

PETER

AND THE

STAR

CATCHER

PRODUCTION HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The *Peter and the Starcatcher* Production Handbook is here to guide you through all aspects of production: from casting to rehearsal to design and beyond. We at Disney Theatrical Group took what we learned from the Broadway production, as well as various high school pilots, to craft a guidebook for creating your own vision for the show. In the following pages, you'll find resources that you can draw from as needed, including broad and specific ways to approach *Peter's* story theater style. Whether *Peter* marks your first or 100th production, we hope this handbook inspires you to take risks, explore new methods of storytelling, and empower your cast to participate in the design and staging process. As Peter says, "This is gonna be one awfully big adventure." We hope it's one that brings you great joy.

Julie Haverkate
Editor and Literary Coordinator
Disney Theatrical Group

Introduction..... 1

Synopsis..... 2

Casting..... 6

Rehearsal Exercises..... 9

Music Direction..... 17

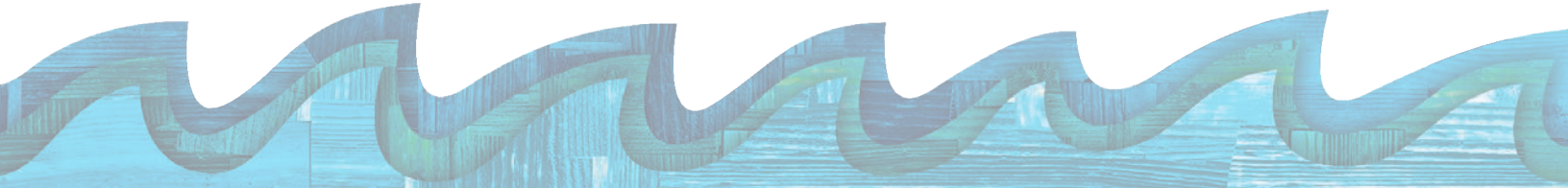
Staging & Directing Tips..... 20

Design..... 33

Beyond the Stage..... 50

Resources..... 77

Credits..... 80



*“Suppose all these planks and ropes are now the British Empire...
use your thoughts to hoist the sails and deck the ships awaiting us...”*

— Act One: Prologue



*Green Valley High School
Henderson, NV*

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, excited at the prospect of escaping a hot New York summer, I agreed to meet with Roger Rees and Alex Timbers in Massachusetts to discuss a project they were going to direct together, based on a novel by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson. I hopped on a train, and four hours later, weary and travel-stained, I found myself at the door at Williamstown Theatre Festival. A door swung open and I was invited inside. Roger and Alex eyed me carefully.

For hours, they talked about this boy, Peter, and eventually said, “We’d like you to write the play.” I was flattered, naturally, but in the course of thinking about what sort of play it would be, one question kept nagging at me, which was, “Who the heck is ‘Peter’?”

And then, it dawned on me. Oh, *that* Peter. I mean, sure, I enjoyed his peanut butter as a kid, but when I read Dave and Ridley’s novel, and J. M. Barrie’s original play, I understood this Peter dude much better. I asked Dave and Ridley if I could make a slight change to their title, *Peter and the Starcatchers*. “I want to drop the plural ‘s’ from *Starcatchers*,” I said. Naturally enough, they asked why. “At its heart, the play is about how this boy and this girl find their destinies only because of the difficult thing they accomplish together. By the end, they’ve become *Peter and the Starcatcher*. Dropping the ‘s’ is a small change with a big difference.”

But we wanted to make sure the play would reflect what all of us love most about the theater – a sense of being part of something bigger than yourself. Community. I remember when Sheldon Harnick, the wonderful lyricist of *Fiddler on the Roof*, came to see *Peter*. *Fiddler* was one of the first shows I saw as a kid – and I finally got to tell Mr. Harnick what I loved most about it. It was the powerful, visual way it showed the strength of community. The very first time the people of Anatevka appear, they form a circle. Then, at the end of the show, when they’re forced to leave their homes, they meet once more in a circle, and then, one by one, they depart, and the circle is broken. And we know it’s the end of something. I share this with you because we did the opposite with this play. We begin with a mob of actors center stage, a community waiting to happen, and we end with those same people, back with a purpose – to lift Peter up in flight. And we know it’s the *beginning* of something.

It’s that collective strength and community purpose – your community here – that I hope you’ll remember. It’s what this play is about, but it’s also what all theater is for; why we love it and need it so. Since 2007, *Peter and the Starcatcher* has traveled across the country, to Broadway and beyond. And its magic has traveled intact – the result of years of collaboration, ingenuity, family, and love. However you do it, make sure you do it for one another, for family, for community. Trust me, that’s the secret to staying (or at least feeling) young forever.

Thank you, Peter. It’s been a wild ride. May it never end.

Rick Elice
Playwright

SYNOPSIS

ACT 1

An ensemble of actors enters a bare stage and addresses the audience, transporting them to a bustling port where two ships – The *Wasp* and the *Neverland* – prepare for a voyage to the remote kingdom of Rundoon. Two identical trunks are delivered to the port. One contains precious cargo belonging to the Queen, who has entrusted Lord Aster to take it to Rundoon aboard the *Wasp* and destroy it there; the other, meant for the *Neverland*, contains only sand. Bill Slank, captain of the *Neverland*, swaps the trunks so that the Queen’s cargo is loaded aboard his ship, and the identical trunk is hoisted aboard the *Wasp*. Grempink, the schoolmaster of St. Norbert’s Orphanage for Lost Boys, then sells three orphans to Slank, prompting one of them – a nameless Boy – to proclaim that he hates grownups.

Preparations are underway on the *Neverland* for the voyage to Rundoon (***Sailors and Seamen***), when a squadron of seamen arrives to fetch Lord Aster as he entrusts his daughter, Molly, and her caretaker, Mrs. Bumbrake, to Captain Slank on the *Neverland*, which is meant to take a slower, safer route to Rundoon. As Molly and Lord Aster bid farewell, a crate containing the orphan boys bursts open and one catches Molly’s eye until her father commands her attention with details of the mission she so desperately wishes to take part in. As only an apprentice Starcatcher, she resigns herself to the *Neverland*, and Lord Aster places a Starcatcher’s amulet around her neck and a matching one around his, for safety.

In their cabin, Mrs. Bumbrake regales Molly with a story when Alf, a kindly old seafarer on his way to feed some pigs, interrupts to flirt with her. When he departs, Molly follows him to the bilge (***Molly Descends***) only to discover three filthy orphans instead: Prentiss, who demands to speak to the captain; Ted, who dives into the slop bucket; and the nameless Boy, who asks Alf about their uncertain fate. After Alf leaves, Molly reveals herself and challenges the boys’ claims to leadership before leading Ted and Prentiss to find real food. Though something about her ignites a spark within the Boy, he stays behind and flashes back to the horrors and abuse of St. Norbert’s (***Grempink Flashback***).

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Greggors roughly escorts Lord Aster below decks on the *Wasp*, revealing that his real name is Smee and the seamen aboard are actually pirates – while Captain Scott and the real seamen are in chains below. Smee elaborately introduces Black Stache, the most feared pirate captain on the high seas, who threatens to find and kill Molly and steals the key to the Queen’s trunk from Lord Aster.

Aboard the *Neverland*, Molly’s amulet begins to glow, and she divulges to the boys that her father is on a secret mission for the Queen. When they encounter a flying cat in Slank’s cabin, she realizes that starstuff is the cause and that the Queen’s treasure must be onboard the *Neverland* instead of the *Wasp*. She tries to distract the boys from the starstuff with a bedtime story. Back on the *Wasp*, Stache opens the trunk to find only sand. He commands that the ship be turned around to pursue the *Neverland*.

After the boys have been lulled to sleep by Molly's story, Lord Aster contacts her through the amulet and warns her that pirates have commandeered the *Wasp*. He instructs Molly, who is now part of the mission, to bring the Queen's trunk to him once the *Wasp* catches the *Neverland*. The Boy awakens and overhears; he insists that Molly tells him what is going on. Molly obliges, telling him about Starcatchers and their mission to rid the world of starstuff, a magical substance that could be disastrous in the hands of the wrong person. As they discuss why they are each headed to Rundoon, Slank enters and tosses the Boy, who cannot swim, overboard. Molly dives into the ocean and saves him.

As hurricane winds begin to stir up the ocean, Slank sees the *Wasp* and assumes the British navy must have discovered the swapped trunk. He prepares to outrun the other ship, but the Boy takes the wheel and changes course, toward the *Wasp*. Below deck, Alf and Mrs. Bumbrake flirt (***Hurricane – Part 1***), while above deck, in the midst of the storm, the two ships meet, and the pirates board the *Neverland*

and fight with the sailors. Molly dashes off to get the trunk from Slank's cabin, and the Boy, realizing that there are more important things than saving his own neck, runs off to help her. On deck, Slank and Stache square off for a final duel, but just as Stache gets the upper hand, the *Neverland* splits in two, torn apart by the violent storm. As Molly and Mrs. Bumbrake struggle to maintain control of the trunk from Slank, Alf steps in and throws the crooked captain overboard to his demise.

While Molly gets the Queen's trunk on board the *Wasp*, the Boy distracts Stache with the other trunk. Seeking to win over the Boy and steal the trunk, Stache christens him with a name – Peter – but soon discovers he's been tricked and throws Peter overboard. Knowing that the starstuff will float, Molly pushes the Queen's trunk into the ocean to save Peter, telling him to ride it to a nearby island (***Swim On***). Everyone abandons the sinking ship – including Molly, who dives in after Peter, and Stache, who commands Smee to follow Peter and the trunk to the island.



*Molly leads the boys out of the bilge.
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI*

ACT 2

A group of Mermaids recounts their transformation from regular fish after swimming in the wake of starstuff (*Mermaid Outta Me*). On the island’s mountaintop, Peter, Ted, and Prentiss briefly enjoy safety and freedom for the first time in their lives. While Mrs. Bumbrake and Alf paddle toward the shore, the boys decide to hide the trunk and go in search of food. Not far into their journey, they realize that are not alone, as mysterious voices chase them through the jungle.

Meanwhile, Molly has made it to the island and begins her search for the trunk. Elsewhere, the island’s natives, the Mollusks, capture the boys. Their chief, Fighting Prawn, sentences them to be sacrificed to Mr. Grin, a crocodile. Hoping to lull the Mollusks to sleep so they can escape, the boys perform the same bedtime story Molly told them aboard the *Neverland*. Alas, they don’t quite have a grasp on the story, and Molly, who has been watching from the underbrush, bursts out, annoyed with their performance. The Mollusks imprison them all in Mr. Grin’s cage, but Molly tosses her amulet into the crocodile’s jaws, which causes him to grow to a gargantuan size. She and the boys flee, with the Mollusks in furious pursuit. Meanwhile, on the beach, Stache and Smee decide to trick Molly and the boys into bringing the trunk to them, but Mr. Grin appears and sends them fleeing into the jungle.

At the jungle’s edge, the boys and Molly notice a flashing light out in the sea – it is Lord Aster, signaling to Molly in Norse Code to bring the trunk to the beach. She and the boys race to the top of the mountain to retrieve it, with the Mollusks in hot pursuit.

As Peter runs up the mountain, a yellow bird distracts him, and he falls into a shimmering lake of warm, golden water, far underground. Floating in the grotto, he is greeted by a mermaid who calls herself Teacher. She reveals that starstuff has the power to turn him into “what he wants to be” before bestowing on Peter a second name: Pan. Teacher then reminds Peter about the trunk, and he bolts back up the mountain to retrieve it.

Molly, Prentiss, and Ted arrive atop the mountain and spot Mrs. Bumbrake and Alf sailing toward the island on a makeshift raft. As they drag the trunk toward the beach, night falls and a storm begins. As the others sleep, Peter appears, surprising Molly, and the two share a tender moment. When Molly falls asleep, Peter tries to open the trunk, but flees when the boys stir.

The next morning, Smee, disguised as a mermaid, tries to lure Molly, Prentiss, and Ted with a ukulele song (*Ukulele Smee*). When that fails, Stache attempts to bait them with a poisoned fruitcake, but Molly exposes him. Smee reveals two prisoners – Mrs. Bumbrake and Alf – but the Mollusks enter with prisoners of their own – Lord Aster and Captain Scott. Mrs. Bumbrake fondly recognizes Fighting Prawn as her long-lost kitchen boy from a previous job in Brighton. An impatient Stache interrupts their fond reunion, pulling a knife on Fighting Prawn in order to get the trunk from Molly. Peter appears and challenges Stache to a duel, but Stache grabs Molly and threatens her life. To save Molly from Stache, Peter gives him the trunk.

Stache lifts the lid to find the trunk empty – the starstuff has dissolved. Frustrated, he slams the lid down, accidentally severing his right hand. Delirious from the injury, Stache vows revenge on Peter and leaves. Fighting Prawn gratefully gives his hat to Peter and allows the English to leave the island unharmed. A proud Lord Aster promotes Molly to a full-fledged Starcatcher.

Peter and the boys are thrilled by the prospect of returning to England with Molly, but when Peter

discloses his encounter with Teacher in the grotto teeming with starstuff, Lord Aster realizes that Peter cannot leave the island. A heartbroken Molly looks on as Lord Aster captures the yellow bird and uses the last of the starstuff to create a pixie protector for Peter, now the boy who would not grow up. Prentiss and Ted vow to keep Peter company on the island, and Peter reluctantly bids farewell to Molly, already beginning to forget all that has happened. As the boys race down the beach, Peter Pan, with some pixie encouragement, takes flight.



*Teacher bestows Peter with a second name.
Dos Pueblos High School; Goleta, CA*

CASTING

P*eter and the Starcatcher's* story theater concept will grab your audience's attention – but well-crafted performances will keep audience engagement high in this prequel to J. M. Barrie's beloved *Peter Pan*. Playwright Rick Elice meticulously breaks down the characters with wonderful detail and humor in the Characters list on pp. iii-iv of the script. Beyond those specific traits, there are a few other key issues to consider when casting your production.

Cast Size & Doubling

Peter and the Starcatcher was conceived as story theater, a type of theatrical presentation in which an ensemble of actors plays multiple roles and provides narration to tell a story (see the Resources section for more information). Because of this, *Peter* was written with specific doubling in mind (see p. v of the script), but your production may benefit from providing more acting opportunities to a greater number of performers. Feel free to assign each of the 17 named characters to different individuals who can help to further develop your storytelling (i.e., create the set and physicalize the circumstances of the play).

If you are working with an even larger group of actors that you wish to incorporate into your production, you can redistribute narration lines (e.g., Narrator Alf's) to ensemble members rather than have the actor playing that character (e.g., Alf) perform everything. Other options for expanding your cast include casting additional mermaids, seamen, sailors, pirates, etc., as well as performers who create the set (ships, doorways, waves, etc.) and atmosphere (sound effects). You might also consider casting understudies and dedicating one or more performances to them.

There are a lot of wonderful ways to curate this show for your specific group of actors. Just be careful of expanding your cast too much; providing acting opportunities to as many as possible is valuable, but can be visually overwhelming or confusing to audiences considering the play's intricate plotting. Set yourself up for success by creating a distinct directorial vision in which each performer has a clear dramaturgical purpose. Story theater works best when casting and staging are as straightforward and precise as possible.

Non-Traditional Casting

In the Broadway production of *Peter and the Starcatcher*, Molly was the only girl in a sea of men. While her singularity in this regard is dramaturgically purposeful – Mrs. Bumbrake was originally played by a male actor in order as to highlight the isolation of women and girls in Victorian England – it is not essential. To create more distinct opportunities in your production for female performers, approach auditions with an open mind. Some roles require a great deal of physicality (such as Stache's comedic loss of his hand) and others require a level of gravitas best expressed by more mature performers (e.g., the confident and serious Lord Aster). It is best to cast actors whose abilities will allow them to excel at the roles they are assigned, regardless of their physical appearance or likeness to a preconceived notion of the character.

Schools and theater companies have had great success thinking outside the box when it comes to casting *Peter*. You can turn the traditional casting on its ear in a variety of ways: a female Alf flirting with a male Mrs. Bumbrake; a funny, flamboyant female Stache; or even a female Boy could be your best bet. Casting this play is not so much about playing a specific gender as it is about character. A female actor playing an orphan can be just as effective if the actor understands and embodies an orphan's loneliness and desperation for family and a home. Just remember that the characters themselves (and their gendered pronouns) must retain their original genders as assigned in the script.

Peter & Molly

The young leads of *Peter and the Starcatcher* are on the cusp of their teens. Look for actors who can play that awkward transitional period between childhood and adolescence. Once cast, help your actors identify moments when they are more distinctly childlike and those when they have the more mature bearing of a teenager. Because Peter and Molly's relationship is integral to the story, it might be a good idea to have your prospective leads read together at auditions in order to get a sense of their chemistry.



Peter & Molly
Edina High School; Edina, MN

Molly is outspoken and intelligent, so look for an actor who can portray the overconfidence and charm of a younger person who thinks she knows everything. Peter should have the energy and courage often synonymous of boyhood (and Peter Pan), but also a sense of vulnerability that can shine through during moments of uncertainty and loneliness (e.g., in the “Gremplin Flashback” sequence).

Ensemble

Peter and the Starcatcher relies on ensemble acting and the spirit of collaboration. The success of any production hinges on how well the cast works together, supports one another, and makes the most of all moments – big and small. Done right, your actors will gain a strong sense of teamwork and responsibility that will fashion a captivating story for your audience in addition to benefiting their everyday lives.

When casting your production, there are some key issues to keep in mind. Be sure to look for performers with a healthy dose of imagination and sense of play that can pull off the story theater concept with gusto. To do so will also require quite a bit of stamina; cast those you believe have, or can develop, this constitution in order to keep the pace of the show quick.

As the story builds, your actors will need to connect with and keep their audiences engaged. They should be articulate, active listeners with keen abilities to maintain focus and keep the storytelling clear. Those with musical backgrounds can also help with this. Though *Peter and the Starcatcher* is considered a play, it does contain some songs that will benefit from those with musical theater training. When casting your production, consider filling out your ensemble with singers who can act – they will be a great help with keeping the pace and rhythm of the show, and its musical moments, moving along.

A NOTE ON ACCENTS

Everyone in *Peter and the Starcatcher* besides the narrators (who should speak in their – i.e., the actors’ – natural accents) speaks with a British accent. The British Subjects (see p. iii of the script) generally speak with Received Pronunciation (RP), which is a standard British accent that sounds very well-to-do. (Think of the proper-sounding Sir Patrick Stewart or Dame Judi Dench for the characters of Molly and Lord Aster especially.) The dialect of the Seafarers is not specified, but they should sound less articulate; e.g., switching out “your” for “yer” (which is designated in the script). The one exception is Sánchez, who, though it is not written into the script, should have a broad Spanish accent.

You also can consider using different accents to assist with character development. For example, in the Broadway production, the actors portraying the orphans were directed to speak with American accents so as to emphasize their sense of isolation from the rest of the characters.

The easiest way to learn an accent is to hear it over and over again. YouTube clips are excellent resources to get started. It is highly recommended, however, that a dialect coach be used during rehearsals. If that is not possible, check out the online options listed in the Resources section of this handbook.

REHEARSAL EXERCISES

As director, your job is not only to guide the vision of the show, but also to assist your actors in developing a bond as an ensemble, introduce them to the story theater style of *Peter and the Starcatcher* (see the Casting and Resources sections for more information), and guide them to join you in the devising process. Below you will find a wide variety of exercises that will help you do just that. Each of the activities is designed to help your cast of actors build their identity as an ensemble, devise movement vocabulary that can be applied to your staging, and assist them in developing rich characters. It is recommended that you begin your rehearsal process with these exercises before diving into the script as it will help you access the style the script calls for.

