



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1985 Volume II: American Musical Theater

American Musical Theater: Making it Work in the Music Classroom

Curriculum Unit 85.02.03
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Our school, the Conte Arts Magnet, is unique in that in addition to academic offerings, our students are also given required courses in theater, dance, visual arts, and music. The music classes offer music activities for students in grades five through eight in the form of core classes, which meet one hour per week. In addition, students may elect music choice classes which meet two hours weekly, and allow students to concentrate on piano and vocal training, or band instruments training. Within the core classes, students explore historical musical styles, music theory, the elements of music (melody, rhythm, form, and tone color) through a variety of vocal, instrumental, rhythmic, creative and listening activities. The majority of our students have had limited exposure to the American Musical Theater; therefore, a unit focusing on this area will serve as an excellent addition to the arts curriculum by providing a vehicle which will allow the students to become more familiar with and actively involved in the connecting aspects of the arts.

The objectives of this unit follow very closely the general objectives of our music curriculum. They are:

1. To help students develop and understanding of and an appreciation for another art form—the musical theater.
2. To explore the evolution of this form from its beginnings to the present.
3. To become acquainted with some of the literary sources of musicals.
4. To analyze musical selections from a sampling of productions.
5. To further develop vocal and listening skills.
6. To reinforce the knowledge of the elements of music.
7. To make connections with other arts and academic areas.
8. To help students understand how story, dance, and music become the integral parts of musical theater.

My unit is designed for use with students in the eighth grade, because they will have had three years of concentrated study in all of the art areas. It will be taught throughout the school year. At the same time, similar units will be presented in the theater and dance departments, and in a humanities class. The final project will be a revue, representing our combined efforts, containing scenes from *West Side Story* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. The music section, by itself, may be adapted for use over a shorter period of time, depending on differing circumstances.

The unit will have three major thrusts, with specific objectives within each area. The objectives of the first thrust will be to introduce the study of the American musical theater, to present a brief historical overview, and to provide the opportunity to hear professional performers vocally express the emotions of the character they are portraying by listening to a sampling of musicals.

Prior to presenting the historical overview, which follows, it will be necessary to set the scene for the students. This can be achieved during the first week of the planned unit. To introduce the study of musical theater, and to determine the extent of their knowledge of this art form, I will begin by placing the names of ten musical performances on the chalk board, and ask the students what the names have in common. A list could consist of:

Annie

Cats

Bubbling Brown Sugar *A Chorus Line*

A Little Night Music *42nd Street*

My Fair Lady

West Side Story

Purlie

Fiddler on the Roof

A discussion will follow after the correct answer is given, in which students will be asked to give their descriptions of musical theater. These descriptions can be put on the chalk board and compiled into one general definition. The final definition will be one of several entries in their music note-books. (All students are required to keep a note-book for each subject area). Following this students will be allowed time to recall and share, with the class, their previous exposure to and personal enjoyment of musical theater. It is anticipated that this sharing will expand the students' understanding of musical theater.

Since music history reference books are not readily available to us at the present time, ditto copies of the historical overview, which is included in this unit, will be given to each student during the first class session of this phase of the unit, to be read and put in their note-books for reference purposes prior to viewing the filmstrip, *The American Musical Theater*. The overview will be presented in the form of the lecture-discussion in order to provide students with a better understanding of how the musical evolved through its many changes to the present format to which they may be more accustomed.

In focusing on the early shows, music's roll will be emphasized. Even though it was an important part of the productions at this time, it was not related to the story, if there was one. In many instances, music was "borrowed" from the classics, other composers, other shows, or selected from current tunes at the music stores. It was placed in scenes, regardless as to whether or not the scenes called for music. There was very little effort made to integrate the story with music or dance. Emphasis will be placed on the students' ability to recognize characteristics of the styles of productions of this early period:

pantomime—the use of action or gestures without words.

vaudeville—a stage show consisting of various acts of songs, dances and skits.

minstrel show—a comic variety show presented by characters in black face who sing songs and tell jokes.

extravaganza—a musical or dramatic production characterized by a loose structure and farcical material.

operetta—a semi-classical musical play, with stories dealing with romantic and comical improbable situations.

