

GRAND THEATRE

HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT 2024

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THE MUSICAL

AUDIENCE ENRICHMENT GUIDE



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GRANDTHEATRE

SPRIET STAGE, SEPTEMBER 17 TO 28, 2024

OPENING NIGHT SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

GRAND THEATRE HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT 2024



BOOK BY
DENNIS KELLY

MUSIC & LYRICS BY
TIM MINCHIN

ORCHESTRATIONS & ADDITIONAL MUSIC BY
CHRIS NIGHTINGALE

CREATIVE TEAM

DIRECTOR	MEGAN WATSON
MUSIC DIRECTOR	SARAH RICHARDSON
CHOREOGRAPHER	STEPHEN COTA[†]
SET DESIGN CONSULTANT	SCOTT PENNER*
COSTUME DESIGNER	LISA WRIGHT
LIGHTING DESIGNER	JARETH LI*
SOUND DESIGNER	AARON OUELLETTE
STAGE MANAGER	MARTINE BELAND[†]
APPRENTICE STAGE MANAGER	JESS GORDON

ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTOR/KEYBOARD II	SARAH RICHARDSON
PERCUSSION	DALE ANNE BRENDAN
REEDS	JENNIFER CAHILL-BEDARD
CELLO	MARIANNA GRIGG
BASS	PETER HYSEN
KEYBOARD I	ALEXANDRA KANE
GUITAR	JOHN KENNY
PROGRAMMER	ANDREW PETRASIUNAS

[†] The participation of this Artist is arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the Dance • Opera • Theatre Policy.

*Indicated designers are represented by the Associated Designers of Canada, IATSE Local ADC659.



CAST

LAVENDER	MARISSA ALLEN
BRUCE	CHARLIE BURNETT
MRS. PHELPS	THEONE DAMUE
MICHAEL WORMWOOD	SHAKOTSHANUNYATHA DOXTATOR
THE ACROBAT	BILLIE GOULD
MRS. WORMWOOD	PIPER JESNEY
MATILDA WORMWOOD	NEELA NOBLE
RUDOLPHO	ETHAN PICKETT
MISS HONEY	UNA ROULSTON
THE ESCAPOLOGIST	ISAAC SELLARS
MISS AGATHA TRUNCHBULL	MACKENNA VANMASSENHOVEN
MR. WORMWOOD	JAMES WRIGHT

ENSEMBLE

MIRAYA AGRAWAL	GRETA FLEET	DANICA NOVA
AVA ALCAIDINHO	ABBY HALL	ISABELLE PARENT
SOPHIA BELLETH	ISABELLE HILTZ	ERIN PROUTY
LELAND CHAFEE	AYA HOLZBERG	LETICIA RODRIGUES
MICHAEL DODGE	ALEXIS KHANNA	OLIVIA SCHIEDEL
EVAN DOERR	JASMINE MELO	ALYSSA SKIFFINGTON
SAWYER EIDT	ERICA MOTA	ISAAC SZOLDATITS
HOSNA EMAMI		DESI VANBEEK-PATERSON

PRODUCTION STUDENTS

PROPS	SCENIC ART	WARDROBE
MARLIE KLOMPSTRA-WHITE	AYAT REZA	MORRIGAN BEHARRIELL
CHLOE LAPORTE	BEA SNIDER	REAGAN BERDAN
AISLYNN PINELLI	PHOTOGRAPHY & MARKETING	MEYER LISTON
CORINNE SMEENK	ANGELINA MOSES	ERIS MARLES
KATE TELFER		VIRGINIA McCALLUM
		MAGGIE McHARDY
STAGE MANAGEMENT	LIGHTING	SOUND
GRACE TANG	ADELAIDE ALCANTARA	LUIS GARCIA
QUENTIN VIEIRA		JONI LAU

STUDENT MUSICIANS

REEDS I	KEYBOARD III	MUSIC ASST.	KEYBOARD 1 1/2
RILEY HALES	FRANZ MARSOLAIS HERNANDEZ	EMILY PEACOCK	RYAN SHAW

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HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT: MATILDA THE MUSICAL

AUDIENCE ENRICHMENT GUIDE

CONTENT ADVISORY

This production contains scenes involving the threat of and actual violence. This violence includes the verbal and physical abuse of children, including but not limited to the use of words such as “stupid,” “idiot,” “maggot,” “gangster,” and “criminal;” depictions of an adult pulling the pigtails and ears of a child; and an adult threatening child with the use of a punishment called the dreaded "chokey". This production discusses body image and eating disorders, including forced binge eating. There is possible gender dysphoric language used in the show, as well as mention of gender preference and sexist language. There are brief mentions of suicide, murder, and the death of a mother during childbirth.