The following activities from the **ENSEMBLE BUILDING**, **ENSEMBLE STORYTELLING**, **CREATING ENVIRONMENT**, and **MUSICAL STORYTELLING** sections can be facilitated before the show is cast and you begin rehearsals; those outlined in the **CREATING CHARACTER** section are designed to be used during the rehearsal process once the show is cast. Feel free to pick and choose from the suggestions below, selecting the activities that best suit your cast's needs by referencing the "use this to" note. Should you wish to incorporate some of the former activities into your rehearsal process, modifications are provided. A few of the activities even make great additions to your audition process.



Look for this Audition Icon to note the exercises that can be used during the audition process to effectively assess your actors' willingness and abilities to perform in the style of the show.

ENSEMBLE BUILDING

These exercises are designed to unify your cast and build a foundation on which you can work toward more sophisticated activities in the other sections. Beginning your process with several of these activities will set the tone for your rehearsals and develop a strong ensemble. You can also use them as warm-ups once rehearsals have begun.

Circle, Star, Crocodile

Use this to: develop a cohesive ensemble.

In a standing circle, invite actors to silently create a circle with their bodies. Then, ask them to silently make a circle with a small group. Finally, direct them to create a circle as a whole group without talking. Repeat these steps using "star" and "crocodile" or any other objects, animals, shapes, or scenery from the story.

“When I was a boy, I wished I could fly...”

Use this to: help your cast get to know one another.

Create a getting-to-know-you game from the first line of the play. In a standing circle, invite actors to fill in the blank: “When I was a child, I wished...” Encourage each actor to generate a movement to accompany their statement and for the ensemble to repeat this statement and movement back to the original actor.

Flocking

Use this to: develop spatial awareness in an ensemble.

Gather the actors in a group facing one direction and turn on some music (you may elect to use underscoring from the show). Identify one member of the group, or yourself, as the leader. The leader should move slowly, and the rest should mimic the leader’s movement exactly. If and when the leader shifts to face a new direction, a new person now at the front should seamlessly become the leader of the “flock.”

Yes, and... Story

Use this to: build a foundation for improvisation.



Gather the actors in a circle. Establish the foundational rule of improv: always says “yes” and build upon what you’re given by your fellow actor(s). Invite your actors to tell a story as a group, with each contributing one sentence at a time. To begin, start the story off with “Once upon a time” or, if you’d like to relate it to the show, “When I was a child, I wished...” When you finish your sentence, the person to your right will pick up the story by saying “Yes, and...” before continuing. If necessary, remind your actors to build directly off of the sentence provided before them. The story should continue around the circle until it finishes.

Swashbuckling

Use this to: generate a sense of play within your ensemble.

Identify yourself as captain of a ship and the actors as your mates. The mates will need to quickly respond to cues from their captain or else be forced to “walk the plank.” Introduce the following cues and any others you wish to create:

- **Poop deck:** mates form a straight line in the middle of the space
- **Starboard:** form a straight line to the right of the space
- **Port:** form a straight line to the left of the space
- **Cannon ball:** jump in the air away from a cannonball
- **Swab the deck:** mime mopping the ship deck
- **Captain’s coming:** freeze and salute the captain
- **Pirate attack:** You take on the role of a pirate and mime a slow-motion sword fight. If you swing high, all of the mates must duck. If you swing low, all of the mates must jump, and so on.

The trick to this activity is to call the cues quickly to keep your actors on their toes. If they fumble, they must “walk the plank” in a dramatic fashion.

ENSEMBLE STORYTELLING

The activities in this section are designed to help your actors build upon their foundation as an ensemble in order to tell unified and engaging stories onstage.

Add a Narrator

Use this to: *emphasize clear storytelling and active listening*

One actor begins to narrate a story featuring one character. Another actor should then step into the playing space as that character and silently act out the story as it is being told. Allow other actors to “tap in” and take over the role of narrator, but each new narrator must bring a new character into the scene. This activity can also be adjusted to add an additional narrator each time, as opposed to replacing the narrator, in order to explore the dynamics of group storytelling.

Apply to rehearsal: *by instructing your actors to narrate a portion of the Starcatcher story.*

Pass the Sound and Movement Story

Use this to: *challenge your cast to tell stories with more than just text.*

Invite your actors to join you in a standing circle. Share a sound and movement to pass around the circle, with each person repeating the exact sound and movement as the previous person. When it returns to you, repeat the sound and movement for the last time. The person to your right should begin a new sound and movement. Continue until everyone has contributed a sound and movement.

Repeat the activity with a story in mind (like a well-known fairy tale). The sounds and movements passed should be within the context of the story (e.g., if the story is *The Three Little Pigs*, we might hear and see the Wolf huffing and puffing). Instead of repeating each person’s sound and movement, each person should build on the previous sound and movement to help tell the story.

Finally, divide the actors into three groups and assign each group the beginning, middle, or end of the story. In their groups, they should activate their section of the story through sound and movement and by selecting one person to narrate. Share the moments in order.

Apply to rehearsal: *by selecting a portion of the play instead of another well-known story.*

Conduct a Story

Use this to: *encourage active listening and hone “yes, and” skills.*

Invite four or five actors to stand in a line to tell a story that’s never been told before. Give them a title prompt (such as “The Story of the Giraffe that Went to the Movies”) and explain that the conductor (which can be you or another actor) will point to a storyteller when it is her turn to speak and tell the story. That person will have to continue speaking until the conductor points to another person. All actors will need to listen carefully as it could be their turn at any moment. Remind the actors of the foundational rule of improv: say “yes.”

Apply to rehearsal: *by creating a prompt related to the show (such as “The Story of the Day Molly Learned to Speak Porpoise”).*

Halftime Story

Use this to: challenge your cast to tell stories in precise, effective, and engaging ways.

Invite four or five actors to improvise the telling of a familiar story. One actor should act as narrator while the rest dramatize the action. In the first telling, give them two minutes to tell the story. Then, cut their time in half so they have just one minute to tell the story. Continue to cut their time in half until they have only a few seconds to swiftly tell their story in an accurate and engaging manner.

Apply to rehearsal: by selecting a moment in the show that is told with narration and ensemble movement.

Devising Movement Story

Use this to: create systems for developing movement vocabulary and devising ensemble movement.



Place a row of chairs in your playing space and invite a group of four or five actors to improvise a scene using only movement you provide them. Share with them five simple movements: raising your hand, looking right, looking left, crossing your leg, and sighing. They cannot speak or make noise apart from sighing. You will signal when the scene begins and ends. You can choose to add music. After the scene, ask the audience what they saw, where they were, and who they are, as well as what was going on in the scene. Repeat the exercise in groups, assigning locations (subway car, beach, bus stop, etc.), and invite your actors to select only five movements to incorporate.

Apply to rehearsal: by selecting specific locations from the play. Build off of the created movement to stage your scenes.

CREATING CHARACTER

Actors in your play may be asked to play multiple roles. The exercises in this section will encourage them to refine their physical, vocal, and imaginative skills to create defined characters that they can quickly and easily switch between.

A Company of...

Use this to: encourage specific character movement and generate a sense of play in rehearsal.



Distribute cards with character groups written on them (pirates, orphans, Mollusks, mermaids). Instruct your actors to silently find their group of similar characters without talking, using only their bodies to communicate character.

Developing Character Voice

Use this to: explore vocal expression.

In a standing circle, invite actors to say a neutral line from the show (such as “And so our story begins”) in their neutral speaking voice one at time. Then, ask them to adjust their voices using a different pitch, volume, inflection, dialect, etc. Next, invite each of your actors to select one of their characters from the show. When they say the line again, they should consider the elements of vocal expression for that character. Continue repeating the line around the circle, encouraging your actors to try something new each time. If they are playing more than one character each, after a few rounds, ask them to switch characters.

Developing Character Movement

Use this to: *explore actors' ranges of motion in space and how environment and character affect movement.*

Invite your actors to move freely about the space. Encourage them to walk as they typically would. After the group has settled, ask your students to take note of how they move, how the floor feels beneath their feet, how their bodies move through space, what parts or areas of their bodies seems to lead them, etc. Then, encourage them to move through the space in a new way. First, coach them through leading with different body parts (head, chest, hips, knees, toes), and then return to neutral. Then, have them experiment with moving on different levels (high, medium, low) or at different speeds (fast, medium, slow), while you side-coach them to notice how this feels and how it impacts their emotions or thoughts. You may also have them experiment moving through the space as if they are in different environments (snowstorm, crowded street, etc.) or as if they are swimming, flying, etc. Next, repeat the activity adding the characters your actors are playing. Invite them to move through the space as their characters, experimenting with leading from different parts of their bodies, moving on various levels, etc. You can continue with these experiments and then direct them to settle into a movement that felt right for their character.

The Truth About Me Is...

Use this to: *further actors' understandings of their characters.*

Arrange a circle of chairs with one less chair than there are people. Share with your actors that they will participate in this activity in character. For the actors playing multiple characters, instruct them to choose one. One person will stand in the center of the circle and say, "The truth about me is..." followed by a statement that is true of her character. For example, the actor playing Molly might say, "The truth about me is I love a good story." Those who feel that is also true of their characters must get up and find a new spot in the circle. Whoever is left standing will then share something about his character, starting with "the truth about me..." For actors playing multiple characters, you can instruct them to switch characters partway through the activity.

Biography in a Bottle

Use this to: *alternate between character and narrator and explore effective storytelling.*

Instruct each actor to write a short biography of one of their characters. Once the biography is written, each actor will work with a partner to create a small scene. Character A will find Character B's biography in a bottle on the beach. Character A will stand as a narrator and read it aloud as Character B silently acts out the story. Once the biography has been read, Character B finds a bottle with Character A's biography and reads it as a narrator as Character A acts out the story. Be sure to focus on the shift from narrator to character as well as the importance of effective storytelling.

CREATING ENVIRONMENT

In *Peter and the Starcatcher*, the ensemble is called upon to create the various locations in the story. Rather than filling the stage with elaborate scenery, actors use their bodies to transport the audience to the *Neverland* and *Wasp* and the various locations on Mollusk Island. The activities on the following pages are designed to help your actors think imaginatively as they work together to create the play's many locations while maintaining focus on the storytelling.

Focus

Use this to: create strong ensemble characters without pulling focus.

Assign each actor a number and invite actors into the playing space, which is now the deck of a ship. Ask them each to find a job on the ship and to move about the space completing that task (swabbing the deck, hoisting the sails, etc.; for more ship-specific inspiration, see the Glossary on p. 55). When you call an actor's number, that actor must dramatically faint as you count backward from ten. The ensemble must rush to the actor's rescue and prevent him from reaching the ground by the time you reach one. Once you do, they should all return to their jobs on the ship. Continue until everyone's number has been called. Be sure to review standard safety parameters with this type of theatrical convention and ensure your cast can responsibly participate in the activity.

Apply to rehearsal: by asking everyone to participate in character. When one's character is called, she should say a line from the show. The rest of the ensemble should turn down their physical volume so that the focus can remain on the actor speaking. Repeat the activity and allow for reactions from the ensemble, reminding them not to pull focus. To add a layer of complexity, allow the ensemble to adjust their blocking within the space based on who is speaking. Perhaps if Boy is saying a line, the orphans would gather around him. Between each line, everyone should continue with their task on the ship.

Quick! To the...

Use this to: define space and establish location using only your actors' bodies.



Divide your actors into five groups and assign each a location within a ship. The groups must create their spaces (and anyone or anything that might be in them) using only their bodies. They must also create the pathway to their space (listed below):

- **Location:** The gangway with a swinging door; **Pathway:** down a hatch
- **Location:** Gambler's cabin; **Pathway:** cramped passageway with many doors
- **Location:** Chapel; **Pathway:** cramped passageway with many doors
- **Location:** Captain's cabin; **Pathway:** cramped passageway with many doors
- **Location:** Bilge; **Pathway:** down through a wretched door

After the groups have created their locations and pathways, they will lead one another through the spaces in order, exclaiming "Quick! To the..." before each new space. Once each space has been shared, determine where onstage each of these spaces might be and walk through them again. This time, direct the ensemble to add on to each pathway so that everyone is involved.

Apply to rehearsal: by implementing it into the staging of Act One, Scene Three. Add in the lines and underscoring. Make sure the focus remains on the person who is speaking.

This Is a...

Use this to: encourage creative thinking around the use of props.

Divide your actors into two groups and line them up in two lines facing each other. Give each group identical objects (e.g., each group has a single umbrella). Structured like a relay race, the actors will be charged with thinking of as many things that the object could be other than what it actually is. Toss a coin to see which team will begin. The actor who begins will say “This is a...” and fill in the blank while demonstrating what the object has become. For example, the actor might hold the closed umbrella and mime rowing, saying “This is a boat.” The other team would then take a turn and both actors would head to the back of the line. Once an idea has been shared it may not be repeated. The game continues until one team runs out of ideas.

Apply to rehearsal: by using a prop intended for the show (or one that might be found on a boat) and encourage actors to think of ways it might be used in the show.

This Is a... Commercial!

Use this to: work as an ensemble to bring life to a transformed object.



Divide your cast into small groups, giving each group an object. Direct them to decide what else that object might be (e.g., a hula hoop might actually be a portal to another world). Have each group create a commercial for their object. All actors in the group should be included in the commercial and it should have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Consider layering in narration, actors playing multiple roles, sound effects, etc.

Apply to rehearsal: by using an object being repurposed as a prop for your show.

Where Are We Now?

Use this to: develop space and environment using objects.

Bring large pieces of cardboard, a tablecloth, tissue paper, and other similar materials to rehearsal. Divide your actors into groups and distribute the materials. Assign each group a location or environment, such as the ocean, grotto, or ship’s cabin. Instruct the group to create the assigned location with their given material. You may also reverse the activity, giving one group all of the materials and instructing them to create the same environment multiple times using each of the different materials.

Apply to rehearsal: by selecting a scene that requires a space or environment created by the ensemble. Let the actors play with the various materials until you find a version you like best.

Scavenger Hunt

Use this to: develop hand props using found objects.

Divide your actors into small groups. Assign each group an essential or optional prop from the show (e.g., a bird, a sword, a shield). Each member of the group should go home and find an object that can represent that prop. When they return, they will share their object with the group and will demonstrate how it can be utilized as that prop. As a group, they’ll decide on their favorite version. Each small group will share out with the whole group.

Apply to rehearsal: by rehearsing a scene that utilizes that prop – experiment with the various ways the prop can be brought to life by the actors in the scene.

MUSICAL STORYTELLING

In *Peter and the Starcatcher*, sound and music develop and enhance the storytelling. The activities below are designed to encourage your actors to think of sound as an extension of their storytelling devices and encourage them to incorporate it into their scene work.

Soundscaping

Use this to: *establish location using only actors' bodies and voices.*

Gather your actors in a seated circle and ask them to close their eyes. Establish a setting, such as a park, crowded street, beach, etc. Ask the actors to think of a sound they might hear there. Invite them to begin making those sounds one by one. Side-coach if necessary until it truly sounds like that environment. Try a few contrasting environments.

Apply to rehearsal: *by creating soundscapes for environments in the show (the ships, Mollusk Island), or revisit the "Quick! To the..." activity and add in sounds.*

Make it Rain

Use this to: *create the sound of a storm using only actors' bodies and voices.*

Guide your actors through this well-known activity of "making it rain." Beginning in a seated circle, instruct your actors to repeat the action you do as you pass them. Begin by rubbing your hands together. As you pass your actors in the circle, they will rub their hands together. When you've made it around the circle once, begin snapping your fingers. As you pass, actors will switch to snapping. Next, clap your hands, then pat your thighs, and finally, stomp your feet. Repeat the actions in reverse order. This should create the sound of a rain storm starting, heating up, and then tapering off. Once you've completed the activity, challenge your actors to consider how they could repeat this activity adding in movement as if they are actually in a rain storm.

Apply to rehearsal: *by incorporating the sound and movement into the staging of Act One, Scene Ten.*

Foley Art

Use this to: *explore how Foley can enliven and enrich a scene.*



Gather objects to be used as Foley (the reproduction or creation of sound effects from objects; see p. 48 for more info) for a scene, such as a water bottle (with water in it), pots and pans, a ruler, a comb, sand paper, etc. Invite a few actors to play a scene. One is the narrator, one or two are the Foley artists, and two or three are the actors. The narrator will tell a familiar story (such as a fairy tale), while the actors dramatize the scene. The Foley artists should make appropriate sounds with the items and with their bodies to set the scene.

Apply to rehearsal: *by taking a piece of narration from the show and repeating the activity.*

MUSIC DIRECTION

While *Peter and the Starcatcher* is considered a “play with music,” the score contains everything from sound effects and transitional underscoring to full-blown musical numbers. As the music director, you will work intimately with the director, actors, and sound designer to create the world of the play. Playing and conducting this show is much like playing and conducting a musical. Ideally, you will be part of the entire rehearsal process and have the help of a rehearsal musician (or musicians) to keep things moving smoothly.

UNDERSCORING BROADWAY: MUSIC DIRECTION

I had the pleasure of music directing *Peter and the Starcatcher* from the premiere at La Jolla Playhouse through three productions in New York, including Broadway. In addition to conducting, playing piano (and other sound makers), I also helped create and shape the music vocabulary with composer Wayne Barker. When rehearsals began in La Jolla, it was clear that the musical element in the show was going to be unique. The wonderfully handmade, actor-driven stagecraft that our directors Roger Rees and Alex Timbers brought to the play inspired many of the instrumentation choices. Wayne and I were inspired by the Foley artistry in the film and TV post-production world and used that as a springboard to discover practical ways to create sound in a live theatrical performance.

One of my first stops was to raid a UCSD props closet for anything that might prove useful as a sound maker. Many of the sound effects that stayed with the production over the years were found in props closets, or vintage music shops in the East Village in NYC. Instruments such as the “tooth ruler” and the “broken violin” were found and modified to create sounds heard on a ship. The tooth ruler was played on the wooden top of an upright piano. The broken violin (which is merely a suggestion to not use a nice violin) is used to give us the sounds of doors opening on the ships. Act One is spent almost entirely on two ships, and just a little hint of ship noise helped us paint a picture of being at sea.

Much of the underscoring and sound effect-playing is tailored to the original production. In many cases, your production may find these moments intrusive, or random. They were created in context with our specific production in mind, and my advice is to use your judgment on whether to omit certain material. Line cues are given to show where to play the desired effect or punctuation. In some cases, the note should be played before, after, or on a specific line or word. Again, use your discretion on how to proceed here.

Much of the joy I had conducting, playing, and helping create the musical language for *Peter and the Starcatcher* came from conjuring up real magic onstage with my fellow artists onstage and off. Approaching the score from this creative spirit will guide your choices.

Marco Paguia
Music Supervisor

NOTES ON *PETER AND THE STARCATCHER'S* SCORE

Below are some specific notes to help guide you through *Peter and the Starcatcher's* score. These annotations are broken down by song and then by measure numbers.

#1 – Sailors and Seamen

m. 1 – The first two notes in the score are perfect examples of music as sound effects/punctuation. The djembe accent played by both musicians in m. 1 is meant to match the stage action of the first trunk being dropped onstage by the actors. Work with your director to ensure your musicians have a clear sightline of the stage. This will help tremendously with the precise timing.

m. 2 – This is another example of musical punctuation. The percussion hit here should be played as Slank hits the trunk that he has just marked with an “X.”

m. 5 – The merchant sailors and seamen vocal lines can be sung by anyone in the cast. Assign the parts for what makes sense in your production.

m. 20 – The sound of the seamen should be vastly different than the sound created by the merchant sailors, underscoring the differences between the two ships, the *Neverland* and the *Wasp*. Rhythms and diction for the regimented seamen should be letter-perfect, whereas the merchant sailors are a little more rough-and-tumble.

m. 39 – Take this djembe cue again off of the onstage trunk drop.

