS THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF DICKENS' BIRTH. HOW CAN YOU CELEBRATE?

- Visit New York Public Library's Free exhibit: "Charles Dickens: The Key to Character" through January 27, 2013.
  http://www.nypl.org/press/press-release/2012/09/14/free-exhibition-celebrates-charles-dickens-his-200th-birthday
- Check out all the Dickens performances, television shows, exhibits, and celebrations in the United States and England this year.
  http://www.dickens2012.org/

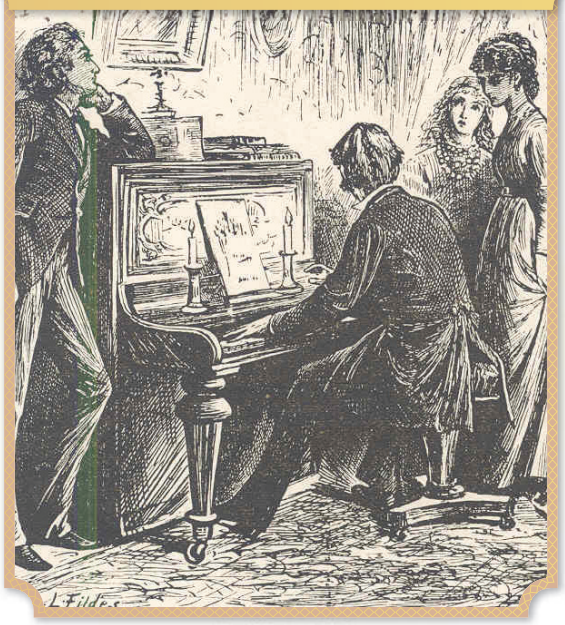
"MURDEROUS ADMISSIONS, OTHERWISE CONCEALED"

Dickens' last book, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, ended a career of writing about crime and criminals–a subject that allowed him to examine a range of social issues including urbanization, industrialization, and the conditions of the poor. Dickens watched the English criminal justice system undergo important reforms. The functions of prisons, the procedures of the courts and policing, and capital punishment were all modernized for an industrial society during his lifetime. He was also compelled by criminal psychology and the destructive impulses that "normal" people share with criminals. His complicated feelings about criminals may have started when his father was imprisoned for debt; additionally, his maternal grandfather had fled England after being convicted for embezzlement.

His first book, *Sketches By Boz*, included a journalistic account of a visit to Newgate Prison and an article on Scotland Yard. *Oliver Twist* (1838) capitalized on Victorian appetites for crime stories based on the headlines, featuring Bill Sikes, a brutal thief and murderer, and Fagin, the corruptor of street youths, who was based on an actual criminal named Ikey Solomon. In *Bleak House* (1852) Dickens laid the groundwork for a new genre of mystery fiction with Inspector Bucket, a quiet but cunning police inspector and master of disguise. He would be the first professional detective to capture a murderess in English literature. In *Great Expectations* (1861) escaped convict Abel Mag seemed threatening, but as Dickens revealed the character, he awakened readers' sympathy for the criminal. With *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) and finally in *Edwin Drood* (1870) Dickens explored the criminal mindset, creating characters who outwardly pass as law-abiding citizens but conceal–and act upon–murderous impulses.

Dickens completed only half of *Edwin Drood* before his death, provoking more than a century of speculation about how he intended to resolve the mystery. For 150 years, authors, scholars, and most recently a new BBC miniseries have proposed different answers. Rupert Holmes composed 8 possible solutions to the crime for this show. Most literary evidence suggests that rather than surprising readers with whodunit, Dickens was interested in exploring the complex psychology of the character most likely to be guilty of the crime.

Attention *Drood* detectives:
Go here to read more theories about how Charles Dickens might have intended to resolve *The Mystery of Edwin Drood.*
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mystery_of_Edwin_Drood



Original illustration from Dickens' *Edwin Drood.*

DICKENS ON THE BOARDS

"IT IS THE CUSTOM ON THE STAGE, IN ALL GOOD MURDEROUS MELODRAMA, TO PRESENT THE TRAGIC AND THE COMIC SCENES IN AS REGULAR ALTERNATION, AS THE LAYERS OF RED AND WHITE IN A SIDE OF STREAKY BACON." *–CHARLES DICKENS*

The Music Hall Royale troupe performing *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* allows us to experience how Dickens' novels appeared on stage during his own lifetime. Melodramas based on Dickens' novels filled London's popular stages, often before his books were completed. These spectacles stripped down his complex novels to sensational dramas of good-versus-evil, mixed with comedy and songs–the "streaky bacon" theatre Dickens describes. Dickens supported the popular theatre, believing that all people, especially the working class, "have a right to be amused." Although Victorian copyright law gave novelists no control over–or payment for–plays based on their books, Dickens was able to authorize "official" adaptations by showing advanced copies to select theatre managers and lending his name to their advertising,

Had he not been a successful author, Dickens might have pursued a career in theatre. As a young man, he considered acting but missed an important audition at Covent Garden because of a bad cold. In the middle of his career, he formed an amateur theatrical troupe with artistic friends, including the famous actor William Macready. He used a schoolroom in his home for a theatre and energetically produced plays whose proceeds went to charity; his troupe even performed twice for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. He collaborated on two plays, *No Thoroughfare* and *The Frozen Deep*, with novelist Wilkie Collins. In 1857 he hired actress Ellen Ternan to co-star with him in the latter play; this started a love affair that ended his first marriage.

