



TUTS

THEATRE UNDER THE STARS

2015/2016
CONTENT
GUIDE

Disney • CAMERON MACINTOSH
**MARY
POPPINS**

THE BROADWAY MUSICAL

MARCH 8-20

SAROFIM HALL
at the HOBBY CENTER



THEATRE UNDER THE STARS

2015/2016

CONTENT GUIDE

ABOUT TUTS

Founded in 1968, Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS) is Houston's acclaimed non-profit musical theatre company. Since its founding by Frank M. Young, TUTS has produced more than 300 musicals including many local, national and world premieres. As a way to continue the tradition of musical theatre, TUTS' Education provides barrier-free instruction and stage experience, through the Humphreys School of Musical Theatre and The

River program for children with special needs. TUTS also annually presents the Tommy Tune Awards, honoring the best and brightest in Houston's high school theatre programs. TUTS is housed in the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. Glance towards the sky before you enjoy a performance at the Hobby Center; the fiber-optic ceiling keeps TUTS "under the stars" all year long. TUTS is pleased to present the 2015/16 season.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE



Arrive about 30 minutes before the show starts.



Turn your cell phones and electronics off completely. No texting!



Applaud at the end of songs and scenes. Otherwise, shhhh!



Save snacks for intermission.

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TUTS creates online content guides to further enhance students' theatrical experiences. The content guides contain various discussion questions, projects and activities that encourage students to engage with parents and/or teachers that will hopefully foster a love and appreciation of musical theatre.

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TUTS 2015/2016 STUDENT MATINEES

RENT
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SCROOGE
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JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH
MARCH 29 - APRIL 1, 2016

OLIVER
APRIL 16, 2016

COMING UP IN THE 2015/2016 MAIN STAGE SEASON

MATILDA
OCTOBER 6 - 18, 2015



A CHRISTMAS STORY
DECEMBER 8 - 20, 2015



BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY
JANUARY 19 - 31, 2016



MARY POPPINS
MARCH 8 - 20, 2016



OLIVER!
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A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO LOVE & MURDER
MAY 4 - 15, 2016



CENTER STAGE: MARY POPPINS



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PARENTAL GUIDELINES

Mary Poppins is rated **G**, considered appropriate for all audiences.

CENTER STAGE: MARY POPPINS



ABOUT THE MUSICAL

ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN IF WE RECOGNIZE THE MAGIC OF EVERYDAY LIFE.

Author P.L. Travers understood this special kind of magic when she published her first book, *Mary Poppins*, in 1934. The tale of the mysterious nanny who teaches a troubled family to appreciate the important things in life went on to become one of the most recognized and beloved stories of all time. Thirty years later, Walt Disney released the film based on Travers' stories: a unique mixture of animation and live action that has become a classic.

Now *Mary Poppins* flies over audiences everywhere, complete with new songs and breathtaking theatrical magic. Beyond its wild special effects and unforgettable characters, the message behind *Mary Poppins* remains an important one for young people to understand, especially today: that hope and optimism can be powerful tools in the face of hard times.

The story concerns the Banks family. Mr. and Mrs. Banks are involved with other things and cannot give their children, Jane and Michael, the attention they need. Jane and Michael, in turn, are misbehaving to get attention. The "winds of change" are literally blowing, and Mary Poppins arrives on their doorstep. Using a combination of magic and common

sense, she teaches this distressed family how to value each other again.

Who exactly is Mary Poppins? That's for you to decide. The author Feenie Ziner calls Mary Poppins "fiercely independent, unpredictable, the very essence of the creative spirit" (as quoted in *A Lively Oracle: A Centennial Celebration of P.L. Travers*, edited by Ellen Dooling Draper and Jenny Koralek). Above all, Mary Poppins teaches us to find the magical in the everyday. In her hands umbrellas fly, carpet bags hide endless treasures and a day at the park becomes a journey to a new world.

In *Mary Poppins*, the factory owner John Northbrook tells Michael that money has a worth (for example, one dollar or, in London, one pound) but it also has a value (or what the money can do to help others). Mary Poppins teaches the Banks family (and the audience!) to value the important things in life: family, friendship and imagination. In *Mary Poppins*, Mary sings, "Anything can happen if you let it." *Mary Poppins* is about discovering the extraordinary world around us, even when things look bleak. This guide is designed to help you explore the extraordinary world of *Mary Poppins*.

SYNOPSIS

CENTER STAGE: MARY POPPINS

ACT ONE

Bert, a man of many trades, introduces us to Cherry Tree Lane. He has a feeling that something is about to happen. He stops in front of No. 17 Cherry Tree Lane, where things are not going well. Jane and Michael Banks are constantly misbehaving, and Katie Nanna, the latest in a long line of nannies, has had enough. She leaves, and Mr. Banks asks his wife to place an advertisement in the newspaper for a nanny, but the children take matters into their own hands and write their own ad. Just as Mr. Banks is about to leave for work, Mary Poppins arrives; she fits the children's requirements exactly. Mary Poppins is strict but fair; she keeps the children focused with a combination of common sense and magic. Against their wishes, Mary Poppins takes the children on a walk to the nearby park. There they meet Bert, who is busy creating his latest works of art. Bored with the park and wary of Bert's ragged clothes, the children try to escape their new nanny. Mary Poppins urges them to look beneath the surface of everyday life to see the magic there; suddenly the parks bursts into brilliant colors and the statues come to life and dance with them.

The Banks children are not the only ones feeling out of place. Back at No. 17 Cherry Tree Lane, Mrs. Banks feels that she is disappointing both her husband and her children. She is throwing a party, but she really doesn't know the guests. She longs for the days when she was an actress on the London stage. The household prepares for Mrs. Banks' party, but even with Mary Poppins' magic, the event is a disaster as no one shows up. Mrs. Banks is left feeling more lost than ever. Mary Poppins takes Jane and Michael on a trip to visit their father at his workplace, the bank. At the bank, Mr. Banks has a choice: to give a loan to Herr Von Hussler, a conniving businessman who cares only about money, or John Northbrook, a factory builder who cares for his workers. An innocent question from Jane prompts Mr. Banks to remember the ideals and values he once held. He decides to take a chance on Mr. Northbrook and gives him the loan.