#3 – Profitable Trade

mm. 7-12 – This violin part was played onstage by an actor in the Broadway production, but this choice does not need to be replicated. It can be performed live by one of the musicians in the pit or pre-recorded and treated like a sound cue.

m. 13 – This is the first of many door- and ship-creak sound effects that occur in the show. If you cannot find the exact instruments specified, just use something that sounds equally... well... *creaky*.

#4 – Molly Descends

This cue was designed specifically to underscore the precise staging (and timing) of the Broadway production. If it does not aid in the storyingtelling for your particular production, adapt as necessary. Refer to your script and the Staging & Directing Tips section of this handbook for an outline of the necessary events and plan accordingly.

#10 – Pay Peanuts, Get Monkeys

mm. 3-16 – You may need to cut (or add) music in this section, as the repeats give a general roadmap that can be tweaked to fit your production. The piano parts can get boisterous, so always ensure your onstage actors can be clearly understood.

#14 – Hurricano – Part I

m. 22 – As in #3, the violin does not need to be played onstage.

#17 – Swim On

Allow extra time to teach this song to your cast. The tempo changes are drastic and the harmonies can be challenging. It might be helpful to think of the piece in chunks (mm. 19-26, 27-74, 75-83, 84-end). The fast sections can be spoken in rhythm if the pitches prove troublesome.

#18 – Mermaid Outta Me

Since this song exists somewhat outside of our story, any of the actors can sing any of these solos. The libretto reflects Broadway's chosen doublings, with Stache on lead; the musical score assigns these parts more generically. Also, in the Broadway production, the actor playing Peter was not part of this number because it was too quick of a costume change for the top of the next scene. Regardless of how you assign these parts for your production, spend a great deal of time on diction.

#20 – Coming Down the Mountain

Rehearse this song at a slow tempo and work your way up to the noted tempo. All of the Mollusks' chants are Italian words and should be pronounced with pure, Italianate vowels. It also helps to create a distinct (perhaps deep) sound for the Mollusks so there is a contrast between their chants and the bits of plot spoken in rhythm by the main characters.

Pay attention to the dynamics written in the score as they will help build the suspense of the scene.

#25 – Ukelele Smee

On Broadway, the actor playing Smee accompanied himself on ukulele. If this is not possible, play this part in the pit, or pre-record it as a sound cue.

STAGING & DIRECTING TIPS

The world of *Peter and the Starcatcher* is created by your cast with just a few props and set pieces – the rest is up to your audience’s imagination. Staging the show will be a fun challenge that, once tightened and refined, will be sure to wow your audience – especially when the plotting becomes fast and fierce. Because *Peter’s* fantastical world of pirates and mermaids lends itself to imaginative staging, this section offers tips on how to tackle this rich, intricate theatrical work and devise your own unique version based on the story theater concept. Remember: the joy of this piece is in playful collaboration with your cast. Let their imaginations – and yours – guide your discoveries of fresh and clever storytelling.

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Peter and the Starcatcher is considered a “play with music,” but its intricate plotting and score can be challenging for both performers and instrumentalists. A lot of information is conveyed quickly – both verbally and visually – and often with song or (optional) underscoring. Be sure to allow enough time in your rehearsal schedule for your cast to become comfortable with the text, dialects, movement, and score. It may be helpful to think of your production as a musical and work on that kind of extended rehearsal schedule: include time for play and improvisation; bring in your musical director, choreographer, and dialect coach (if available) early on; and allow extra time for devising and refining as you go.

DEVISING

If this is your first time working in the story theater style, it may seem overwhelming at first. But fear not! It’s as much fun as it is challenging, so don’t be afraid to dive in and discover the process as you go. The Disney Theatrical Group education team has created activities to help you and your cast build ensemble and storytelling, create environment, and devise sound and music (see Rehearsal Exercises on pp. 9-16). These aren’t arts integration lessons for the classroom, though we have some of those for you, too. (Check out the Curriculum Connections on pp. 60-76.) They are collaborative activities to get all hands on deck and in the story theater mindset. We strongly recommend you employ these before you begin rehearsals in order to get both minds and bodies warmed up for *Peter’s* unique theatrical style. This section also provides guidance for using some of the exercises during the rehearsal process. The more your cast is involved in, and comfortable with, the process, the stronger they will be as an ensemble.

TRANSITIONING THROUGH THE SCORE

Before you begin rehearsals, read through the score and consider marking sound effects – many of which are clearly indicated in the percussion underscoring. Keep in mind, however, that while the songs must be included in your production, the additional underscoring is optional. This underscoring was created specifically for the Broadway production – to compliment and emphasize particular moments of staging – so it may be difficult to conform it to your own production. You may want to create your own underscoring that benefits your original staging (see Sound Design and Music Direction for tips).

Whether you use the underscoring provided or devise some of your own, keep in mind that it is there to help you move quickly and smoothly through transitions and extended sequences of exposition. Rather than using blackouts or elaborate scene changes, fold transitions into your storytelling, using movement and props as necessary. The underscoring is meant to guide you thematically through these moments and keep the pace quick and the pauses between lines of dialogue at a minimum. Remember to rehearse the songs – “Swim On” and “Mermaid Outta Me” – early and often so that the melodies and rhythms become muscle memory for your cast. For tips on tackling the score and its intricacies, see the Music Direction section of this handbook.

NOTES ON SCENES & SONGS

As a supplement to the stage directions in your script, the tips below have been compiled to help inspire and guide you through nearly every scene and all key sequences. Use these as a jumping off point as you begin to devise your staging with your cast and designers.

ACT 1

Prologue

Loosely based on Shakespeare’s prologue to *Henry V*, this opener explicitly acknowledges the collaboration between actors and audience in bringing a story to life. (The group of actors that functions as narrators is also a nod to the Royal Shakespeare Company’s legendary stage production of Charles Dickens’s *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*; see p. 78 in Resources for more information.) In just a few pages, a great deal of exposition is provided for your audience. Keep your staging simple, as too much movement will distract your audience, and they may miss key information about setting and backstory. Remember, the Prologue sets the tone for your production, so keep the pacing brisk and the diction sharp.



*A company of players introduces the story.
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI*

pp. 1-2

- These lines are spoken by your acting company – not the characters they will soon portray – and so should be spoken sans dialect and characterizations until they (beginning with Lord Aster) introduce their characters. When this switch occurs, actors can subtly assume their characters’ physicalities and dialects (as opposed to a “POP!” of character) – or perhaps begin donning their character costumes (see pp. 41-44 for costume tips).
- “Up to the Stars – I like that.” “Me too.” – This exchange between the actors playing Molly and Peter hints at a future connection between the two characters; give it space to land.

p. 2

- “And so our story begins” – When Stache claps his hands, consider having your ensemble immediately assume the bustling, noisy action of those preparing for a voyage – perhaps moving set pieces in, hoisting sails, calling out to one another, etc. Allow this to occur for a couple of beats before the next lines of dialogue; it will help solidify that the actors are now beginning to tell the story.
- As the actors introduce the characters of the play (“And we are lords – and captains –” etc.), block your ensemble in a way that with each line (as spoken by a different actor or group of actors), your audience will know exactly where to look. To achieve this, assign a different movement to each line. For example, for “captains,” your actors can salute the actor playing a captain (who may be on a raised platform to be better seen by the audience).
- “GOD SAVE HER!” – Because this line is comically repeated throughout the play, consider directing all actors to perform a synchronized movement whenever it’s said (e.g., hand to heart).

Scene One: *The Neverland* – On Deck

pp. 5-7 – After Slank marks the Queen’s trunk with an ‘X’ and demands his men “get this trunk on board the *Neverland*,” perform some “trunkography.” While your ensemble sings “Sailors and Seamen,” members of your cast can hoist the trunks up and down and around each other in clever choreography that confuses the two trunks before they are placed on their respective ships. The ships can be designated by half the ensemble on one side of the stage and the other half on the other. (See the Sets and Lighting sections for tips on clarifying these spaces.)



“Just then, the crate of boys bursts open!”
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV

p. 9 – One way to give the impression that Boy is falling out of the crate is to incorporate ensemble members in a simple lift. While a couple actors busy themselves with hoisting up a crate while Aster and Molly talk, have two (or more – safety first!) others standing behind it hold Boy up in a seated position by his waist and legs. When the trunk moves away, he can simply lean back and down, with his torso and arms hanging.

Scene Two: Molly's Cabin

Much of the comedy of this scene derives from the incredibly small space in which it's played out. Use your chosen props (e.g., ropes, benches), ensemble members' bodies, and/or lighting to create a sense of claustrophobia, so that when Alf shows up, he – literally – has to squeeze in to be seen. To give the sense of a ship at sea, have your actors (and set pieces/props) sway back and forth.

Scene Three: Bowels of the Ship

Before you begin staging this sequence from the cabin to the bilge, consider what you will need to create the passageways and rooms that Molly encounters. Can you keep it simple, with only one or two props and actors' bodies? The fewer your resources, the more imaginative your staging will be, so start minimally and consider involving your cast in the devising of this particular bit of staging.

To keep things moving swiftly into the scene, use underscoring (#4 – Molly Descends, or your own devised score) to transition actively by showing Alf and Molly descending into the depths of the ship, rather than using a blackout to get them there (e.g., they can walk down a long plank of wood of which one end is propped on a crate or pallet). To show Molly “jumping down a hatch,” perhaps two actors each hold a side of a ladder that Molly “climbs” down (as they raise the ladder up). Create the passageways with the bodies of your ensemble (e.g., Molly can walk on the backs of ensemble members who are crouched on all fours as they make “creaking” noises) and/or props to show Molly traversing these narrow gangways. The rest of your cast and crew can similarly create the three cramped rooms and the scenes therein (see Sets for more tips). As always, lighting (contrasted with surrounding darkness) will help define these particular small spaces. If you are directing in the round, you can use each entryway onto the stage as a room, having the actors spill out from that corner.



*Alf pops into Molly's cabin.
Shadow Mountain High School; Phoenix, AZ*



*“Molly follows Alf down the dim and damp gangways...”
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI*

Scene Four: Bilge Dungeon

It needs to be very clear for your audience when Boy's flashback begins (p. 26 in the script). Create a sudden, stark contrast in tone and lighting, assisted by underscore (#5 – Gremplin Flashback), which should become harsher as soon as Gremplin appears. Ensuring that there is no pause between Boy's narration and Gremplin's ferocious "WHERE'S THAT MULE!!" will make this switch more effective. If you are using actors (holding props or not) for the setting here, feel free to employ their assistance in creating the tone – their bodies can shiver and cower in fear as Gremplin whips Boy.

Scene Five: The Wasp – Captain's Cabin

p. 32 – Black Stache instills fear into each and every one he meets. Whenever his name is mentioned, the pirates should shriek and physically react accordingly. Consider developing an individualized movement/vocal reaction for each actor that stops as suddenly as it starts along with the underscoring.

p. 34 – Instead of having Black Stache look into a literal mirror, devise a way to create one – and/or his reflection – using your props and performers.

p. 36 – On Stache's "Here's the key, boys!" Aster's suddenly glowing amulet should immediately capture your audience's attention (see Props and Lighting for tips). To keep the pace, stay with him for only a beat before quickly transitioning to Molly and her matching glowing amulet on the *Neverland*. Her lines can begin over the eerie underscoring (#8 – Amulets and Cat).



*"Stache surveys his reflection in a mirror."
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV*

Scene Six: The Neverland – Passageway

p. 37 – Create this passageway the same way you did in Scene Three, using actors' bodies/props. When the cat flies (see p. 38 of this handbook for tips), it can be held and moved by an actor standing behind the passageway or passed from one performer to another.

p. 39 – To transition out of this scene smoothly into the next, Molly can lead the boys off while she begins her bedtime story. As they head out, Stache should make his way in, so that he's finishing her line without interruption of a pause or blackout.



*"We ask you now to imagine a grown cat in flight..."
Shadow Mountain High School; Phoenix, AZ*

Scene Seven: The *Wasp* – Captain’s Cabin

p. 42 – For Stache’s “destiny check,” consider using your ship models to enact Smee’s descriptions of them. This will help your audience to better place where they are and who is on what ship.

Scene Eight: The *Neverland* – Bilge Dungeon

p. 44 – When Molly’s amulet begins to glow, make it very clear that she’s leaving the boys to head to the deck. This can be achieved by having her cross to the opposite side of the stage, while Aster appears on the side she just left. Keep the stage dark, as the audience should not be able to see the boys once she leaves them, and Boy will need to sneak up behind her and interrupt her final call to her father.



“They lift their amulets away from their chests for better reception.”

Shadow Mountain High School; Phoenix, AZ

Scene Nine: The *Neverland* – On Deck

p. 48 – Consider devising your own magical, twinkly sound to represent starstuff as Molly explains it to Boy (or use #12 – Starstuff as dictated in the score). Whenever the sound occurs, a “star” can appear in the darkness surrounding them.

p. 49 – To make Molly float, you will need a ladder placed cross-like over a bench or sturdy, wooden box. A few lines before “To have faith...,” she should sit on the end of the ladder facing the audience and cover its end with her skirt. When her line comes, another actor or two, positioned behind her in the dark, can gently push their weight onto the ladder’s back end, making her “levitate.” Alternatively, you can employ the audience’s imaginations by simply seating Molly on a bench, which two actors can then lift from either end. Remember, to better sell either of these options, be sure that only Molly and Boy are lit; the rest of the space should be dark in order to cover the “magic.”



“You like to look at the stars? Well, there they are...”

Edina High School; Edina, MN



“To have faith is to have wings.”

Shadow Mountain High School; Phoenix, AZ

p. 51

- For this sequence of events – from Slank snagging Boy with his whip through throwing him overboard – be sure to block very specific choreography so that your cast remains safe. See Stage Combat tips on the next page for pointers.
- To make it clear that Slank and Boy are at the rail of the ship, consider positioning Boy on a small platform, surrounded by waves (see Sets on p. 34 for tips) in front and to the side. From the platform, Boy will be easier to lift by other actors and “tossed” into the sea. The actors can continue to hold him as he attempts to stay above water. Molly can “swim” to Boy by perching on the shoulders of another actor.



*Molly backstrokes to save Boy.
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV*

Scene Ten: *The Neverland and the Wasp*

This “Hurricano” section is one of the most challenging of the play, but an extremely fun one when approached imaginatively. A lengthy sequence that showcases a lot of information, it is important to keep the storytelling moving clearly and briskly, with an intensity of action. Be prepared to spend a good chunk of time working with your performers to stage this.

Consider how you can create the environment of the storm: What does the storm sound like? Can the actors generate those sounds with their mouths or props? What does it feel like? Can they create the wind and sea spray in fun and creative ways? (Think: water guns and handheld fans.) How would their bodies move as the ships are being tossed about by waves? If water flowed onto the ship, how would they get it out? (Think: buckets.) How would they project their voices (especially as a group) to be heard above the noise of the storm? Can they see clearly, or are there flashes of brightness amongst the darkness? Consider introducing these aspects at the end of the previous scene (when Slank pulls Boy to the rail of the ship) and continue to build them throughout.

Before you begin to stage the “Hurricano,” think about how you will represent the ship and the sea. Will you use rope? Poly silk? Dowels? Can one flexible material transform throughout to be both (and perhaps even Alf and Mrs. Bumbrake’s cabin)? Remember, the more minimal your design and props, the more creative you’ll become with the staging, which will produce clearer storytelling for your audience (and ultimately be more manageable for you, as director). See the Sets section in this handbook for tips.

p. 52 – Molly needn’t literally drag Boy onstage. For a safer – and quicker – option, simply have her run in with her arm around him, only to let him drop to the ground (so the actor playing Boy has control) upon hitting their mark.

STAGE COMBAT TIPS

In *Peter and the Starcatcher*, Slank and Stache's (s)word fight, as well as a few other key moments in the play, require fight choreography. For the most part, these sequences should lean more toward slapstick than realism so that the audience never fears for the safety of your cast. Although you can hire a professional fight choreographer to assist you, below are some tips on devising your own stage combat for your production that is both safe and specific.

- Stage combat is also referred to as fight choreography because it needs to be as specific in movement as a choreographed dance would be. Traffic patterns (or tracks) must be replicable in order to keep your cast safe.
- When blocking, walk through the movements in slow-motion first. While this can be an opportunity for actors to help devise the fight choreography, it is also the time to set very clear parameters using rehearsal props.
- If underscoring is involved, consider how you can choreograph the fight to align with the music, just like a dance number.
- Start small and add onto the action – i.e., begin with two people, slowly adding in any others. Start with key beats, layering in details once your actors become comfortable and confident.
- Both parties should be in control at all times, but the reactor, or receiver of an action, should be dictating the movement. For example, if Slank pulls Stache's hair, Stache – not Slank – should be in control of the movement of Stache's head. The instigator of the action initiates the contact, but the reactor performs the follow through.
- The parameters of each rehearsal should be clarified before you begin. For example, tempo (slow motion or real time), use of props, etc. Always make sure everyone is on the same page.
- Schedule a fight call before every performance during which your actors can practice their specific fight choreography. Remind them that the adrenaline produced during live performance brings with it the possibility of mistakes, so it is important to work through these moments over and over directly before curtain.

p. 55 – When the ships begin barreling toward each other, create a visual for the audience, depicting two distinguishable ships onstage. Think about using lighting and a distinct prop (e.g., the flags or ship models) to help with this. When the pirates enter the *Wasp*, the lighting and design for that ship can take over the stage.

p. 57 – Stage the “melees” carefully, with specific movements for each actor. This will help keep everyone safe and your storytelling clear and consistent each time. When the narrators speak in unison, think about layering in some simple, synchronized movements to give those lines a visual punch.

p. 59 – While you can use “swords” (see Props on p. 40 for tips), consider staging Black Stache and Slank’s fight as the “(s)word” fight it’s called in the script, by treating it as more of choreographed dance (off), with movements that are just as silly as their banter. Whether you stage it more like a dance or a fight, remember that it needs to be precise and consistent each time (see Stage Combat Tips on p. 27 for pointers).

p. 62 – Whatever you’ve been using to generate the waves, employ that material to form a frame for Slank’s face that can slowly narrow as his monologue comes to a close, and the “waves” overtake him.

p. 65 – “Swim On” is the longest musical sequence in the show and requires some choreography to keep the pace – and the storytelling – moving. Consider having some or all ensemble members in the background throughout the number performing some character-inspired synchronized choreography that resembles hoisting sails, yanking ropes, etc. When you arrive at the final two choruses, the staging can be simplified, focusing on Peter, atop the trunk, as he floats toward the island, backed by strong ensemble vocals.

p. 69 – Right before the blackout, give a hint of the jungle island by brightening the lights and/or revealing a green foliage-inspired background.



*“Two ships make toward each other...”
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV*



*“A (s)word fight between Slank and Stache.”
Edina High School; Edina, MN*



*“The waves cover Slank forever.”
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV*

ACT 2

Prologue: Mollusk Island – Shore

If possible, stage “Mermaid Outta Me” in front of your curtain or a sea-like scrim, so that the world of Mollusk Island isn’t fully revealed until the first scene. This simple Busby Berkley-styled number is more presentational than fully choreographed. Have your mermaids perch on levels (see Sets for tips) and flip their “tails” (whether full tails or their legs zipped up together with bell-bottomed pants) in synchronized movements. Alternatively, your actors can sit with legs together and to one side of their bodies while using props such as fans. Remember, moving in the tails and/or using props will take some getting used to, so bring these items into rehearsal early.

Scene One: Mountaintop, Mollusk Island

p. 74 – See Props and Lighting for tips on creating the yellow bird.

p. 76

- To create the sense that the boys are on top of a mountain surrounded by jungle below, elevate them on various levels.
- For the split scene, block the boys upstage on a higher level to suggest their mountain location as Mrs. Bumbrake and Alf drift by downstage in the “sea.” (For tips on how to construct their raft, see Sets.)
- “Or maybe Molly’s down there, in the jungle.” – Consider having your Mollusks enter here (if they are not onstage already as the “jungle”), camouflaged by foliage, to form the jungle Peter refers to (see Sets for tips).

p. 77 – As the boys head down into the jungle, devise some jungle noises as your lighting becomes a bit more ominous.

