



STUDY GUIDE

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

Music by Alan Menken

Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz

Book by Peter Parnell

based on the novel by Victor Hugo
and songs from the Disney film

Directed by Justin Anderson

Musical Direction by Ann-Carol
Pence

Choreography by Ricardo Aponte

Produced by Theatrical Outfit &
Aurora Theatre, 2017

The Hunchback of Notre Dame reinforces the following World History Social Studies Georgia Performance Standards:

SSWH7 – The student will analyze European medieval society with regard to culture, politics, society, and economics including the status of peasants and feudal monarchies and the political impact of Christianity. Through this literary narrative, students will better understand the role of the church, the caste system and unwanted and unaccepted members in medieval society.

“At its heart, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is a story of faith: a faith in something bigger than us, and the faith that *we* are something bigger. When the fire of our life burns away the given circumstances of socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, creed, handicap and hardship, we are just people ... people who long for love, acceptance, and wholeness. In times like these that seem so unclear, I can’t think of a better hope-filled story to pierce through the darkness and remind us of that truth.”

— Justin Anderson, director, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

PLAY SYNOPSIS

ACT I

The setting is Paris in the year 1482. As bells echo through the Cathedral, a congregation recounts the story of Dom Claude Frollo and his brother Jehan. When the brothers were orphaned, they were taken in by the priests of Notre Dame Cathedral. Frollo, who lived by the strict rules of the Church thrived; Jehan, who preferred to write his own rules and took up with a Gypsy woman, was expelled from the community. Now an Archdeacon, Frollo is summoned to his estranged brother's deathbed. Jehan's Gypsy wife died shortly after giving birth to their baby, and now, Jehan's dying wish is to have his brother Frollo care for the infant, who has been born with physical deformities. Frollo reluctantly agrees, and names the baby Quasimodo, meaning "half-formed."

Now grown, Quasimodo is the lonely but obedient bell-ringer at Notre Dame. Frollo has offered him sanctuary in the Cathedral, but keeps him locked away in the bell tower where Quasimodo's only "friends" are the bells and the stone statues and gargoyles. During a festive day known as the "Feast of Fools," Quasimodo musters up the courage to go out in public. In the square, Clopin, the King of the Gypsies is leading the festivities when Captain Phoebus de Martin arrives to take command of the Cathedral Guard. Frollo appears and he and Phoebeus both become entranced by the dancing of a beautiful Gypsy woman named Esmeralda. Esmeralda good-naturedly encourages Quasimodo to step up to receive the honor of "King of the Fools," but the crowd attacks Quasimodo, and Esmeralda intercedes to rescue him. Back at the bell tower, Frollo scolds Quasimodo for going out in public and makes him promise that he'll never leave again.

Esmeralda runs into Phoebus, and the two share an instant chemistry. She then visits Quasimodo in his tower. He is also quite taken by her kindness and beauty. The two are discovered by Frollo, who, because he is also smitten with her, offers Esmeralda sanctuary in the Cathedral. Suspecting he has ulterior motives, she declines.

Obsessed with Esmeralda, Frollo follows her to a tavern, where he sees her kissing Phoebus. Consumed with jealousy, Frollo convinces himself that Esmeralda is a demon sent to tempt his soul. The next morning, Frollo persuades King Louis XI to put out a warrant for Esmeralda's arrest. While searching for her, Frollo orders Phoebus to burn down a brothel where she is believed to be hiding. When Phoebus refuses, Frollo has him arrested. Esmeralda tries to save Phoebus, and in the melee, Phoebus is stabbed by Frollo, who then blames Esmeralda for the crime. Esmeralda and the injured Phoebus escape, as a distraught Quasimodo observes it all from his tower above.

ACT II

Quasimodo agrees to hide the wounded Phoebus until he regains his strength. Esmeralda gives Quasimodo an amulet that will lead him to the Gypsy's Court of Miracles. Inspired by a statue of the martyr Saint Aphrodisius, Quasimodo imagines himself as Esmeralda's protector and savior. Frollo arrives and tells Quasimodo that he knows the location of the Gypsy hideaway and that he is sending his soldiers to attack at dawn. Quasimodo and Phoebus sneak out to warn the Gypsies.

When they arrive at the secret lair, Clopin, believing them to be enemies, threatens their lives, until Esmeralda intercedes. Quasimodo and Phoebus warn them of the impending attack. As the Gypsies prepare to leave, Phoebus makes plans to go with Esmeralda. Quasimodo is heartbroken. Just then, Frollo and his soldiers enter, arrest Esmeralda and Phoebus, and take Quasimodo back to the bell tower where they chain him up.

Frollo imprisons Esmeralda, and tries to force himself on her. When she fights him off, Frollo threatens to have Phoebus killed unless she relents. He then brings Phoebus to her as an inducement. Locked in the bell tower, Quasimodo submits to his devastation, and ignores the pleas of his "friends" to break free and save Esmeralda.