On the way home from the bank, the children and Mary Poppins run into the Bird Woman, feeding the birds in front of St. Paul's Cathedral. Jane is still worried about outer appearances and shuns the beggar woman, but Michael offers to give the Bird Woman money.

Mary Poppins, Jane, Michael and Bert meet Mrs. Corry, the mysterious owner of the unusual "talking shop," where people actually purchase words along with gingerbread. The children are surprised to hear that Mrs. Corry knew their father when he was a boy.

Things begin to go very wrong for Mr. Banks. Von Hussler has gone to another bank and is making millions, and Mr. Banks is being blamed. Under great stress, he yells at the children. In turn, Jane and Michael are furious with their father and in their anger, fight over their toys. The toys magically come to life and teach the children a lesson they will never forget. Recognizing that the children are not yet open to learning, Mary departs with a note which says, "au revoir," or "till we meet again."

ACT TWO

The house is bustling again, this time because a nanny is returning to No. 17 Cherry Tree Lane. However, the visitor is Miss Andrew, Mr. Banks' old nanny, and not Mary Poppins. Miss Andrew is a cruel and harsh woman who believes that children should be punished on a regular basis with a horrible medicine that tastes like cod liver. In a



panic, the children escape the house and run to the park where they meet Bert, who explains that the cure for every ill can be found at the end of a kite string. Their kite flies up into the London sky and when it returns, Mary Poppins is on the other end. She returns home with them and defeats Miss Andrew in an epic battle. Mr. Banks has also been hiding from Miss Andrew, and is relieved to see Mary Poppins again.

Whisked up to the rooftops, Mary Poppins, Jane and Michael meet Bert and his fellow chimney sweeps). The sweeps dance across the rooftops of London and into the Banks' house, wishing good luck to Mr. Banks and shaking his hand as they go.

Mr. Banks' boss, the Bank Chairman, wishes to see Mr. Banks immediately. Mr. Banks fears the worst, but Bert reminds him that his family is more important than his ambitions. Mr. Banks leaves for the bank and Mrs. Banks wishes she could go with him. Mary Poppins and the children encourage her to do what she believes is right.

At the bank, Mr. Banks defends his actions in front of the Board of Directors, who tell him that he was right all along: Herr Von Hussler's schemes have fallen through and their competition has been ruined, while Northbrook's factories have made a healthy profit. They promote Mr. Banks, who tells them that from now on his family comes first. As Mr. and Mrs. Banks walk along the streets of London, they are joined by Mary Poppins, Jane and Michael, Bert, Mrs. Corry. The whole universe spins above their heads, like a giant umbrella. Her job done, Mary Poppins leaves, perhaps to help another family in need. Although Jane, Michael and their parents are sad to see her go, they are glad that they have finally found each other.

CENTER STAGE: MARY POPPINS



CHARACTERS

BERT: A one-man-band, a sidewalk artist, a chimney sweep and a kite salesman, Bert also narrates the story.

MR. GEORGE BANKS: Father to Jane and Michael. Bank manager and a good provider; often forgets how to be a good father.

MRS. WINIFRED BANKS: Mother to Jane and Michael; a former actress, who struggles to find herself.

MICHAEL & JANE: The Banks children; bright and precocious.

KATIE NANNA: The latest in a long line of Banks' nannies.

MARY POPPINS: Jane and Michael's new nanny.

POLICEMAN: This local policeman brings Jane and Michael home after many of their misadventures.

ADMIRAL BOOM: The Banks' friendly neighbor on Cherry Tree Lane.

MISS LARK: Another neighbor on Cherry Tree Lane.

WILLOUGHBY: Miss Lark's dog.

MRS. BRILL: The Banks' cook.

ROBERTSON AY: The Banks' footman.

THE PARK KEEPER: Watches over the park near the Banks' home.

MRS. CORRY: Mysterious and very old, Mrs. Corry runs the "Talking Shop" where people buy conversations and gingerbread.

VALENTINE & WILLIAM: Two of the children's special toys.

NELEUS: A statue in the park, the Greek Neleus was abandoned by his father, Poseidon, god of the ocean.

THE BIRD WOMAN: A beggar woman who sits in front of St. Paul's Cathedral every day, selling bags of crumbs for feeding the pigeons.

VON HUSSLER: A conniving businessman.

JOHN NORTHBROOK: An English factory owner who cares more for his workers than for making money.

MISS ANDREW: George Banks' childhood nanny. Miss Andrew is cruel and demanding.

THE BANK CHAIRMAN: Mr. Banks' boss.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

Chim Chim Che-ree/Cherry Tree Lane

The Perfect Nanny

Practically Perfect

Jolly Holiday

Being Mrs. Banks

A Spoonful of Sugar

Precision and Order

A Man Has Dreams

Feed the Birds

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious

Temper Temper

ACT TWO

Brimstone and Treacle

Let's Go Fly A Kite

Good For Nothing

Step In Time

A Man Has Dreams/A Spoonful of Sugar Reprise

Anything Can Happen If You Let It

CURTAIN CALL:

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

WHO'S WHO: CREATIVE TEAM

P.L. Travers

Novelist

Like the magical nanny she created, P.L. Travers never explained. Throughout her career, people often asked her where the idea for *Mary Poppins* came from, but she never really told. She believed in mystery, mythology and folk tales - she believed in questions, not answers. For P.L. Travers, life was a never-ending quest for the truth.

Born Helen Lyndon Goff, she grew up with stories. She was born in Australia on November 9, 1899 into a world with no TV, no radio, no movies or Internet.

She especially loved the stories of the *Brothers Grimm* and began to create her own fantastical tales at an early age. One night when Helen was ten, she was left in charge of her two younger siblings during a driving thunderstorm; their mother had walked into the storm, distraught, and they didn't know if she would return. To comfort the younger children, Helen began to weave intricate and magical stories about an enchanted horse, allowing the children to fill in the blanks of the tale.