Scene Two: Jungle

Work with your choreographer to devise some simple marching movement for your Mollusks to perform as they chant and surround the boys (#20 – Coming Down the Mountain). This is a fun opportunity to utilize any foliage props your jungle ensemble might be holding or hiding behind in order to create confusion and rising tension before fully revealing the Mollusks with their spears (see Props for tips). Use the King’s introduction (downstage) to cover any exits/entrances for your ensemble (upstage) as they prepare to surround their prisoners.



*“The Mollusks raise a great hue and cry as they surround the boys with spears.”
Shadow Mountain High School; Phoenix, AZ*

Scene Four: Mr. Grin's Cage

p. 91

- To transition into this scene, black out on all but Narrator Aster as he walks across the stage. While he's narrating, Molly and the boys can get into place and huddle behind him.
- When Mr. Grin roars, lighten the stage a bit to reveal the cage, which can be created with actors standing behind the group holding either side of long dowels or ropes (representing the cage bars).

p. 92 – To create Mr. Grin's eyes, use large red bowls or buckets with red LED lights inside. Alternatively, repurpose your ship wheels from Act One as eyes that can spin scarily, or use red lighting gels with flashlights behind them to give off a red glow. For his mouth, three actors can hold a long stretch of rope in a way as to suggest two rows of jagged teeth. Or, two lengths of rope with white pennants can easily represent his sharp grin to be pulled up at the ends into a smile when Molly feeds him her amulet. To make Mr. Grin grow even larger, simply unravel more rope/pennants to widen and heighten his smile, while lifting his eyes even higher.



*“Mister Grin roars! Giant red eyes appear!”
Shadow Mountain High School; Phoenix, AZ*

p. 94 – To transition energetically out of this scene, as soon as the chanting begins, the Mollusks can cross the stage with foliage camouflage (perhaps in a festive Conga line) covering Fighting Prawn and Hawking Clam's exit as well as Black Stache and Smee's entrance.

Scene Five: Beach

Consider devising some tension-building sounds to support Mr. Grin's roars and impending visit prior to “#22 – Abandon Spleen” (see Sound for tips). This will help to keep the energy of the scene bright and fast.

Scene Six: Jungle's Edge

When Aster signals to Molly, have him positioned onstage near the *Wasp* model to indicate his location at sea. Be sure that his amulet glows bright enough to capture the audience's attention (see Lighting for tips).

Scene Seven: Up the Mountain

Consider working with your choreographer for the chase. Play with Peter, followed by the narrators, running (perhaps sometimes quickly in place) in different formations and patterns around the stage, sometimes jumping, ducking, dodging. Underscoring this action will infuse the scene with a driving energy.

p. 101

- Your surrounding ensemble members can create the many birds that appear around Peter's head in the same way as before.
- For Peter's fall, your actor can simply walk backward, arms waving in slow motion. Alternatively, if your ensemble is tightly surrounding him at this time, he can fall back into the arms of two actors. As Peter pushes his feet off the ground, they can help him somersault (slowly) backward so that he lands on his stomach in the arms of more ensemble members behind the first ones. Forming a kind of hammock for him, they then can gently swing him up and down and side to side as though he is continuing to fall. On "rushing up to meet him," they can lean his upper body down so that he can place his hands on the ground and somersault out of their arms into the "solid sheet of glass" as it appears around him.
- If using additional mermaids for Scene Eight, they can help create the golden pool as you transition (see Sets and Lighting for tips).

Scene Eight: Grotto

To give this expository scene some movement, consider how the mermaids would move within the golden pool. In their seated positions, they can create soft movements with their arms and tails that suggest flowing water and a mystical quality.



"Try'n catch me, Fighting Prawn!"
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV



"SPLASH!"
Shadow Mountain High School; Phoenix, AZ



"Listen to Teacher."
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI

Scene Nine: Mountaintop

During the thunder and lightning, while Peter is rushing off, Molly should be running on as your ensemble transitions the set from grotto to the mountaintop. There should be very little pause in dialogue – as the one scene ends, the other immediately begins. It’s nearing the end of the show, and the tendency will be to lag a bit, but work on keeping the transitions tight to help maintain a lively pace throughout these final scenes.

p. 107 – When your ensemble enters, continue to utilize effects like thunder, rain, and fractured lighting (see pp. 48-49 for tips on devising sound), throughout their narration to really give a sense of the oppressive, dark atmosphere. Also, consider devising some movement and formations with the umbrellas to create a sense of forward momentum.

Scene Ten: Beach

This final scene involves some rough handling of various characters by Black Stache, so choreograph these sequences very carefully. Safety of your ensemble is paramount, so rehearse these moments early and often. (See Stage Combat Tips on p. 27, as well as Props on p. 40 for suggestions.)

p. 123 – For tips on how to create the illusion of Black Stache’s stump, see Costumes on p. 43.

p. 131 – To create the “Light,” your actors can simply mime as though being harassed by a fairy. For more ideas, see Lighting on p. 46.

p. 134 – “Don’t worry, Nana darling...” – If the actor who plays Molly says these lines, be sure she projects a more mature bearing and tone of voice than she did as the younger Molly.

p. 136 – To make Peter fly, have your ensemble support him in a simple lift. Two actors can each grab a foot, while others hold his hands for steady support as he rises to his full height (with others supporting him from behind for safety).



*“Peter thrusts. Stache easily parries...”
Bowling Green High School; Bowling Green, OH*



*“Ca ca Ca ca CAAAH!”
Dos Pueblos High School; Goleta, CA*

DESIGN

SETS

Story theater begins with a bare stage, and it's up to you and your performers to create the world of the story with simple scenery (chairs, tables, ladders, crates) placed in ways to suggest various settings with the assistance of some basic props (fabrics, ropes, wooden dowels). Then, it's up to your audience to fill in the details with their imaginations.

Peter and the Starcatcher essentially has two locations – ships at sea (and their various decks and spaces within) and Mollusk Island (with its beach, mountaintop, jungle, and grotto) – as well as a few essential props, which are listed on pp. 38-40. While lighting and sound will play a huge part in differentiating these locations (see pp. 45-49 for tips), how you utilize your theatrical space with props and set pieces needs to be as clear and specific as possible so that your audience can follow the story and characters with ease (this is even more important if your actors are playing multiple roles).

Be sure that all set pieces are selected or designed to move quickly into position – nothing drains the energy and stagnates the flow of a show faster than clunky, complicated, and noisy set transitions. This is especially true of *Peter and the Starcatcher*, which needs to flow at a brisk pace in order to support its fast humor and energetic sense of adventure. However you differentiate locations, ensure transitions are thoughtful and seamless so you can keep your audience engaged with the story.

Ship Decks

Act One is entirely set at sea onboard the *Neverland* and the *Wasp*. To ensure that your audience knows which ship they are on at any given moment, designate one side of your playing space to the *Neverland* and the other to the *Wasp*. Generally, the set pieces you choose for each ship can mirror the other. A wooden platform on each side can define the ships' spaces. A-frame ladders can act as masts, from which the captains or other sailors can look out. Sails can be made from wide, white strips of fabric (or really any color/design – this is story theater, after all!). These can be strung from your masts and connected to other levels of your ship's set (a tower of wooden crates, for example) or flown in on battens in a more impressionistic



The decks of the Neverland and the Wasp.
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI



The deck of the Neverland.
Edina High School; Edina, MN

representation of sails (you can also create “walls” of the ship in this way with wooden backgrounds hanging from battens). Another way to create levels is to hang a ship mast climbing net (easily purchased online) for each ship. Even if actors don’t climb them (remember, safety first), they are a nice visual addition to your nautical atmosphere. Other items that suggest a ship location include wooden barrels, benches, planks, shipping pallets, and thick rope strung about the playing space. To create waves and ocean spray for the “Hurricane,” use long stretches of blue and silver fabrics (like poly silk) or a long length of rope.

Remember, the goal is not to create realistic representations of ships. This is story theater, which means you can use *anything* to tell your story, so get creative! Brainstorm with your cast and designer ways to create levels and differentiate the ships – you never know where the best idea may come from. Also, keep in mind that the joy of story theater is seeing the story – literally – come to life. Rather than rolling in perfect, finished set pieces for each scene, consider allowing your performers to “create” the setting before the audience’s eyes in a way that adds to your storytelling. To do this, keep your set pieces light and uncomplicated. Story theater works best when simple objects are used in imaginative ways.

Below Decks

To create rooms and gangways below deck, it’s best to keep your design as simple as possible as these scenes are brief and don’t require much detail of location. To frame a cramped space, such as Molly’s cabin, use performers’ bodies to act as the perimeter. Alternatively, a stretch of rope or dowels (held by a performer on each side) can act as walls and ceilings that sway when the ship rocks. Use a similar idea for the bowels of the ship (Scene Three): actors’ bodies or large sections of burlap, or other material, hanging from dowels or rods can act as the wall of a narrow gangway. These can drop or swing open to reveal the individual rooms that Molly enters. Just remember that it’s dark, dank, cramped, and dirty down below, so your set should reflect this accordingly.



*Molly leads the orphans down a passageway.
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI*

Shore

There’s no real need to design a set specifically for the Act Two opening scene; your mermaids can sing “Mermaid Outta Me” in front of your curtain (if available). If performing in the round or in a found space, a bare stage will work just fine. To create some levels for your mermaids to perch on, use crates covered in (sandy-colored) burlap, perhaps attaching shells, starfish, and other sea-inspired found objects (feel free to get silly with this, as it’ll match the tone of the scene and song). Keep this set super-simple, as your audience’s focus will likely be on the scene-stealing costumes and performances.



*Mermaids sing on the shore.
Shadow Mountain High School; Phoenix, AZ*

Beach

To differentiate the beach from the jungle, utilize levels previously created for the ship and/or mermaids. These crates, shipping pallets, etc. can be covered with burlap or another sandy-colored material. Alternatively, construct one or two climbable ground rows that can be painted as sandbars. These pieces should be on casters so that they are easy to move on and off stage. Add details such as driftwood (and pieces of the *Neverland* shipwreck for Act Two, Scene Ten) or strewn seaweed, but do this sparsely to avoid a cluttered stage. Use a blue backdrop (and/or lighting – see pp. 46-47 for tips) to suggest the ocean and blue sky.



*Black Stache and Peter on the beach.
Dos Pueblos High School; Goleta, CA*

Mountaintop

To suggest the high elevation and feeling of openness, use a blue backdrop to represent a wide sky and ocean. Your crates and pallets from Act One can be draped in green fabric to act as shrubbery and grass (or use green lighting), but there should be a feeling of openness here, so avoid using your taller set pieces (which will work well in the jungle – see p. 36). Your audience should sense an expansive view that they haven't experienced until now. In the split-scenes in Act Two, Scenes One and Nine, when Alf and Mrs. Bumbrake enter, their raft can be as simple as a dolly wide enough to fit them both (and pushed by another performer), or a shipping pallet on casters that they ride, scooter-like, across the stage (holding a dowel with red bloomers attached for Scene Nine).



*Peter calls out to Molly on the mountaintop.
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV*

Grotto

To give the impression that Peter has entered a grotto, use a shiny gold backdrop. Consider creating golden walls with fabric hanging from dowels held by actors to the right and left of the space to suggest an intimacy (lighting will also help a lot here). The golden pool of water that Peter lands in can be as simple as a swath of shiny gold fabric. For the rocky ledge that Teacher sits on, use an A-frame ladder, large crate or block, or have her dangle her tail over a catwalk that is lowered down for this scene (you can decorate this with blue fabric for a watery feel or burlap for a sandier contrast to the rest of the set). Alternatively, create a swing for Teacher (out of silks, or an actual wooden swing), from which her tail can hang.



*Teacher advises Peter in the grotto.
Shadow Mountain High School; Phoenix, AZ*

Jungle

The jungle is only a few steps from the mountaintop, so not much needs to change for this set. Switch to a green backdrop (or lighting), perhaps with some hanging foliage that flies in on battens as the boys descend the mountain. To achieve the sense that they are entering a more confined space, surrounded by trees and wildlife, bring in any pallets, crates, and rope ladders used in Act One, but this time covered with green fabric, leaves, and vines. The Mollusks “appear and disappear from behind giant foliage,” so use them as walking set pieces that blend into the jungle. Give them large palm fronds or green leaf-shaped shields of green material for them to hide behind.



*Peter walks through the jungle.
Shadow Mountain High School; Phoenix, AZ*

DESIGNING FOR BROADWAY: SETS AND PROPS

Working on *Peter and the Starcatcher* is a dream come true.

The first time I met with the directors Alex Timbers and Roger Rees, they said they wanted a ship's deck, a captain's quarters, a deserted island, and a vast ocean – but they didn't want to see any of those things onstage! What?! This meant we were going to need to think outside the box. Actually, we quite literally started to think about the box – a cardboard box, to be exact. I'm sure you've seen this or maybe this was you: a child gets a toy for the holidays or a birthday, plays with it for one day, and then proceeds to play with the box the toy came in for weeks. The box itself becomes an endless fascination. Maybe because there are no rules, no directions, no boundaries on what that box can become. The box could be a house, a cave, a tunnel, a car, a bed – or a ship! This idea of the box that becomes many, many locations by being none of those things was the basis of the set design for *Peter and the Starcatcher*.

So how do you start designing your own *Peter and the Starcatcher*? Well, begin by looking around you. What is in your house, theater, and school? What do you see everyday that you don't even think about? The mop in the corner, the pile of newspapers you meant to recycle last week, all those green plastic soda bottles, that mess of cables in the drawer, or those small plastic toys that no one plays with anymore? At school, do you have piles of old scenery, chalkboards, and trash cans? What about ladders, hampers, or fabric? Any or all of these could become the world of *Peter and the Starcatcher*.

The trick here is to use *your* imagination to create a world out of whatever and anything just like we did when we were kids – that time before we wanted or needed that awesome new toy, gadget, or device (hey, I love those things too!). There really is something special about stepping back from all of our “stuff” and complicated lives to return to a world where a child can imagine anything and everything out of a cardboard box. I welcome you to come back to this place and enjoy your time. Even if it is only for one enchanted evening – come join the world of what *Peter and the Starcatcher* can be.

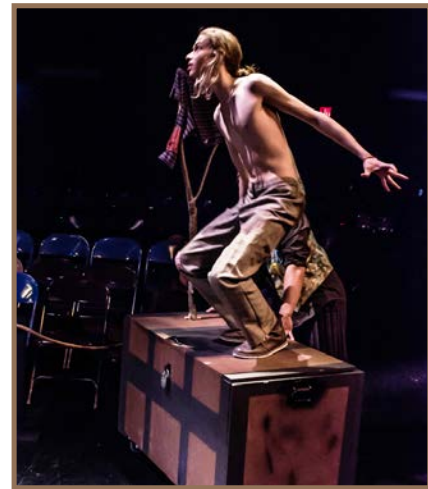
Donyale Werle
Scenic Designer

PROPS

Most of your design for *Peter and the Starcatcher* will be relatively simple and created with found objects and your actors' bodies, but there are a number of props that are essential for your storytelling. Remember, in story theater, these items need not be literal, and they can also be anachronistic. For example, a trunk can be represented by a large ice chest. Be creative, and make what you already have work for you; just be sure that any contemporary items you use aren't too distracting for your audience. Essential – and some optional – props, and the page number(s) on which they appear in the script, are listed below along with some tips to guide you.

Essential Props

- **Trunks** (4-7, 14, 34, etc.): These can be old-fashioned Victorian trunks or as simple as two large coolers or wooden boxes (just make sure that these boxes look slightly different than any others you might use in your set design). Whether you purchase or construct them, ensure that they are sturdy (enough to hold Peter's weight) and ideally lightweight for any "trunkography" you might perform in Scene One (see p. 22 for more info). They should also be on casters for easy rolling around onstage. For the Queen's trunk, consider adding battery-operated LED lights inside to act as glowing starstuff during pivotal moments like "Swim On" (this would require cracks in the trunk that will emit light).
- **Ship models** (5, 60): These hand-held representations of the *Wasp* and the *Neverland* should look slightly different so that the *Wasp* appears the faster, better ship. You will also need a *Neverland* model that can split in two during the "Hurricaneo."
- **Whip** (7-14, 51): Slank's whip need not be an actual leather whip; you can use a length of rope or other material and have your actors create the "crack" of the whip (see pp. 48-49 for Foley tips).
- **Gold coin** (8)
- **Cat** (8, 13, etc.): The ship's cat can be a stuffed animal or puppet (large enough for the audience to make out). To make it "fly," attach it – or a stuffed double – to a dowel or fishing pole.
- **Crate** (9): If desired, you can use a variety of



Peter rides the trunk to shore.
Bowling Green High School; Bowling Green, OH



Captain Scott holds a model of the Wasp.
Edina High School; Edina, MN

crates to create levels and perimeters in your design. Regardless, you will need at least one to act as the “crate of boys” for Boy to fall out of. (For tips on staging this moment, see p. 22.)

- **Amulet** (10, etc.): From the moment Aster places matching amulets around his and Molly’s necks, your actors should never take them off. LED pendant necklaces are cheap, come in a variety of shapes and colors, and are easy to find online or at novelty stores. Alternatively, you can make your own out of hot glue and a string of LED lights. Whether you create or purchase these amulets, be sure that they glow brightly enough to be detected by your audience (see lighting tips on p. 46).
- **Bucket** (15-18, 32-34): The bucket that Alf uses to bring food to the boys can double as that used by Black Stache upon his entrance. It can be a standard metal or wooden bucket, a colorful sand pail, or any large open container you have on hand.
- **Branding iron** (17): This can be as simple as a wooden dowel or rod. Sell the moment of branding with Foley created by your actors and/or musicians.
- **Wooden switch** (26-28): Slank’s whip can double as Grempink’s switch during the flashback.
- **Union Jack flag** (29)
- **Razor** (33, 117-119): Remember: safety first. Always use a plastic prop razor.
- **Key** (36, 41, 121): The key to the Queen’s trunk should be large enough for the audience to make out.
- **Ship wheels** (43, 53, 54): While the *Wasp* and *Neverland* wheels aren’t mentioned until p. 42, these can be present earlier, whenever action takes place on deck. They needn’t be affixed to anything; your actor can simply hold and turn as appropriate.
- **Gull** (51): Like the flying cat, the gull can simply be a stuffed bird attached to a long pole.
- **Jolly Roger** (57): A pirate flag. (See p. 55 of the Glossary for more info.)
- **Branch** (68, 118): This branch will form the mast of Alf and Bumbrake’s raft, and can also be used for Peter to defend himself in the final scene.



The cat flies.
Edina High School; Edina, MN



The Boy spins the ship’s wheel.
Edina High School; Edina, MN



Peter encounters a yellow bird.
Dos Pueblos High School; Goleta, CA

- **Yellow bird** (74, 101, 130): This bird can be the same idea as the gull (above), a hand puppet, an actor with bird-like details added to her costume, or even as simple as an actor wearing a pair of yellow gloves, fluttering his hands. The more imaginative, the better!
- **Pineapple** (77-119): Because the pineapple is thrown at Stache, it should be lightweight and relatively soft to ensure the safety of your performers. It also needs to break in half upon impact with Stache's razor.
- **Spears** (82-90): The Mollusks' "weapons" can be as simple as long sticks or broom handles. For more Italian flair, top the spears with kitchen utensils (spatulas, whisks, soup spoons, etc. – but nothing sharp). If you choose to be more literal, ensure the safety of your cast by using rubber or plastic ends.
- **Kitchen timer** (85-91)
- **Umbrellas** (107): You will need as many as the number of ensemble members you utilize in Act Two, Scene Nine.
- **Ukulele** (113)
- **Fruitcake** (114)
- **Severed hand** (123)



*Mermaid Smee strums a ukulele.
Shadow Mountain High School; Phoenix, AZ*

Optional Props

- **Telescopes:** one for each ship to be used when on deck.
- **Dice** (17): Your gamblers can throw dice or simply mime the action.
- **Swords** (59): While the altercation between Slank and Stache can be a fistfight, you might choose to have a "sword" fight. Wooden dowels, plungers, or any other long, stick-like items can take the place of actual swords (and perhaps get a laugh as well). Remember: safety first. For stage combat tips, see p. 27.