Dickens took the spotlight by giving dramatic public readings from his own works. Later in his career, he was such a celebrity that his tours earned more money than his books, but he always ensured working-class audiences could afford admission. He performed so intensely that he exhausted himself, and his friend John Forster urged him to stop performing "The Murder of Nancy" from *Oliver Twist*, for his own health. Dickens ignored the advice and weakened himself with a demanding "farewell tour" that may have contributed to his final illness.

Dickens' books continue to entertain theatre audiences. The Royal Shakespeare Company's 9-hour *Nicholas Nickleby* received Olivier and Tony Awards and was called by one critic "the theatrical experience of a lifetime." *A Christmas Carol*, which first appeared on stage in 1844, remains one of the most popular plays produced in American theatres today.

Ladies and Gentleman, the dazzling Stephanie J. Block!

Before rehearsals began, Ted Sod, Education Dramaturg, spoke to Stephanie J. Block about her work on *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

Ted Sod: Tell us about yourself and how you were bitten by the theatre bug.
Stephanie J. Block: I grew up in Southern California, Orange County. My father, Steven, worked as a welfare fraud investigator. My mother, Rosemarie, worked for our local school district and was later employed by American Title Insurance Company. Both of them sang during their high school and collegiate careers, but neither one of them pursued it as a profession. I have one elder sister, Renee. She was one of the premiere dancers and princesses at Disneyland but married quite young and started having a family right away. She's now pregnant with her fifth child, and there isn't a better mom out there. For me, singing wasn't "a bug," it was a passion. My parents recognized that I could carry a tune and sing on pitch at the age of three. I would sing with television commercials or jingles on the radio. I began singing at my church when I was 7 years old. And when I was 11 years old, I began taking private voice lessons. I trained with the most amazing teacher, Jill Goodsell. She is an absolute master, and I apply what I've learned from her, and continue to learn from her, every day.

TS: Did you know that this is what you wanted to be your life's work once you took voice lessons?
SJB: I knew almost immediately that performing would be my career. I was involved with the local community theatres and talent shows. At the age of 14, I auditioned for a performance group called "The Young Americans." We traveled around the U.S. and the world to perform at different concerts, corporate events and industrial shows. One of the directors of the Young Americans, David Green, approached my parents and said, "I really think that Stephanie should look into going to a high school of the performing arts." So my junior and senior year, I attended the Orange County High School of the Arts located on the campus of Los Alamitos High School. Essentially, I was going to school from 7am until about 7pm. I still continued all of my private voice lessons, and through Jill Goodsell, I was awarded a scholarship to the Boston Conservatory of Music. The scholarship only supported arts classes, no regular curriculum. My family could not afford that school without a full scholarship, so the plan was for me to attend Orange Coast College the first two years and then transfer. I went there for five days. I felt like a lion in a cage. I looked at my parents and said, "Let me just try it out there in the real world. I want to jump in head first and start." My parents hated the idea of me leaving college. But we made a pact. They were going to keep a really close watch on me, and if they saw me lose my focus or discipline, if they saw me stop growing in my craft or simply rest on my laurels, I was going back to college.

TS: So you started to work as a teenager?
SJB: I started to work onstage professionally by the age of 18 and was able to pay for my life. When I was 22, I attempted to move to New York City. I had done a lot of regional productions. I had an agent and was a member of all the actors' unions (AEA, SAG, AFTRA and AGVA). I thought, "Ok, I'll move to New York and see how it goes." It scared me to death! Although everything seemed to be in place and I had plenty of on-the-job experience, I just wasn't comfortable in my own skin in New York. I was intimidated by the city. I was intimidated by my competition. So about a year later I moved back to Los Angeles, continued to perform regionally and just do as much work as I possibly could. That whole time period was about finding out who I was. I needed to gain a true sense of myself and of my talent, so that no matter where I was, I had solid footing and a comfortable confidence.

TS: In 2000, things got rather interesting for you – correct?
SJB: In February of 2000, I got a call from Stephen Schwartz. He was out in Los Angeles developing a new musical. The story goes that he wasn't familiar with a lot of musical theatre talent on the West Coast. He went to dinner with some friends and was speaking of his new project and the character of Elphaba. The amazing people he was dining with recommended me. I got a phone call from Stephen Schwartz on my answering machine. I met him the very next day and sang a bit from my repertoire. He played me a couple of songs from the show. And that's how I was introduced to the musical that would change my life… *Wicked*. At this point in the process, I was to present three songs to the executives at Universal Pictures. It was going to be a very informal presentation with Winnie Holzman, who is the librettist of *Wicked*, explaining the plot while reading off index cards and Stephen Schwartz at the piano. That was the beginning. For the next 2 years, every several months I would get a call from Stephen saying, "We've finished Act I, would you come in and read for us?...Ok, now we've edited Act I, will you come back in and read

with us?" Finally, I did an extended two-week workshop on the Universal Studios lot with Kristin Chenoweth. And I really thought that the role of Elphaba was going to be my way back to New York and my Broadway debut. Months and months later, I flew into NYC to audition for Joe Mantello. Days after the audition I got a call from Stephen saying, "You did a great job in the audition. We love you. However, you have no Broadway credits and we just can't risk a multimillion dollar production on someone who's never done a Broadway show let alone created a role on Broadway before. We want you to understudy Idina Menzel and stand by for her when we get to New York." It was painful but that was the chance that I was looking for, to come back to the city with a job. *Wicked* led to *The Boy from Oz*, which then led to other shows. I'm now working on my sixth Broadway show. I'm very lucky!

