

Zorro

Book by Stephen Clark and Helen Edmundson
Lyrics by Stephen Clark
Music by the Gipsy Kings and John Cameron

Study Guide

Created by Decatur High School Language Arts Class of Nora Bergman
As part of the Alliance Theatre Institute for Educators and Teaching Artists'
Junior Dramaturgy Program
Under the guidance of Teaching Artist, Rachel Jones

Zorro opened at the Garrick Theatre in London's West End on July 15, 2008.

Zorro is playing at The Alliance Theatre from April 3, 2013 to May 5, 2013.

Awards

Zorro was nominated for Laurence Olivier Awards in Best New Musical, Best Actor in a Musical, Best Actress in a Musical, and Best Theatre Choreographer.

Lesli Margherita won an Olivier for her portrayal of Inez, the feisty gypsy queen.



Reviews

"Great fun [that] brings a refreshingly different, Hispanic sound to the jaded world of West End musicals." – *Guardian*

"Imagine a mix of Errol Flynn and Monty Python, and you have the feel." - *The Times*

“An onstage flamenco fiesta that sets feet tapping and blood racing.” – *What’s on Stage*

The Creative Team

Stephen Clark



Stephen Clark is an award-winning playwright. He was born in 1961 in Nottingham and studied at Oxford University with Stephen Sondheim. He went on to receive an Oliver award for his lyrics for the reworked version of *Martin Guerre* and also a Jefferson award for his play *Stripped* in Chicago in 2003. His other works include *Takeaway*, *Making Waves*, *Forbidden City*, and *the Far Pavilions*. He wrote the book and lyrics for *Zorro*.

Helen Edmundson



Helen Edmundson, a British playwright, was born in 1964. She is known for adapting literary classics into plays. She has taken on such challenges as *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, and *The Mill on the Floss*. Her first play, *Flying*, was produced at the National Theatre Studio in 1990. Her other plays include *The Clearing*, *Mother Teresa Is Dead*, and *Coram Boy*. She won the John Whiting Award for *The Clearing* and Time Out Awards for *The Clearing*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Coram Boy*.

Gipsy Kings



The Gipsy Kings are one of the world’s most famous flamenco bands. Composed of two groups of brothers, the Reyes brothers (Nicolas, Canut, Paul, Patchai, Andre) and the Baliardos brothers (Tonino, Paco, Diego), they have an original sound that blends flamenco with pop. The Gipsy Kings made the soundtrack for the well-known musical *Zorro*. Their first hit album, *Gipsy Kings* brought them fame in 1986. They’ve been making hits ever since like “Bomboleo,” “Volare,” “Djobi Djoba.”

Their story also separates them from other bands. Most people don’t know this, but the Gipsy Kings sing with accents to make their music sound authentic. The Gipsy Kings really do have a unique story.

John Cameron



John Cameron has composed music for over 40 feature and tv films. He's been nominated for an Academy Award, an Emmy, an Olivier, and won a New York Drama Desk Award and a National Broadway Theatre Award.

John created the orchestral score for every version of *Les Misérables* from the original Robert Hossein production in 1980 through the RSC Broadway, tour and concert versions.

Other compositions for the theatre includes the music for *Alfie-The Musical*, *Becket*, *Faust Parts I and II* (RSC), the National Theatre's production of *Hamlet* and *Zorro*.

Synopsis of Zorro

At the beginning of the musical, Diego and his friend, Luisa, are playing. Ramon, Diego's brother enters and immediately chastises them for making a game out of fencing. Ramon and Diego begin fighting, Diego playfully and Ramon seriously. Their father, Alejandro, the Alcalde of the pueblo, makes them stop. Alejandro explains that he wants Diego to become Alcalde, although Ramon is older and desirous of becoming the leader. Diego would rather stay in California and play for the rest of his life, but his father insists that he will be Alcalde and ships him to Spain for training. Alejandro also tells Luisa that she must grow up and act like a girl.

While Diego is in Spain, he runs away from military school and becomes the King of the Gypsies. He has become a charming performer who enchants the women of Spain. Diego enjoys his new life until Luisa arrives in Spain to tell Diego that his father has died and Ramon has taken over the pueblo. She begs him to return to California and save the people from Ramon's tyrannical rule. Diego reluctantly agrees and heads back to Los Angeles. Inez and the Gypsies join him.

When he arrives, he discovers an oppressed, impoverished people struggling under taxes levied by Ramon. To combat his brother's ruthlessness, Diego becomes Zorro, a crafty, sword-fighting hero. Suddenly, the people have hope because Zorro fights for them.