Creation of Matilda

Matilda the Musical is a stage performance (also adapted into film) based on the 1988 novel, *Matilda*, by Roald Dahl. The script is written by Dennis Kelly with music and lyrics by Tim Minchin. Some characters in the original novel were inspired by people in Dahl’s life and Matilda’s love of reading symbolizing his love for books.

Curriculum Connections

- English (Writing)
- The Arts (Music; Visual Arts; Drama; Dance)
- Social Sciences (Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy)



Themes

- Questioning Authority / Power Balance
- Ethics & Morality
- Shift/Change in perspective / Forming new perceptions

- Power in numbers/community, Unity, Revolt, Underdog

The Evolution of Matilda the Musical, From Page to Stage

- **Matilda – The Original Novel by Roald Dahl, 1988**

Roald Dahl was a British author of popular children's literature and short stories, a poet, screenwriter, and a wartime fighter ace. His books have sold more than 300 million copies worldwide. He has been called "one of the greatest storytellers for children of the 20th century".

Dahl's initial draft for the novel portrayed Matilda as a wicked, irrational girl, her name being drawn from Hilaire Belloc's poem "Matilda Who Told Such Dreadful Lies". The American editor Stephen Roxburgh at Farrar, Straus and Giroux had been instrumental in reshaping the story by coming up with the idea to make Matilda an innocent child who loved books, with her powers manifesting because of the abuse she endured.



Did you know?

*Telekinesis is a hypothetical psychic ability allowing an individual to influence a physical system without interaction.

- **Matilda – The 1996 Film Adaptation**

The movie stars Mara Wilson and was directed by Danny DeVito. Since Dahl himself was from the UK, his story was set there too. However, the 1996 adaptation took the story across the world to Los Angeles, California. The film was produced by United States production companies; hence it was set in the country. Since, the movie has an Americanized sense of humor, the film's location is valid". This film adaptation added songs to tell the story. "Send Me on My Way" by Rusted Root is a recurring theme for Matilda, and Thurston Harris' "Little Bitty Pretty One", is played when Matilda is learning to control her telekinetic* powers.

- **Matilda the Musical – Stage Premiere, 2011**

Matilda the Musical received its West End premiere at the Cambridge Theatre in November 2011 after a trial run staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford-upon-Avon. With a transfer cost of \$16 million USD, it premiered on Broadway April 11, 2013, at the Shubert Theatre. Small changes were made from the London production, but it was all worth it as the production received seven 2012 Lawrence Olivier awards and five Tony Awards in 2013. Ten-year-old, Eleanor Worthington, received the Olivier Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role in a Musical, becoming the youngest winner of the award in any category. The Broadway production closed on January 1, 2017, after 1,555 performances.

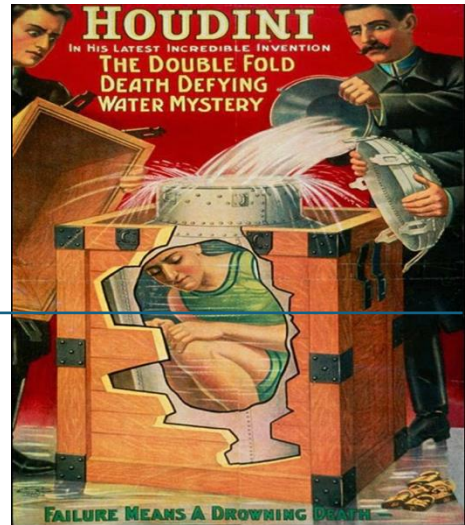
- **Matilda the Musical – The 2022 Film Adaptation**

Matilda the Musical is a fantasy musical film based on the stage musical, directed by Matthew Warchus. Tim Minchin wrote a new closing number for the film, “Still Holding My Hand”, as he felt the film needed to be wrapped up without the presence of a theatrical curtain call. Production was originally planned between August and December 2020; however, this was postponed to spring 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was theatrically released in the United Kingdom and made available to stream on Netflix internationally in 2022.

Did You Know?

- ...about the training process of an Escapologist

Escapologists are professional entertainers who specialize in escaping from restraints, confinement, or other hazardous situations. A successful escapologist needs to be in good physical condition, have excellent problem-solving skills, and possess a strong understanding of the various tools and equipment used in the field. They are skilled in manipulating locks, handcuffs, ropes, chains, and other restraining devices. Escapologists usually get their initial experience in the field through practicing and mastering various types of escape techniques. Safety training and first aid knowledge are also important considering the risky nature of the job.