Although she entered her teens wanting to be an actress and a dancer, Helen soon realized that writing held more power for her. She loved to express herself through storytelling. As a young actress, she had changed her name to Pamela Travers, and she loved to see it in print. In February of 1924 she left for London, England, the home of poets, playwrights and famous

storytellers. "There, at last," she said, "I was where I wanted to be" (as quoted in *Mary Poppins, She Wrote: The Life of P. L. Travers* by Valerie Lawson (Simon & Schuster, 2006)).

While in London, she wrote for Australian newspapers, describing her adventures abroad. She soon met the poet George William Russell, nicknamed AE, who became a close friend and mentor. He told her that she had a "dangerous brilliance."

It was Russell who introduced her to the inner meaning of fairy tales and mythology and, in a moment that would change her life, suggested that she write about a witch. Something about a magical teacher - a combination wise old woman and fairy godmother - appealed to Travers. She took all of her experience and imagination and poured them into a solitary figure, blown into London by a mysterious wind.

In 1926, Travers had written the first *Mary Poppins* story, "*Mary Poppins and the Match Man*," about a young Mary Poppins meeting Bert the Match Man for an afternoon tea in one of his sidewalk chalk drawings. She built on that original story, creating a world around her mysterious nanny that combined magic and ordinary life.

Who is Mary Poppins? Travers' biographer Valerie Lawson wrote, "The original Mary Poppins was not cheery at all. She was tart and sharp, rude, plain and vain. That was her charm; that - and her mystery." *Mary Poppins*, published in 1934, was very popular, and Travers began writing a series of books about the family who lived at No. 17, Cherry Tree Lane.

Throughout her life, Travers explored the connections between life and storytelling. Fairy tales, she wrote, "live in us, endlessly growing, repeating their themes, ringing like great bells. If we forget them, still they are not lost. They go underground, like secret rivers and emerge the brighter for their dark journey" (as quoted in *Mary Poppins, She Wrote: The Life of P.L. Travers* by Valerie Lawson (Simon & Schuster, 2006)). In *Mary Poppins Opens the Door*, she writes of a mystical crack in the fabric of reality that opens between New Year's Eve and New Year's Day in which all the fairy tale characters come out to play.

P.L. Travers died in 1996 at the age of 96. Her journey was over, but in many ways it had just begun. At the first day of rehearsal for *Mary Poppins*, Cameron Mackintosh said to the company, "I'm sure Pamela Travers is here, today, in spirit! And you can be sure she has plenty of notes for us already!" (from "*Out of the Blue: The Comings and Goings of Mary Poppins*" by Brian Sibley).



CURTAIN CALL: LEARNING ACTIVITIES

WHO'S WHO: CREATIVE TEAM

RICHARD M. SHERMAN & ROBERT B. SHERMAN

Composers / Songwriters

Richard and Robert Sherman had music in their blood. Their father, Al Sherman, had been a songwriter on Tin Pan Alley, that famous New York City street where hundreds of songwriters worked at their pianos day and night creating a sound like crashing tin pans. And their grandfather had been Court Composer and Conductor for Emperor Franz-Josef of Austria-Hungary in the early 1900s. Richard and Robert Sherman would follow the “family business” by spreading their joyous music around the world.

The Sherman brothers were born in New York City to Rosa and Al Sherman (Robert was born in 1925, Richard in 1928). After several trips across country, the family finally settled in Beverly Hills, California in 1937. Both boys were intensely interested in music, but it wasn't until their father challenged them to write a song together that they began to work as a team.

By the early 1960s, Richard and Robert had become the main song writers for Walt Disney. In 1961, they wrote several songs for the Disney movie *The Parent Trap*. Then in 1964, they began work on *Mary Poppins*. They had to find ways to fit songs into P.L. Travers' stories. Richard Sherman said, “From the beginning, we saw this in musical terms. We wanted to do a full blown musical fantasy of the first magnitude.” (as quoted in *The Musical World of Walt Disney* by David Tietyen).



GEARGE STILES & ANTHONY DREWE

Composers / Songwriters

George Stiles and Anthony Drewe had admired the Sherman brothers all of their lives. This song writing team had worked together with Cameron Mackintosh on the musical *Just So Stories*. At Mackintosh's suggestion, they wrote a song called “Practically Perfect” for *Mary Poppins*, not realizing that the Sherman brothers had written a song with the same title that never made it into the film! When work began on the *Mary Poppins* stage production, the two song writing teams began to collaborate, creating new songs and expanding some of the original songs with new dramatic context. “By the end of the process,” said Richard Sherman, “it was sometimes hard to remember who wrote what and when.”



CURTAIN CALL: LEARNING ACTIVITIES

THE MAGICAL TEACHER

Mary Poppins is a modern myth: the tale of four heroes - the Banks family - who are schooled by a magical teacher. For thousands of years, people have told stories of gods, genies, and spirits: magical teachers who have granted humans special knowledge and insights. Heroes sometimes need guidance from supernatural mentors to continue their journey. What else is “Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious” but a magic word? What else is “A Spoonful of Sugar” but advice from a magical being on how to live a better life? As Brian Sibley and Michael Lassell write in *Mary Poppins: The Story Behind the Journey from Books to Broadway*, “Mary, like many modern fairy tale characters - not to mention mythic beings - fills some longing, some need, some desire in us all. Like many of her fellow figments of imagination, from *Goldilocks* to *The Little Mermaid*, she teaches us real and valuable lessons about life.”

Many of these magical mentors have been women: oracles, wise women, and even witches who nurture male and female heroes alike and pass knowledge down through the ages. In Greek mythology, Athena, the goddess of wisdom, helped many heroes by making them use their common sense, just as Mary Poppins does for the Banks family.

What is common sense? It's what we know deep in our hearts to be true, not what we read in books or what others tell us. Athena shows the hero Perseus how to kill the Medusa, not by magic, but by forcing the monster to gaze upon its own reflection in a mirror. Teachers like Mary Poppins show us how to see the magic in everyday life. It's wonderful to read about magical occurrences in books, or see them happen on stage. But magic can be an old woman feeding the birds on the steps of a cathedral, or a father teaching a son to fly a kite.

