

WANTED: Talented Young Writers!

Play by Play isn't just written for New York City high school students...it's written by them!

Do you teach talented young writers who also love going to the theatre? If so, encourage them to apply to become a staff reviewer for *Play by Play*. They'll receive valuable experience writing about and reviewing the best of Broadway and Off Broadway theatre...not to mention free tickets!

For more information, contact *Play by Play* editor Amanda Cooper at playbyplay@tdf.org

***Play by Play* is now available at public libraries throughout New York City. Look in the teen/young adult section for your copy!**



Seasons Greetings from Play by Play!

The Winter issue of *Play by Play* will soon be at your school, giving you and your students the best of New York City theatre. Please distribute it right away!

This guide is designed to familiarize you with the upcoming issue of *Play by Play*, and to suggest ways it can be used in a variety of classroom settings and curricular contexts.

How to Introduce *Play by Play*

Using *Play by Play* as a classroom resource supports New York City and State learning standards in Drama and English Language Arts, as well as the New York City **Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts**. In this issue, you can:

- ✓ **DEVELOP THEATRE LITERACY** with a writing exercise introducing students to the process of casting a play
- ✓ **MAKE CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS** with current Broadway and Off Broadway shows (listed in this guide) which relate to subjects you may be studying.
- ✓ **WORK WITH COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES** by visiting one of the neighborhood theatres featured in this issue!

Other options featured in this guide:

- ✓ **WORKSHEET:** Reproduce and distribute the *Play by Play* A to Z worksheet on the back page of this guide along with the current issue of *Play by Play*.
- ✓ **PUZZLE:** Use the puzzle found in *Play by Play* as a quick, fun and easy way to familiarize your students with the content of the issue. (Answers inside this guide.)
- ✓ **IMPROVISATION:** "2016: High School Reunion" —host a talk show in your classroom!

Give the Gift of Big Theatre Discounts!

Many of you are already TDF members and enjoy **great theatre at deeply discounted prices** through our mailings and Web site. Why not remind your fellow full-time educators and your students that they're also eligible to join TDF and get the best ticket deals in town for Broadway, Off Broadway, music and dance?

www.tdf.org/application

IN THIS ISSUE:

Reviews:

- ***A Chorus Line*** was once the longest-running show in Broadway history. *Play by Play* reviewer Barbara Fenig says that the current revival is “the ideal musical this winter and carries with it a united tale that all can identify with.”
- ***No Child*** is a one-woman show written and performed by Nilaja Sun, based on her real-life experiences as a teaching artist in New York City’s toughest public schools. *Play by Play* reviewer Melissa Elgandy says “you’ll never think of public education the same way again.”
- ***Spring Awakening*** is a daring rock rendition of Frank Wedekind’s coming-of-age story, featuring music by pop musician Duncan Sheik. *Play by Play* reviewer Valerie Prizimenter considers it “a play that transcends time and space.”
- ***Striking 12*** is this season’s ‘anti-holiday’ hit that features music and performances by rock band Groovelily. Reports *Play by Play* reviewer Anthony Laws: “*Striking 12* is a musical that is worth every moment.”
- ***Evil Dead: The Musical*** is the cheeky stage version of the cult movie classic. Five friends go camping in the woods...and much fake blood ensues! Says *Play by Play* reviewer Quaseem Raab: “EVERYONE in the theater gave a standing ovation, including me!”

Other Shows Highlighted in this Issue:

- ***A Very Merry Unauthorized Children’s Scientology Pageant*** returns to New York for another holiday season. Don’t miss this spoof on stardom and Scientology!
- ***High Fidelity*** was a book by Nick Hornby, then a movie starring John Cusack...and now it’s a stage hit at the Imperial Theatre!

Other Features:

- **Interview with Alex Gemignani:** The star of the current revival of *Les Misérables* chats with *Play by Play* reporter Candice Brown about how he got his start on stage, the ups and downs of the acting profession, and the process of mounting a huge Broadway musical!
- **Spotlight on a Neighborhood Theatre:** In this issue, read about the offerings of Brooklyn’s Gallery Players.

Using the Back Page: *Play by Play* A to Z

The worksheet provided on the back page of this guide is designed to help students navigate through the issue and discover the opportunities it contains. Reproduce the worksheet and assign it as homework, or put students into groups and encourage them to complete it together in class. Try setting a time limit, and see which group can find the most correct answers.