TS: Let's talk about *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. In English music hall terms, the role of Edwin is called a "pants" role. Would you describe the role you played in *The Pirate Queen* as a pants role?
SJB: Not exactly. Grace O'Malley does have to disguise herself as a man to get herself on the ship. But I wasn't ever playing the role of a man in *The Pirate Queen*. Now when I auditioned for *Drood*, I asked Rupert Holmes, the creator of the show, whether I should really take on the posture of a man, the voice of a man, etc. Rupert said no because in the Victorian music halls, the audience was completely aware that the leading boy's part would usually be played by a well known actress of the time. It was one of the devices that they used. In fact, the songs that Rupert has written for the role of Edwin Drood are very much in a female vocal range. Having said that, as an actress I do have to believe that I'm a man or it's just going to look silly.

TS: At this moment, you haven't started rehearsals yet, but could you tell me what you think the challenges of playing this role will be? What kind of preparation have you done?
SJB: I'm watching a ton of old films set in the Victorian age so I can see other actors play "real men" in the late 1890s or in the early 1900s. The gait in their walk is very distinct. I am watching their specific postures and where they place their hands when they approach a woman. I want to make sure I address Rosa Bud and the other characters appropriately for the time period and for the story that we're telling. For me, the challenge is that I not only have to play Edwin Drood, but there's a section where I become Alice Nutting, the actress playing Edwin Drood. She is a completely different being when she's herself. Because I play several different characters in *Drood*, I need to make a connection and impression on the audience with each one. The entire cast gets to break the fourth wall in this play. We bow to the audience and acknowledge their applause, or do an aside joke to the audience. Alice Nutting and Edwin Drood don't necessarily get to do that as often

as the other characters but I want to make sure that the audience is still able to embrace both Edwin and Alice. Especially with "The Writing on the Wall," the number where I feel the character strips herself down and is really talking to the audience and is giving them wonderful words of wisdom: Every moment is precious. Take every moment and grab it as if it's your last, fight for that last breath. I think that's an important statement for Stephanie J. Block or Edwin Drood or Alice Nutting to make to the audience. So I want to make sure that it is completely heartfelt and impactful when I sing it.

TS: Will you talk a little bit about what you look for in your director, your musical director, and your choreographer?
SJB: I'm so excited to work with Scott Ellis, as I've heard and seen fantastic things! I usually come into rehearsals with some opinions as to how I see the character and how I feel the character serves the play. But that doesn't necessarily mean that those are the most informed opinions. My homework and my backstory certainly help to form who my character is going to be, but it's always amazing for the director to say, "I hear what you're saying, now let me throw this at you." I love a director that you can share with, a director that allows an open room for dialogue, experimenting, and play. I think that's important. As for the musical director, Rupert has written very intricate and complicated melodies and harmonies. I can't wait to see the notes on the page and to have every precise detail plunked out for me so I know how it fits with the other voice (or the three or four voices) involved in the songs and then begin to really interpret the music and lyrics. I haven't had the opportunity to work with Paul Gemignani, and he is such a legend. He definitely goes beyond just "plunking the notes" and I am going to relish every moment with him and Rupert's music. I also look forward to working with Warren Carlyle, the choreographer. It is going to be interesting because I don't think I dance a whole lot in *Drood*. I'm sure there's going to be quite a bit of movement and I think the movement will be very character specific. This is a brand new team for me. I'm excited to start.

TS: How would you advise a young person to go about having a career in the musical theatre?
SJB: My advice is to stay true to yourself. If the performing arts are truly what you eat and breathe and drink, then it's for you. I'm going to be a bit of a "name dropper" right now: Carol Burnett. I asked her the same question. And she looked at me and said, "Do you love animals?" And I said that I do. And she said, "Do you want to be a veterinarian?" And I said no. She said, "Do you love children?" I said I do. "Do you want to be in pediatrics or be a teacher?" And I said no. She said, "Is there anything else…ANYTHING…that you love as much as performing?" And I said, "Absolutely not. It's all I can think of." And she said, "Then it's meant for you. If there's something else in your life that brings you as great a fulfillment or purpose or enjoyment," she said, "I advise you to do that. Because the performing arts are far more than a job. It becomes a lifestyle." And I found her words to be very, very true.

TS: How do you keep yourself sane in this business?
SJB: One thing that keeps me sane is my family and my husband. But I also try to keep a certain perspective about what our world is. What we do on Broadway is important and I think it changes people's lives. However, if you go beyond the twenty block radius in midtown, there's a whole other world that if you mention Musical Theatre, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Stephanie J. Block, or even *Wicked*, they don't know what you're talking about. I try to maintain an involvement with those outside of the arts, people who need other things besides song and dance, people who are in need of food, shelter, clothing. I try to keep a level head and remember there's a world beyond the blessings of the American theatre.

TS: When you read *Drood*, what did you think it was about?
SJB: I think it's about the challenges in life… the mystery of life. There's a lot of misguidance, dependence, jealousy and want in *Drood*. But even though the piece is dark at times, I think the genius of Rupert Holmes brings it back to the joy and humor of life. I think all good theatre has a universal message. And I think the universal message of *Drood* is very much about making your life worth something, hanging on to every breath of life and making it count. ■

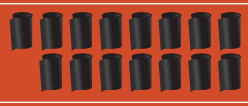
COSTUMES IN NUMBERS*:


63 hats

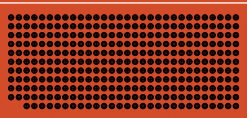

33 wigs


21 costumed house staff


16 bustles


150 yards of taffeta


1 mile of shoelaces


3,280 buttons–give or take a dozen

*Each symbol represents 10 items


Stephanie J. Block and company.
Photo by Joan Marcus.