REHEARSAL PROPS

Props can influence an actor's performance in any play, but this is especially true of *Peter and the Starcatcher*. Because it relies on a variety of props to tell its story and shape its design, it is important to provide your actors with props very early on in the rehearsal process. Some of these – the trunks, ship models – may be too delicate (or used too often) to survive the rigors of rehearsal. To ensure that your performers have adequate rehearsal time to become comfortable with their props and staging, ask your props master or set designer to provide rehearsal props of relatively the same size and weight. Doing so will help ensure a confident cast and successful staging!

COSTUMES

Due to its story theater concept, *Peter and the Starcatcher's* costumes can be as simple or elaborate as you decide. If your ensemble is playing multiple roles – including set pieces like gangways – it might be useful to start with base costumes of dark pants and lighter tops with black shoes or boots. Your actors can then add pieces to denote which characters they are playing in the moment (in true story theater style, they can do so in front of the audience). For characters like Molly, Peter, and Black Stache, it might make sense to craft more specific costumes. Just remember, in story theater, a suggestive costume piece can be equally as effective as a detailed head-to-toe costume; your audience's imagination will fill in the rest.

The Orphans

Boy (Peter), Prentiss, & Ted: These three orphans should look as poor and world-weary as they feel. To distinguish them from the adults, you may wish to costume them in shorts (or pants that hit just below the knee – try rolling them up) paired with Henleys or tees and perhaps suspenders. Collared shirts work too – just be sure they're not stiffly starched or properly buttoned up all the way. Their costumes should be a bit worse for the wear – these are likely the only items of clothing they own – so distress them slightly so that they look well worn. You may also choose to have a duplicate costume for each boy that is tattered, torn, and dirty for Act II, post-ship wreck.



Molly and the orphans
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI

The British Subjects

Lord Leonard Aster: This British gentlemen and loyal subject to Queen Victoria should be the most kempt and well-dressed of the lot, perhaps with a buttoned-up shirt and vest, upon which a medal or five is pinned, with long pants. He should also have a coat (that is large enough for Black Stache to wear as well).

Molly Aster: You may choose to distinguish Molly as the only young girl simply by adding a skirt to her base costume. For prim and proper Victorian attire, costume her in a below-the-knee, loose-fitting dress (known as a shift) with a pinafore, drawers (loose fitting, calf-length, open-legged bloomers), stockings, and lace-up boots. Like the boys, she could have a duplicate costume for the second act that is tattered and torn post-shipwreck.



Lord Aster and Molly
Edina High School; Edina, MN

Mrs. Bumbrake: Victorian nannies typically followed a relatively strict dress code, and the proper Mrs. Bumbrake would make no exception. Costume her in a long, dark-colored dress with frilly apron and bonnet. Or, simply add an apron to a base costume of a long skirt and top, and put your Mrs.'s hair in a bun.

Captain Robert Falcon Scott: Just as orderly as Lord Aster, Captain Scott's costume can have a similar likeness to Molly's father's, but sans medals, and perhaps rolled-up sleeves to denote his more hands-on position on the ship. Add a captain's cap to really distinguish him from the other seamen.

Gremplin: The brutal schoolmaster of St. Norbert's should have a proper, but imposing Victorian look. Give him a collared shirt and vest, with a long, dark overcoat. To further distinguish him, add a pocket watch and chain.

The Seafarers

Sailors/Seamen/Pirates: The *Neverland's* rag-tag crew of pirates, including **Alf**, **Mack**, and **Sánchez** would be dressed like typical Victorian seamen. This means loose, baggy trousers cut off between the knees and ankles, allowing for freer movement, paired with a blousy white "pirate" shirt or a Henley. Add bandanas or beanies to top off the look. Be sure to lightly distress all items, as pirates were known to wear the same outfits until they literally rotted off of them! To differentiate the British seamen from the rougher pirates and sailors, dress them in proper naval jackets and caps.

Smee: Black Stache's loyal first mate will be dressed like the other seamen, but will also need a British naval hat for when he poses as Lieutenant Greggors, as well as a mermaid costume for "Ukulele Smee." As a mermaid who's seen better days, Smee's costume should be less impressive than his predecessors in "Mermaid Outta Me." Perhaps a burlap sack as a tail and long tresses made out of vines or jungle palms – use whatever might have washed up on shore from the ship or that could be found on an island. For Act Two, Scene Ten, he'll also need a disguise to sell his poisoned fruitcake (see Black Stache on the next page for ideas).



*Alf woos Mrs. Bumbrake.
Edina High School; Edina, MN*



*Peter and Gremplin
Bowling Green High School; Bowling Green, OH*



*Sailors narrate the story.
Edina High School; Edina, MN*

Bill Slank: The *Neverland's* captain is more “bad boy” than dignified ship commander, so he should have more of a worn, disheveled look than his *Wasp* counterpart, Captain Scott – so, no stiff collars here. Try instead a long-sleeved Henley shirt with a dark, unbuttoned vest.

Black Stache: The flamboyant Stache should have a bit more fashionable flare than his fellow pirates. Add a vest with a sash tied around his waist, perhaps a pair of swashbuckling black boots, and don't forget the 'stache. For Act Two, Scene Ten, he'll need a disguise to hawk his poisonous fruitcake, such as a chef's hat, diner hat, or an apron. Just use one piece, though, so he can remove it swiftly. Don't forget to consider how to hide Stache's stump in the final scene. This can be as simple as unfolding the jacket cuff to make its sleeve longer or pulling the shirt sleeve through so that it hangs over the hand.

The Natives

Mollusks: These natives can be dressed in organic materials that they might find on the island: reeds, raffia, palms, and other natural fibers (think: natural hula skirt). To add some Italian flair to these pasta-loving islanders, add some red neckerchiefs. Or, simply add sashes or vests that give the impression of loincloths typically worn in such tropical regions.

Fighting Prawn: The King of the Mollusks can be dressed similarly to the other natives; just add a British top hat with green feather in the band (as designated in the script – you'll need it for fairy-making in the final scene) to set him apart. To emphasize his culinary passions, you can add hanging kitchen utensils to a vest or sash.

Hawking Clam: The King's son should also be set slightly apart from the rest of his fellow Mollusks, so add a festive headband or neckpiece, maybe with a whisk or spatula “charm” hanging about his neck.



*Slank captains the Neverland.
Edina High School; Edina, MN*



*Smee and Black Stache
Edina High School; Edina, MN*



*Fighting Prawn and the Mollusks
Edina High School; Edina, MN*

Mermaids: Create your ladyfish by adding shimmering, different-colored “tails” to their base costumes. These tails can be as simple as long stretches of fabric tied about the waist (*à la* a wraparound skirt), with the material gathered in front and tied at the end to suggest the silhouette of the mermaid’s lower half. For the rest of the costume, get creative: let your actors devise their own wigs/hair pieces and “shells” with whatever objects they wish. A mermaid’s hair can be made of a mop, hula skirt, or colorful wig, while her shells can be tea cups, pin cushions, flowers, mini soccer balls – whatever strikes the imagination! Alternatively, consider creating sparkly bell-bottoms for your actors’ pants that suggest the split ends of mermaids’ tails.



*The Mermaids sing “Mermaid Outta Me.”
Dos Pueblos High School; Goleta, CA*

Teacher: Use the similar concept to your other mermaids’ costumes, but with a touch of sophistication to suggest the “grand dame” of a mermaid that she is. Perhaps her tale is longer and more elaborate, with a golden glimmer (like the golden pool she resides in).

DESIGNING FOR BROADWAY: COSTUMES

The directors and I were looking to create individual looks for each of the actors that were at once unique and also strongly related in color and feel to one another so the ensemble could become large blocks of unified color when representing doors and walls on the ship. I was inspired by Victorian England, but also 1970s London punk and contemporary fashion. It was important for us that our actors looked non-stodgy and that there was a direct relationship with the audience they were narrating to. There was a very DIY feel to the set, as if the actors had made a set out of found objects to put on a show – this idea was heavily reflected in our mermaid costumes as well. I approached them as if I was a Lost Boy – sort of a clever, but also dumb, 12-year-old boy – let loose in the house to use any of its domestic objects to make these “beautiful fish lady” costumes. There was a lot of junior-high humor in there but also some sophisticated commentary on the burden that the one female actor in the show was shouldering – her mermaid costume was intended to be aggressively winking at her character’s constant struggle with the others’ gender-based expectations of her. In the shop we called her costume, with its sewing-tomato-pincushions bra, “The Feminine Mystique.”

*Paloma Young
Costume Designer*

LIGHTING

In *Peter and the Starcatcher*, lighting is a vital storytelling component that, in concert with your set design, shapes the varying moods and atmospheres and helps to create locations. In some instances it can even generate character (e.g., the yellow bird). Because of its integral role in *Peter and the Starcatcher*, consider lighting as another character in your story – one that follows and shapes the space in and around Peter, Molly, and the other colorful characters aboard the ships and inhabiting the island.

In story theater, a great deal of the audience’s delight derives from seeing your performers become characters (donning costume pieces) and setting the scene (moving, creating, or becoming set pieces). Treating the transitions as *parts of your storytelling* will make for more fluid and entertaining transformations from one location to the next, and lighting can assist with that. Avoid blackouts in between scenes, and instead create character-driven moments that are reinforced with atmospheric lighting that keeps the story – and your sets and actors – moving at an energetic pace.

For more specific lighting tips for each act of *Peter and the Starcatcher*, see below. Remember, as you devise your lighting design, always consider how light can work to expand and shrink your theatrical space to imaginatively form rooms and natural landscapes in addition to setting the tone and feel of your show.

ACT 1

Peter’s first act takes place on and below decks of the *Wasp* and the *Neverland*, and includes large amounts of exposition about the characters and their journeys. Help the audience keep track of where they are at all times by using different colors of lighting to denote the two different ships. (This idea can be further assisted if each side of the stage or playing space is devoted to one ship. See Sets on p. 33 for tips.)

The darker of the two acts – literally and thematically – Act One should be awash in darker lighting that can be lightened with cooler hues when applicable. To add texture to your stage picture and otherwise simple set pieces, try using gobos, especially for those moments taking place on deck.



Two ships meet.
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV

To help create narrow, cramped spaces like Molly's cabin and the gangways below deck, use specials that light only your actors and the imagined space while keeping the rest of the stage in darkness. This will reinforce the claustrophobic feeling of a ship's tight quarters while maintaining the intimate story theater atmosphere (which can be difficult to generate if two actors are simply crouching in one corner of a large, brightly lit playing space).

If you find that Aster and Molly's amulets are not drawing enough focus when "glowing," help direct the audience's attention to them by utilizing specials. Alternatively, ensemble members can assist by shining flashlights or other handheld lighting devices onto the amulets.



*Worshippers gather in the bowels of the ship.
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV*

ACT 2

Your lighting design for Mollusk Island should work as a direct contrast to the dark, confined spaces of the previous act. To establish the bright openness of the mountaintop and beach areas, use blues and yellows to lighten up the space. For the jungle-specific scenes, consider employing shades of green and gold lighting to compliment any foliage or jungle set pieces you have. Finally, for the grotto, a yellow-colored special can help suggest the golden pool Peter lands in.

Lighting can also assist in creating character. Create the (pixie) light in the final scene by employing laser pointers or other handheld lights to create the illusion of her flitting about Peter's head. Another idea is to project a green or golden pinpoint of light onto a darker background (the proscenium, perhaps). Similarly, employing red lighting whenever Mr. Grin roars will help heighten the imminent threat of his many sharp teeth.



*The Mollusks surround Molly and the boys in the jungle.
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV*

DESIGNING FOR BROADWAY: LIGHTING

Oppportunity. That's the word that ran through my mind over and over again as I read *Peter and the Starcatcher* for the first time. Opportunity to create, to design, and to help tell the story through lighting.

Almost immediately, the play asks the audience to imagine: a dock, the deck of a ship, a hurricane at sea, a remote tropical island, a giant crocodile... Since there was never an intention to create realistic locations using scenery, light played an enormous role in changing the space. By using color, texture, and angle we created major shifts in mood, atmosphere, and location – at times immediate and dynamic and sometimes over the course of a ten-minute scene. The sun set very slowly through the last scene of the play leaving Peter and Molly in the glow of warm light as they said their goodbyes. In contrast, as Molly and the boys were crawling through the bowels of the ship, the light changed with every turn down a hallway or pull of a doorknob.

Early in our process we discussed how much the lighting should support the action in the script and staging. Almost immediately we decided that the visual storytelling would be stronger if light reinforced as much as possible. Passageways would be represented using a square of light on the floor, even as actors created the same opening using rope. The storm sequences would have lightning that looked real. Water, in many forms, would be represented by swirling blue-green light. For Act One, sharp and defined boxes of light were used to contain the cabin scenes – in essence reducing the large stage to small claustrophobic rooms. In contrast, Act Two required an open, airy feel. The shafts of blues and white light that we used in Act One gave way to broad strokes of tropical color.

The visuals throughout *Peter and the Starcatcher* are subjective. Some amount of research will certainly help but much of my design was about heightening and abstraction as opposed to realism. Plus, it's very personal. The way someone else sees the storm, or the forest, or Peter underwater will be very different from how I saw them. Because of that, I look forward to seeing other productions. It's thrilling to watch someone else take the opportunity to create this magical world.

Jeff Croiter
Lighting Designer

SOUND

Strong lighting choices will create distinctions between your ships and the rooms therein, as well as various locations on Mollusk Island, but your sound design will help fill in the details of these locations. Many sound effects are included in the provided underscoring but are specific to the staging of the Broadway production. Should you choose to go a different route and create your own underscoring (see Music Direction for tips) and/or sound effects, keep in mind the story theater style. Part of the joy of this theatrical genre is watching the actors create scenes from scratch – and that includes your sound design!

Foley

Foley is the reproduction of everyday sounds. It is generally used to describe the creation of cinematic sound effects that are added to films in post-production, but it also can be applied to theater or any other live event. The only difference is that instead of recreating realistic ambient sounds (footsteps, squeaky doors, breaking glass), theater creates them live. This is usually done with objects or instruments backstage, but story theater can take this a step further and make sound design a part of the *staging* of a production.

DEVISING SOUND WITH YOUR CAST

Work with your cast (and sound designer if available) to find moments in the script that can be enhanced with sound. Then, work together to devise an atmospheric quality that supplements the music and dialogue of the show. In pre- or early rehearsals, bring together this list of moments, your cast and crew, and a variety of items from your props closet – or just random everyday objects found in your classroom, office, garage, etc. – and let your cast play. (For more inspiration, see “Designing for Broadway” on the next page and p. 16 in Rehearsal Exercises.) They’ll have a ball assisting in their show’s sound design, and you (and your designer) will appreciate the help! Just be aware of how much sound you are creating – overdesigning your soundscape can distract from your storytelling, especially if actors are creating it in view of the audience.

A complete soundscape of firing cannons, closing doors, thunder, screeching cats, dripping water, and chirping birds can play intermittently throughout appropriate scenes in your production. You may discover that some moments are best created with actors’ bodies (stomping and yelling “BOOM!” can be a simple way to fire a cannon) or with an instrument (a saxophone can make the sound of Alf “breaking wind” in the bowels of the ship). If choosing the latter, consider bringing your musicians (or actor-musicians if you have multi-talented performers) onstage, especially for longer musical moments (when “the lonely sound of a fiddle wafts by” in Scene Two, an ensemble member can play a plaintive tune on a fiddle near Molly). As long as the design does not become aurally or visually overwhelming, creating sound effects onstage can be a fun way to amp up your story theater production. Just be sure to take care when choosing where your musicians will be in relationship to the stage so that both they and your actors are heard clearly.

Amplification

Decide early on if you will use body microphones for your production. Take into account the acoustics of your space and the vocal projection of your actors. It is important that audiences are able to properly hear and understand the expository dialogue of the Prologue as well as lyrics in songs like “Mermaid Outta Me” that are vital to following story and understanding character. If you choose to outfit your actors with body mics, do some research before renting. Ensure the rental package you choose can fit into your budget while giving you the quality you need. No one wants audible cracking and popping sounds to spoil the performances of the actors. Also, consider putting a monitor onstage so actors can hear themselves – this is a standard feature of most sound rental packages.

DESIGNING FOR BROADWAY: SOUND

The *Peter and the Starcatcher* sound design really meant accessing that time as a kid when you’re fascinated by what things sounded like. Remember those door stoppers at the bottom of doors with the copper springs that, when flicked, made that great *SPROING!!!* sound? Or hearing mom frying the breakfast bacon and thinking, “That sounds like rain”?

In the preproduction phase of the show, like a young kid, I raided the nooks and crannies of the theater, finding a squeaky door hinge and, closing my eyes, twisted it back and forth and asked myself, “Does this sound like something from a ship?” I smacked on lots of small and large metal things, turned a lot of cranks, twisted reams of rope, and swished riding crops. There were no rules, and the sound team and I gathered musical junk from hither and yon.

By the time rehearsals began we had a wondrous pile filled with all manner of sound-making devices: a giant pile of potential cues and ideas. The stroke of a detuned string on a broken violin became our door squeaks. A notched piece of a wooden ruler raked on special spot on the piano became the dusty groans of a pirate ship, a tooth knocked out in the boxing scene was solved by a cast member onstage dropping a metal washer in a bucket (after we auditioned a quarter, a half dollar, and a marble dropping into three different metal buckets). Many things were tried and abandoned, and the rehearsals were playful as we kept experimenting until those moments of “That’s it! That’s the perfect sound!” We also embraced the old-fashioned sound magic of the theater – rattling thunder sheets and canvas wind machines made our storm scenes – while trying to keep our use of technology in the show to a minimum. What do you think starstuff magic sounds like? For me it was a chiming bundle of keys shaken in one hand and the circling tone of a Tibetan bowl made with the other hand. Some well placed reverbs on the actors’ microphones in the grotto scene and a roar for a large croc named Mr. Grin made from a collage of bear, hippo, lion, and elephant roars (no real crocodile sounds at all), and our aural world started to come into focus little by little, day by day. We spent the rehearsal process channeling our early days of child’s play and following our bliss. I hope you to do the same...

Darron L. West
Sound Designer

BEYOND THE STAGE

PAGE TO STAGE: THE EVOLUTION OF PETER PAN

J. M. Barrie's Story

“All children, except one, grow up.” So begins J. M. Barrie’s novel *Peter and Wendy*, published in 1911. But it was more than a decade earlier that the Scottish playwright would meet the inspirations for his cocky, carefree protagonist and fellow Lost Boys. Arthur and Sylvia Llewelyn Davies’s five sons – George, John, Peter, Michael, and Nicholas – who Barrie met in Kensington Gardens, would help the writer craft the indelible characters and their adventures that have been adapted innumerable times across page, stage, and screen.



Arthur Llewelyn and his sons, 1904.

The boy who wouldn’t grow up made his first appearance in 1902.

