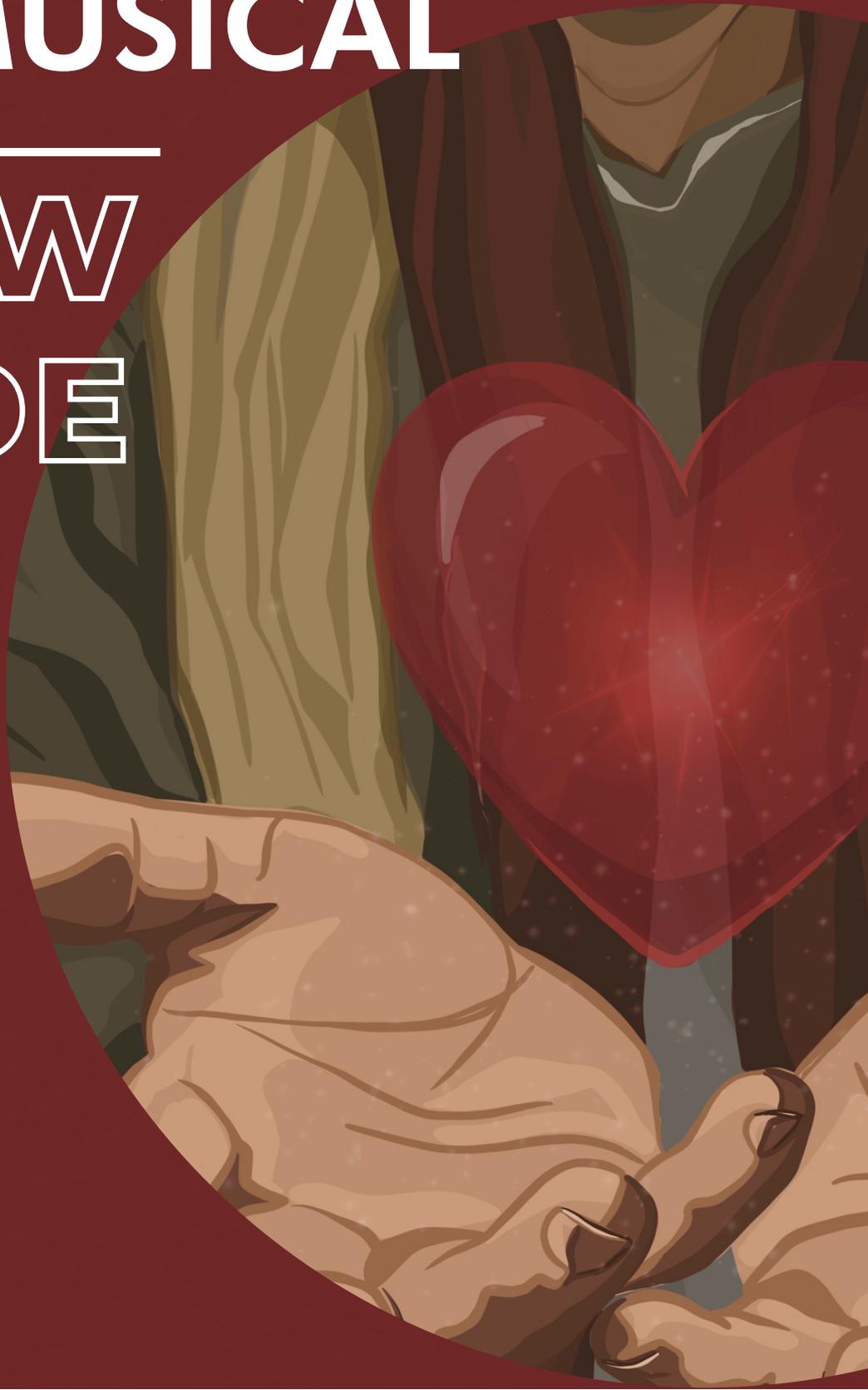




MOUNTAIN
THEATRE COMPANY

BKLYN THE MUSICAL

SHOW GUIDE



DEVELOPED BY

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WELCOME TO MTC



Welcome Educators, Parents, and Audiences of all ages!