"I THINK IT'S ABOUT THE CHALLENGES IN LIFE… THE MYSTERY OF LIFE. THERE'S A LOT OF MISGUIDANCE, DEPENDENCE, JEALOUSY AND WANT IN *DROOD*. BUT EVEN THOUGH THE PIECE IS DARK AT TIMES, I THINK THE GENIUS OF RUPERT HOLMES BRINGS IT BACK TO THE JOY AND HUMOR OF LIFE."

Let's draw back the curtain on London in 1895

THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD takes us back to a crowded London Music Hall in the late 1800's. The play gives us a brief glimpse of what the characters' lives were like working in a troupe of actors in that time period, but what about life outside the theatre? Many aspects of life were different then—from sanitation to education to fashion. Can you imagine stepping outside of your home onto the bustling streets of London over 100 years ago? Can you imagine what you'd see? Can you imagine what you'd smell?

At the time Dickens was writing, London was the biggest city on Earth. It was the period of Queen Victoria's reign, and a time of prosperity and peace for England. By 1900 almost a quarter of the earth was under the rule of the British Empire, and the Queen reigned over 400 million people.

Click here to learn more about Queen Victoria:
http://www.royal.gov.uk/historyofthemonarchy/kingsandqueensoftheunitedkingdom/thehanoverians/victoria.aspx

Follow this link to see a map of London in the late 1890's that describes the different social classes and their geographic locations around London:
http://www.bl.uk/learning/images/dickens/large116399.html

Peter Ackyrod, who wrote a biography of Charles Dickens, writes, "If a late twentieth-century person were suddenly to find himself in a tavern or house of the period, he would be literally sick - sick with the smells, sick with the food, sick with the atmosphere around him."

There was a huge divide in the social classes in the Victorian era. The rich were very rich and lived in luxury. The poor lived in horrible conditions (although the industrial revolution did bring improvements to the quality of life for the lower class) and had little hope of moving up in social class.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION CHANGED THE WORLD, and England was a leader in industrialization. For the first time, everything was being made by machines instead of by hand, and this caused a huge change in many aspects of daily life. New buildings were popping up everywhere; the air was heavy and smelled awful because of coal-fired stoves and sewage in the streets and the Thames River. Cities like London increased rapidly in population during the Industrial Revolution as more jobs became available in the cities. Housing was scarce and expensive, so many people would often share very small living quarters. This overcrowding only added to the pre-existing pollution and sanitation issues.

TEENAGERS IN THE VICTORIAN ERA would have had very different priorities and lifestyles from teenagers today. If you were in the lower class in 1895, by age sixteen you probably would have already been working for ten years, to help your parents support the household. The upper class teenager would have a private governess at home and not have many responsibilities or concerns beside their school work.

Women could not buy property. They had no claim to their children, and they were not educated beyond domestic duties. Some young men had the opportunity to go to University, but it was not required or expected.

Social etiquette was hugely important to the upper class in the 19th century. Education in proper decorum was thought to be as important as any other subject or skill taught to children of the era. There were even manuals written on how to behave in "Refined Society." These manuals would describe almost every part of daily life, including speaking, shopping, and even how to properly mourn when someone has passed away. Failing to abide by these rules could cause a person to be excluded from their social circle and possibly damage her reputation permanently.

If you were to attend a performance in the 1890's of a show like *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, you would go to a Music Hall like the "Music Hall Royale" in the play. You will get an idea of what the Music Hall feels like when you attend Roundabout's performance, but the streets outside the Music Hall were a performance all their own. Imagine streets as busy as the streets of Manhattan but crowded with women in long, elaborate dresses with huge decorative hats, carrying delicate parasols; men looking dapper in full suits and bowler hats; horse-drawn carts full of goods to sell at markets bumping across the uneven brick of the roads. Shoe shiners, beggars, and women selling matches and flowers, would be in the streets outside the Music Hall trying to sell their wares to the patrons of the theatre.

The Victorian Age is remembered as a time of peace and wealth for England but also as a time of rapid transformation. Despite the horrible smells and lack of central air and internet, the late 1800's were a pretty amazing time to be alive in London.

Follow this link to see some examples of high Victorian fashion for both men and women:
http://www.victoriana.com/Victorian-Fashion/

Click this link to see candid shots of the streets of London in the 1890's:
http://bit.ly/S8XHb6

Follow this link to learn more about life in Victorian London:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/pleasure_01.shtml

OPIUM DENS

In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, John Jasper goes to an opium den, described as "the wickedest corner of the wickedest hole in the fabric of the City of London."

Opium dens were places where people went to smoke opium, a narcotic derivative of the poppy plant. Opium dens sold customers opium and provided all the tools needed to smoke it. Dens were seen as dirty, low-class establishments that promoted prostitution.

Opium contains both morphine and codeine and is a key ingredient in heroin. Opium poppies were cultivated and used medicinally throughout the ancient Middle East and Mediterranean.

Recreational opium use, present in low levels in many societies, became noticeable when large numbers of Chinese laborers emigrated to western cities, particularly San Francisco and New York. Interestingly, there were never many opium dens in London—they were mostly imagined by Victorian writers.

