

STUDY GUIDE



A Peek Behind the Curtain

A live theatre performance requires lots of dedication and teamwork from many different people. The following is some basic information about that, as well as your duties as an audience member that will help create a fun experience for everyone.

Who's Who?

- The director is responsible for putting the show together, from a mere vision to a full production in a short amount of time.
- The cast are the actors in a show.
- It takes a team of dedicated crew members to help put on a show from backstage. They help with makeup, costumes, lights, props and ushering.
- Designers decide what kind of sounds, lights, sets and costumes effectively tell a story.
- The stage manager oversees the rehearsal schedule and performances. He or she also monitors where the actors need to be on stage.

Do's & Don'ts

- Arrive on time for the performance.
- Pay attention to the show. Turn off all cell phones and anything else that beeps, vibrates or lights up. This also means no texting!
- Don't take any photographs during the performance. It's distracting to the actors and your fellow audience members.
- Stay in your seat throughout the entire performance, even if something in the show excites or startles you.
- Don't talk during the performance.
- If something in the show is funny, laugh out loud. If something wonderful happens in the story, clap your hands.

What's Your Role?

Believe it or not, you – the **audience** – are the most important part of a theatre performance! Plays and musicals are created to entertain, enlighten and inspire people. The laughter, tears and applause from audiences are an integral part of the theatre experience.

About San Diego Junior Theatre

Every cast and crew member is enrolled in one of our classes. Ranging from 8 to 18 years old, our students learn from grown-ups who are experienced theatre arts professionals. With their guidance, young people get a taste of what it takes to work in theatre world.



About *The Music Man*

The “Trouble” in 1912 River City, Iowa begins with con artist and salesman “Professor” Harold Hill, who appears in town to warn the citizens that the new pool table will corrupt their youth. His scheme is to organize, and profit from, a Boy’s Band with instruments and uniforms, despite his lack of musical experience. Professor Hill’s biggest skeptic in the close-knit community is Marian Paroo, the librarian and piano teacher. Despite her suspicions, and the Professor’s moneymaking motives, romance may be in the air, and even Harold Hill may be able to change his self-serving ways.

The Music Man, which was written and composed by Meredith Willson, won three Tony Awards when it premiered on Broadway in 1957. It was made as a movie in 1962 and a TV movie in 2003, and has gone on to be one of the most beloved, most-produced musicals in the American musical theatre canon.

ACTIVITIES



“THE WELLS FARGO WAGON IS A’COMIN!”

The residents of River City, Iowa are excited when they hear that the Wells Fargo Wagon is on its way to their town. At that time in 1912, the wagon was the sole provider of mail services around the country. In addition to mail, residents could receive goods that they ordered through catalogs. The arrival of the Wells Fargo Wagon, therefore, was a little bit like the UPS truck coming through your neighborhood to deliver parcels and packages.

Give your students the following prompt: Imagine that you lived in a small town in 1912. There is no internet, no shopping malls, and no UPS to bring packages to you as soon as you ordered them. You had the basics, like food and household supplies, but “something special” would have to be ordered through a catalog. Name one thing that you would order through a catalog and have sent to you by the Wells Fargo Wagon. It could be a book, or a toy, or something to decorate your house with. Why is it important to you? Write three sentences about why you would need this item, and how you would feel when the Wells Fargo Wagon began to approach your town.

THE CON-MAN CONTEST

In *The Music Man*, Harold Hill is a salesman who fools the River City residents into thinking he’s someone else. That makes him a con-man, or someone who lies to people for personal gain. Conning isn’t a good thing to do, but it actually makes for a good acting exercise. Divide the class into groups of three. Have them decide amongst themselves who will be the con-man. Keep the identity of the con-man in each group a secret from the rest of the class. Then ask each of them to come up with a brief story or something about themselves to tell the rest of the class. The catch is that the con-man of the group must lie, while the others tell the truth. Have each group tell their story to the rest of the class, and ask the class to select who they think is the con-man. After every group has had their turn, ask your class how they based their choices. What makes a lie convincing?



AFTER THE SHOW: *Why are the arts important in communities?*

Despite the trickery in his ways, Harold Hill inadvertently unites the small town of River City, Iowa by convincing them that music will save their youth. Think about your community, town, or school. Do you think music, or any kind of performing arts, is important to your community? Why or why not? Do you feel that music or the arts should have a place in every community, and if so, why?