In Barrie’s novel, *The Little White Bird*, Peter Pan appeared as a seven-year-old boy adventuring in Kensington Gardens. It wasn’t until 1904 that he flew into the Darling nursery for the first time, making his stage debut in London’s West End. Upon seeing an early draft, theatrical manager Herbert Beerbohm Tree declared, “Barrie has gone out of his mind.” A play full of pirates, mermaids, Indians, fairies, and crocodiles was certainly unlike anything the London audience had ever seen before and became an instant success. *Peter Pan* opened on Broadway in 1905 and continued to run in London for several seasons. In 1911, Barrie adapted and expanded his 1904 play into the novel *Peter and Wendy*, which is still in print.

Disney’s Animated Film

Walt Disney was a great admirer of the story and intended to follow the great success of the studio’s first animated feature, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, with an animated feature of *Peter Pan*. Delays pushed off the development of the film until 1953, making it the fourteenth animated feature film produced by Walt Disney Productions. The film broke tradition by casting child-star Bobby Driscoll as the voice of Peter Pan; conventionally, onstage, the role had been played by a woman. *Peter Pan* received positive reviews from critics and today is regarded as one of the highlights of the Disney animated classics.

A Broadway Musical

A year after Disney released its animated feature, Mary Martin earned a Tony Award® and further popularized the story of Peter Pan in a new Broadway musical adaptation based on J. M. Barrie’s book with music by Mark Charlap and Jule Styne, and lyrics by Betty Comden, Adolph Green, and Carolyn Leigh. Several other film and stage adaptations have followed in the decades since, as well as Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson’s novel, *Peter and the Starcatchers*.

A NOVEL'S INSPIRATION

While reading to my five-year-old daughter, Paige, she asked me, “How did Peter Pan meet Captain Hook in the first place?” It was an innocent question and one I felt an obligation to answer. At the time, I killed people for a living (I wrote mysteries and thrillers) and wasn’t sure about tackling a novel for “younger readers.” I turned to my friend Dave Barry for his expertise in all things adolescent. A humorist who “wrote booger jokes for a living,” he was the obvious choice.

We started out intending to write an 80-page book we would only make only eight copies of. (We both had daughters, so we knew we had at least three readers.) But Paige’s simple question had led to many others: How could the boy fly? Why did he never grow old? How could he detach from his shadow, and why would he want to? How did he end up on an island? Why was the island called Neverland? Where did Tinkerbell and the Lost Boys and mermaids come from?

We made a few upfront decisions: we would make no attempt to be the second-coming of J. M. Barrie; this was a romp by two friends, a prequel to a classic, but not *the* prequel. We would not attempt Victorian syntax, nor would we necessarily aim for J. M. Barrie’s (somewhat dark and brooding novel) *Peter and Wendy*. We believed most of those familiar with Peter knew him through Disney’s animated film, and so that film should be our touchstone. We would, however, make some changes from the animated film, including treating the island natives more kindly, and making Wendy more like our daughters – charge-with-your-head-down little girls who would play second fiddle to no one. So, Molly Aster would be our heroine, British to the bone and from the landed gentry, and Peter and the Lost Boys would become orphans sold and transported by ship to a sorry fate at the hands of treacherous pirates.

Dave and I rarely spoke by phone, so when he called one day, I knew it had to be important. “If we’re going to write this book, we’re going to need magic. But...” He paused. “If we’re going to have magic there has to be rules.” Putting restrictions on “starstuff” (think: Pixie Dust) saved our story. We spent days laying out the cans and cannots for our heaven-sent powder that could embolden the holder with genius or power-craving insanity.

As the chapters rolled out, Peter showed himself to be plucky, nervy boy who found girls a mystery. Molly showed herself to be a daring, caring leader who loved family and wanted badly to serve her father well. The Black Stache was ruthless and tough and dangerous, and his sidekick, Smee, though he pandered to his captain, had smarts and whimsy. But it was Tinkerbell who flew off the page from the moment Dave wrote her. Jealous, catty, and possessive, Tink stole the show.

With the passing of co-director Roger Rees in 2015, the *Starcatcher* family suffered an emotional loss that none of us has fully pulled out of since. I have spoken to several regional *Peter* casts, and each time I ask, they dedicate every performance to Roger’s love of theater, his gentle kindness, and keen vision. What began as a probing question by an inquisitive child became a beautifully written, amazingly conceived dramatic stage play by a family of people who cared deeply for the material. It shows in every performance. It’s that sense of family and home that Rick Elice evokes in the material, and that has been with the production since the first words were put to page.

Ridley Pearson
Co-author, *Peter and the Starcatchers*

Peter and the Starcatcher(s)

Before Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson's novel *Peter and the Starcatchers* was published in 2004, a draft was given to Thomas Schumacher, who at the time ran Disney's feature animation and theatrical divisions. Immediately recognizing its dramatic potential, he optioned the novel for both film and stage and, inspired by the Royal Shakespeare Company's 1980 production of *Nicholas Nickleby*, in which Roger Rees starred, Schumacher approached Rees about using a similar concept for *Peter and the Starcatchers*. Then, in 2007, after bringing on board Alex Timbers as Rees's co-director and dramaturg Ken Cerniglia, and crafting a few scenes, the group headed to Willimstown Theatre Festival where Rees was the artistic director, and they tested the story theater concept in a log cabin with fifteen actors and minimal props. After another brief staging lab in NYC – and bringing in Rick Elice to pen the play – *Peter and the Starcatcher* premiered at La Jolla Playhouse. From there, the play went on to a 2011 off-Broadway debut at New York Theatre Workshop before transferring to Broadway in 2012.

Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson's *Peter and the Starcatchers* and Rick Elice's theatrical adaptation *Peter and the Starcatcher* each act as a prequel to the beloved J. M. Barrie's play and novel. Each sets up the familiar story of the boy who refused to grow up – preferring, instead, to live in Neverland with his band of Lost Boys and be chased eternally by the pirate Captain Hook. Both adaptations reveal who Peter was (the orphan Boy), before he became Peter Pan, explain why he can fly and why he'll never grow up (the magical starstuff), and how he (through a shipwreck) and the island's inhabitants came to live on Neverland. Still, the two versions of the story are inherently different, with each taking advantage of its respective medium's conventions to frame and tell the story.

One of the biggest differences between the two interpretations is the play's self-awareness, narration, and double-casting – all due to its story theater conventions. Some practical changes were also necessary, such as cutting two Lost Boys (sorry, Thomas and James!); condensing three ships into two (R.I.P., *Sea Devil*); saying goodbye to Ammm, the talking porpoise who teaches Peter to fly; killing off villainous Slank early on in order to focus on Peter's relationship with Black Stache; and trimming down the participation in the story of the mermaids (who, in the novel, are less human, but still humane – they save Peter's life) to one very funny song. Essentially, *Peter and the Starcatcher* does what all good play adaptations do: it minimizes exposition and casting, and theatricalizes its storytelling (while weaving in a contemporary – and very Rick Elice – anachronistic sense of humor).



Molly flies in to save Peter in Peter and the Starcatchers.
Illustration by Greg Call

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Wayne Barker (*Composer*) earned Drama Desk Award and Tony Award® nominations for Best Original Score for *Peter and the Starcatcher*. He performed with Dame Edna Everage from 2000-2006, composing the music and appearing as Master of the Dame's Music for her Broadway shows *Dame Edna: Back with a Vengeance* and *All About Me*. He also co-wrote lyrics with Barry Humphries (Dame Edna) for the 2006 Commonwealth Games and the 75th Royal Command Variety Performance. Mr. Barker is also artistic associate for new musicals and composer-in-residence at New York Theatre Workshop. He has been music director for Mark Lamos's stagings of *Into the Woods* and *She Loves Me* at the Westport Country Playhouse and *A Little Night Music* at Baltimore's Center Stage and American Conservatory Theater. While at Center Stage, Mr. Barker also conducted *Caroline, or Change* and *The Boys from Syracuse*. He has written music for *The Three Musketeers* and *Twelfth Night* at Seattle Repertory Theatre, *The Great Gatsby* and *The Primrose Path* (dir. Roger Rees) at the Guthrie Theater, the world premiere of Beth Henley's *Laugh* at Studio Theatre in Washington, D.C., and he was orchestrator of Mark Bennett's score for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at La Jolla Playhouse and music director, onstage pianist, and composer of *A Confederacy of Dunces* at Huntington Theatre Company. He has contributed dozens of original arrangements to symphony pops programs, including those presented by the New York Pops, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra, and the Baltimore, Chicago, San Francisco, and St. Louis symphonies, among many others.

Dave Barry (*Co-Author of the Peter and the Starcatchers novels*) is a Pulitzer Prize-winning, nationally syndicated humor columnist for the *Miami Herald*. He is the author of more than a dozen books, including *Dave Barry's Complete Guide to Guys*, *Dave Barry Slept Here*, *Big Trouble*, and *Dave Barry Hits Below the Beltway*.

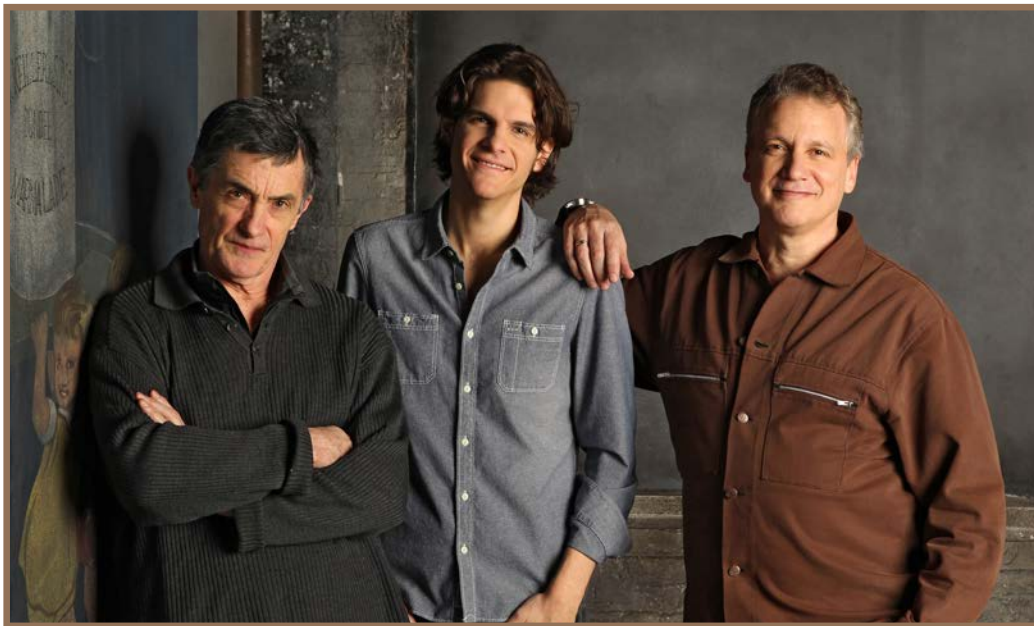
Rick Elice (*Playwright*) co-wrote *Jersey Boys* (winner of the 2006 Tony Award®, 2007 GRAMMY® Award, and 2009 Olivier Award for Best Musical) with Marshall Brickman. Other Broadway: *The Addams Family* (with Marshall Brickman, music and lyrics by Andrew Lippa). Other projects include *Magnificent Climb* (music and lyrics by Will Van Dyke), *Monopoly* (music and lyrics by Dan Lipton and David Rossmer), *Bag of Nails* (directed by Jerry Mitchell), and a musical about the life and adventures of Cher.

Marco Paguia (*Music Supervisor*) was with *Peter and the Starcatcher* from the premiere at La Jolla Playhouse, continuing through the New York Theatre Workshop, Broadway, and subsequent off-Broadway and national tour productions. Broadway credits include: *Tuck Everlasting*, *If/Then*, *The Addams Family*, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, *Everyday Rapture*, and *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. Other theater highlights include: *Poster Boy* and *Unknown Soldier* at Williamstown Theatre Festival and the national tour of Disney's *On the Record*. As a jazz pianist, he was a two-time finalist for the American Pianists Association's Cole Porter Jazz Fellowship. He performs and collaborates with singer/actress Lindsay Mendez; they released the album *This Time* and made their Lincoln Center debut in 2013. He also works as music director and arranger for Tony Award®-winning actress LaChanze.

Ridley Pearson (*Co-Author of the Peter and the Starcatchers novels*) is the best-selling author of fifty novels, including *Probable Cause* and *White Bone* (for grown-ups) and *The Kingdom Keepers* and *Lock and Key* (for younger readers). An Edgar-nominated mystery writer, Ridley was the first American to be awarded the Raymond Chandler/Fulbright Fellowship for Detective Fiction at Oxford University.

Roger Rees (*Co-Director*) worked in the theater for 50 years. He was a Tony[®], Olivier, and Obie Award-winning actor and Obie Award-winning, Tony[®]-nominated director. For 40 years, he was an associate artist with the Royal Shakespeare Company. He created the lead roles in two of Tom Stoppard's plays in London's West End and was directed on film by Bob Fosse, Mel Brooks, Christopher Nolan, and Julie Taymor, among many others. His television appearances included roles on *Cheers*, *The West Wing*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and more.

Alex Timbers (*Co-Director*) directed on Broadway: *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* (also book writer; Tony[®] nomination, Best Book; Drama Desk Award, Best Book; Lortel, Outer Critics Circle Award, Best Musical); *The Pee-wee Herman Show* (HBO, Emmy[®] nomination); *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Obie, Tony[®] nomination with Roger Rees); *Rocky* (Drama Desk, OCC nominations, Best Director); and *Oh, Hello* with Nick Kroll and John Mulaney. Off-Broadway: *The Robber Bridegroom*, *Here Lies Love* (Lortel Award, Best Director; Drama Desk, OCC nominations, Best Director; London Evening Standard Award), *A Very Merry Unauthorized Children's Scientology Pageant* (Obie Award and Garland Award, Best Director), *Gutenberg!* (Drama Desk nomination, Best Director), and *The Language of Trees*.



Roger Rees, Alex Timbers, and Rick Elice
Photo by Joan Marcus

GLOSSARY

The glossary below includes explanations of many of the script's less common words and expressions along with the script page(s) they can be found on.

Nautical Terms

Aft (30, 60, 70): At or toward the stern of a ship.

Armada (125): A fleet of war ships.

Bilge (17, 18, 25, 28, etc.): The deepest part of a ship's hull where any leakage and spray collects.

Capstan (15): An apparatus, rotated manually, used for hoisting weights and heavy sails. It consists of a vertical spool-shaped cylinder, around which rope is wound.

Cesspit (26): A pit for sewage or other waste.

Davy Jones (62): The bottom of the sea. "Davy Jones's Locker" refers to the grave of those who perish at sea.

Foretop (7): A platform mounted at the head of a ship's foremast (the forward lower-mast).

Frigate (4, 29, 53): A fast naval vessel of the 17th-19th centuries.

Frammistan (14): Also called "framistat," a nonsense word referring to a part or device one doesn't really understand or know the proper name for.

Futtocks (7): One of the middle timbers forming the curved portion of the ship's frame.

Gangway (17, 37): An opening in the railing or bulwark of a ship, into which a gangplank fits. Today, it is often used interchangeably with "gangplank." Can also be an especially narrow passageway.

Gunter (55, 56): A manner of rigging a sail attached to a spar to a short mast, so that the spar can slide up the mast in order to spread the sail.

Jib (14, 52): The triangular shaped sail at the front of the ship.

Jolly Roger (57): A flag with skull and cross bones. Black flags indicated pirates aboard the ship would consider showing mercy, while red flags meant no mercy would be shown.

Knots (29, 51-57): The nautical measure of speed. Knots are determined using pieces of knotted string fastened, at intervals, to the log-line; the number of pieces that run out while the sand-glass is running indicates the ship's speed.

Longboat (98, 114, 127): The largest open boat belonging to a sailing vessel, powered by sail or oars.

Main-brace (61): The principal line that controls the rotation of a sail.

Mast (55, 60, 68): An upright pole, usually raked, which is fixed or stepped in the keel of a sailing ship in order to support the sails, either directly or by means of horizontal spars.

Merchant sailors (6): Sailors on a trade vessel.

Plank (2, 60): A board or ramp used as a temporary footbridge from a ship to the dock. Also known as “gangplank.” To “walk the plank” is to be forced to move along a plank over the ship’s side to a watery death.

Poop (5): A superstructure installed on a raised afterdeck, which, in large ships, comprises the roof of the captain’s cabin. Describing the *Neverland* as “long in the poop” implies that the old ship has seen better days.

Red over white over red (56): Warning lights on a ship that signal that it has restricted maneuverability.

Spar (66): Long, round bits of wood to which sails are bent.

Starboard (53): The right-hand side of a ship when facing forward. The term began with the Vikings who called a ship’s side its “board” and placed the steering oar (the “star”) on the right side.

Stem (60): The bow of the ship.

Stern (60): The aftermost part of the ship’s hull (the body of the ship between the deck and the keel).

Swag (35): Plunder or booty.

Sea Life & Other Creatures

Ahi (72): A large tuna fish, especially the bigeye tuna and the yellowfin tuna.

Antipodes (12): A group of inhospitable volcanic islands south east of, and belonging to, New Zealand.

Archipelago (65): A large group or chain of islands.

Arrowtooth (72): A fish in the flounder family. Habitat ranges from central California to the eastern Bering Sea. The most abundant fish in the Gulf of Alaska.

Dodo (10, 11, 44, etc.): A clumsy, flightless bird extinct since 1662. Related to the pigeon, but about the size of a turkey, it inhabited the islands of Mauritius.

Leviathan (93): A sea monster, or any huge marine mammal such as the whale.

Mahi mahi (72): The Hawaiian name for the species called the dolphinfish (no relation to dolphins). A large marine food and game fish found worldwide in tropical waters, having an iridescent blue back, yellow sides, a steep blunted forehead, and a long, continuous dorsal fin.

Porpoise (12, 46): A cetacean (sea mammal) closely related to the whale and the dolphin. Porpoises are often confused with dolphins but there are some visible differences between the two, including the porpoise’s shorter, flattened beak.

Smelt (16, 71): A species of small, silvery saltwater fish found in cold northern waters. A common food source for salmon and lake trout. Their yellow or orange eggs, also known as roe, are often used to garnish sushi.

Weevil (53): A type of beetle destructive to nuts, grains, and fruits.

Britishisms & Other Terms

America's Cup (41): A trophy awarded to the winner of the America's Cup match races between two sailing yachts. In 1851, the first match occurred during the first world's fair, hosted by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, when six members of the New York Yacht Club built a racing yacht so advanced that Her Majesty's yachtsmen didn't want to race. The America (as the winning yacht was called) won that race and the trophy was renamed America's Cup in its honor. The Americans held on to the trophy for 132 years.

Ayn Rand (48): The controversial author of books such as *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead*. Developed a philosophical system called Objectivism largely ignored by academic philosophers, but which held significance among libertarians and conservatives.

Appellation (64): A name or title.

Attaque coul   (118): A fencing term for an attack that slides along the opponent's blade.

Ay de m   (43): Spanish for "oh, my."

Balestra (118): A fencing term for a forward hop or jump, which is often followed by an attack.

Bloomers (106): An undergarment formerly worn by women and girls that was composed of loose trousers gathered about the ankles and worn under a short skirt. Popularized in the 1850s by Amelia Bloomer, a feminist who advocated for women's rights and Victorian dress reform.

Bollocks (121): British slang for rubbish or nonsense. Considered to be a vulgar term.

British Empire (2): A former term for the territories controlled by the British Crown. The most extensive empire in the world and, at one time, the foremost global power.

Buffet (101): To strike or push against repeatedly.

BVDs (41): A brand of men's underwear. Stands for "Bradley, Voorhees, and Day."

Claggy (59): Sticky or clingy.

Comme il faut (34): French for "proper."

Crocodile tears (123): Insincere tears of grief.

Debo protestar (43): Spanish for "I must protest."

Devon cream (56): A type of clotted cream from Devonshire County, England that is spread on scones.