A weak form of opium called laudanum was sold over the counter as a painkiller and cough suppressant in the 1890's. In calling for more "laudanum wine," John Jasper reveals that he may be abusing opium throughout the day, rather than just when he visits the opium den.


Illustration of an Opium Den

Ladies and Gents, we give you Mister Scott Ellis!

Ted Sod, Education Dramaturg, sat down with Director Scott Ellis to talk about his work on *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

Ted Sod: Tell me how this production came together and why you wanted to direct it.
Scott Ellis: The idea of reviving *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* started a while ago when I was working with Rupert Holmes on the Broadway production of *Curtains*. He was a writer on that show and while we were talking about *Curtains*, *Drood* came up. I told him I fondly remembered it. I wondered why there hadn't been a major revival of it. That's how it began. I told Rupert that it seemed like the perfect time for a revival. We kept talking about it over the years and we finally got it scheduled for this season. We have looked at the scripts that were used for the Delacorte, Broadway and London productions, and we're putting together a new version of the script and a song order that we want for this revival.

TS: What kind of research did you have to do in order to direct this show?
SE: We've done research on Dickens and his unfinished novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. The show takes place in a music hall in the 1800s, so we need to have a clear understanding of what was happening during that era in England. And the actors have to understand what it was like to be performing in a music hall at that period in time.

TS: Have you ever worked with Warren Carlyle, the choreographer, before?
SE: I've never collaborated with him on a theatre production before. I've known Warren for a very long time and love his work. The collaboration between the director and choreographer is most important in a musical. You really have to be on the same page. So far it's been a really wonderful collaboration. He's very creative.

TS: When you work with a choreographer, do you say, "I want this dance to feel like this" or do you let them go off and…
SE: I let them do what they do. We talk about the story, what the story is we're trying to tell. It's not about steps or my saying, "It should be like this or look like that." It's none of that. The choreographer needs to be very free to explore. We always talk about the sets, what's going on in the story, what we have to work with, things like that. That's what we've focused the most on so far. We're very much involved with the sets and what they look like and what we're doing visually because it's going to be a huge part of how the choreography will ultimately manifest itself.

TS: Anna Louizos is designing the sets, and she's remarkable. Can you talk about collaborating with her?
SE: It's been an easy collaboration because we've worked together before. It's always nice when you have a shared language with people. I've worked with all these designers before. We're not reinventing the wheel here. It's very clear that it takes place in a music hall. So we said, "Let's create an old English music hall." It's a group of actors that are doing this show, so the sets dictate that. We're not using any automation because at that time they didn't have any. We thought, okay, if there's no machinery per se, let's try and do a lot of things with flats. A lot of things will be played downstage. We're using a ton of drops because that's what they used at that time.

TS: When you choose your musical director, what are you looking for?
SE: Someone I can work with and someone who I trust when they are working with actors. I first met Paul Gemignani when I was an actor and he was a musical director. We've done lots of shows together for the past twenty years. Paul and I have a shorthand. If an actor has a question about how to sing or interpret a song, Paul will know the answer. He is an expert at getting the best from each performer.

TS: Tell me a little about casting this show.
SE: The original cast is very well known. It was a stellar cast. Most of those people are still working and doing very well. Casting became the most important part of putting this revival together, and it took us quite a long time to find the right mix


Photo by Joan Marcus.

of people. Each character is so individual. You're not only casting actors who are playing characters in this musical – they are also playing the actors who are playing those characters. They have to be very unique and different. They have to be able to understand the humor of doing this type of show in the world of the music hall. When you look at the cast we've assembled, you think, it's such an odd group of performers, but they are odd in a really great way. It's all over the place. And that's what I wanted. Jasper was very difficult to cast. We just got very, very lucky because Will Chase had been doing "Smash" and when they rewrote it, his character wasn't in it anymore and we were able to get him.

TS: How do you go about creating an ensemble? What is the secret to that?
SE: I don't know if there is a secret. It could just be good casting. It's an important part of a director's job. I like actors, but I always cast people who I not only think are going to be great in the role, but are also going to be fun in the rehearsal room. If someone's not being fun, it's not worth it to me, no matter how talented they are. Hopefully, I can help create an atmosphere where people are naturally having a good time. That's how I go about it, and it doesn't always work. I think it starts with the casting, and you pray it all works out. It will be challenging this time because they really have to feel like they are part of the company. They have to be a company in more ways than one. You always take chances when you put a group of people this large together.

TS: One of the things that struck me is how cleverly written it is. And Rupert did everything: the book, the lyrics, the music, the orchestrations.
SE: There are very few people who do all three elements well. I think Meredith Willson did it well with *The Music Man*. But there's only a handful, if even that. I think it's pretty remarkable what Rupert has created. It's also mind boggling when you look at what he had to write in terms of the multiple endings and how many possibilities there are. And he was able to make all that work. The audience votes on who they think the murderer is and who they want the lovebirds to be and every one of those choices has a different song attached to it. What I love is that there's no cheating. Everyone votes, and it is up to the audience to decide who they want at every show. It's different every night. That's what's so amazing about it.

TS: How does the voting work? Do you send actors out into the house and have them count hands?
SE: Yes. Every actor has a section of the house. And they go and ask the audience who they want, not knowing who the other groups are voting for. You never know what the result is going to be. They go backstage and tally the votes and there it is!