Of course, all the enchantment and good advice a magical teacher can give can only go so far. In the end, it is the hero who must make the journey alone. Now it's up to the Banks family to take the next step.

VARIATIONS:

Compare Mary Poppins with some modern magical guides such as Ms. Frizzle from *The Magic School Bus* series, or Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Which & Mrs. Who from *A Wrinkle In Time* by Madeleine L'Engle.

FROM THE PAGE TO THE SCREEN TO THE STAGE

No one had ever seen anything like it. When the Disney film *Mary Poppins* was released in 1964, audiences saw live actors dancing with animated creatures, characters jumping into sidewalk drawings and a magical nanny flying above the London skyline. As David Tietzen, author of *The Musical World of Walt Disney* wrote, “It was a total synthesis of all that was Disney - animation, music, special effects, outstanding art and superb casting and acting.”

Walt Disney had been introduced to the world of *Mary Poppins* by his daughter and spent many years persuading writer P.L. Travers to let him adapt her stories for the screen. Once she gave Disney the film rights, he knew that the story needed the best in movie magic and music (he brought in the songwriting team of Richard and Robert Sherman).

Disney was sure that, along with its visual delights, *Mary Poppins* had to be about the characters. “We had to come up with a need for Mary Poppins to come to the Banks family,” said Richard Sherman. At first they thought of having the father be away at war, but then they had a better idea. “He would be emotionally absent,” said Sherman. “We made it a story about a dysfunctional family. And in comes Mary Poppins - this necessary person - to heal them” (as quoted in “*Becoming Mary Poppins: P. L. Travers, Walt Disney, and the Making of a Myth*” by Caitlin Flanagan, *The New Yorker*, December, 2005).

The film garnered 13 Academy Award® nominations, and won in five categories (Best Actress, Best Song, Best Score, Best Film Editing, and Best Special Effects). After such a massive success, talk of a sequel was natural. After all, P.L. Travers had written many stories about her supernatural nanny. However, a sequel was never made.

Years later, following the Broadway success of *The Lion King* and *Beauty and the Beast*, Disney Theatrical Group's President Thomas Schumacher partnered with Producer Cameron Macintosh to bring the beloved nanny to life on stage. Drawing from the classic film version for inspiration, they assembled a dynamic creative team to combine the original film score with new songs as well as additional stories from Travers' other *Poppins* tales. In an unusual pairing of past and present, composers George Stiles and Anthony Drewe were brought in to work with the film's original songwriters, Richard and Robert Sherman to merge new tunes with the existing movie score. Additional members of this innovative creative team included writer Julian Fellows, Director Richard Eyre, Choreographer Matthew Bourne and Designer Bob Crowley.

CURTAIN CALL: LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Now that you've met the characters in *Mary Poppins*, meet some of the people who might have worked in an upper class or upper middle class English home in 1910.

THE BUTLER



Often the oldest servant in the house, he was in charge of the family silver, china and glassware and answering the door to callers. He assisted at all the family's meals, standing behind the chair of the master of the house, awaiting his next command. His responsible position meant that he had the highest salary.

THE HOUSEKEEPER



The housekeeper was in charge of maintaining order and cleanliness in the house. She looked after all the household stores, ensuring that everything was in good condition. All of the other female servants reported to her, and she would work closely with the butler to see that everything ran smoothly.

THE VALET



He was second in importance to the butler. The valet assisted the master with his clothing. He would also take care of all travelling arrangements when the master decided to go abroad. If valets had a good relationship with the head of the house, their job would be made much easier.

NANNY



Children from wealthy families would spend very little time with their parents. Instead, a nanny would be employed to look after them. Although the nanny's job was very important, they were not paid very much. She was given a comfortable bedroom in the family's house, and allowed more days off than other staff.

THE FOOTMAN



Reporting to the butler, the footman's job was to clean and refill oil lamps, clean cutlery, polish silver and copper plate and set the dining room table for dinner. He would also accompany the man of the house as he paid calls. It was very important that footmen kept on the good side of both the butler and the valets in the house.

THE HOUSEMAID



The housemaid was responsible for many tasks which kept the household running. She swept the rooms, cleaned the fireplaces, polished the brass, mended clothes and washed dishes. She would usually be younger than the housekeeper, and her wage not as high, but her position was not the lowest in the house.

CHIMNEY SWEEPS



Although not employed by the family on a permanent basis, many Edwardian families would regularly pay chimney sweeps to clean their chimneys. It was a dangerous job, with many health and safety risks e.g., breathing problems, falling and breaking bones.

THE COOK



In consultation with the lady of the house, the cook chose and prepared the dishes for each day's meals. She also oversaw the larder, ensuring that there was enough food, and that this was well kept. Her position was very important and she had a lot of influence – if you upset the cook, you might not get any dinner!

SCULLERY MAID



The scullery maids were often the youngest girls in the house. Their jobs included washing dishes, pots, and pans, preparing fires and lighting the stove in the mornings. Because work was hard, low paid, and there was little time off, they took every opportunity to have fun behind their bosses' backs.

CURTAIN CALL:

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

LONDON

In many ways, *Mary Poppins* can be seen as a magical travelogue of London in 1910. Throughout the story, we see London's parks, shops, banks, the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral, even the city's rooftops! Since *Mary Poppins'* story is so ingrained in the city, learning about some of London's landmarks will make seeing *Mary Poppins* a richer experience.

THE PARKS

During the 19th century, London's neighborhoods were arranged to create a balance between buildings and open, leafy spaces that still exists today. London's industry was growing at a rapid pace, and people of all classes needed places to go to escape the hustle and bustle of the city and reconnect with nature. Most of London's small parks were built during the 1820s. The parks were laid out with larger evergreen trees and shrubs along the outer belt to create a secluded feeling. The interior of the parks were set with grass, paths, flowerbeds and statuary.