Historical Overview

In general, the American Musical Theater can be traced to the 18th century, at which time in America, there was more musical entertainment than straight drama. *Flora, or a Hob in thu Well*, a ballad opera was produced in Charleston, South Carolina in 1735. At this time, it was the only show to have a hint of a story line. ¹ *The Beggar's Opera*, by John Gay, was seen in New York

City in 1751. There were also plays with songs, dances, acrobatics, puppet shows, and other ballad operas being performed. ²

It was not until 1787, when Royall Tyler's *The Contract* was performed, that America had an indigenous play. The story is set in New York City, featuring a local subject, and using local speech. Categorized as a comedy, the story accentuates the virtues of rural life as opposed to city life—a theme to be used in subsequent shows during the early years of musical theater. ³

Another production of a musical which could be called “American” was *The Archers or Mountaineers of Switzerland* in 1796. This production was based on the story of William Tell, the libretto by William Dunlap and music by Benjamin Carr. Its success was said to have been immediate.

The 19th century gave rise to production which can be generally classified as pantomimes, vaudevilles, minstrel shows, and extravaganzas. There was also evidence of some movement towards that which was American.

The pantomimes were a French import with origins in the 16th century “comedia Dell'arte”. They were used initially as one-third or one-half of a night's entertainment, but with the popularity of the extravaganzas, the competition forced a lengthening of the acts and use of trick scenic effects.

The variety show, or vaudeville concept, was of English origin, but quickly adapted to include local materials. The first vaudevilles were shows that were more suited to the all-male clientele of saloons and were considered off-limits to women patrons because of their so-called “blue” acts. To protect the audiences from police annoyance, the music hall thus developed. Tony Pastor, one of the more successful saloon owners, opened the first music hall, followed closely by Joe Weber and Lew Fields, comedians. The music hall then became a place where women and children could go without fearing the accompanying scandal which was

sure to follow after attendance at a variety show in a saloon. The show was focal point of interest in the music halls. As a result, by the turn of the century, the variety show had divided into two separate forms of entertainment, vaudeville and burlesque. The latter featured the “waiter-girls” of the earlier variety show who were excluded from the music hall shows.

During the 1840’s the minstrel shows related somewhat to American life. The shows consisted of songs, dances, skits, comedy, and costumes, and were, supposedly, what was thought to be a representation of the life of the southern Negro. They were performed by white actors in black-face make-up. A standard format developed for the shows. Following a parade around the stage, jokes were exchanged between the “end men” and the interlocutor, with songs and dances interspersed. Composers Dan Emmett (“Dixie”) and Stephen Foster (“Swanee River”, “Camptown Races”, “I Dream of Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair”, etc.) grew to prominence as composers of songs for minstrel shows—Emmett for the Virginia Minstrels and Foster for the Christy Minstrels.

The extravaganza was a foreign import which eventually consisted of American stories and settings. An off-shoot of the French and English court masques, initially it focused primarily on music, but later, the focus changed to elaborate scenery and exciting stage effects. The continuity was achieved and preserved through the programmatic scene titles. An extravaganza of note is the 1866 production of *The Black Crook*. It was very successful, but only by accident. A ballet company that had been imported from France by Henry Jarrett and Harry Palmer was unable to perform because the theater which was to house the performance burned down before opening night. William Wheatly, the producer of the play had publicized *The Black Crook* as a melodrama without music. The ballet producers approached the play producer with the idea of turning the melodrama into a musical spectacle. The stage of Niblo’s Garden in New York City had to be remodeled to accommodate the now greatly expanded production. ⁴

In 1874, another extravaganza, *Evangeline*, by Edward Rice, came on the scene. It was based on the poem by Longfellow. The book was not exceptionally great, and the music was just fair. However, it was the first time an American musical had a score written for it specifically. *A Trip To Chinatown* in 1890 was successful in that it had three hits to come out of it. They were: “The Bowery”, *Reuben, Reuben* by Percy Gaunt, and “After the Ball” by Charles K. Harris. ⁵

At the turn of the 20th century, the European operetta had grown in popularity through importations of works by Johann Strauss of Austria, Jacques Offenbach of France, and William S. Gilbert, dramatist and Arthur Sullivan, composer, of England. Operettas were semi-classical in nature, with stories that dealt largely with romantic and comical improbable situations.