Director

Christopher Renshaw was born in Reading, England and attended Magdalen College, Oxford. He served as Resident Director of The Royal Opera House. Since then, Chris has directed operas, plays and musicals all over the world. His favorite opera productions include *Norma* with Joan Sutherland (Sydney Opera House), *Eugene Onegin* conducted by Rostropovich (Aldeburgh Festival) and a new production of Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Covent Garden). His celebrated series of Gilbert and Sullivan's Operettas (*The Mikado*, *HMS Pinafore*, and *The Gondoliers*) at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London led to a crossover into plays and musicals. Christopher directed Hayley and Juliet Mills in Noel Coward's *Fallen Angels* in Australia, Sir Brian Rix in *Dry Rot* in London's West End, a television production of *Ruddigore* with Vincent Price and *Cafe Puccini* at London's Wyndham's Theatre produced by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Cameron Mackintosh. He received a Tony nomination and a Drama Desk Award for *The King And I*, with Donna Murphy and Lou Diamond Phillips, which also won four Tonys. Christopher's production of Queen's *We Will Rock You* is still playing at London's Dominion Theatre. And his production of *TABOO*, which he co-conceived with Boy George, has just reopened in London.

Actors

Don Alejandro – Mark Kincaid

Diego/Zorro – Adam Jacobs

Ramon – Nicholas Carrière

Luisa - Andrea Goss

Inez- Natascia Diaz

Garcia – Eliseo N. Roman

Joaquin – Cristian Puig

Young Diego – Royce Mann

Young Ramon – Benjamin Harding

Young Luisa – Mary Stewart Sullivan

Ensemble – Danny Bolero, Larry Cox, Jr, Logan Denninghoff, Sara Erde, John Evenden, Maxim Gukhman, Greg Lockett, Glenda Sol Koeraus, Gabrielle McClinton, Philip Mills, Jose Moreno, Diany Rodriguez, Lucia Roderique, Arielle Rosales, Peter Suarez, Rocío Del Mar Vallés

Characters

Alejandro de la Vega is the Alcalde of Los Angeles and father to Diego and Ramon. He cares for the people of California and his sons.

Diego de la Vega is the younger son of Alejandro. His playfulness and charm sometimes interfere with his ability to live up to his responsibilities.

Ramon de la Vega is the elder son of Alejandro. He always wants to be in command regardless of the cost to others.

Luisa Pulido is a friend and playmate of Diego and Ramon. She strongly believes in justice and freedom for the people of Los Angeles, and will fight bravely until freedom becomes a reality.

Inez is a vivacious gypsy queen who cares for Diego.

Sergeant Garcia is Ramon's brow-beaten right-hand man.

Zorro at the Alliance Theatre

Zorro is a witty, sword-fighting hero.

Unfamiliar Words and Phrases from Zorro

Fencing Terms

Parries: Ward off (a weapon or an attack) by countering. When Diego parries Luisa's attack, he is blocking her from hitting him and also pushing back

En Garde: A fencing term that means "get ready" adopted from the French warning En garde, which means on your guard. Ramon uses this term to tell Diego he is about to attack

Spanish Terms

El Puma: Spanish for the cougar, a large cat native to the Americas. It inhabits the lands from the Canadian Yukon to the southern Andes of South America. Diego wants to be likened to a puma because they are known for being sleek and sexy.

Matador: A Spanish bullfighter who commonly uses his cape to trick a bull by getting it to run at them. Ramon uses his cape like a matador to trick and confuse.

Alcalde: A traditional Spanish leader, who had both judicial and administrative functions. The Alcalde would watch over and lead the town.

Chorizo: A fresh sausage. Spanish chorizos and Portuguese chorizos get their distinctive smokiness and deep red color from dried smoked red peppers.

Pueblo: Communities in the Southwestern United States of America. The first Spanish explorers of the Southwest used this term to describe the communities housed in apartment-like structures built of stone, adobe mud, and other local material. These structures were usually multi-storied buildings surrounding an open plaza. They were occupied by hundreds to thousands of pueblo people.

Zorro: Spanish word for fox

Religious Terms

Padre: Spanish term for father which is used to address a priest of the Catholic Church in Spanish.

Confessional: A small stall, usually enclosed and divided by a screen or curtain, where a priest hears confessions

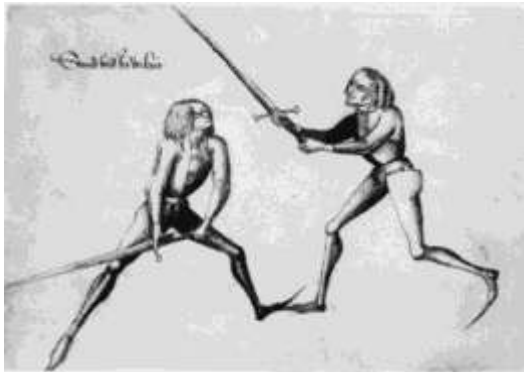
Confession: When a person wants to admit his sins, he goes to church and tells them to a priest inside of a confessional. The priest will then tell him how to atone for his misdeeds.