World Famous Escapologist
Harry Houdini

- ...about the difference between a genius and a prodigy

Genius and prodigy are two terms often used to describe individuals with exceptional intellectual abilities. A **genius** is typically someone who demonstrates exceptional intellectual prowess across a wide range of fields or disciplines. They are known for their ability to think critically, solve complex problems, and innovate in various areas. On

the other hand, a **prodigy** is someone who exhibits exceptional talent or skill in a specific area at a very young age. These children are characterized not only by their high intelligence in all or some areas, but also by a very high capacity for motivation and interest in learning and developing their knowledge. **They also have a considerable level of creativity.**

Synopsis

ACT I

An ensemble of children opens the show ["**Miracle**"] as amateur dancer, Mrs. Wormwood, gives birth to Matilda, but is more concerned with missing a dance competition than her newborn daughter, and her similarly shallow salesman husband, Mr. Wormwood, rejects the child when he realizes she is a girl. Time passes and an extraordinary 5-year-old Matilda constantly endures verbal abuse from her family, including her less-than average brother, Michael. As an act of rebellion, Matilda adds hydrogen peroxide to her father's hair oil, giving him a brand-new, bright green hairdo ["**Naughty**"].

Matilda distracts herself by going to the library and telling Mrs. Phelps, the librarian, a story about a renowned acrobat and escapologist, who wanted a child but could not have one ["**Acrobat Story I**"]. The following day is Matilda's first day of school ["**School Song**"], where her kind and compassionate teacher, Miss Honey, immediately recognizes Matilda's exceptional intelligence and recommends she be placed in class with older children ["**Pathetic**"]. Unfortunately, the cruel, child-loathing headmistress, Miss Trunchbull, refuses Miss Honey's suggestion and gives her a reminder to follow the rules ["**The Hammer**"]. Back home, Mr. Wormwood laments over his failure to deceive a group of rich Russians and takes out his frustration by destroying one of Matilda's library books. Matilda revolts against her father by adding glue to his hat ["**Naughty Reprise (Superglue)**"].

At school, Matilda discovers that Miss Trunchbull punishes disobedient children by locking them in a small cupboard filled with sharp objects called The Chokey ["**Chokey Chant**"], and witnesses Miss Trunchbull swing a girl by her pigtails and throw her across a field. Miss Honey visits Wormwood's house to recommend that Matilda be placed in an advanced class, but Mrs. Wormwood, busy at rehearsal with her dance partner, Rudolpho, could not care less; she mocks both her daughter and Miss Honey ["**Loud**"], and Miss Honey feels powerless to help Matilda ["**This Little Girl**"].

Matilda continues the story for Mrs. Phelps, telling her about the acrobat's sister, a former hammer-thrower who enjoys frightening small children, who arranged a performance that was cancelled upon news of the acrobat's pregnancy, but the sister is furious, and contractually binds them to perform or otherwise go to jail ["**Acrobat Story II**"]. Back at school, a boy in Matilda's class named Bruce Bogtrotter has been caught stealing a slice of Miss Trunchbull's personal cake. As punishment, Bruce is forced to eat the entire cake in front of everyone, and they show unanimous support for him ["**Bruce**"], but upon finishing the cake Miss Trunchbull drags Bruce to the Chokey anyway.

ACT II

Mr. Wormwood sings praise to the television, explaining that it is all you need for learning while criticizing reading ["**Telly**"] and Lavender, Matilda's best friend, plans to put a newt in Miss Trunchbull's water jug. The children share their hopes for adulthood ["**When I Grow Up**"] and Matilda vows to put a stop to Miss Trunchbull's cruelty. Matilda continues the story of the acrobat and escapologist describing the forced show going well until a fatal injury at the end, causing the acrobat to die just after giving birth. Her sister is invited to live with the newborn and the escapologist and is secretly detestable to the daughter ["**Acrobat Story III**"]. Mr. Wormwood returns home pleased, having sold cars to a group of Bulgarians using dishonest methods. Disappointed Matilda scolds him, and he locks her in her bedroom where she finishes the story of the acrobat and escapologist. After years of cruelty from the aunt, the escapologist discovers the truth, and vows to always be there for his daughter, but is never seen again after trying to find the aunt ["**Acrobat Story IV - I'm Here**"].