In addition to the imports, there were immigrant composers who came to New York during the late 1890’s who greatly influenced the development of the operetta style in this country. Among them were Victor Herbert, Rudolph Friml, and Sigmund Romberg. Victor Herbert, the first to arrive in this country was the most influential. His purpose in coming, originally, was to play in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and to further the traditions of Viennese operetta, and in so doing, he created a style which represented the first significant break with European traditions on which earlier American musical theater forms had been developed. Notable among his operettas are *Prince Ananias*, *Babes in Toyland*, (“March of the Toys” and “Toyland”) *Mlle. Modeste* (“Kiss Me Again”), and *Naughty Marietta* (“Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life”, “I’m Falling in Love With Someone”, “Italian Street Song”, and “‘Neath the Southern Moon”). ⁶

George M. Cohan injected the Broadway scene at this time with a burst of energy, naturalness, and national

pride. His characters spoke and sang as if on a thoroughfare in New York City. He was able to capture in song that which people were thinking. He wrote the book, the music, the lyrics—and starred in his productions. His music had a vitality that had people nationwide singing along. From *Little Johnny Jones* (1904) came “Give My Regards To Broadway”, “The Yankee Doodle Boy”, and “Goodbye Flo”. *Forty-five Minutes from Broadway* (1906) was his best work. Hits included the title song, “Mary’s a Grand Old Name”, “So Long, Mary”, and “Stand Up and Fight Like H___”. ⁷

The years 1915-1918 saw the production of a series of successful musicals dubbed The Princess Shows. (The name was derived from the small, intimate theater of the same name.) A relative new-comer on the scene, Jerome Kern collaborated with Guy Boulton and then with Boulton, and P.G. Wodehouse in *Nobody Home* (1915), *Very Good Eddie* (1915), *Oh Boy* (1916), and *Oh Lady, Lady* (1918). These productions were a complete break from the glamour and glitter of the extravaganza. *Very Good Eddie* stayed very close to the book, and informality was of the essence. Humor developed out of character interactions, eliminating the need for a slap-stick comic. ⁸

At this point, a class session will be devoted to viewing the first two filmstrips of *The American Musical Theater*. Students will refer to their overview sheets in preparation for the viewing. The two to be shown deal with the periods from the 1800’s to the turn of the century, and from 1900 to World War I, and explore such early styles as the minstrel and variety show, vaudeville, and extravaganza, the Princess Shows and operetta. Composers and persons associated with these styles are also high-lighted. They included: Stephen Foster, Harrigan and Hart, Weber and Fields, Victor Herbert, George M. Cohan, Florenz Ziegfeld, Jerome Kern, and Irvin Berlin. The culminating activity following the viewing will be in the form of a student question-answer session.

In 1927, *Show Boat* was produced, marking the turning point in the development of the musical theater. Jerome Kern teamed with Oscar Hammerstein, II in the production of the musical based on the novel by Edna Ferber. Unlike the musicals of the earlier 20’s which had settings in ballrooms, in penthouses, on college campuses, at the country club, the setting of *Show Boat* was that—on a river boat that sailed up and down the Mississippi bringing its plays and musical entertainment to the population of rural America. It has its elements of rural family life, romance, and a bit of scandal. In *Show Boat* there is now a direct connection between the story and the music. The format that developed is basically scene, related song or songs; blackout; new scene, continued action, related song, etc. This becomes the foundation upon which later musicals were built.

We will examine two selections from *Show Boat*, “Only Make Believe” and “Old Man River”. For clearer understanding of the lyrics of the songs selected, they will initially be presented to the students, on ditto sheets, as poetry, then as songs. After reading the “poems”, a discussion of both selections should answer such questions as: What is the idea or theme that is being conveyed to the reader/listener? What is the setting? Is the mood happy, sad, reflective? What kind of character is being portrayed? Are there words or phrases which give you clues to the characterization? If so, what are they? How are conflicts, if any, resolved? Which “poems” give a feeling of the ballad as we have studied it?