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

The current St. Paul's Cathedral is actually the fourth to occupy this same site. A Cathedral of St. Paul has looked over London since 604 AD. The Cathedral that towers over the London skyline today was designed by the architect Sir Christopher Wren and built between 1675 and 1710 after the third cathedral had been destroyed in the Great Fire of London. Since the first service took place there in 1697, St. Paul's Cathedral has become a focal point for the history of London and England. The funerals of Winston Churchill and the Duke of Wellington took place here; peace services were held here after both World Wars. Millions have visited St. Paul's: to worship, to sit in its peaceful interior, and to feed the birds that still flock its steps.

THE ROOFTOPS

During the early 20th century, the rooftops of London were the chimney sweeps' kingdom! As long as we have heated our homes with fire, there has been a need to clean out chimneys of soot, and chimney sweeps have always come to the rescue. During the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, more and more people built tightly packed houses in cities and urban centers. And with houses came chimneys! In 19th-century England, many young boys were employed as chimney sweeps because it was easier for them to get inside the chimney. Many became sick and died from this difficult work.

Have you ever heard the phrase "to light a fire under" someone to make them work faster or harder? That comes from the young chimney sweeps - sometimes a young sweep was too scared to go into a chimney, so his boss would light a fire in the fireplace underneath him! Being a chimney sweep was a dangerous job, but an important one. Dirty chimneys could easily cause fires and back up with deadly smoke.

Eventually, the creation of instruments that would allow someone to sweep the chimney without actually being inside allowed older men like the character of Bert to take over the job. In many places in Great Britain, it's still considered good luck to shake hands with a sweep. Chimney sweeps are sometimes hired for weddings so they can shake hands with the bride and groom before the ceremony; in fact, sweeps today often make more money at weddings than they do cleaning chimneys!

CURTAIN CALL:

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

REALITY CHECK: NANNIES

During the 19th century and into the early 20th century, something unique happened in Great Britain. Rather than raising their children themselves, as parents had done for centuries, mothers and fathers from rich and middle class families handed over their children to special caregivers, called “nannies,” who were hired to address childrens’ every need, from food and education to discipline. As in *Mary Poppins*, fathers were expected to work while mothers were expected to entertain guests and lead the staff of servants.

“WHETHER IT WAS A COAT, OR A CHILD.”

During the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, both population and wealth dramatically increased in Great Britain. In 1830, the average English family had six or seven children, and this number was even higher for the wealthy. More children created a need, and more money created the means to hire more servants to watch the children. As Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy in his book *The Rise and Fall of the British Nanny* writes, “If the rich had anything that needed looking after - whether it was a coat or a child - then there was a servant to do it.”

RULER OF THE NURSERY

As nannies became more and more popular among the wealthy and middle classes, their power in the household increased. The nursery was their kingdom and they ruled it with a firm hand. The nursery was always removed from the rest of the house; many times, as in *Mary Poppins*, it was on the top floor, or near the servants quarters. Nannies controlled every aspect of the child’s life; children would see their parents for only a short amount of time each day. Nannies controlled the child’s clothing, books, food, medicine, and discipline, and so exerted a great deal of influence over the lives and personalities of their charges.

“AS MADE MY CHILDISH DAYS REJOICE”

Nannies could be very cruel, like the character of Miss Andrew in *Mary Poppins*. But when nannies were kind, the connection between them and their children could be very close. The writer Robert Louis Stevenson, who wrote *Treasure Island* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* wrote about his own nanny in *A Child’s Garden of Verses*:

“And grant it, Heaven, that all who read
May find as dear a nurse as need,
And every child who lists my rhyme,
In the bright, fireside nursery clime
May hear it in as kind a voice
As made my childish days rejoice.”

DID YOU KNOW?

Nannies also passed on stories. Why do you think they’re called “Nursery Rhymes?” Remember, there was no television, no Internet in 1910; although people read books and newspapers, stories told through the oral tradition were still a popular way to pass on morals and traditions. Who might be the storyteller in your family?

NANNIES TODAY

Nannies are more popular today than ever! In these stressful times when both parents need to work long hours, or single parents raise children, parents are still looking for help in raising and appreciating their kids, and nannies like “Supernanny” Jo Frost are there to help Mom and Dad cope!

There are many different web sites that describe the duties and responsibilities of a modern nanny. Use the Internet to research how different countries define these roles.

CURTAIN CALL: LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CHARACTERS CAN SEE THE WORLD IN DIFFERENT WAYS

A story can change depending on who tells it. People see the world from different viewpoints; a group of people might see the same event from completely different perspectives. You've gotten a chance to meet the characters at *Mary Poppins* and learn about their development. Now it's your turn to become the characters by expressing their viewpoints in words and styles that you help to create.

STEP ONE: Set up the "hot seat": a single chair in front of your classroom.

STEP TWO: One by one, each member of your class or group should take a turn in the "hot seat." When it's your turn, choose one of the characters from *Mary Poppins* (for a full list of characters, see page 6). Introduce yourself in the voice and manner of the character you have chosen.

STEP THREE: To the right, find some important events from *Mary Poppins*. Ask the "characters" in the "hot seat" questions about how these events affect them.

EVENTS:

KATIE NANNA LEAVING
MARY POPPINS ARRIVING
VISITING MR. BANKS AT THE BANK
FIGHTING OVER THE TOYS
PREPARING FOR MRS. BANKS' PARTY
MISS ANDREW ARRIVING
MR. BANKS BEING FIRED FROM HIS JOB
MEETING WITH VON HUSSLER
MEETING WITH NORTHBROOK

After the class or group has interviewed several "characters," discuss how the characters' viewpoints differed. How were they alike? Was there a point in the story when most of the characters' viewpoints were the same?

WHAT HAPPENS IN *MARY POPPINS*?

Get up on your feet and jump into *Mary Poppins*' story!

Break your class or group into smaller groups of 2 or 3 people. Each group can choose or be assigned one of the events in *Mary Poppins* (to refresh your memory, check out the synopsis on page 4).