The next morning in the town square, a caged Phoebus watches as Esmeralda is tied to a wooden stake. Frollo gives her one more opportunity to relent, but she spits in his face. Frollo lights the pyre. Watching from above, Quasimodo is moved to action. He breaks free of his chains and swoops down to rescue Esmeralda, carrying her away while crying "Sanctuary!" and whisking her back to the Cathedral. He bars the doors of Notre Dame and carries her to the bell tower. Violence breaks out in the square, Clopin frees Phoebus and they rally the crowd against Frollo. Quasimodo believes he has saved Esmeralda, but it is not to be; she dies in his arms. Frollo returns to the bell tower and tries to convince Quasimodo that things can return to the way they were. Quasimodo finally sees Frollo for who he really is and throws him from the tower to his death. He then picks up Esmeralda's body and carries her out into the square for all to mourn.

ABOUT THE NOVELIST



VICTOR HUGO is a celebrated French Romantic author best known for his poetry and novels. He was born in 1802, in Besançon, France and died in 1885, in Paris. Hugo's innovative brand of Romanticism developed over the first decade of his career. In 1831, he published *Notre-Dame de Paris (The Hunchback of Notre Dame)* which became one of his most well-known novels. By the 1840s, Hugo had become a celebrated literary figure in France. He fled to Brussels following a coup in 1851 and lived in Brussels and Britain until his return to France in 1870. Much of the work that Hugo published during this period conveys biting sarcasm and fierce social criticism. Among these works is the novel *Les Misérables*, which was finally published in 1862. The book was an immediate success in Europe and the United States. Later reinterpreted as a theatrical musical and a film, *Les Misérables* remains one of the best-known works of 19th century literature.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

ALAN MENKEN's career as a composer has spanned over 40 years. His stage musicals include *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Beauty and The Beast*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Sister Act*, *Leap of Faith*, *Newsies*, *Aladdin*, and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Song and score credits for film musicals include THE LITTLE MERMAID, BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, NEWSIES, ALADDIN, POCAHONTAS, THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, HERCULES, ENCHANTED, and TANGLED. Winner of the 2012 Tony and Drama Desk awards for his score for NEWSIES, he has won more Academy Awards than any other living individual, including eight Oscars®, with 4 for Best Score and 4 for Best Song; 11 Grammy® Awards; 7 Golden Globes; London's Evening Standard Award; the Olivier Award; the Outer Critics Circle Award and the Drama Desk Award. Other notable achievements include induction into the Songwriters Hall of Fame, Billboard's number one single ("A Whole New World") and number one album ("Pocahontas"). In 2001 he received the distinction of being named a Disney Legend. He has been awarded two doctorates in Fine Arts from New York University and the North Carolina School of the Arts.

ABOUT THE LYRICIST

STEPHEN SCHWARTZ studied piano and composition at the Juilliard School of Music while in high school and graduated from Carnegie Mellon University in 1968 with a B.F.A. in Drama. In 1971, he wrote the music and new lyrics for GODSPELL, for which he won several awards including two Grammys. The following year, he wrote the music and lyrics for PIPPIN and two years later, THE MAGIC SHOW. He later began working in film, collaborating with composer Alan Menken on the scores for the Disney animated features POCAHONTAS, for which he received two Academy Awards and a Grammy, and THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME. He also provided songs for DreamWorks' first animated feature, THE PRINCE OF EGYPT, for which he won another Academy Award for the song "When You Believe." He recently collaborated with Alan Menken on the songs for Disney's ENCHANTED. Mr. Schwartz's musical WICKED opened in the fall of 2003 and in 2008 reached its 1900th performance on Broadway, making Mr. Schwartz the only songwriter in Broadway history ever to have three shows run more than 1900 performances. A book about his career, "Defying Gravity," has recently been released by Applause Books.

ABOUT THE BOOK WRITER

PETER PARNELL most recently wrote the new book for the Broadway revival of Lerner and Lane's *On A Clear Day You Can See Forever*, starring Harry Connick Jr. and Jessie Mueller. His plays include *Trumpery* (Atlantic Theatre Company), *QED* starring Alan Alda (Mark Taper Forum), and a two-part stage adaptation of John Irving's *The Cider House Rules* (American Theatre Critics Association Award). His other plays, including *Hyde in Hollywood*, *Flaubert's Latest*, and *An Imaginary Life*, were first produced by the Public Theater and at Playwrights Horizons. For television, Parnell was a co-producer for "The West Wing" (two EMMY Award citations), and a producer for "The Guardian," "Inconceivable," and "Six Degrees." His children's book "And Tango Makes Three," co-authored with Justin Richardson, was an American Library Association Notable Book and a Henry Bergh Award winner. Parnell has taught writing at Dartmouth, the New School, Columbia, the Yale School of Drama, and NYU. He proudly serves as Vice-President of The Dramatists Guild.

"HUNCHBACK" VOCABULARY WORDS & TERMS

Amulet - an ornament or small piece of jewelry thought to give protection against evil, danger, or disease.