They will then listen to the songs, which will be analyzed in terms of the elements of music. Does the melody move mostly upward or downward? Does an upward movement suggest sadness or happiness? Why is a certain type of melodic contour more expressive than another? Is the beat strong or weak? Why was this particular rhythm chosen? What effect do you think a rhythm or tempo change might have? How can conflict and resolution be expressed musically? What role does instrumentation play? Is it just for accompaniment purposes? Or is its role to enhance the interpretation of the lyrics and mood? Does the instrumentation help

with the characterization? What is the form of the composition? Are any of the sections repeated? If so, where?

To conclude this study of the early years of musical productions, students will spend approximately three class sessions creating a short variety show which will feature comedy, music, pantomime, dance and acrobatics. Classroom time can be to tie it together for a video-taping and a performance for our third and fourth grade classes.

During the first session, the class will be divided into five small groups. Each group will be told the area in which they are to develop their presentation. Time will be allowed, during this session, for each group to plan an activity which does not exceed eight minutes. The activities are to be presented and refined in the second class session, using positive and constructive criticism from classmates. The third class session will be devoted to video-taping the completed project. Additional time during the school day can be allotted for a performance for the lower grades.

The third objective of the first thrust, the examination of selected musicals after *Show Boat*, can be covered during a period of six weeks. The musicals that have been selected will be presented in the order that they appear here: *Porgy and Bess*, George and Ira Gershwin and DuBose Heyward; *Oklahoma*, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, II; *Guys and Dolls*, Jo Swerling, Abe Burrows, and Frank Loesser, and *My Fair Lady*, Alan J. Lerner and Frederick Lowe. We shall listen to and compare two or three selections from each musical.

These musicals were chosen as being representative illustrations of further chronological developments in the evolution of musical theater. They will also serve as a tool for developing the students' listening skills.

From *Porgy and Bess*, we will listen to the "Overture" and "Summertime"; "I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'"; and the street cries of the "Strawberry Woman" and the "Crab Man". Before playing the selections, the students will be given ditto sheets with a synopsis of the story, and the lyrics of "Summertime" and "I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'". These also, will be put into their note-books. The lyrics of the first selection will be read by a student, who volunteers to do so. The class will be asked for their interpretation of the words. Other questions asked could be in reference to the mood that the lyrics establish, the person most likely to be saying this, and whether the lyrics can be interpreted literally.

The "Overture", which includes "Summertime", will then be played. The students will be asked to name the instruments they heard, and to describe the mood and tempo of the beginning themes. Questions to be asked about "Summertime" would be: What tone color is added at this point? Does the melody interpret the words? Is there a difference between the tempo of the beginning themes and the tempo of "Summertime"? Is the meter double or triple? What tone colors accompany the vocal line? Why do you think the second appearance of the "Summertime" theme is different from the first appearance?

The focus of "I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'" will be on the use of dialect in the lyrics, which is a cross between the dialect of the Southern Black and the dialect known as "Gullah" (the language of the Charleston Negroes that still retains African words). The same procedure will be followed as with the analysis of "Summertime", a reading of the lyrics, comparing them with the way we would say them today. Questions following the listening would be in terms of the melodic contours, the accompanying tone colors, tempo, meter, form and harmony.

Before playing the Strawberry Woman and Crab Man calls, I will tell the students that this type of singing originated as "field hollers" of slaves on the southern plantations. Workers in the fields would chant short

melodic and rhythmic phrases while hoeing and digging, and when calling out for drinking water to be brought to them by the water boy. These hollers became the “street cries” of the Black vendors in the towns and cities after the slaves were freed. They would hawk fresh vegetables, fruit, and fish to passers-by and to the inhabitants of the houses and apartments in the area. Some people collected rags, old clothes, and all sorts of junk in this manner. Street cries can still be heard in various New Haven neighborhoods. Students will be asked if they have heard any, and where. I will then play some recorded illustrations of field hollers and street cries from the student text book series. Gershwin refines the street cries for the Strawberry Woman and Crab Man. Following the listening, students will be asked how Gershwin refined the raw qualities of the street cries. Time allowing during this session, we’ll improvise some calls of our own to sell dinners, cakes and pies, snow-cones, and helium balloons.