Die is cast (43): A permanent decision has been made, or fate has taken charge.

Done 'n' dusted: (36): To be successfully completed.

Fall off the wig (15): To die. Also phrased as "to hop the twig."

Fop (56): An extremely vain man.

Fortnum’s (56): Short for “Fortnum & Mason.” A department store and grocer founded in London in 1707 by one of Queen Anne’s footmen. In 1854, in response to the soldiers’ appalling conditions in the Crimean War, Queen Victoria ordered a huge consignment of beef tea to be sent from Fortnum’s to Florence Nightingale in an effort to boost morale.

Fruitcake (113-114): A heavy, spiced cake containing nuts and candied or dried fruits. Fruitcake became popular in Europe and the Americas around the 16th century, when it was discovered that the fruit was preserved longer when soaked in sugar. Often served at English tea time up until the 19th century.

Game’s afoot (43): The process is in active existence.

Guano (55): A natural manure, usually composed of the excrement of sea birds and found on the islands of Peru.

Java (59): The main island of Indonesia where the capital, Jakarta, is located.

Kippers ‘n’ custard (36): A small herring served with custard. At one time a common breakfast.

Nattering (54): Incessant chatter.

Oh Captain, my Captain (123): A reference to Walt Whitman’s 1865 poem, “O Captain! My Captain!,” about the death of Abraham Lincoln.

One for all and all for me (67): A play on “all for one and one for all,” which is best known as the motto for the title characters in Alexandre Dumas’s *The Three Musketeers*.

Orphan (2, 3, 4, etc.): A child who has lost both parents, whether through death or abandonment. High mortality rates – as well as abandonment due to overcrowding or lack of money – during the Victorian era meant that becoming an orphan was not a rarity. Not many orphanages existed at the time, and because they were so terrible, many children preferred to live on the streets.

Pasta fazool (116): A traditional Italian dish of pasta and beans. Also known as “pasta e fagioli.”

Peer of the realm (2): A U.K. citizen of high social class who has the right to sit in the House of the Lords.

Philip Glass (95): A contemporary and influential American composer who has written for stage and film (including his Oscar®-nominated work for *The Hours* and *Notes on a Scandal*) in addition to other compositions. His works became the basis for a form of “minimalist” music that consists of repetitive patterns layered on top of each other.

Picaroon (14): A pirate or other rogue.

Pike (59): A hill or mountain with a pointed summit, or the pointed end of anything.

Portsmouth (4): A significant naval port on the south coast of England. Portsmouth has the world’s oldest continuously used dry dock and is home to some noted ships, including HMS *Victory*, the world’s oldest commissioned warship, which is preserved as a museum ship.

Prat (95): British slang for an incompetent person.

Préférez-vous que je parle français (83): French for “Do you prefer that I speak French?”

Qué demonio (43): Spanish for “what a demon.”

Queen Victoria (2, 35, 48): Born in 1837, Victoria became queen at 18 years of age because her uncles did not have children who lived long enough to take over the throne. Her 64-year reign – the longest of any British monarch – is known as the Victorian era, and it is remembered as a period of prosperity and peace. She is known for proposing to her husband, Prince Albert, and for starting the tradition of women wearing white at their weddings. Though child labor was common during her reign (many were employed in mines, factories, and as chimney sweeps), she is the most commemorated British monarch.

Salad days (15): A period of youthful inexperience. Coined in 1606 by Shakespeare in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, when the latter titular character says, “My salad days, when I was green in judgment...” (I.v).

Sally Field at the Oscars (89): A reference to the Oscar[®]-winning actress’s acceptance speech at the 1985 Academy Awards[®] in which she repeats “You like me!” Often misquoted as “You like me; you really like me!”

Sally Lunn (53): A French refugee who worked in a bakery in Bath, England in 1640. Brought with her the French tradition of a brioche bun that was unfamiliar to her English colleagues who, because they couldn’t pronounce her given name (Solange Luyon), christened her “Sally Lunn.” The delicacy she shared was thus named after her as well (the Sally Lunn Bun).

Sleeping Beauty (40, 44, 84-88): The bedtime story that Molly tells the boys is the first part of the dark fairy tale adapted by Charles Perrault and popularized by the 1959 Disney animated film. The story in the play takes elements from the Perrault tale, Tchaikovsky’s ballet, and the Brothers Grimm tale.

Sticky Pudding (23, 88): A British dessert made of a very moist sponge cake with chopped dates and covered in a toffee sauce. Usually served with vanilla ice cream.

Swot (52, 111): British slang for a student who studies (too) vigorously.

Too posh to push (57): A prospective mother who elects to have a caesarean section rather than give birth naturally. Such a woman is usually imagined to be of a wealthier, higher class.

TTFN (12): “Ta ta for now.” Originated in Britain with “It’s that Man Again,” a radio show popular during WWII, which buoyed morale for the U.K. home front.

Union Jack (29): The national flag of the U.K. since 1801. Combines the three crosses of the patron saints of England (Saint George), Ireland (Saint Patrick), and Scotland (Saint Andrew).

Winkle-pinner (60): Refers to one who removes meat from a mollusk, or winkle, with a pin.

Your milkshake brings all the boys to the yard (124): A lyric in the song “Milkshake” by American recording artist Kelis.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Staging *Peter and the Starcatcher* will provide your cast and crew with a valuable education in the art of theater-making. Additionally, this show provides rich opportunities for cross-curricular investigation and can be a springboard for learning beyond the classroom. The following lesson plans use arts integration techniques that allow students to explore varied subjects through an engaging and accessible forum. Share these lesson plans with English, social studies, and science teachers, or use them to enrich your exploration of the play in rehearsals. Feel free to modify or adapt the lessons to suit your needs.

Adapting Neverland

English Language Arts: Adaptation

Use this to: study the playwright's process in adapting literature for the stage.

Objectives:

- Adapt literature by writing original stage scenes
- Use problem-solving skills to creatively solve common challenges associated with adaptation
- Provide and receive critical feedback on creative content

Materials:

- Copies of the Adapting Neverland activity sheet (see pp. 62-63) – one for each student
- Pencils and paper

Time: 45 minutes

Introduction: (1 minute)

Peter and the Starcatcher is an example of an adaptation. Rick Elice wrote the play based on the novels by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson. When adapting works for the theater, playwrights do much more than transcribe dialogue from the source material – they *reinvent* the story for the stage.

Warm-up: (10 minutes) Dramatic Discussion

1. Start a conversation with the class about adaptation. To facilitate the discussion, use the following prompt: Are you aware of any books that have been adapted for film? Films that have become stage musicals? Books that have become plays (e.g., *Harry Potter*, *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*)?
2. Ask students to identify the differences between the original versions and the adaptations of the examples they shared.
3. Use the following prompts to continue the discussion:
 - Why do you think the adaptors made such choices?
 - How does the way spectators experience a movie differ from the way they experience a stage musical? How does a reader's experience of a book differ from the way she encounters a play?

- What choices might an author make when adapting a Shakespearean tragedy into a big blockbuster movie? What about adapting an animated film into a stage musical? Or an action-adventure story for the stage? Consider cast size, plot, special effects, etc.

Main Activity: (30 minutes) Writing Adaptations

1. Distribute the Adapting Neverland activity sheet to each student and review the directions.
2. As they work, walk around the classroom and encourage students by asking open-ended questions: How might you indicate a change of location in your scene? How will you stage a battle of 100 people using only 12 actors?
3. Be mindful of time, and give your playwrights five- and two-minute warnings so that they may conclude their scenes.
4. Choose a student volunteer to share with the class. If time allows, have other students share their scenes as well.

Reflection: (4 minutes)

Ask students to reflect on the playwriting/adaptation process using the following prompts:

- Did you find the adaptation process easy or difficult? Why?
- What makes an adaptation successful? Does this change depending on the medium of format (i.e., adapting a book into a film vs. a film into a play)?
- Thinking back to the adaptations that were brainstormed at the beginning of the activity, what do you now appreciate about the adaptors' choices?
- Comparing the book excerpts to your classmates' stage adaptations, what is gained by telling a story using a theatrical medium? What is lost?

EXTENSION IDEAS

- Have students swap scenes with a classmate and provide constructive feedback using the prompts “One thing I liked about the scene...,” “One thing I noticed about the scene...,” and “One thing I wondered about the scene...” Then, give the class ten minutes to consider the constructive feedback they received from their classmates and to incorporate any changes they would like to make. The students could also complete their revisions as homework.*
- Working in groups, have students stage their adaptations. Consider bringing in everyday items to create a prop trunk from which the students can pull objects to use when staging their scenes. Grab whatever you can get your hands on: paper towel rolls, pieces of rope, brooms, cardboard boxes, balloons, scarves, dishwashing gloves, etc. can all go in your trunk. Once the scenes have been staged, do the authors wish to make any changes to their adaptation? How can “workshopping” moments inform their process?

* This process is a variation of Liz Lerman’s Critical Response Process (CRP), and is designed to elicit thoughtful and deep responses to works of art.

STARCATCHER STUDIES: ADAPTING NEVERLAND

Peter and the Starcatcher is adapted for the stage from the novel *Peter and the Starcatchers* by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson. The novel is one in a series of four novels about the Neverland you never knew. In this activity, you will step into role as a playwright and experience the process of adaptation first-hand.

Choose one of the excerpts below from Barry and Pearson's other novels for your stage adaptation. Read your passage thoroughly. Before you start writing, jot down notes to answer these questions:

- Where does your scene take place? Aboard a ship? In the jungle? In more than one location?

- Who are the characters in your passage? Will any of them enter or exit your scene, or will they all be onstage the entire time?

- What are the characters' objectives in your excerpt? What does each character want?

- What is the overall mood of the passage? How might you convey the atmosphere of the piece onstage?

Now, get to work! Write a 1-2 page scene based on the excerpt you selected. In addition to dialogue, use stage directions (unspoken words that tell us where the actors go and what they do onstage), which you can put in parentheses. Remember, you are writing a play, not a film. There are no quick edits or computer-animated graphics, so you need to use language and the audience's imagination to tell the story.

Also, remember that in the process of adaptation, the playwright needs to determine which portions of the source material are essential to include. Think critically about your excerpt to determine which elements are needed and appropriate to include in your adaptation for the stage (this includes characters).

Excerpts for STARCATCHER STUDIES: ADAPTING NEVERLAND

From *Peter and the Shadow Thieves*

An inhuman roar of rage, like wind from a deep, cold cave, filled the night. The sound froze Slank and Nerezza, who stood at the end of the walk, having just seen the cab, and their prisoner, off to the ship. In a moment they were joined by Jarvis, Cadigan, and Hodge, who came running from their posts around the house. They looked toward the source of the horrible sound and saw Ombra's dark form leaning out the fourth-story window, an arm extended, pointed at something flying awkwardly, erratically, overhead toward Kensington Gardens.

Slank squinted up at it, then cursed in fury.

The boy. The flying boy. And he had the girl.

From *Peter and the Secret of Rundoon*

The canoes were now close enough that Molly, from the deck of the ship, could make out the red-painted faces of the howling Scorpion warriors. Some of the closer ones raised their bows and shot; the poisoned arrows arced through the air. Most splashed into the sea, but several thunked into the hull.

“Father,” said Molly, “they’re getting awfully close.”

Leonard, his eyes on the canoes, nodded. “Steady... steady...” he said to Hook, whose dark eyes danced between the Scorpions and the sails. The *De Vliegen* continued on a steady course that kept her broadside to the oncoming Scorpions – an easy target.

Leonard turned to Peter – actually, to Tink, on Peter’s shoulder.

“Now,” he said.

In a flash, she was over the side.

From *Peter and the Sword of Mercy*

Shining Pearl clung to the white starfish wrapped in wet seaweed as she and the others struggled through the mud, which was ankle-deep and getting deeper every minute in the torrential rain. She followed Nibs, who led the way; behind them came Slightly, Little Scallop, then Curly, Tootles, and, well back, the twins.

It was very dark, and the windblown rain was coming down so hard that the fat drops actually hurt. The children held banana leaves over their heads, but these gave them little relief from their misery as they slogged along the water trail toward the place where it met the mountain trail.

Nibs stopped so suddenly that Shining Pearl nearly bumped into him.

“What is it?” she said.

“I heard shouting ahead,” he said. “Maybe the shipwrecked sailors. Everybody keep quiet.”

“What are we going to do?” said Slightly.

AN EXAMPLE OF STAGE DIRECTIONS

SLANK

And while nobody’s lookin’ —

(everyone turns away, occupied elsewhere)

I’ll just mark the Queen’s trunk, the one s’posed to go on the *Wasp*.

(makes a chalk X on the top trunk)

Class and Power

Social Studies: Social Structures and Identity

Use this lesson to: *study the class system of Victorian England and creatively explore how class and status influence a person's identity.*

Objectives:

- Work as a class to create stage pictures
- Work in pairs to make connections between historically-based fiction and modern society
- Employ empathy, performance, and storytelling skills to explore class and power from a character's point of view

Materials:

- Copies of Class & Power activity sheet (see p. 66) – one for each student
- Pencils
- Three chairs

Time: 45 minutes

Introduction: (1 minute)

The story takes place around 1885 and begins in England – a time and place in which class meant power, and when people were often born into their stations in life. The characters in *Peter and the Starcatcher* span every social status imaginable, from the oppressed and trampled orphans all the way up to a noble ambassador of the Queen. It's important to understand the very real class struggles of the Victorian era in order to fully appreciate the characters of the play.

Warm-up: (10 minutes) Who's Got the Power?

1. Ask students to join you in a standing semi-circle facing a "stage" space; place three chairs in the space.
2. Instruct your students to enter the space one at a time, and – using levels, proximity, and angles – command the most power in the room. Once a student enters the space and takes her position, she must remain frozen in place as part of the ever-growing stage picture. The next student will then enter and strike a pose that he thinks will give him the most power in the group.
3. As the activity progresses, coach the class with open-ended questions; feel free to pause the activity periodically to point out interesting choices.
4. Reflect together, focusing on how levels, proximity, and angles created power dynamics in the activity.

Hook: (10 minutes) Status Match-up

1. Divide your class into pairs, and give each group the Class & Power activity sheet.
2. Review the directions with the class, and walk around the classroom to field questions and encourage collaboration.

Note: This activity requires prior knowledge of the play's characters. If needed, reference the character descriptions on pp. iii-iv of the script.

Main Activity: (20 minutes) Power Freeze

1. Ask students to join you in a standing circle and place one chair in the center.
2. Ask each student to silently choose a character (of any gender) from the list on the Class & Power activity sheet.
3. Randomly select 2-4 students to come into the center of the circle, introduce themselves in character, and note their assigned class. If two students have selected the same character, ask one to choose another character.
4. Instruct the students to start freely moving around the circle. Then, when you call “freeze,” the students must stop and, staying approximately in their current locations in relation to one another, instantly create a tableau (frozen picture) reflecting the power dynamics of their characters. If needed, remind students that certain characters out-rank others within their own class system.
5. Lead a brief discussion about the choices the group made in the tableau and the class and power dynamics represented in it.
6. Repeat the exercise with different groups of students to explore the varied power relationships of the characters. Mix up the number of students per group to explore how power dynamics change depending on the number of relationships present.
7. If time allows, repeat the exercise and layer in a new challenge: give each student a level (high, medium, low) they must use for their frozen pose. Use this extension to explore how a character can maintain status and power on different levels.

Reflection: (4 minutes)

Facilitate a class discussion using the following prompts:

- What did you notice about the relationships between characters based on their status differences?
- How might the characters’ status and power differences influence the plot?
- In today’s society, how is the link between class and power similar to that of Victorian England? How is that relationship different?

EXTENSION IDEAS

- Working in pairs, instruct your students to interview one another in character. The pairs can work together to write interview questions and answers, focusing on status differences and relationships between characters, and then perform the interview for the rest of the class.
- Direct your students to investigate how various governments influence class systems around the world. Using the U.S., England, and India as case studies, charge students with writing a comparative essay on current class structures and the political influences that shape them.

STARCATCHER STUDIES: CLASS & POWER

In Victorian England, a rigid class system determined much of an individual's life. Typically, a person was born into a social class and remained there until her death. In 1885, when our story begins, most British subjects were members of one of the following classes:

- **Upper Class:** Royalty, nobility, and landowners. They did not work for their money.
- **Middle Class:** Bankers, physicians, merchants, and other professionals. Men worked to provide income for the family.
- **Working Class:** Millworkers, servants, cleaners, and unskilled laborers. Men, women, and children worked to provide income for the family; the work was usually physically demanding.
- **Under Class:** Paupers, beggars, orphans, and others who could not care for themselves or their families.

Working with a partner, determine which of the four primary classes you think each of the (on- and offstage) characters from *Peter and the Starcatcher* in the adjacent table belongs.

Working with your partner, discuss the following questions:

- Within each class system, do certain individuals out-rank others? Provide examples.

Character	Class
Molly Aster	
Slank	
Peter	
Captain Scott	
Black Stache	
Lord Aster	
Mrs. Bumbrake	
Ted	
Gremplin	
Smee	
The Queen	

- The status that comes from class is often relative. That is, it changes depending on the group of people involved. For example, if Lord Aster was in a room with the Queen, who would have the highest status? If Lord Aster was in a room with Ted, who would have more power?

Gender in Victorian England

Social Studies: Historical Gender Roles

Use this lesson to: *study the traditional role of women in Victorian England and reflect on the role of gender in society.*

Objectives:

- Work in pairs to analyze historical texts
- Work in pairs to make connections between historical and modern texts
- Investigate personal ideas regarding gender and reflect on the role of gender in society
- Examine the expected role of women in Victoria England

Materials:

- Copies of Gender in Victorian England activity sheet (see pp. 69-70) – one for each student
- Copies of Victorian Gender Role Images* (see pp. 71-75) posted around the room, with a blank piece of paper posted next to each image
- Pencils and paper

Time: 45 minutes

Introduction: (1 minute)

Peter and the Starcatcher explores topics such as bravery, leadership, and the power of wishes and dreams. Class and power is a theme of the play, and gender dynamics continue to be intertwined with class and power in situations and societies around the world. *Peter and the Starcatcher* is set during the reign of Queen Victoria – a time when a woman had the top job, but for most other women, the expectation was to be seen and not heard. In the original production, Molly was played by the only female actor in the company. In order to better understand Molly’s character and how gender is used in the play, it is important to know the societal expectations of women in Victorian England.

Hook: (10 minutes) Victorian Gender Roles Gallery Walk

1. Introduce the concept of “separate spheres”: In Victorian England, this theory asserted that women and men had separate “natural” characteristics, qualities, and strengths and weaknesses that made them inherently different; therefore, the belief was that men and women existed in “separate spheres.”
2. With this concept in mind, direct students to walk around the room (with writing utensils in hand) and look at each of the images posted on the walls. These images depict men and women performing tasks, activities, and roles associated with their gender in this time period.
3. As the students walk, encourage them to write down adjectives they think describe each image on the paper next to it.
4. Bring the class back together and discuss the images one at a time, focusing on what each image and the adjectives listed reveal about expectations of gender in this time period. What were the expected characteristics within each of the “separate spheres”?

*Used with permission from the Getty Foundation.

Main Activity: (25 minutes) Women in Victorian England

1. Divide your class into groups of four or five and give each student the Gender in Victorian England activity sheet. Then, assign each group one of the two texts on the handout, doing your best to evenly distribute both texts.
2. Review the directions with the class, and walk around the classroom to field questions as they work.
3. Bring the class back together and have the groups share their narrated tableaus.
4. As a class, compare the presentations and come to a consensus regarding what the source materials reveal about the role of women in Victorian England and how Molly differs from those expectations in the play.
 - In this time period, what was a woman's proper role in society? In a marriage? What were her expected duties?
 - What does the passage reveal about Molly's ideas of gender? What about her ideas of a woman's role in relation to men? How do her beliefs compare to the gender norms of her time?