The following day, Miss Trunchbull puts Miss Honey's students through a rigorous physical education class ["**The Smell of Rebellion**"]. After Miss Trunchbull discovers the newt in her water jug, she begins to punish an innocent student. Matilda discovers she can move things with her mind and tips over the water jug, causing the newt to climb up Miss Trunchbull, scaring her off ["**Quiet**"]. An astounded Miss Honey invites Matilda over for tea, where the two discover they both have less than ideal families. Miss Honey tells Matilda about her terrible aunt, who raised her after her parents died, and legally contracted her to pay her aunt back for every expense, and now lives in an old shed ["**My House**"]. Discovering that Trunchbull is Miss Honey's aunt and that her father disappeared mysteriously, Matilda realizes that the story of the acrobat and escapologist that she has been telling is really the story of Miss Honey's parents.

During a spelling test, Miss Trunchbull forces Lavender to the Chokey by making up a word she cannot spell. The children rebel by misspelling simple words, believing they can't all be sent to the Chokey, but Miss Trunchbull has built many Chokeys. Matilda uses her telekinetic powers to move the chalk on the chalkboard, writing out words making Miss Trunchbull believe that the ghost of her brother is out to get her. The children celebrate her screaming exit and their freedom ["**Revolting Children**"]. Miss Honey's parent's will is discovered after Miss Trunchbull runs away, and it is revealed that everything belonged to Miss Honey, who is also made the new headmistress. Matilda, losing her powers, makes Miss Honey feel helpless about the special child living in an unloving household.

The Wormwoods arrive in a rush, telling Matilda they are fleeing to Spain after the Bulgarian Mafia, Sergei, discovered they were sold broken cars. Miss Honey asks if Matilda can stay with her. Impressed by Matilda, Sergei agrees to leave the Wormwoods alone if the Bulgarians never have to deal with them ["**Priyatna Pznakomitsa / This Little Girl Reprise**"]. Wormwoods agree to let Matilda live with Miss Honey ["**Bows / When I Grow Up Reprise**"].

The Characters

Matilda Wormwood: An imaginative girl who is clever and wise far beyond her years, despite growing up in difficult circumstances. Her parents treat her poorly, but Matilda escapes into a world of books, which puts her reading level far above the other children in her class, and she develops magical power to defeat Trunchbull.

Miss Agatha Trunchbull: The tyrannical headmistress at Matilda's school who despises children, making up arbitrary rules and dreaming up creative punishments.

Miss Honey: Matilda's kindhearted teacher who is kind, generous, and really cares about the children. She is tired of living in fear under Miss Trunchbull.

Mr. Wormwood: Matilda's uncaring father who is egotistical, rude, and not very bright. A slimy, greedy used-car salesman who prefers his son, Michael, over Matilda.

Mrs. Wormwood: Matilda's self-absorbed, negligent mother who dislikes Matilda and is obsessed with her own appearance. An amateur ballroom dancer who takes dancing lessons with Rudolpho.

Michael Wormwood: Matilda's older brother who is not very bright, though he is the apple of his father's eye.

Mrs. Phelps: The kindly librarian who loves hearing Matilda's stories.

Bruce: One of Matilda's classmates who is subject to extreme punishment by Miss Trunchbull.

Lavender: Matilda's classmate who is kind and bright, and quickly decides that Matilda is her best friend.

Rudolpho: Mrs. Wormwood's self-obsessed dance teacher.

The Acrobat: A character in a story Matilda tells to Mrs. Phelps who comes to life in their imagination.



The Escapologist: A character in a story Matilda tells to Mrs. Phelps who comes to life in their imagination.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

MIRACLE (PART I-III)
NAUGHTY
STORY I: ONCE UPON A TIME
SCHOOL SONG
PATHETIC
THE HAMMER
NAUGHTY REPRISE (SUPERGLUE)
CHOKEY CHANT
LOUD
THIS LITTLE GIRL
STORY II: THE GREAT DAY ARRIVED
BRUCE

ACT II

TELLY OFF & LAVENDER'S NEWT
WHEN I GROW UP
STORY III: THE TRICK STARTED WELL...
I'M SO CLEVER
STORY IV: I'M HERE
THE SMELL OF REBELLION
QUIET
MY HOUSE
CHALK WRITING
REVOLTING CHILDREN
PRIYATNA PAZNAKOMITSA
THEY HAD FOUND EACH OTHER

MATILDA THE MUSICAL runs 2 hours and 40 minutes, and is performed with an intermission.

Roald Dahl's *MATILDA THE MUSICAL* is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.
www.mtishows.com

MATILDA THE MUSICAL was first commissioned and produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company and premiered at The Courtyard Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, England on 9 November 2010. It transferred to the Cambridge Theatre in the West End of London on 25 October 2011 and received its US premiere at the Shubert Theatre, Broadway, on 4 March 2013.