Mountain Theatre company is thrilled to grow both our Theatre For Young Audiences (TYA) and Community Outreach initiatives with this new Show Guide resource series. We can't wait to share the magic of live theater with you at the historic Highlands Playhouse!

This Show Guide will assist you in preparing for your trip to the Playhouse and is designed especially for enhancing the experience of attending an MTC production. Our goal is to provide a valuable resource for the production you attend, as well as an educational tool for your classroom, home, or simply a conversation over dessert after the show.

Parents and educators, we look forward to working with you this year and learning how we can serve you and our youth community best. Thank you for your tremendous work in nurturing our young audiences and theatre advocates of tomorrow!

Enjoy the show!

Scott Daniel
Executive Artistic Director

Lindsay Garner Hostetler
Director of Marketing & Outreach

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**KNOW
BEFORE THE
SHOW**

THEATRE IS A TEAM SPORT!

It takes a lot of people to make a play happen on stage!

The **Playwright** writes the script. Sometimes it is from an original idea and sometimes it is adapted from a book or story. The Playwright decides what the characters say and gives the designers guidelines on how the play should look.



The **Director** creates the vision for the production and works closely with the actors, costume, set, and lighting designers to make sure everyone tells the same story.



The **Actors** use their bodies and voices to bring the playwright's words and the director's ideas to life on the stage.

The **Designers** imagine and create the lights, scenery, props, costumes, and sound that will compliment and complete the director's vision.

The **Stage Manager** assists the director during rehearsals by recording their instructions and making sure the actors and designers understand these ideas. The Stage Manager then runs the show during each performance by calling cues for lights and sound.



The **Stage Crew** builds the set, props, and costumes according to the designer's plans. The Stage Crew sets the stage with props and furniture, assists the actors with costume changes, and operates sound, lighting, and stage machinery during each performance.

The **Front of House Staff & Volunteers** welcome you to the theater, take your tickets, help you find your seat and answer any question you may have on the day of performance.

The Theater is where it all takes place. Mountain Theatre Company is the only professional theater company in a 50 mile radius of Highlands, NC, reaching students and audiences in Macon, Jackson, Rabun, and Transylvania counties.

YOUR ROLE IN THE PLAY

The audience has the most important part in the play! Without the audience, live theatre wouldn't exist. You are an active participant in the play, and actors on stage are affected by your energy and responses. Every performance of a play is a little bit different depending on the audience, and the quality of the performance depends as much on you as it does on the professionals on stage and behind the scenes. The actors see you just as much as you see them! Every laugh, snuffle, and gasp the audience makes affects the way the actor plays the scene. We want you stay engaged and react to the story as it is happening!



Watching live theatre is not like watching tv at home. You can't rewind the video if you miss a moment or pause the scene for a bathroom break. You can't turn up the volume of the scene if someone is talking behind you or distracting from the moment.

Listen and watch intently. Laugh and cheer when it feels appropriate. Gasp if you're frightened or cry if something makes you feel sad. Keep in mind that the audience will have older and younger people mixed together in the audience, and they may react in different ways than you. That's ok! Respect the differences in the reactions you may hear around you.

When do we clap?

Applause is appropriate at the end of scenes, the end of music numbers, and of course at the end of the show! Applause is how an audience shows appreciation to the performers on stage when they see something they like.

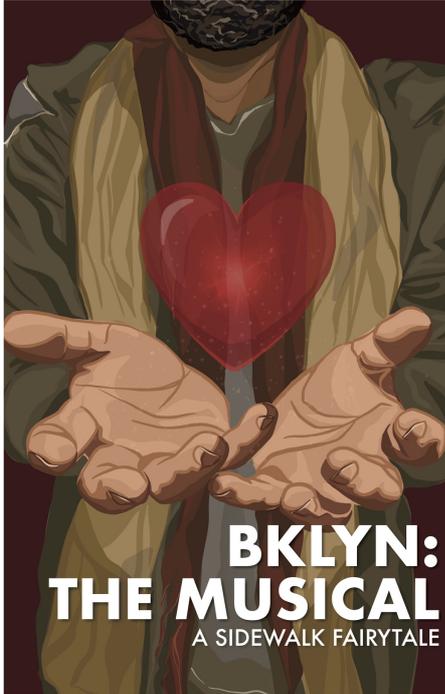
Here are some other tips to help you and your group be top notch audience members!