Archdeacon – an official of the Christian church; during the European Middle Ages, a chief official of the diocese.

Catechism - a collection of questions and answers that are used to teach people about the Christian religion.

Gargoyle - a grotesque carved human or animal face or figure projecting from the gutter of a building, typically acting as a spout to carry water clear of a wall. (Interestingly, a second definition is “a person with an ugly face.”)

Gypsy - also **Romani** or **Roma**, are a traditionally nomadic ethnic group, living mostly in Europe and the Americas and originating from the northern regions of the Indian subcontinent. While the Romani are widely known among English-speaking people as Gypsies, some people consider this term to be offensive due to its connotations of illegality and irregularity.

Notre Dame Cathedral Paris - or Notre Dame de Paris (meaning 'Our Lady of Paris' in French) is a Gothic cathedral located in the fourth arrondissement of Paris, France. It was one of the very first Gothic cathedrals, with its construction beginning in the 12th century and ending 300 years later. It is now one of the most prominent cathedrals in France as well as one of the oldest. Although its architecture is predominantly French Gothic, there are parts of the Cathedral that reflect the Renaissance and Naturalism eras.

Outcast - a person who has been rejected by society or a social group.

Piety- the quality of being religious or reverent.

Popinjay - a vain or conceited person, especially one who dresses or behaves extravagantly.

Profligate - utterly and shamelessly immoral.

Pyre - a heap of wood or other combustible material for burning a corpse as part of a funeral ceremony.

Saint Aphrodisius - a saint associated with the diocese of Béziers in southern France. Christian tradition states that he was a prefect or high priest of Heliopolis who sheltered the Holy Family when they fled into Egypt.

Sanctuary – a place of refuge or safety. (In the Catholic tradition, the concept of Sanctuary is an ancient one. In the year 511, the First Council of Orléans granted protection to anyone who sought asylum within a church or an ecclesiastical residence like the house of a bishop, even those guilty of the very worst crimes.)

(the) **Seine** – the second longest river in France.

Study Questions and Activities

Study Questions and Activities provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the play and its historical context, related to specific educational standards or elements.

POST SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be an outcast? How is our society in 21st century America more tolerant and accepting of so-called “outcasts” than was 15th century France as depicted in “The Hunchback of Notre Dame?” In what ways is our society similar? What can our society do to improve in this regard?
2. A line in the musical’s opening song asks “What makes a monster and what makes a man?” Are most people all “good” or all “evil?” or a mix of both? Which characters in the play would you describe as “men?” which as “monsters?” Why?

3. The concept of Sanctuary is an important one in this play. What was the church's meaning of sanctuary? Is it a good (noble) idea? There is much discussion in our country at this time around the idea of "Sanctuary Cities." Discuss what these designations are about and whether or not you think they're a good idea. Could a Sanctuary City have assisted any of the characters in the play? Which ones? In what way?

ESSAY TOPICS

1. **"The Three Estates and the Characters' Fates"** The socio-economic caste system of 15th Century France was divided into what was called the Three Estates: the first was made up of the King and Queen and all ordained members of the Christian Church; the second, of noblemen and women; and the third, of everyone else – from laborers to beggars. Select two characters from "Hunchback." Write any essay about how their ranking in this caste system affected their fates in the play.
2. **"What Makes a Monster and What Makes a Man?"** What are the traits that make a person "good" or "evil?" What role does physical appearance play in the overall character of a person (if any)? Do different societies value different qualities in their citizens? What aspects of a society affect the way it judges its people?

ACTIVITIES

1. Have A Debate

Compare and contrast the politics of 15th Century France with those of 21st Century America, focusing on the relationship of Church and State.

Step 1: Research the relationship between Church and State in 15th century France and 21st century America.

Step 2: Assign students to play two characters from the play who would hold differing opinions about the positive and negative ramifications of living in a country in which the church has power and/or influence over the government. (for example: Frollo and Esmeralda, or Frollo and Jehan.)

Step 3: Divide the class into two teams to provide support for each student playing a character. Allow each team to prepare their arguments.

Step 4: Hold the debate.

2. Writing a Persuasive Letter

Most of the characters in this play fall short of getting what they want from other characters in the story. What if they could write a letter to another character trying to persuade the other person to give them what they want/need?

Step 1: Research tactics of writing a persuasive paper.

Step 2: Have each student pick a character from the play, and then determine what it is that he/she most wants.

Step 4: Have each student write a one to two page letter from the point of view of their character.

Step 4: Allow each student to read his/her letter aloud in class. Possibly have another student play the role of the person to whom the letter has been written and gauge his/her reaction to the letter.

3. Venn Diagram Activity (see next page)

ACTIVITY – Use a Venn Diagram to describe the differences and similarities of two characters in "The Hunchback of Notre Dame."

VENN DIAGRAMS are used to illustrate the areas where sets overlap.

Use this Venn Diagram to list both physical and personality traits of Quasimodo and Esmeralda.

In the overlapping area, cite characteristics that are similar to both characters.