The second lesson will focus on selections from *Oklahoma* . Included are the “Overture”, “Oh, What A Beautiful Morning”, and “Oklahoma”. A synopsis of the story and the lyrics of “Oh, What A Beautiful Morning” and “Oklahoma” will be given to the students on ditto sheets to read and discuss in terms of the previous lesson. The music analysis of the “Overture” and the songs will also center around tone colors (instrumental and vocal), melodic lines meter, tempo, harmony, and form. Questions on the use of the elements of music will be similar to those asked in the previous lesson.

Selections from *Guys and Dolls* that will be listened to during the third lesson, are the “Overture”, which includes “Runyanland Music, “Fugue for Tin Horns” and “Follow the Fold”;; “Luck Be a Lady”; and “Sit Down, You’re Rocking the Boat”. The overture of this musical has in addition to the instrumental introduction usually heard, two complete vocal selections. They clearly and immediately show us the opposing life styles of the characters in the story. We hear the gamblers and their “Fugue for Tin Horns”, followed by the soul-savers of the Salvation Army singing their invitation to “Follow the Fold”.

Before giving out the synopsis of the story and the lyrics of the songs to the class, they will be asked to describe the personalities of the characters in the story after hearing the overture. I will also ask if the other overtures they have heard have given us a glimpse of the plot before the story unfolds. We will then read the lyrics of the above mentioned selections, and the lyrics of “Luck Be a Lady” and “Sit Down, You’re Rocking the Boat”.

In discussing the “Fugue for Tin Horns”, we will compare the form to the familiar round, “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” (letting the class sing this), and I will point out that this is a more complex version of the same form. I will also explain the difference between the harmony achieved by the round, canon, or fugue and the chordal harmony of “Follow the Fold”.

The lyrics and music of the remaining selections will be examined using the procedure of previous lessons.

The fourth lesson will focus on selections from *My Fair Lady* . They are the “Overture”, “Just you Wait”, and “I Could Have Danced All Night”. The overture will be compared to the other overtures we have discussed, noting any differences and similarities in tone colors, tempi, forms, harmonies, and meters. Lyrics and music of the other selections will be discussed and analyzed following the same established procedure. The lyrics of the two songs selected, first, give us an angry Eliza, the flower-seller with the Cockney accent, and then, a more relaxed and happy Eliza after the ball and after Professor Higgins’ diction lessons. The class should be able to see and hear the results of the professor’s lessons. I will ask if they can hear the difference in the emotion of both songs; the anger and frustration in the first selection as opposed to the happiness and self-confidence of the second. Does music play a role in heightening these emotions? Do the tempo and instrumentation help in conveying this?

The objective of the second thrust is to focus on two musicals, *West Side Story* and *Fiddler on the Roof* .

West Side Story

We shall begin our examination of *West Side Story* , by making comparisons between it and Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* . I find that Lehman Engel, in his *The Making of a Musical* has clearly compared the scenes, characters, action of both stories. ⁹We shall use this as a basis for understanding how a story set in they city of Verona, Italy in the sixteenth century is transformed to an area in New York City in the late 1950’s. The students should be able to grasp the parallels between the two stories.

We will then read scenes from Act I of *West Side Story* . In scene 2, Tony is painting a sign for his boss who owns the drugstore. Riff is trying to convince Tony that he should come back to his gang, the Jets, because they want to stop the rival gang, the Sharks, before they take over the turf. Tony hesitates at first, telling Riff that he feels something is about to happen to him. He doesn’t know exactly what, but he feels it will be something good. Tony does agree to go to the dance planned for that night. As Riff runs off, Tony begins his song, “Something’s Coming”. After the first reading, students will listen to the recorded version of the song. Here, one of the differences between Romeo and Tony can be noted. Romeo’s feeling at this point is one of doom, while Tony, although he doesn’t know what is about to happen, feels that it will be something good. The class will be asked, after listening to the recording, how the music makes one feel that something good is going to happen, instead of something bad. Does the melody line show this? Does the tempo of the music play a part? Is it the use of the short, repetitive melodic phrases? How much of a role does the orchestral accompaniment have in portraying a feeling of optimism?

Scene 5 is the love scene between Tony and Maria after the dance. This scene parallels the balcony scene of Romeo and Juliet in which Romeo arranges to send for Juliet the next day to be married. Tony and Maria agree to meet the next afternoon in the bridal shop. We shall listen to the duet “Tonight”, sung by Tony and Maria. For related listening, I’ll use Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet* , Suite 1, No. 6 (balcony scene) and Tchaikovsky’s *Romeo and Juliet* Overture, comparing each composer’s treatment of the love themes.