TS: What happens onstage while all that is happening?
SE: There's music and people are watching the voting process. The suspects are still onstage. Hopefully it will happen very fast. It's a lot of fun to watch the whole process and see who the audience votes for – it's another mystery. ■

Without further ado... Warren Carlyle!

Ted Sod, Education Dramaturg, interviewed Choreographer Warren Carlyle about his work on *The Mystery of Edwin Drood.*

Ted Sod: Can you tell us about your background?
Warren Carlyle: I was born in Norwich, Norfolk, on the east coast of England. I went to a regular high school and I went to a ballet school in London. I appeared in ten shows in the West End. About thirteen years ago, I moved to America. I moved here to be an associate choreographer to Susan Stroman on *The Producers*.

TS: Have you always had your eye on musical theatre, or did you make a transition from ballet?
WC: I made the transition, but it was a very short one.

TS: Does that mean we won't see you choreographing for any of the ballet companies?
WC: No! I would very much love to! It's on my list because I come from that world.

TS: Let's talk about *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. How did you get involved as a collaborator on this revival?
WC: I've been friends with Scott Ellis for a number of years. Scott and I have the Susan Stroman connection. That's the common link between us. Scott and I have done television together but never theatre. We worked on ABC's "Hope and Faith" with Kelly Ripa. It was really fun. He and I have a great time. I'm a big fan of his. I was so happy when he called.

TS: What's the first thing you have to do on a show like *Drood*?
WC: The first thing I do is read everything that's available. I read the Charles Dickens novel, and I read every version of the musical that Rupert's written. I've read every article that's available to read. I've watched almost everything I'm able to watch. I try and do that early on so I'm not influenced close to my process. I'll go and watch things six or nine months ahead of time and forget about them. And then, of course, I listen to the music. I've spent many hours in a rehearsal room with a rehearsal pianist playing through the score again and again and again and again.

TS: Tell us about your process.
WC: Scott and I do it together. We discuss everything. We're trying constantly to develop the story through dance. We talk about each number at length, how we think it needs to be, how it fits into the story, what it needs to achieve in the scheme of things, whether it needs to stop the show or needs to be about the number. Sometimes movement and dance is used to just keep the ball in the air. Or it is used to help with character development. It can also be an opportunity to tell the story. For instance, we're developing the ballet into much more of a story piece. We've been writing a little outline for it so it will help develop character. We want to use the ballet to show the pursuit of Rosa Bud, having her appear and disappear. Scott and I always talk first and then I'll go into the studio and start to work on the vocabulary and the style.

TS: What would that style be for this musical?
WC: I have a feel for it but I haven't started to develop the very jaunty, very English, almost straight-legged style that we will be using. I have some ideas and some sketches and some outlines for things but, beyond that, I don't have steps because with me, they're always the last thing that comes. The first is the story and then when I really start to know the characters, I'll fashion how they move.

TS: This is not a dance-heavy show, would you say?
WC: I don't think that it's dance-heavy. I do think that it's movement and style-heavy.

TS: Did you study any vintage photographs?
WC: I'm somebody who likes to learn. I am really curious. I'm doing *Chaplin* now and I've immersed myself in that world of early Hollywood. When I did *Finian's Rainbow* or *Follies* or whatever, I immersed myself in that musical's specific world. I try to transform into what is needed for each show every time.

Janine DiVita, Shannon Lewis and Will Chase.
Photo by Joan Marcus.

TS: How did you audition people for this show? What did you need as the choreographer from the performers?
WC: When casting, I like to do something from the show. I like to do something that has the style of the numbers. We were looking for amazing character actors. With *Drood*, it was very important that they were all able to act through dance, not just perform dance steps. They had to have something going on inside them. They had to be a barmaid or they had to be a boy that was chasing a girl through the dance. They all had to be able to tell the story though the choreography and on top of the choreography.

TS: I'm wondering if you would talk about your response to the show when you first experienced it. What did you think it was about?
WC: That's an interesting question. I really don't know if I got that deep in my first impression. I thought it was very funny and original. I was quite taken by this group of players, this group of actors who are all reaching. They're putting on a show that is a little beyond their means. It was Rupert who said to me that he thought this band of players he created was being a tad overzealous. I'm going to give them some dance steps that are a little beyond them. I think their choreographer was a bit ambitious. Truly, I don't think there is one word or phrase that can accurately tell someone what this show is about. It's magnificent! If I can bring to life even a quarter of what Rupert has written, I will be a very happy man.

TS. What do you see as the most challenging aspect of the work you have to do?
WC: I think the most challenging thing is to not "Broadway-ize" it. I'd like to keep it truly authentic if I can. And I would like the style of movement to be quite special and unusual.

TS: What advice would you give a young person who wants to do the type of work that you're doing?
WC: I think people starting out should say "yes" to everything. They should do everything they are offered at the beginning and experience as much as they can and never say the word "no."

TS: How do you keep yourself inspired? What feeds you as an artist?
WC: I read as much as I can. I love to read. I love picture books, too. I do a lot of visual research. I love movies. I paint and draw a little bit. I always storyboard what I'm going to do.

TS: Is there any question you wish I had asked you about your work or the show that I didn't ask?
WC: I am excited that *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* is being revived on Broadway. It hasn't been produced in New York for a very long time and it's going to be a great show. When you see Anna Louizos' set, you'll understand why I feel this way. She's created a magical world. From the moment you walk into Studio 54, you're going to be transported to a completely different place and time. ■

Pre-Show Activities

HOW DOES A MUSICAL CREATOR (OR TEAM) ADAPT A NOVEL INTO A MUSICAL?