Reflection: (4 minutes)

Guide a discussion with the class using the following prompts:

- What did you learn about gender roles in Victorian England?
- Britain was ruled by Queen Victoria during the time *Peter and the Starcatcher* is set. What surprises you about gender expectations under a woman's rule?
- Does our society subscribe to a similar theory of gender? Do we still believe men and women exist in "separate spheres"?
- How has our society progressed in terms of gender? How has it remained the same?

EXTENSION IDEAS

- Direct students to work in pairs (or small groups) to write and perform a short scene between Molly and a character(s) from one of the Victorian Gender Roles images.
- Instruct your students to further research gender roles in Victorian England and write essays based on their research. Also consider having the students write essays comparing gender roles in Victorian England to those of another country or time period.

STARCATCHER STUDIES: GENDER IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

The Victorian era, the time period in which *Peter and the Starcatcher* is set, was characterized by very strict gender roles. Working in groups, use the following texts to explore either the expectations of women in Victorian society or the views on gender expressed by Molly in the play.

First Text: Women's Rights Card, 19th Century England

This set of verses, written in the late 19th century by an anonymous author, was printed on a small blue card and handed out to women. The poem is believed to have been written during the beginning of the women's rights movement in reaction to society's strict gender norms. The "rights" referred to in the poem are therefore considered to be ironic.

Directions:

1. After you read the text, take notes regarding what it reveals about expectations of women during this time period. What was a woman's proper role in society? In marriage? What were her expected behaviors and duties?

2. Circle the words or phrases that stand out to you as most clearly representing expectations of women in this time period.
3. Based on this text, write a 4-6 sentence monologue from the perspective of an "ideal woman" communicating her thoughts on being a woman in Victorian times. Then create a tableau (or frozen picture) to visually represent the core message of your monologue.
4. You will be sharing this monologue and tableau with the class. Choose a "narrator" who will deliver the monologue while other group members form the tableau.

Women's Rights.

The right to be a comforter,
When other comforts fail ;
The right to cheer the drooping heart,
When troubles most assail.

The right to train the infant mind,
To think of Heaven and God ;
The right to guide the tiny feet
The path our Saviour trod.

The right to solace the distressed,
To wipe the mourner's tear ;
The right to shelter the oppressed,
And gently chide each fear.

The right to be a bright sunbeam,
In high or lowly home,
The right to smile with loving gleam,
And point to joys to come.

The right to fan the fevered brow,
To ease the troubled mind,
And gently tell in accents low,
" All those who seek shall find."

Such are the noblest woman's rights,
The rights which God hath given,
The right to comfort man on earth,
And smooth his path to Heaven.

M. C. M. R.*

Second Text: *Peter and the Starcatcher* Excerpt

In this passage, Molly discusses a kiss that she and Peter shared earlier in the play:

You stop that right now. I won't answer any such question. You're inclining toward the sentimental and that's all well and good for a boy, but the fact is we girls can't afford to be sentimental. We must instead be strong. ... And when I marry, I shall make it very clear to this person – that sentimentality is not on the calendar. He will have to lump it or leave it. And if he should leave, I'll stay a spinster and pin my hair back and volunteer weekends at hospital. And I will love words for their own sake, like "hyacinth" and "Piccadilly" and "onyx." And I'll have a good old dog, and think what I like, and be part of a different sort of family, with friends, you know? – who understand that things are only worth what you're willing to give up for them.

Directions:

1. After you read the text, take notes regarding what the passage reveals about Molly's ideas of gender and her ideas of a woman's role in relation to men.

2. Circle the words or phrases that stand out to you as most clearly representing Molly's ideas of gender.
3. Based on this text, write a 4-6 sentence monologue from Molly's perspective encouraging other women to share her views. Then, create a tableau (or frozen picture) to visually represent the core message of your monologue.
4. You will be sharing this monologue and tableau with the class. Choose a "narrator" who will deliver the monologue while other group members form the tableau.



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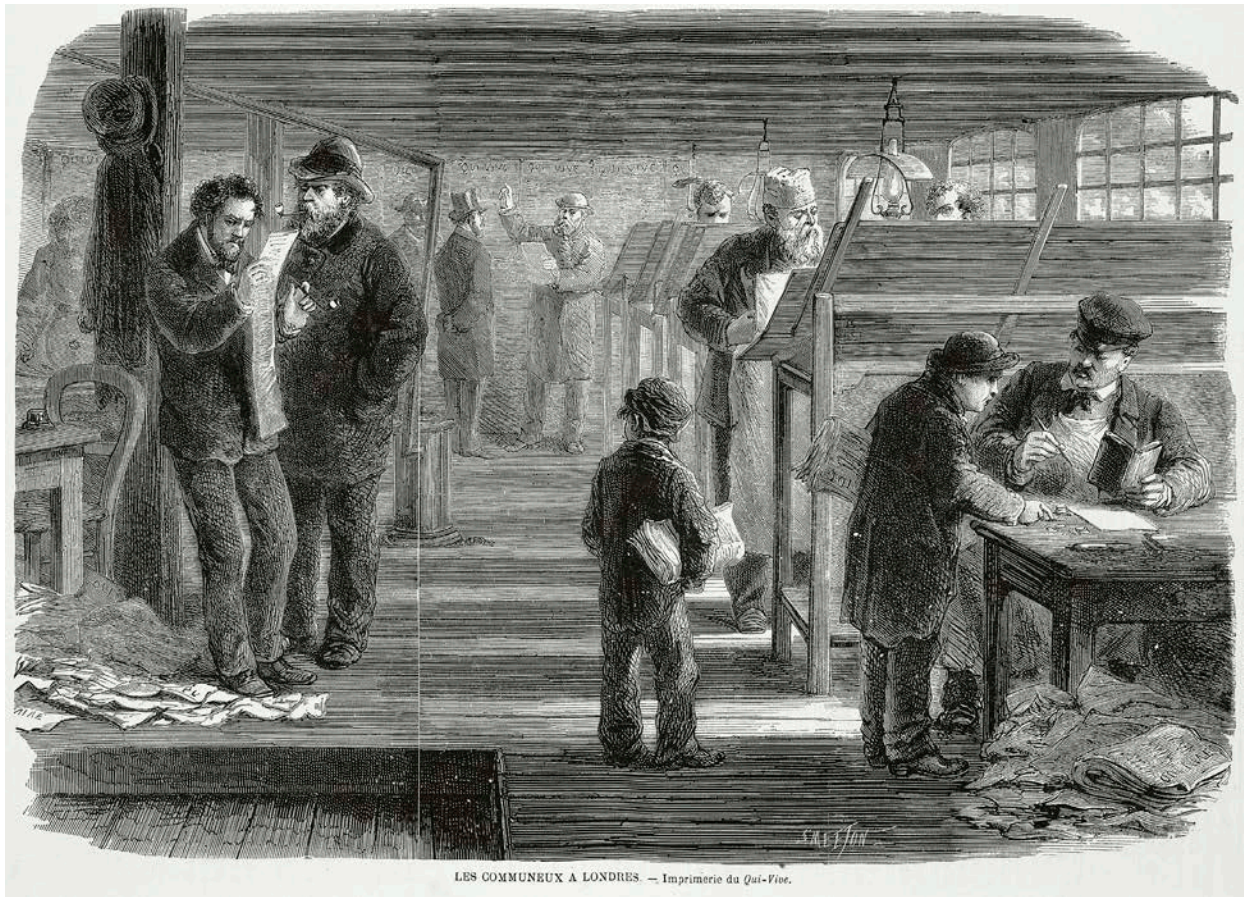


"I MAY BE VERY FOND OF PENNYWINKLES, MRS. RICHARDS, BUT IT DON'T FOLLOW THAT I'M TO HAVE 'EM FOR TEA."

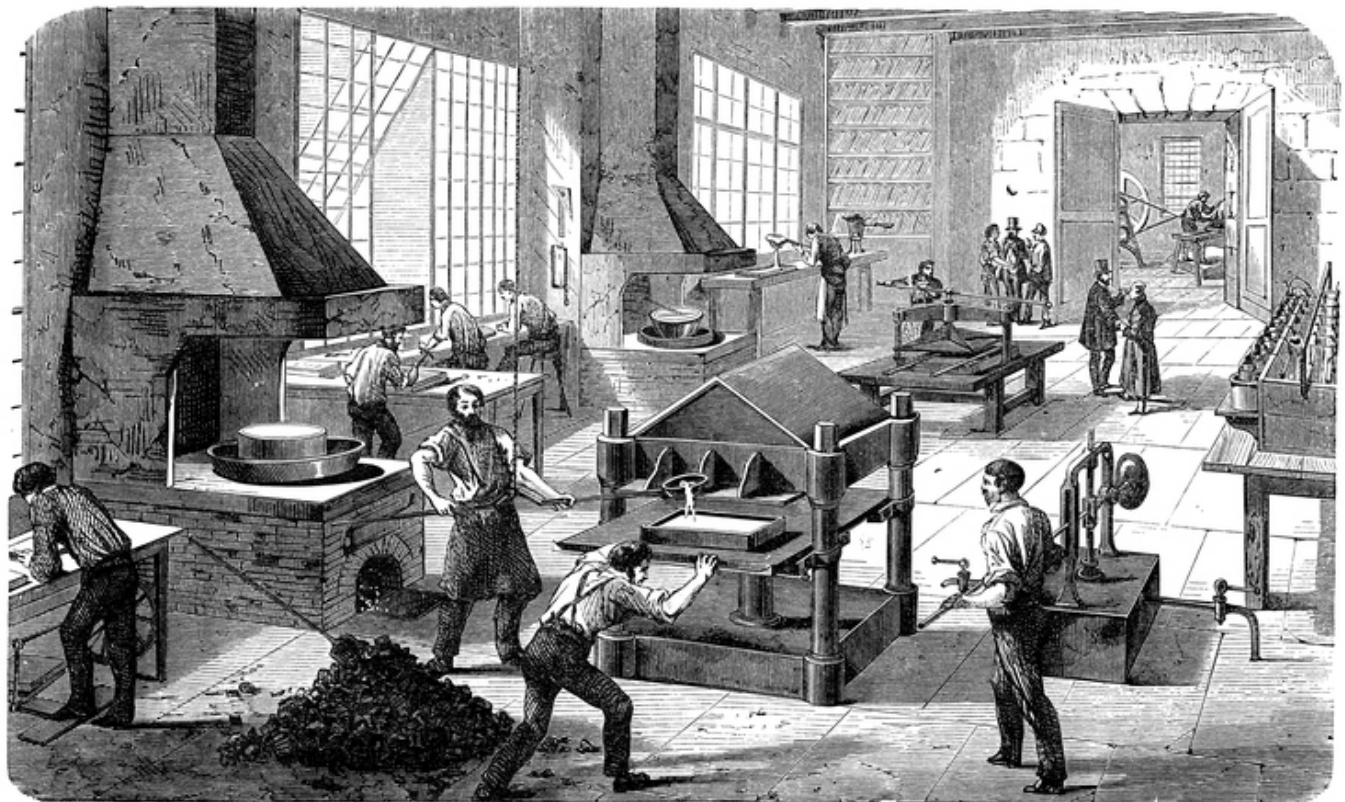


DOMBEY AND SON.

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RESOURCES

J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan

The Annotated Peter Pan: Edited by Maria Tater, and published by W. W. Norton & Company in 2011, this centennial edition of the novel includes period photographs, iconic illustrations, commentary on stage and screen versions, and an array of supplementary material, including J. M. Barrie's screenplay for a silent film.

jmbarrie.co.uk: A source for all things Barrie, this website includes a forum for discussing the author and his works, information about the Llewelyn Davies family (whose boys inspired the novel), letters written by Barrie, and more.

J. M. Barrie and the Lost Boys: The Real Story Behind Peter Pan: Author Andrew Birkin, in this 2003 edition by Yale University Press, draws extensively on a vast range of material by and about Barrie – including notebooks, memoirs, and recorded interviews with the family and their friends – to describe Barrie's life and the world he created for the five young boys of the Llewelyn Davies family.

The Little White Bird: Published in 1902, this novel by Barrie introduces the character and mythology of Peter Pan as he escapes from human life as a baby and learns to fly with fairies.

Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up: Barrie's original 1904 play.

Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens: This 1906 novel tells of Peter's young upbringing with birds and fairies in London's famous park, Kensington Gardens, where he meets Maimie, a little girl lost in the gardens (and considered a literary predecessor to Wendy).

Peter and Wendy: Barrie's 1911 novel that became known as *Peter Pan*.

Peter on Stage & Screen

Peter Pan: Disney's 1953 animated feature.

Peter and the Starcatcher: The Annotated Script of the Broadway Play: Authored by playwright Rick Elice and published by Disney Editions in 2012, this volume places the Broadway script alongside commentary from the playwright, directors, authors of the novel, and other creatives involved in the development of the play. Illustrated with production photos and design sketches, it also includes scenes and songs cut from the final version of the show.

Peter Pan on Stage and Screen, 1904-2010: This second edition, written by Bruce K. Hanson and published by McFarland & Co. in 2011, recounts the more than century-long stage and screen history of Barrie's *Peter Pan*. It traces the origin of Barrie's tale through the original London production in 1904 through various theatrical and film adaptations up to and including 2010.

Dave Barry & Ridley Pearson's *Peter and the Starcatchers* Series

Peter and the Starcatchers (Disney-Hyperion, 2004): The novel on which Rick Elice's play is based.

Peter and the Shadow Thieves (Disney-Hyperion, 2006)

Peter and the Secret of Rundoon (Disney-Hyperion, 2007)

Peter and the Sword of Mercy (Disney-Hyperion, 2009)

The Bridge to Never Land (Disney-Hyperion, 2011)

Story Theater

The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby: The Royal Shakespeare Company's legendary 1980 stage production of Charles Dickens's classic novel inspired Rick Elice to begin *Peter and the Starcatcher* with a group of players who function as narrators. Released on DVD in 2002 by A&E Home Video, the 8.5 hours, two-part production starred Roger Rees as the title character.

Paul Sills' Story Theater: Four Shows: This volume, published by Applause in 2000, includes the chapters "Designing for Story Theater," "Music Notes for Story Theater," and "Theater Games for Story Theater" (created by Sills's mother, Viola Spolin).

Story Theatre: plays.about.com/od/basics/fl/Story-Theatre.htm

This 2015 article by Rosalind Flynn on About.com details the history and conventions of the genre.

Story Theatre: A famous example of the story theater genre, this play by Paul Sills with music, was adapted from famous fables from the Brothers Grimm and Aesop. In the 1970 Broadway production, a cast of eight actors performed a total of 66 speaking roles, ensemble roles, and sound effects while assisting with – and performing as – set pieces. Published by Samuel French.

Pirates & Ships

The Dictionary of English Nautical Language: www.seatalk.info

A comprehensive nautical dictionary, complete with usage, suggestions for good seamanship, images of ships, and a nautical blog.

The New England Pirate Museum: www.piratemuseum.com/edperspt.htm

A brief historical perspective on piracy, from Viking and Muslim pirates in the Middle Ages through "licensed" privateers that appeared after Columbus's exploration.

The Pirate Dictionary: Covering the 15th-18th centuries when pirates controlled many sea lanes, Terry Breverton's dictionary (Pelican Publishing, 2004) lists major naval mutinies, a summary of the slave trade, and even some pirate jokes in addition to the origins of phrases like "steer clear of," "hit the deck," and "to harbor a grudge."



Women & Children in Victorian England

Ideals of Womanhood in Victorian Britain:

www.bbc.co.uk/history/trail/victorian_britain/women_home/ideals_womanhood_01.shtml

In Victorian England, a woman's place was in the home. This article by Lynn Abrams for the BBC describes the (physical) domestic sphere that women inhabited, women's fashion, the roles of wife and mother, and more.

The Victorian Child: www.representingchildhood.pitt.edu/victorian.htm

This essay by Marah Gubar explores how the idea of children evolved during the Victorian era, from the rampant use of child labor to the activism leading to laws protecting children and their "innocence."

Victorian Children in Victorian Times: www.victorianchildren.org/victorian-children-in-victorian-times/

This brief article surveys how Victorian children lived, played, worked, and, ultimately, survived.

English Dialects

When learning a dialect, the Internet provides a wealth of material. How-to videos for just about any accent in existence can be found on YouTube. Listed below are some helpful websites. Remember, when mastering a dialect, it can be extremely useful to stay in character for the length of rehearsal.

- **British Library Sound Archive:** sounds.bl.uk/Accents-and-dialects
This site contains audio clips and oral histories from five different archives, including the Survey of English Dialects and BBC Voices. Scroll down to "View by" for access to hundreds of recordings sorted by County, Date, or as clickable options on a Sound Map.
- **IDEA (International Dialects of English Archive):** www.dialectsarchive.com
Created by a dialect coach in 1997, this website contains dozens of samples of dialects from all over the globe – there are over 90 examples from England alone.

CREDITS

PETER AND THE STARCATCHER

A Play by
Rick Elice

Based on the Novel by **Dave Barry** and **Ridley Pearson**

Music by
Wayne Barker

Peter and the Starcatcher was commissioned and developed by Disney Theatrical Productions and produced at New York Theatre Workshop (James C. Nicola, Artistic Director & William Russo, Managing Director), February-April 2011. This production transferred to Broadway and opened on April 15, 2012, at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre, where it was presented by Nancy Nagel Gibbs, Greg Schaffert, Tom Smedes, Eva Price, and Disney Theatrical Productions. The production was conceived and directed by Roger Rees and Alex Timbers, with music by Wayne Barker, movement by Steven Hoggett, scenic design by Donyale Werle, costume design by Paloma Young, lighting design by Jeff Croiter, sound design by Darron L. West, music direction by Marco Paguia, fight direction by Jacob Gringolia-Rosenbaum, dramaturgy by Ken Cerniglia, technical supervision by David Benken, casting by Jim Carnahan/Jack Doulin/Tara Rubin, press by O&M Co., general management by 321 Theatrical Management, assistant stage management by Katherine Wallace, and production supervision by Clifford Schwartz. The cast was as follows:

BLACK STACHE	Christian Borle
MOLLY	Celia Keenan-Bolger
BOY (PETER)	Adam Chanler-Berat
GREMPKIN/MACK/SÁNCHEZ/FIGHTING PRAWN	Teddy Bergman
MRS. BUMBRAKE/TEACHER.....	Arnie Burton
SLANK/HAWKING CLAM	Matt D'Amico
SMEE.....	Kevin Del Aguila
PRENTISS	Carson Elrod
ALF	Greg Hildreth
LORD ASTER.....	Rick Holmes
CAPTAIN SCOTT	Isaiah Johnson
TED	David Rossmer

The understudies were Betsy Hogg, Orville Mendoza, Jason Ralph, and John Sanders.
The musicians were Marco Paguia (conductor/piano) and Deane Prouty (drums/percussion).

Originally Presented as a "Page to Stage" Workshop Production
by La Jolla Playhouse, February-March 2009
Christopher Ashley, Artistic Director & Michael S. Rosenberg, Managing Director

In memory of Roger Rees (1944-2015)

CREDITS

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Julie Haverkate

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Julie Haverkate, Sarah Kenny, Timothy Maynes, Colleen McCormack

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Lisa Mitchell, David Redman Scott, Matt Zambrano

Designer

Chad Hornberger

Production Photos

Bowling Green High School; Bowling Green, OH
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI
Dos Pueblos High School; Goleta, CA
Edina High School; Edina, MN
Green Valley High School; Henderson, NV
Shadow Mountain High School; Phoenix, AZ

Find a complete listing of Disney stage titles at [DisneyTheatricalLicensing.com](https://www.DisneyTheatricalLicensing.com).



MUSIC THEATRE
INTERNATIONAL

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