After listening to “Tonight”, I will ask the class to describe it musically, using the procedure of the general listening sessions. Recorded illustrations of Tchaikovsky’s *Romeo and Juliet* : Overture-Fantasy and Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet* , Suite 1, No. 6. On the board, I will put the titles of the compositions, accompanied by a list of statements. Students are to choose the correct descriptive statements and place them under the title of the composition which they fit. The list is as follows:

lyrical melody		non-singable, jagged melody line	
very little tempo change	strong beat and no beat		
dissonance			rising crescendos
wide contrast of loud and soft	great expressiveness		wide contrasts of high and low

English horn heard with

muted strings

More than a single listening is suggested before attempting this exercise. Correct placement will determine the students' ability to recognize the differences in the musical treatment of the same balcony scene by composers from each end of the creative spectrum.

In examining scenes and music from this musical production, I would like to include one of the major musical production numbers, "America", in which Anita, who is very happy with life in New York City, tries to convince two of her girlfriends, who are homesick for Puerto Rico, that New York is the place to be. I will approach this in terms of an analysis of the rhythm pattern

which dominates the song and adds to the fiery spirit one feels when hearing it. Before listening to the selection, I will put the rhythm pattern on the board. The class will be asked to clap the pattern until it is perfected. We will then add bongo drums, tambourines and maracas.

Rhythm pattern for clapping:

(figure available in print form)

Bongo drum rhythm:

(figure available in print form)

Tambourines:

(figure available in print form)

Maracas:

(figure available in print form)

After practicing with instruments, we'll listen to the recording to find out where the pattern occurs. Then we'll use the instrumental accompaniment at those places in the selection. This exercise provides the opportunity for students to become more aware of music with meter changes from measure to measure or within one musical composition.

Fiddler on the Roof

We will read and discuss the libretto of *Fiddler on the Roof*. We find that in *Fiddler*, we have a community of Jews, in their village in Poland, who live by their age-old traditions, which eventually begin to crumble. Families are broken up; they are forced to move out of the village that had been their home for generations. The older members of the families are able to overcome and move on to a future, though uncertain, by their strong beliefs.

Focusing on the "Prologue", we find that Tevye introduces his family and the other villagers to the audience in this selection. We learn of the acceptable tasks of all concerned. This is held together by the recurring "Traditions" chorus, thereby establishing the importance of their traditions in their lives. As the traditions begin to crumble, we hear this theme again and again. The class will be asked how music contributes to this establishment in the minds of the listeners. Is the importance of tradition felt as strongly when only the lyrics are read, or do the melodics, harmonies, rhythms, form and tone colors give it more strength and meaning? If so, why? What effect is accomplished when all the papas, the mamas, the sons and the daughters sing their verses in the form of a round? Why do we hear the theme when each tradition crumbles? Is the theme presented at this time the same as in the "Prologue", or are there differences?

As a written homework assignment, the class will be asked to re-think both stories and the relationships

between the families in each. What were the conflicts in the two stories? Were they similar? How were the conflicts resolved? Which do you think was the better resolution? Why? At the height of conflict in each story, with which did you feel the most tension? Why? Do you think that the music played a role in creating tension? If so, how would you explain it musically? If you were to write an epilogue, what would you say about the families of Anatevka? Describe the music you would use. What would life be like for Maria and her family, for Anita and the neighborhood?

Before beginning the rehearsals for our final production, a class session is planned for the viewing of the last two filmstrips in *The American Musical Theater* filmstrip set. These filmstrips cover the 20's, 30's, 40's, 50's, and 60's. Highlighted are the musicals: *Of Thee I Sing* , *Pins and Needles* , *The Cradle Will Rock* , *Porgy and Bess* , *Pal Joey* , *Oklahoma* , *My Fair Lady* , *West Side Story* , *Man of LaMancha* and *Hair* . This viewing will serve as a reinforcement of the developing stages of musical theater.