Answers: *Assassins*, Barrow Street Theatre, *Company*, Daryl Roth Theatre, *Edge Theatre*, *Floyd and Clea Under the Western Sky*, Groovelily, “Hello Twelve, Hello Thirteen, Hello Love,” Imperial Theatre, Jonathan Groff, Knowby, Lincoln Center Theatre, Michael Mayer, Natalie Cortez, *Our Country’s Good*, Pearl Theatre, Quaseem Raab, Rattlestick Theatre, *Slava’s Snow Show*, *Two Trains Running*, Upright Citizens Brigade, Valjean, Wendla, Xerox Corporation, Youth Onstage!, Zach

WRITING EXERCISE

A Chorus Line @ Schoenfeld Theatre

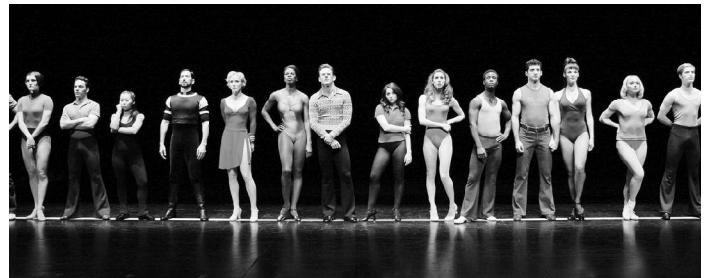
You’re Hired!

A Chorus Line offers a dramatic glimpse at the intriguing process of casting a Broadway musical. Based on taped interviews with real performers, the play follows a fictional director’s quest to cast the perfect backup chorus line.

The chorus of a musical, not unlike a school classroom, is a unique and diverse combination of individuals with different hopes, dreams and fears. The director’s job in casting all the roles of the play—from the leading role to every chorus member—is to find unique and talented performers who can reflect and refract the special qualities that make each character unique.

Theatres often post casting notices in trade publications to announce upcoming auditions, describing the roles they’re trying to cast and the personality traits they’re looking for. A notice for the role of Diana Morales in *Chorus Line*, for example, might look like this:

Seeking: DIANA MORALES, female, age 25-35, Hispanic. Motivated, passionate, full of professional ambition. Never takes “no” for an answer. Mistrustful of authority. Her spunky and sometimes bitter personality hides deep passions, hatreds and personal fears. She is a well-trained singer, dancer and actor; she’s tired of auditioning for chorus roles and not getting cast.



Exercise: Write a casting notice for yourself, describing the kind of performer who could best portray you on stage.

1. **Read** the review of *A Chorus Line* in this issue of *Play by Play*.
2. **Discuss** the importance of the casting process in producing a play. How does casting influence the overall production? What does a director look for in a good performer?
3. **Imagine** someone has written a play about your classroom, and it’s going to be a big hit! And...there is a character in the play based closely on you.
4. **Identify** your most dominant and important character traits. How would you describe yourself to another person? What are your physical characteristics—age, gender, etc.? How would you want to be portrayed on stage? What are your best and worst qualities? What are your likes and dislikes? Biggest hopes, fears, motivations?
5. **Write** a casting notice (known as a “breakdown” in the theatre industry) for the role of yourself!
6. **Trade** casting notices with another classmate and read the breakdown they’ve written for themselves. What two or three famous stage, film or TV actors would you audition to portray your classmate on stage?

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Many Broadway and Off Broadway productions can support the curriculum you teach. The list below includes shows featured in *Play by Play*, as well as other productions that may or may not offer a specially priced student ticket.

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, tickets can be purchased for the following shows by calling Ticketmaster at (212) 239-6200.

Literature:

- **Les Misérables** (in this issue)
- **El Quixote** A carnivalesque adaptation of Cervantes' masterpiece. Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27 St. (212) 225-9940.
- **The Color Purple** The hit musical based on Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel. Broadway Theatre, 1681 Broadway. www.colorpurple.com
- **Two Trains Running** In this August Wilson revival, regulars at a Pittsburgh diner come to terms with their rapidly-changing world. Through Jan. 14. Signature Theatre Co., 555 W. 42 St. (212) 244-PLAY. www.signaturetheatre.org

History/Government:

- **The Coast of Utopia: Voyage and Shipwreck** Parts one and two of a three-production play that tells the panoramic story of a group of Russian intellectuals who lead a revolution. Lincoln Center Theater, 150 W. 65 St. www.lct.org or www.lctstudentix.org
- **Frank's Home** Famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright tries to mend the broken relationships within his family. Jan. 12-Feb. 18. Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42 St. www.playwrightshorizons.org.