Create an emotional portrait: Using gestures, facial expressions and body language - but no words - express the emotions of your event from *Mary Poppins*. You can even use sounds - but no words! Can the audience guess what event you are portraying?

Create a tableau: Create a tableau, or frozen moment in time, from your event - with no words. Can the audience guess what event you are trying to portray?

Create an improvisation: Each group will have two minutes to improvise its events from *Mary Poppins* with

full use of language, facial expression, gesture and body language. Don't worry about recreating lines from the musical - the idea is to reveal the emotions behind that moment in the story to your audience.

Hire a director: After the initial round of improvisations, a director can be assigned to each scene. Another student joins the group. It will be his or her job to lead the scene, advising the actors on the best way to make the story clear for the audience.

Hire a playwright: Assign one student to be the playwright. Another student joins the group; it's her or his job to write out the lines after the improvisations in proper dramatic format, complete with character names and stage directions.

CURTAIN CALL:

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

REPORT THE NEWS ON CHERRY TREE LANE

Mary Poppins takes place in London, England in 1910, a time before text-messaging, the Internet, television or radio. People got their news through newspapers. During the time of Mary Poppins there were dozens of newspapers published in London, each one with a different style and viewpoint, read by people from all walks of life.

Create a neighborhood newspaper for the street where the Banks family lives. Study the front page of a modern newspaper to see what your front page might include, such as the date, a motto, weather and a masthead.

Ideas for articles can include:

CURRENT EVENTS

Use Library or Internet research to study what was happening in the world in 1910 with such topics as:

- THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY
- CLASS DISTINCTIONS
- THE ROLE OF CHILDREN IN SOCIETY
- THE ECONOMY & COMMERCE
- THE PLACE OF BRITAIN IN THE WORLD
- THE PLACE OF THE NANNY IN BRITISH SOCIETY

Choose one factor from the list above (or another of your choosing) and write an article describing how that factor affects the characters in Mary Poppins.

INTERVIEWS

Create fictional interviews with different characters from Mary Poppins. First, write out a series of questions you would ask one of the characters, then answer the questions in the “voice” of the character (this can also be done in pairs, with one person writing the questions, the other writing the answers in the “voice” of the character. These interviews can be improvised and then transcribed.

Choose an event from the musical and describe it in article format; include quotes from different characters.

You can interview the characters on how they feel about events in the musical, including the arrival of Mary Poppins, the arrival of Miss Andrew, Mr. Banks losing his job, Mr. Banks getting a promotion.

FEATURE ARTICLES

Advice Columns: Give advice as if from Mary Poppins and Mr. Banks. Split your class in half. One half can write letters to Mary Poppins or Mr. Banks, asking for advice on such topics as: “Chores: Why or Why Not?”, “Is Homework Important?”, “Should Parents play with their Kids?”, “How Should We Treat Our Toys?” The other half might write responses in the voices of Mary Poppins or Mr. Banks.

Pro and Con: Use the topics from the Mary Poppins/Mr. Banks advice columns above to create a “Pro and Con” column. Split your class in half. One half will write brief paragraphs about the “pro” aspects of schoolwork, chores around the house, parenting, and teaching. The other half will write from the negative, or “con” position. Place the paragraphs side-by-side for comparison; what can you learn from points on either side?

Advertisement from Bert: Describe Bert’s various skills as a sidewalk artist, chimney sweep, one-man band and kite salesman.

Crossword puzzle: Develop a puzzle or word search with words and terms from Mary Poppins.

The Winds of Change: Create a weather report - is it good weather to fly kites? What are the winds of change coming to Cherry Tree Lane?

Horoscopes: Imagine what the stars hold for the characters in Mary Poppins?

Comic strips: Design a comic strip or one-panel comic portraying a scene from Mary Poppins.

EDITORIALS

Unlike a newspaper article which is just supposed to present the facts, an editorial expresses the opinion of the editors on important timely matters. Possible ideas for “The Cherry Tree Lane Gazette” editorials:

1. **Should Mr. Banks encourage Mrs. Banks to be an actress?**
2. **Are nannies good for the English home?**
3. **What is the most important lesson the Banks children learn from Mary Poppins?**
4. **Your suggestions?**

CURTAIN CALL: LEARNING ACTIVITIES

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE USE OUR IMAGINATION?

WHAT HAPPENS? WHERE DID SHE GO?

P.L. Travers said, "I often wonder why people write and ask me to explain this and that. I'll write back and say that Mary Poppins didn't explain and neither can I, or neither will I. So many people ask me, 'Where does she go?' Well, I say, if the book hasn't said that, then it's up to you to find out" (quoted in *Women Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews*, Random House, 1998).

A story has a beginning, a middle and an end, but a character's life goes on after the last page, or after the curtain falls. Take up Travers' challenge. Where DOES Mary Poppins go? What happens after the curtain falls? Write a story describing what happens to the characters after the end of the musical.

UPDATE THE STORY

What if the story of Mary Poppins happened today? Write your own adaptation of Mary Poppins, updating the story to the present (no longer than three pages). How would it change? Use library and Internet resources to research the history of au pairs and nannies today. Who might Mary Poppins be in the 21st century? How about Jane and Michael? Mr. Banks, Mrs. Banks, or Bert? Think about the families in your own community - what type of family might she visit, and why?

CREATE IMAGINARY WORLDS

When Mary Poppins takes Bert and the children into the magical world of the paintings in the park, it's a leap of imagination. Every time we look at a landscape painting or photo, we might imagine what that world must be like beyond the confines of the picture frame. We imagine what it must be like to be IN the painting or photo.

Study some landscape paintings or drawings. Write a story about what it would be like to be in the painting. Create your own landscape drawings. Now give them to other students in your class or group. They will write about what it must be like to be in your drawing.



CURTAIN CALL: LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CREATE THE WORLD OF THE STORY ON STAGE!

Imagine that you're a set designer! It's your job to create the physical world of the play or musical - to show the audience WHERE the story takes place.