The Mystery of Edwin Drood–just like *Wicked*, *Les Miserables*, and *The Color Purple*–was a novel before it became a musical. Work with a book or story you have studied in your class to explore the process of adapting a book into a musical. (You may also work with nonfiction texts, especially biography or historical narrative.)

Divide the group into teams (2-3 students per team) or have students work individually. Assign each group/individual one chapter or section of a text you have studied.

WRITE

Students choose an important moment or event from their chapter/section and imagine this moment as a musical number:

- What is the title of the song?
- Which characters would sing this song?
- What type of song would it be? (Romantic love song? Ballad? Big group dance?)

Students write a few lines of lyrics for this song, either changing the lyrics to an existing song or creating their own tune. (Optional: Students could also draw an image of what the musical number might look like on stage.)

ACTIVATE

Allow each group to present their song in the correct order of the text. They could offer their song as a performance, or they could present the lyrics and describe the musical number they imagine.

REFLECT

Ask students how they chose the moment to put into music. Why is this moment important to the text as a whole? Why did they choose this type of song? What does a musical creator or team consider when choosing where to insert a musical number?

HOW DOES AN ACTOR LAYER CHARACTER CHOICES?

The cast of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* plays nineteenth century music hall actors, who in turn play characters from Dickens' novel, also titled *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

Materials: slips of paper with stock character types written on them; melodrama script

EXPLORE

Students draw a slip of paper with a stock character type written on it. These will be the student's "actor type." [The teacher may choose to have the students explore how this character moves and speaks at this point.] Students then draw a second slip of paper with a different character type on it. This will be the student's "character type."

ACTIVATE

Working in groups, students rehearse the melodrama scene. Each student must act as if they are the stock character type playing the character. For example, Nancy could be playing an old woman actor who is playing a rebellious teenager character.

REFLECT

Students share their scenes. Ask for audience feedback: What characters did you see? How did you know? Was that the "actor type" or the "character type"?

For the actors: What challenges did you face in playing an actor who was playing another character? What is one choice you made in your melodrama scene that you thought revealed who your "actor type" was?

Melodrama Scene

A: You must pay the rent!

B: But I can't pay the rent!

A: You must pay the rent!

B: But I can't pay the rent!

C: I'll pay the rent!

B: My hero!

A: Curses! Foiled again!

Post-Show Activities

HOW DOES A LYRICIST USE POINT-OF-VIEW TO RESOLVE *THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD*?

You've seen how Rupert Holmes created lyrics and music to resolve Charles Dickens' unfinished mystery, based on the choice your audience voted. Now it's your turn to write your own ending for Dickens, imagining the point of view of another character.

WRITE

Refer to the list of suspects (found on the Callboard of this Guide) and choose a character that was not voted as the murderer when you saw the show. Imagine you are this character and tell the story from his/her point of view:

- What is your relationship to Edwin?
- Why would you want to kill Edwin? (Or if it was an accident, how did it happen?)
- How did you do it?
- How do you feel about committing this crime?

Write this character's confession for the crime: it may be song lyrics, a poem, or in prose such as a letter or a diary entry. Make sure you are expressing his or her point of view.

ACTIVATE

Perform your confession for the class. Try to remember how the character expressed him/herself vocally and physically in the show. (Refer to pictures in this guide to recall each character.)

REFLECT

Why did you choose this character to write about? How did you imagine the story from her/his point of view? Why do you think Charles Dickens included this character in his story?

HOW DOES A WRITER CREATE A STORY WITH MULTIPLE ENDINGS?

The Mystery of Edwin Drood has hundreds of possible endings, depending on how the audience votes. Author Rupert Holmes wrote endings for every possible scenario.

Materials: [optional] fiction or non-fiction articles without conclusions

WRITE

Students write the beginning and middle of a story, or read the beginning and middle of a story chosen by the teacher. Students then outline two or three possible ending scenarios for the story.

ACTIVATE

Students briefly share their stories with the class, or in small groups. They offer all of their proposed endings, and classmates vote for their favorite ending. Students then write the conclusion to their stories.

REFLECT

How did creating multiple endings change the beginning and middle of your story? Why do you think your classmates chose that conclusion?