Ethnicity/Multicultural:

- **Translations** Brian Friel's masterpiece on the power of language to unite and divide people in a time of cultural imperialism. Begins Jan. 4. Biltmore Theatre, 261 W. 47 St. (212) 399-3000. www.mtc-nyc.org

Current Events/Ethics:

- **No Child** (in this issue)
- **The American Pilot** A pilot crash lands in a rural village in a war-torn country. Through Dec. 31. Manhattan Theatre Club at City Center, 131 W. 55 St. (212) 399-3000.

Shakespeare and the Classics:

- **King Lear** Shakespeare's classic drama, starring Kevin Kline. Begins Feb. 9. The Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. www.publictheatre.org
- **The Merchant of Venice** F. Murray Abraham stars in Theatre For A New Audience's Shakespeare revival. January 6-Feb. 11. The Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42 St. (212) 229-2819. www.tfana.org

THE SECRET OF YOUR SUCCESS

What's the real behind-the-scenes story?

Many of this issue's featured productions reveal the story "behind the scenes." The hopeful dancers of *A Chorus Line* reveal their greatest inspirations and deepest fears. Nilaja Sun's *No Child...* offers an insider perspective on New York's public school system; Groovelily's imaginative re-telling of "The Little Match Girl" in *Striking 12* includes a revelation of their drummer's secret holiday hopes. Candice Brown's interview with Alex Gemignani gives us a glimpse of the actor's biggest joys and struggles.

What will be the story behind your students' success? What do they know about each other...and what don't they know yet? What are their dreams and ambitions? What (or who) inspires them? How will the choices they make today affect the people they'll become tomorrow?

Talk Show Improv: "2016: High School Reunion!"

- ▶ Ask students to imagine what they will be doing ten years from now. Will they be living out their dream? Will they have accomplished everything they set out to? How did their accomplishments, challenges, and personal choices in high school help them get there?
- ▶ Place four chairs at the front of the room. Ask for one volunteer to host "2016: High School Reunion!" Explain that the host will interview three special guests as if they were on a talk show.
- ▶ Choose three volunteers to appear on "2016: High School Reunion!" as special guests. When they appear in the improvisation, they will play themselves...ten years from now!
- ▶ Have the "host" introduce the special guests one at a time, and interview them about where they are, how they got there, and their reflections on high school: how it influenced them, prepared them, and catapulted them into the future. What were their biggest fears and challenges in school? What were they most proud of? What were their biggest likes and dislikes? Who inspired them? (Be sure to field questions from the "studio audience" in the classroom!)

Using the *Play by Play* Puzzle

Pass out *Play by Play* to your class. Give students ten minutes to read through the issue, and fill in the word scramble on the bottom of page 5.

Answer Key: Alex Gemignani, Happy go lucky X-mas, *A Chorus Line*, Malcolm X High

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Play by Play **A to Z**

Use this issue to find answers which start with the following letters.

A

Alex Gemignani was in a revival of this musical

B

Nilaja Sun's *No Child...* is currently playing at this theatre

C

Go to the Barrymore Theatre and get \$25 student rush tickets to this musical

D

Striking 12 is currently playing at this theatre

E

Find theatre, dance and comedy events at The Point, located at this theatre in the Bronx

F

\$15 student rush tickets are available for this show at Playwrights Horizons

G

They're the performing band in *Striking 12*



H

First loves and first breakups are described in this song from *A Chorus Line*

I

High Fidelity is currently playing at this theatre

J

He plays Melchior in *Spring Awakening*

K

He's the ghostly professor of *Evil Dead: The Musical*

L

\$20 tickets are available for *The Clean House* at this theatre



M

He directed the musical pictured left

N

She plays Diana Morales in *A Chorus Line*

O

In *No Child...*, the students of Malcolm X High School are rehearsing this play

P

Go to this theatre on Thursday nights for \$10 student tickets to *School for Wives*

Q

He reviewed the musical pictured right

R

Go to this theatre for \$10 student rush tickets to *Dark Matters*

S

Get \$25 student rush tickets for this long-running show at Union Square Theatre

T

\$15 student tickets are available for this August Wilson play at Signature Theatre

U

See improv and sketch comedy for \$8 here

V

Alex Gemignani plays the character pictured right in *Les Misérables*

W

Lea Michele plays this character in *Spring Awakening*

X

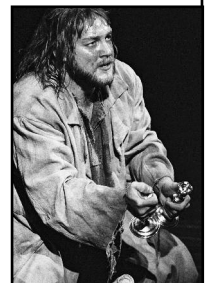
Corporation that supports *Play by Play*

Y

The All Stars Project produces this event (you can see it for \$5!)

Z

He's the fictional director of *A Chorus Line*



Think about it/Talk about it: Which show featured in the issue most interests you, and why?