ASSIGNMENT: Create a set for one of the following scenes in *Mary Poppins*:

- NO. 17 CHERRY TREE LANE
- THE PARK
- THE ROOFTOPS
- THE BANK

1. ORIGINAL SOURCES:

THE DISNEY FILM: Watch the 1964 Disney film version of *Mary Poppins*. Take notes as you watch. How do the filmmakers portray the Banks family's home? The Park? The London rooftops? Use your notes to write a paragraph description of how these places appear in the movie.

P.L. TRAVERS: Set designer Bob Crowley was influenced by Mary Shepard's illustrations for P.L. Travers' original *Mary Poppins* book. Here are some examples of how P.L. Travers described the settings in her books. Close your eyes as someone reads these passages to you. What emotions do they evoke? What colors do you see? Patterns? What do you hear? Smell?

THE PARK: "Over the Park lay a cloud of sunlight as thick and as golden as syrup. No wind stirred the heavy leaves. The flowers stood up, very still and shiny, as though they were made of metal.

"Down by the Lake the benches were empty. The people who usually sat there had gone home out of the heat. Neleus, the little marble statue, looked down at the placid water. No goldfish flirted a scarlet tail. They were all sitting under the lily leaves - using them as umbrellas.

"The lawns spread out like a green carpet, motionless in the sunlight. Except for a single, rhythmic movement, you might have thought that the whole park was only a painted picture."

- from *Mary Poppins in the Park* by P.L. Travers

NO. 17 CHERRY TREE LANE: "If you want to find Cherry Tree Lane all you have to do is ask the Policeman at the cross-roads. He will push his helmet slightly to one side, scratch his head thoughtfully, and then he will point his huge white-gloved finger and say: 'First to your right, second to your left, sharp right again, and you're there. Good morning.'

"And sure enough, if you follow his directions exactly, you will be there - right in the middle of Cherry Tree Lane, where the houses run down one side and the Park runs down the other and the cherry-trees go dancing right down the middle."

- from *Mary Poppins* by P.L. Travers



CURTAIN CALL: LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CREATE THE WORLD OF THE STORY ON STAGE! (cont.)

2. RESEARCH:

Using library and Internet resources, research Edwardian homes and design. Find five photos (at least one in color) of what real homes, parks and rooftops looked like during Edwardian era London.

For information on these special places, visit these web sites:

Brick and Brass: Edwardian Style www.bricksandbrass.co.uk/deshist/edward/edward.htm

This web site offers comprehensive information on the architecture, design, and history of houses in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This section presents details of the Edwardian style.

The official site for London parks: www.yourlondon.gov.uk/parks/

Sites about Peter Ellenshaw:

Peter Ellenshaw created the matte paintings for the 1964 Disney film *Mary Poppins*. When using a matte in a film, certain sections of the scene are blocked out while the live action is filmed.

These sections are later replaced by the matte painting. The matte paintings Ellenshaw fashioned for *Mary Poppins* created the illusion that Mary Poppins, Bert and the children are dancing with the chimney sweeps on the Edwardian rooftops!

To see a gallery of Ellenshaw's work, including his work for the *Mary Poppins* movie, visit this website: www.piersidegallery.com/artists/ellenshaw/

3. NOW, GET TO WORK!

Divide your class or group into smaller groups of three to five students. Each team should get a cardboard box to house its diorama/model. Other materials can include:

- Crayons, markers, and colored pencils
- Glue or tape
- Scissors
- Scrap pieces of fabric
- Modeling clay
- Real plants
- Color photos of plants and trees
- Popsicle sticks
- Other materials...be creative!

Combine your descriptive words and your research and, alone or in groups, create a three-dimensional model of what your set might look like.

Once all the teams are finished, each group should present its model to the class or group. Constructive criticism can be given: how do the models enhance the scene? How might the team change its set design to better tell the story of *Mary Poppins*?



VOCABULARY

Nanny: a person employed to take care of children in a household

Conniving: to scheme and plot

Epic: imposing or impressive

Dysfunctional: abnormal or impaired functioning

Intensely: having great strength, strong feeling

Collaborate: to work together

Perspective: a mental view or outlook

Au Pair: a young foreign visitor, employed to take care of children in exchange for room and board.

Travelogue: a description of travels

Ingrained: deep rooted, firmly fixed

Secluded: isolated, shut off

Focal: relating to a central point

Sweep: a nickname for a chimney sweep

Aspect: part or feature

RESOURCES:

TEXT

Mary Poppins by P.L. Travers (Harcourt Children's Books, 2006)

Mary Poppins Comes Back by P.L. Travers (Harcourt Children's Books, 2006)

Mary Poppins Opens the Door by P.L. Travers (Harcourt Children's Books, 2006)

Mary Poppins in the Park by P.L. Travers (Harcourt Children's Books, 2006) Mary Poppins From A to z by P.L. Travers (Harcourt Children's Books, 2006)

Mary Poppins in the Kitchen by P.L. Travers (Harcourt Children's Books, 2006)

Mary Poppins in Cherry Tree Lane by P.L. Travers (Dell, 1983)

Mary Poppins and the House Next Door by P.L. Travers (Delacorte, 1989)

Mary Poppins, She Wrote: The Life of P. L. Travers by Valerie Lawson (Simon & Schuster, 2006)

A Lively Oracle: A Centennial Celebration of P.L. Travers, Creator of Mary Poppins, edited by Ellen Dooling Draper and Jenny Koralek (Larson Publications, 1999)

Women Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews (Random House, 1998)

The Musical World of Walt Disney by David Tietyen (Hal

Leonard, 1990)

The Rise and Fall of the British Nanny by Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy (Hodder and Stoughton, 1972)

London: The Biography by Peter Ackroyd (Doubleday, 2000)

London: A Social History by Roy Porter (Harvard University Press, 1998) The Baby-sitters Club series by Ann Martin (Scholastic, 1995) Supernanny by Jo Frost (Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 2005)

Impro: Improvisation and Theatre by Keith Johnstone (Theatre Arts, 1987)

Walking London's Parks and Gardens by Geoffrey Young (McGraw-Hill/Contemporary Books, 1999)

INTERNET

The official site of Disney on Broadway's Mary Poppins: disney.go.com/theatre/marypoppins/

A park-by-park description of London's greenery: www.london-sightseeing-guide.com/parks.htm

The London Parks & Gardens Trust, a charitable organization dedicated to preserving London's parks and spreading the word about the history of London's green spaces: www.londongardenstrust.org/

A very comprehensive site detailing the history of London, including a great deal of information on the Edwardian Era: www.storyoflondon.com

BACK STAGE: ABOUT MUSICAL THEATRE

A BRIEF HISTORY

Live theatre is a unique experience that engages the audience much more than movies or TV. Musical theatre is the only genre of performance that fully utilizes acting, singing and dancing together to further the development of the plot.