Photography and video/audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

The Grand Theatre is an active member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT).

The Grand Theatre acknowledges with thanks the co-operation of the Local 105 and 828 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists, and Allied Crafts of the United States, its Territories and Canada, and the London Musicians' Association Local 279.



STUDENT PERSPECTIVES



"Even if you're little, you can do a lot, you mustn't let a little thing like 'little' stop you!"



MATILDA TEACHES US THAT EVERYONE, NO MATTER HOW **BIG OR SMALL**, IS CAPABLE OF **STANDING UP** TO UNFAIRNESS.

HOW ARE YOU INSPIRED TO MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE WORLD AROUND YOU?

"I believe everyone can do something remarkable, regardless of its impact. It's about taking action, not the size of the change. This belief has driven me to fight injustice, participate in justice clubs and challenge unfair rules. Matilda's message resonates with me: even the smallest act matters because something is not nothing." - THEONE DAMUE

"Just like Matilda inspired her classmates, this program and my fellow castmates have inspired me – and I hope many others. Through celebrating diversity and uniqueness, this program shows us that no matter your age, race, gender, etc., you can still do amazing things and be part of a true miracle." - AYA HOLZBERG

"In the Social Justice Club at my school, I assisted with a bake sale to raise money for women in need at My Sister's Place. My Sister's Place caters to women and their children facing multiple vulnerabilities such as gender-based violence, homelessness, and mental health issues. I hope that this production inspires other children that they can make a change in the world, no matter their age or gender." - MIRAYA AGRAWAL

"Failure is frustrating, but incredibly helpful. If you change the perspective, failure is very inspiring. To be able to try, fail, get up and try again, is one of the most impactful things a person can do." - GRETA FLEET

“As a dance teacher at my studio, I take pride in knowing that I can be a positive influence on my students and can help them achieve their goals.” - MORRIGAN BEHARRIELL

“I was a representative at my school’s Relay for Life Campaign, raising money for cancer. By doing this, I put others first and made a difference in my community, similar to Matilda leading her school friends.” - ALEXIS KHANNA



“I am inspired to make a positive impact on the world around me by standing up for what I believe is right and supporting organizations that do the same.” - ANGELINA MOSES

“I am inspired to make a positive impact on the world around me by fixing others’ crowns before my own.” - VIRGINIA MCCALLUM

“I’m inspired to help others feel motivated in acting, singing and dancing, and to help others grow. And hopefully, in the future, I will encourage young actors to push forward and bring a little magic into the world.” - CHARLIE BURNETT



“As a team leader of my hockey team, I am proud to say I mentor the younger girls and help as many people improve their skills as possible.” - REAGAN BERDAN

“Small acts of kindness inspire me to have a positive impact on this world by encouraging me to be like those people who give and are kind, no matter what.” - ADELAIDE ALCANTARA

“I constantly remind myself that performing can inspire a positive impact on the world. I remember watching my first production and being empowered to make a positive impact through the arts. I hope someday I can be strong and wise like Matilda. She inspires me every time I am faced with a challenge to bring light with me.” - SOPHIA BELLETH



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANGELINA MOSES

Pre-Show Discussion Questions



- 1) Define what a child prodigy is. What are you exceptionally talented or skilled at? (*Everyone is great at something! Don't shy away from hyping yourself up!*)
- 2) Have you ever been to a circus? What element/aspect fascinates you the most?
- 3) In *Matilda the Musical*, we meet adults with power. Some of them choose to abuse that power, and some are allies to the children. When you are given power, how do you ensure that you use it in a good way?

Pre-Show Classroom Activities

- 1) As a class, choose a version of *Matilda* to engage with. Will you read Roald Dahl's book, or watch a film adaptation? Enjoy and consider how this story will be translated for the stage.
- 2) Research and reflect on circus acts. In small groups, use a pro and con list to discuss whether circuses should continue to be a form of entertainment.

Post-Show Discussion Questions

- 1) Reflect on the version of *Matilda* you engaged with before the show. What version of the story were you more connected to? Which adaptation do you think is most effective in portraying the story?
- 2) Now that you've met the Escapologist and Acrobat, would you change anything on your circus pros and cons list?
- 3) Did you catch any of the production magic on stage? How do you think it was accomplished?

Post-Show Classroom Activities

- 1) Choose a children's book that you identify with. How would you adapt it for the stage? In partners, write a scene of dialogue between the lead characters, or attempt to write a chorus of a song that would appear in your musical.
- 2) Compare and contrast the teaching strategies of Trunchbull vs. Miss Honey. Which approach do you think is more effective for the growth of a student?