The objectives of the third thrust are to make connections with the theater and dance classes and to end our units with a collaborative revue of scenes from the two above named musicals. Involved in this area will be the final casting, rehearsals of dialogue, rehearsals of the dances and the musical numbers. These will be separate rehearsals as will the rehearsals for the principals expressiveness of lyrics, and clear enunciation.

A performance of this kind will be an accomplishment in itself for our students, and it will also serve as an evaluation tool of the acquisition of the skills necessary for a successful production.

Sample Lesson Plan I

This activity can be used in conjunction with or prior to the general listening sessions of the unit, and may prove to be beneficial just before a vocal rehearsal.

Objectives To help students become accustomed to displaying certain emotions using improvised singing instead of speaking.

To help students overcome the fear of singing alone.

Activities Students will pull from a bowl containing folded strips of paper on which an emotion has been written.

They will be given a few minutes to plan their improvisations, alone or with another person.

Improvisations should be short melodies.

Rhythms and tempi should correspond with the emotion being expressed.

The exercise will be taped for listening to after completing.

Following the listening, students will be given the opportunity to discuss the effectiveness and believability of their expressions. Constructive criticisms will be encouraged.

Desired outcomes

Students will discover techniques of using expressiveness in singing.

Students will overcome their fear of singing alone before and audience.

The next two activities are designed to be used for learning the lyrics and music of the "Prologue" of *Fiddler*

on the Roof .

Sample Lesson Plan II

Objectives

To read through the “Prologue” of *Fiddler on the Roof* . To discuss setting, characters and lyrics.

Activities

Select a temporary cast of principles: Tevye, Golde, Yente, Auram, Nahum, Lazar, Mendel, Rabbi, First man, and Second man.

Select a small group of male students to read the part of the papas.

Select another small group of male students to read the part of the sons.

Divide female students into two groups for the mamas and the daughters to read these parts.

Have the entire class read sections marked “all” and “villagers”.

Discuss the settings, characters, and lyrics.

Read through the “Prologue” with the assigned parts.

Listen to the recorded music.

Follow with a rhythmic reading of the lyrics.

Desired outcomes

Students should now have a feeling for the lyrics and the rhythm.

Students should be able to understand the characters better.

Sample Lesson Plan III

Objective

To learn to sing the “Prologue”.

Activities

Use the same temporary cast selected for the reading.

Listen to the recording again.

Discuss the music in terms of melody, rhythm, tempi, harmony, form, and vocal and instrumental tone colors.

Listen to the section that is sung like a round, asking if anyone recognizes the form.

Activities

Have students follow the lyrics of their parts as they listen.

Try singing the round section with the piano (this will need to be done several times until the technique is learned).

Try singing the entire “Prologue” with piano accompaniment.

Desired outcomes

Student should be able to understand music’s role in the characterization process.

Student’s vocal skills should improve.

Notes

1. David Ewen, *American Musical Theater* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1958) p. xxi.
2. Lehman Engel, *The American Musical Theater* (New York: MacMillan and Company, 1967) p. 3.
3. Ethan Mordden, *Better Foot Forward* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1976) p. 7.
4. Lehman Engel, Op. Cit., pp. 4-5.
5. Ethan Mordden, Op. Cit., pp. 18-19.
6. Lehman Engel, Op. Cit. p. 21.
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Recordings of Musicals

American Musical Theater (Chicago: Time-Life Books, 1982).

A series of boxed sets of selected musicals. Each box contains three musicals, with an illustrated booklet, and cassettes or records for each of the musicals.

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The original Broadway cast recording.

Frank Loesser, *Guys and Dolls*, MCA Records 37094.

The original Broadway cast recording of highlights.

Alan J. Lerner and Frederick Lowe, *My Fair Lady*, Columbia Masterworks, PS 2015

The original Broadway cast recording.

George and Ira Gershwin and DuBose Heyward, *Porgy and Bess*, MCA 37098.

Recording of highlights by the original cast, 1935 production.

Arthur Laurents, Stephen Sondheim, and Leonard Bernstein, *West Side Story*, Columbia Masterworks OS 2070.

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An excellent chronicle of musical theater developments from the early 1800's to 1960's. All of the visual materials is contemporary to the theater of the time being discussed. The music is, whenever possible, taken from original recordings. Contains 4 filmstrips and 4 cassettes.

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