ORIGINS & FOLLIES



Musical theatre's roots can be traced back to ancient times, where the Greeks used music and dance in their tragedies and comedies. Next, fast forward to the 1700s where comedic operas were popular in Europe. In 1866, the first "musical" by modern definition, *The Black Crook*, opened in New York City. In the 1920s, Florenz Ziegfeld's famous *Follies* showcased star actors and actresses with extravagant sets and costumes but was mainly a musical revue of popular songs.

In 1927, Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II's *Show Boat* premiered, which featured complete integration of book, music and score to tell a story. During "The Golden Age of Broadway," famous composers and lyricists churned out hits, like George & Ira Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* (1935), Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* (1943), Irving Berlin's *Annie Get Your Gun* (1947), Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim's *West Side Story* (1957), and Cole Porter's *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948).

EARLY YEARS & THE GOLDEN AGE

In 1927, Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II's *Show Boat* premiered, which featured complete integration of book, music and score to tell a story. During "The Golden Age of Broadway," famous composers and lyricists churned out hits, like George & Ira Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* (1935), Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* (1943), Irving Berlin's *Annie Get Your Gun* (1947), Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim's *West Side Story* (1957), and Cole Porter's *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948).



CONTEMPORARY & MEGA MUSICALS



The end of the 1960s saw changes in Broadway, like *HAIR*, one of the first rock musicals. Unusual concept musicals such as Marvin Hamlisch and Edward Kleban's *A Chorus Line* and Sondheim's cynical *Company* led to big-budget musical operettas like Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil's international hit *Les Miserables* and Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*.

Well known movie and literature favorites like Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (which premiered at TUTS in 1994) and Stephen Schwartz's *Wicked* have been adapted into family-friendly, special effect spectacles. At the same time, in reaction to the rising ticket cost and flashy spectacle of Broadway, shows like Jonathan Larson's *RENT* aim for a less polished, more personal theatre experience. TUTS was a part of the production enhancement team that moved *RENT* from off-Broadway to Broadway, and continues to benefit from that association, presenting the original Broadway and film leads in a special engagement in 2009.

WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

Innovative new musicals like the rowdy production of *Matilda* and the fresh take on Roger and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* have been attracting and pleasing younger audiences.



The revival of the beloved classic *Annie* starred a Theatre Under The Stars alum, Sadie Sink, in the title role and successfully creating a new generation of musical theatre lovers. Broadway audiences have also fallen head over "heels" for the Tony Award winning *Kinky Boots*, the story of a struggling shoemaker and his unexpected new business partner. Between movie and book adaptations, revivals of past favorites and contemporary boundary-breakers, there's no doubt the Broadway musical is here to stay.

BACK STAGE:

ABOUT MUSICAL THEATRE

PUTTING ON A SHOW

Whether you're a stage manager, actress, director, costume designer or composer, when it comes to putting on a musical, all roles are important. Here's a roadmap for getting a musical to Broadway.

FINDING THE PERFECT MUSICAL

Producers must find a show that their audience will enjoy and will want to purchase tickets to. They also need to plan the budget for the production. Producers rent a theatre and pay royalties to the composer, lyricist and writer of the musical's book for the rights to perform the show. One resource for discovering new musicals and connecting with the world of musical theatre is the National Alliance for Musical Theatre (NAMT), which was founded by TUTS' Frank Young in 1985. Please visit NAMT.org for more information.

GATHERING THE CREATIVE TEAM

The creative team includes the director, set designer, costume designer, choreographer and music director/conductor. Together with the producers, they discuss their vision for the show and how they will bring it to life on the stage.

CASTING AND REHEARSAL

The director and choreographer will hold auditions for the parts in the show. For most Broadway shows and tours, actors must be a part of the Actors Equity association and have an appointment, but sometimes an open call will be held. After the cast has been chosen, rehearsals begin. Actors must memorize their lines, songs and choreography before dress rehearsals and the show's opening. For information about auditioning for shows at TUTS, please visit TUTS.com.

PERFORMING FOR AN AUDIENCE

If the show looks good after previews, it will open. Most Broadway shows perform several times a week at night and usually have a few matinees as well. Some shows have a specific closing date; other shows will continue performing as long as people are buying tickets.

VOCABULARY

Choreographer - the person who creates the dances and movement patterns for the show

Stage Manager - the person who manages and takes care of the stage, sets and all special effects; directs the stage hands

Stage Hands - technicians and trained individuals who work side stage and back stage before, during and after the show to make all special effects, scene changes and clean-ups happen.

Prop Master - the person in charge of getting, storing, maintaining and sometimes creating the props used in the show.

Audition - a tryout for performers.

Open call - a casting open to anyone without appointment

Dress rehearsals - rehearsing in full costume and full tech as though there is an audience.

Previews - performances before the show opens for a limited audience to test public opinion.

Matinee - an afternoon or early evening show.

TUTS CONTENT GUIDE

THANK YOU!



You are the only person qualified to determine what is appropriate for your child(ren)/student(s), but we hope the information and rating system in this guide were helpful. This content guide was designed by Melissa Taylor, written by Christina Martinez, and supervised by Scott Howard. Please feel free to copy and distribute.
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SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Email any questions, concerns or comments to Gaby Quintana at Gaby@tuts.com.



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