Glossary

ASSIGNATION	An appointment for a meeting (sometimes a secret meeting between lovers) *We meet Durdles on his way to an important assignation.*
BETROTH	To give, or promise, to marry *From a young age, Rosa Bud and Edwin Drood were betrothed by their parents.*
CEYLON	A British colony from 1815 to 1948 on an island off the southern coast of India; now it is called Sri Lanka *Neville and Helena Landless move to Cloisterham from their childhood home in Ceylon.*
CHOIRMASTER	Director of the church choir *John Jasper is the choirmaster for Cloisterham's church.*
CHASTE	Innocent, pure, celibate *Rosa Bud's home at the Nun's House is a chaste place.*
CLASP	A device (as a hook) for holding objects or parts together *Rosa refers to a piece of jewelry inherited from her mother as a clasp; this will be an important clue to Edwin's disappearance.*
COFFER	A chest or box, often used to store jewelry *Princess Puffer complains she can't fill too many coffers with the money she earns from her business.*
CRYPT	A chamber or vault, usually under the main floor of a church or mausoleum, often where important dead people are buried. *Jasper asks Durdles to take him into the crypt of the Mayor's wife.*
DUALITY	The quality of having two aspects or parts *Jasper says he "suffers from duality," referring to his own divided personality. His song "Both Sides of the Coin" explores his state of mind.*
HOT-TEMPERED	Having a quick or violent temper *Neville Landless is trying to calm his hot-tempered nature with the help of Reverend Crisparkle.*
LAUDANUM	A mixture of opium and alcohol used as a tranquilizer, pain-killer, or to induce sleep. *When the effects of opium wear off, Jasper asks for laudanum wine to help him continue his fantasies.*
RESOLVE (N)	Fixed purpose *Helena's steely resolve stops the town from arresting Neville without evidence.*
RESOLVE (V)	To work out the ending of a play or situation. *At the end of the play, the audience resolves Dickens' unfinished mystery.*
RIVALRY	A state of competition *Edwin and Neville form an immediate rivalry for the attention of Rosa.*
SEMINARY	An institution of secondary or higher education *Rosa lives in a seminary for young ladies called The Nun's House.*
SHILLING	Monetary unit equal to 12 pence; 20 shillings equaled 1 pound *The Chairman complains that he is not paid a shilling more to step into the role of Mayor Sapsea.*
SUBJECT (N)	Person under control or authority *Neville sings about his feelings of being a British subject.*
THRUPPENCE	Slang for three pence or 3 pennies; a three pence coin. (240 pence equaled one pound in this time) *Puffer charges five and thruppence for providing Jasper's opium.*

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When you get to the theatre...

BELOW ARE SOME HELPFUL TIPS FOR MAKING YOUR THEATRE-GOING EXPERIENCE MORE ENJOYABLE.

TICKET POLICY

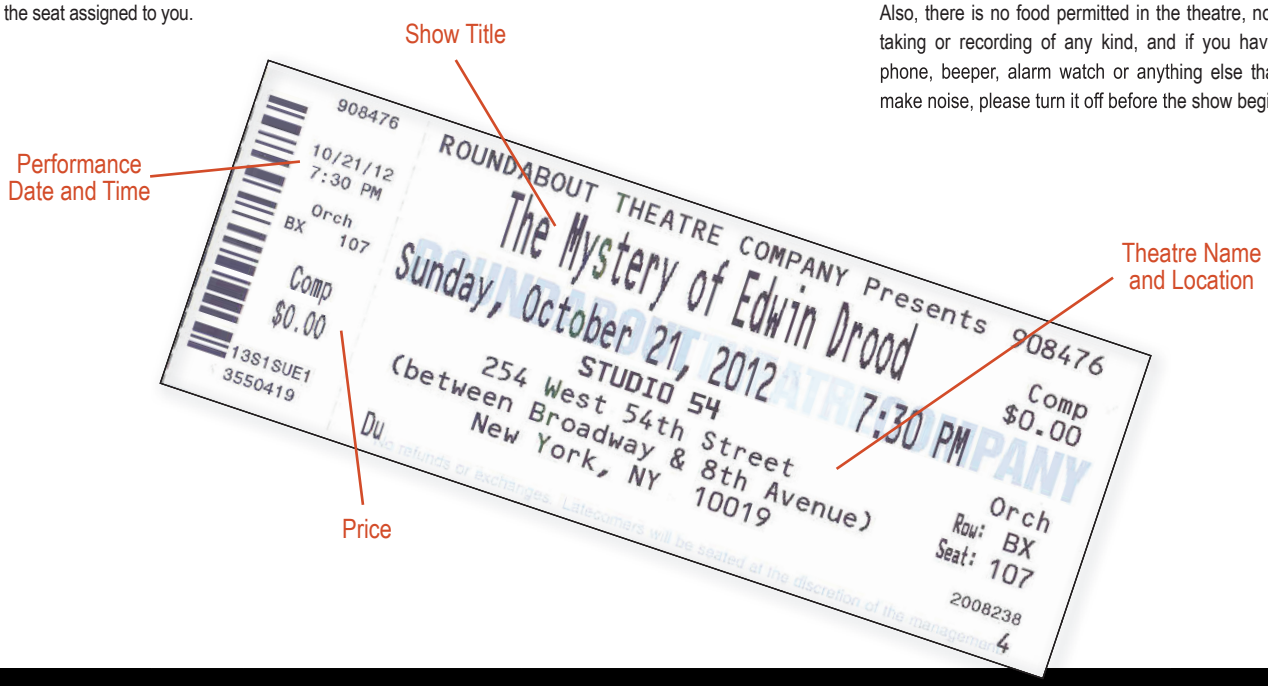
As a student participant in Producing Partners, Page To Stage or Theatre Access, you will receive a discounted ticket to the show from your teacher on the day of the performance. You will notice that the ticket indicates the section, row and number of your assigned seat. When you show your ticket to the usher inside the theatre, he or she will show you where your seat is located. These tickets are not transferable and you must sit in the seat assigned to you.

PROGRAMS

All the theatre patrons are provided with a program that includes information about the people who put the production together. In the "Who's Who" section, for example, you can read about the actors' roles in other plays and films, perhaps some you have already seen.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

As you watch the show please remember that the biggest difference between live theatre and a film is that the actors can see you and hear you and your behavior can affect their performance. They appreciate your applause and laughter, but can be easily distracted by people talking or getting up in the middle of the show. So please save your comments or need to use the rest room for intermission. Also, there is no food permitted in the theatre, no picture taking or recording of any kind, and if you have a cell phone, beeper, alarm watch or anything else that might make noise, please turn it off before the show begins.



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