- Please turn off all cell phones. And **NO TEXTING!**
- Please stay in your seat. Use the bathroom before the show begins and stay in your seat unless there is an emergency.



ABOUT THE SHOW

ABOUT BKLYN: THE MUSICAL



BKLYN: The Musical had its stage premiere on April 30, 2003 at the New Denver Civic Theater in Denver, CO.

The musical premiered on Broadway on October 21, 2004 at the Plymouth Theatre (later renamed the Gerald Schoenfeld Theatre), and closed on June 26, 2005. Directed by Jeff Calhoun, the cast included Eden Espinosa as Brooklyn, Karen Olivo as Faith, Kevin Anderson as Taylor, Ramona Keller as Paradise, and Cleavant Derricks as the Streetsinger.

The Broadway production featured some established Broadway names and young artists who would go on to make names for themselves in recent years. Cleavant Derricks won a Tony Award and Drama

Desk Award in 1989 for creating the role of James "Thunder" Early in *Dreamgirls*. Jeff Calhoun, a Tony Award winning director and choreographer, would later direct the Broadway productions of *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Newsies*. Eden Espinosa was Idina Menzel's understudy for the role of Elpheba in *Wicked* on Broadway, and she went on to take over for the role in 2006. She also played Maureen in the closing company of *Rent* on Broadway. Karen Olivo originated the role of Vanessa in the Broadway production of *In the Heights*. They won a Tony Award for their portrayal of Anita in the 2009 revival of *West Side Story* and was nominated again recently for *Moulin Rouge!*

A 2006 national tour of *BKLYN: The Musical* followed. And in 2019 *BKLYN* was staged in London at the Greenwich Theatre.



The original Broadway cast of BKLYN: The Musical

ABOUT THE WRITERS



This production marks the Broadway debut for the writing collaboration of Mark Schoenfeld and Barri McPherson. Mark first met Barri in 1982 upon hearing her sing at a cabaret and hired her to record some of his music. Shortly thereafter, Barri moved to Massachusetts to raise a family. Years later, in 1991, Barri returned to New York to perform at a private-party. She stopped at a remote street corner in Brooklyn Heights after hearing the sound of a voice she vaguely recognized. She discovered that Mark had become a homeless street performer, getting by on \$40 a day. Barri invited Mark back to Massachusetts to stay with her husband and two children. Mark repaid Barri by developing music with and for her and soon, the street poet and cabaret singer had the skeleton of a most unusual new musical which became *BKLYN: The Musical*.

SYNOPSIS

Using a play within a play concept, this show focuses on a group of five street performers known as The City Weeds who transform a street corner under the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge into a stage where they present their play about a young Parisian singer named Brooklyn, named after the New York City borough from which her wayward father, Taylor, was from. Orphaned when her depressed mother, Faith, dies by suicide, the girl is sent to live in a convent where she discovers her vocal talents, becomes a star, performs at Carnegie Hall, sets out in search of her father, and engages in a competition with local diva, Paradise, at Madison Square Garden.



SETTING AND MUSICAL NUMBERS

Setting:

A street corner in Brooklyn, New York. Sometime in the late 1990s or early 2000s.

Musical Numbers:

“Heart Behind These Hands” - The City Weeds

“Christmas Makes Me Cry” - Faith and Taylor

“Not a Sound” - The City Weeds

“Brooklyn Grew Up” - Brooklyn and The City Weeds

“Creating Once Upon a Time” - Brooklyn and Faith

“Once Upon a Time” - Brooklyn and The City Weeds

“Superlover” - Paradise and The City Weeds

“Brooklyn in the Blood” - Paradise, Brooklyn, and The City Weeds

“Magic Man” - Streetsinger and The City Weeds

“Love Was a Song” - Taylor

“I Never Knew His Name” - Brooklyn

“The Truth” - Taylor, Brooklyn, and The City Weeds

“Raven” - Paradise

“Sometimes” - Taylor and The City Weeds

“Love Me Where I Live” - Paradise and The City Weeds

“Love Fell Like Rain” - Brooklyn

“Streetsinger” - Brooklyn, Streetsinger, and The City Weeds

“Heart Behind These Hands” (reprise) - The City Weeds



A PLAY WITHIN A PLAY

Simply put, a play within a play is a play that is being performed within the confines of another play. It is also called a show within a show or a story within a story, which is a type of literary device called an embedded narrative, in which a character within a story becomes the narrator of a second story. The dramatic device of a play within a play dates way back in the history of theatre. Historians have dated this literary device being used on stage dating back to at least the 1500s. Shakespeare used this device multiple times, most famously in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet*. This device is generally used to highlight important themes or ideas of the main play. More modern examples of this device include *The Princess Bride*, *Big Fish*, and even *Titanic*. In musical theatre, we have seen this device used in *Pippin*, *Kiss Me, Kate*, *The King and I*, and *Cabaret*.



Daniel Maclise. *The Play Scene in "Hamlet,"* 1842

BKLYN: The Musical uses this device of a play within a play to tell two stories on stage. On the outside you have a troupe of talented street performers who are sharing a story by putting on a play on a street corner. Then, wrapped inside the narrative, is the story they tell – the story of a young girl named Brooklyn who comes to America to find the father she never knew. Together both of these stories create the whole plot of *BKLYN: The Musical*.

Discussion Questions:

- What themes does the play within the play highlight? What themes exist in both the story of these street singers who call themselves The City Weeds and also in their fairytale of Brooklyn?
- Because we are technically seeing two stories presented on stage, think about which set pieces are establishing the world of The City Weeds and which ones are telling the story of their fairytale, Brooklyn?
- Which costume pieces are the everyday clothes worn by The City Weeds? Which ones belong to the characters in their fairytale?
- Can you think of other examples of books, movies, or plays that use this “story within a story” device?

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR



BKLYN: The Musical is a special show for me. When I was first beginning my career in the United States, after moving here from England, I was an usher for almost every performance of the Broadway production. I left that usher job when I was offered a role in my first national tour, but I've always considered *BKLYN* to be a part of my entry into American musical theatre.

I directed this show once before in Tampa, FL. I'm excited to now direct the North Carolina premiere of *BKLYN: The Musical* here at Mountain Theatre Company!

This staging features one significant change from the original Broadway production almost twenty years ago. In this production, the characters of *The City Weeds* are not presented as homeless but instead they are street artists, using their gifts to share the stories of those who can't articulate their needs.

I believe art is a conversation starter. This show doesn't have one specific message. It is a universal story that anyone can find parts of themselves in. This set the tone for us to be artists and not activists. We are not informing the audience about how they should feel. We are not preaching. We are presenting a piece with no bias in hopes that it will start a conversation, as all art should. In my opinion, activism theatre is a piece that forces one point of view. That's not what we do at Mountain Theatre Company. We present art, which is always free to interpretation, while achieving our primary goal of entertaining audiences.

This piece of theatre is highly entertaining with hit musical number after hit musical number! It also asks some big questions and allows every member of the audience to answer those questions in their own hearts and minds. At the end of the day, it's a story about love, hope, faith, forgiveness, and most of all - family. Both the families we are born with and the families we create for ourselves.



DISCUSSION TOPICS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Some of the primary themes of this show include messages of love, hope, faith, loss, forgiveness, and family. Can you name moments in the show that signify each of these?
2. Can you name some themes in *BKLYN* that haven't already been listed?
3. Think about the line in the show, "You change your life when you change someone else's." What do you think that line means?
4. Think about how many times we hear the melody of the unfinished lullaby. Why do you think that song repeats itself so many times in the show?
5. Does the show change at all for you knowing that one of the writers of this piece was a homeless street musician himself for a time in his life?
6. We never learn the names of The City Weeds themselves, only the characters they play in their story. Why do you think that is?
7. What is the American Dream? How is each character in this show trying to achieve the American Dream? Does everyone have equal access to achieving it?
8. Think about the major decisions each of these characters make in the story. Why do you think they make these decisions?
9. This story certainly touches on mental health issues concerning depression, suicide, and PTSD. How did the way this show presented those make you feel?
10. Think about the themes in this show of family and chosen family. Where can you find examples of each? Why do you think chosen family is important?