Sword Fighting

Pre-1800s real swords were used in swordplay making the threat of injury real. In the 19th century, fencing transitioned from military training to a gentlemen's sport because the invention of guns and heavy armor made sword fighting obsolete as a battle option. Fencing was a popular sport in Europe and was brought over to the Americas by immigrants. Protection increased as the transition to sport continued. In 1790, someone in France made a mask to protect the competitor's head. The sportsmen also used fake swords for protection, which are called parisers. These fake swords were not sharp and were very flimsy. If a contestant were poked with the pariser, he would not be hurt because it would bend.



pariser



Example of pre-1800s sword play. Notice Sharp swords and no protection.



Fencing Contest



Fencing Mask

Costumes in Zorro

In the era of California history during Spanish colonization when *Zorro* is set, individuals were either very poor or very rich. This was reflected in the clothing they wore. Although rich and poor people wore similar styles, fabric quality varied greatly.

The standard clothing for peasant men usually consisted of four or five main pieces of clothing. The basic outfit was a loose, one-size fits all shirt, usually made of white linen and a pair of baggy pants made of linen, burlap or wool. Depending on the time and activity a leather vest may have been worn over the shirt. The vest was always left open and unbuttoned. Occasionally a hat or pair of shoes was worn. The women's clothing was much simpler; they wore a plain white linen dress with an apron.

The daily clothing for the upper class citizen was surprisingly similar to that of the peasants. The men wore a loose white shirt, usually cotton or silk, but occasionally linen. The pants are of a similar style, however, they would be made from a soft, fine, and usually dyed material, such as cotton, silk, or a blend of the two. The vest was often made of the same fabric as the pants and died to match. Occasionally the vest included ruffles and brass ornamentation. The women wore cotton or silk dresses of varying colors with some ornamentation and numerous petticoats; although not quite as many as the British citizens of the same time period.



Zorro at the Alliance Theatre

Romani

The Romani people, known colloquially as Gypsies, in the 1800s have a difficult and dark history. A nomad people, they were viewed with suspicion and open hatred by the people of the towns and pueblos. Romani were believed to be thieves and cut-throats that carried diseases. However, they were much like their stationary counterparts. They placed high value on having a large family. Guys and girls were usually married at a young age often in a union arranged by the Romani leadership. Once married, the wife joins her husband's family, and takes care of her husband, children and in-laws' needs. Authority in Romani families was assigned by age. The eldest patriarch was preeminent. General men have more authority than women, but women increased in position as they bear children and age.

Another important aspect of Romani life is music and dance. It is believed that the music of the Romani influenced Johannes Brahms and Frank Listz. Further, the flamenco originated with Romani.

Historically, Romani have been misunderstood and mistreated. Many European countries passed laws to limit Romani access and in some cases expelled them from the country. During World War II, they were sent to concentration camps. Many Romani were killed on sight by Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units). The total number of victims has been estimated between 220,000 and 1,500,000. Even the lowest estimate would make the Porajmos, a Romani word meaning destruction, one of the largest mass killings in history.



Zorro in the Classroom

Pre-Show Questions

1. How do you define courage? Is it a product of your actions or who you were born to be? Can a person be brave when they are scared?
2. What is freedom? How does a nation or individual become free? Once a nation or individual wins freedom will they be free forever?
3. Should women fight in combat? Why or why not?
4. How do you define family? What duties does an individual owe his or her family? Is there ever a time then it is right not to fulfill those duties?

Post-Show Questions

1. Why do you think Diego joined the Gypsies? Was this a better choice than staying in school to learn leadership skills?
2. Why did Inez follow Diego back to California and join the fight for freedom when it wasn't her people in danger?
3. Should Garcia have continued to follow Ramon or join the resistance? What is a good enough reason to rebel against authority?
4. Why was it important to Zorro to be liked for who he was? Is this desire reasonable for a person who strives to maintain secrecy?
5. How did Luisa follow her own conscience in spite of the gender expectations placed on her?

Creative Writing Prompts

1. Should an individual put his responsibility toward others over his own desires?
2. Describe a time when you were brave in a difficult circumstance.
3. What is the difference between the law and justice? Are the two ever at odds?