Study Guide prepared by Alliance Theatre Dramaturgy and Group Services departments.
Curriculum Information

Curriculum Connections available at http://alliancetheatre.org/content/field-trips

Content Advisory

Contains a graphic medical procedure and moderate thematic elements

About the Theatrical Process

Theatre as an art form emerged in Ancient Greece during the 6th century, BCE. Modern western theatre performance is a collaborative art form. The unifying vision of the creative process is dictated by the director of the production. Costumes, sets (scenery), lights and sound are all designed in alignment with the vision of the director, well before rehearsals begin. During the rehearsal process, the director, alongside stage management, works with the actors on their performances, including motivation, mood and blocking (movement). Technical elements are added to complete the production.

About Alliance Theatre

Founded in 1968, the Alliance Theatre has become the lead producing theatre in the Southeast, creating the powerful experience of shared theatre for diverse people on two stages. The Alliance values excellence, pursued with integrity and creativity, and achieved through collaboration. Reaching more than 200,000 patrons annually, the Alliance delivers powerful programming that challenges adult and youth audiences to think critically and care deeply. Under the leadership of Susan V. Booth, Jennings Hertz Artistic Director, the Alliance Theatre received the Regional Theatre Tony Award in recognition of sustained excellence in programming, education and community engagement.

Known for its high artistic standards and national role in creating significant theatrical works, the Alliance has premiered more than 70 original productions including Tony Award winners The Color Purple by Alice Walker, Aida by Elton John and Tim Rice, and Alfred Uhry’s The Last Night of Ballyhoo. The Alliance has a reputation for developing important American musicals with a strong track record of Broadway, touring, and subsequent productions including the world premieres of Sister Act: The Musical, Bring It On: The Musical, and Stephen King and John Mellencamp’s Ghost Brothers of Darkland County. The Alliance also creates and nurtures the careers of playwrights through the Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate Playwriting Competition, producing a premiere for the competition winner as part of the regular season with national networking opportunities for four finalists. The works produced by the Alliance allow locally based artists the chance to create on a nationally watched stage, building and sustaining Atlanta’s artistic community.

Each year, the Alliance Theatre Acting Program and Education Department reaches close to 50,000 students through performances, acting classes, drama camps, and in-school initiatives. The Alliance creates and produces plays for young audiences at every age level: from the Collision Project, where high school artists create and perform new work based on a classic text, to the ground breaking Theatre for the Very Young, creating interactive shows for infants and toddlers. The Alliance also offers community education classes for all ages and abilities of theatre interest; and adult student productions of unproduced plays in development, working with local and national playwrights.

An active participant in Georgia classrooms, the Alliance has developed programs using theatrical techniques to aid in student learning through storytelling and problem solving. The Alliance Theatre Institute for Educators and Teaching Artists equips teachers with theatrical techniques that link directly
to school curriculum, align with the Georgia Performance Standards, and increase student learning. Other programs include Georgia Wolf Trap, a nationally recognized professional learning program that focuses on literacy skills for children in Pre-K – 2nd grades, and Dramaturgy K-12, a unique program that empowers students to create research material that both informs Alliance productions and prepares peer audiences. Twice recognized by the Federal Department of Education as leaders in the field of arts education, these programs reflect the Alliance’s commitment to city wide arts access. The Alliance continuously delivers the finest talent, art and educational opportunities for Atlanta audiences—proving once again that the Alliance is where great theatre lives.

About the Playwright

Matthew Lopez is the author of The Whipping Man, one of the most widely produced new American plays of the last several seasons. Since its world premiere at Luna Stage in 2006, it has played at over two dozen theatres across the country including The Old Globe, Actor’s Theatre of Louisville, The Alliance Theatre, Northlight Theatre, BarringtonStage, Hartford Stage, and Baltimore Centerstage. The play premiered in New York in 2010 at Manhattan Theatre Club, directed by Doug Hughes and starring Andre Braugher. The sold-out production extended four times, ultimately running 101 performances off-Broadway and garnering Obie, Lucille Lortel and Drama Desk Awards. Matthew was awarded the John Gassner New Play Award from the New York Outer Critics Circle for the play. His play Somewhere started at Summer Play Festival at the Public Theatre in 2008 (as Tio Pepe) and premiered at The Old Globe in San Diego in 2011 and was subsequently produced at TheatreWorks in Palo Alto in the winter of 2013. Both productions were directed by Giovanna Sardelli and choreographed by Greg Graham. His newest play, The Legend of Georgia McBride, will premiere at the Denver Theatre Center in the winter of 2014. Other plays include Reverberation, Zoe’s Perfect Wedding and The Sentinels, which premiered in London at Headlong Theatre Company in 2011. Matthew currently holds new play commissions from Roundabout Theatre Company, Manhattan Theatre Club and Hartford Stage, where he is the 2012/13 AETNA New Voices Fellow. He is a staff writer on Aaron Sorkin’s HBO series “The Newsroom.”
About the Setting

The total Jewish population of the United States in 1860 was about 150,000. The total Jewish population in the eleven states of the Confederacy was in the range of 20,000 to 25,000.

As Rabbi Korn of Charleston related, "Nowhere else in America - certainly not in the Antebellum North - had Jews been accorded such an opportunity to be complete equals as in the old South."

Jews accounted for 1.25% of all Southern slave owners which numbered 315,632 according to the 1860 Census. Approximately 4,000 of the approximately 25,000 Jews in the South owned slaves. A little less than a third of all free families (including free people of color) owned slaves in the Upper South, so the Jewish population of slave holders was slightly less than the general population.

In 1830 there were only four Jews among the 11,000 Southerners who owned fifty or more slaves.

When the Richmond Light Infantry Blues left the capital of Virginia for battle in April 1861, fifteen of its ninety-nine members were Jews, including Ezekiel ("Zeke") J. Levy, its fourth sergeant. (The Jewish Confederates)

By 1860 [Richmond] was home to three congregations and dozens of thriving Jewish-owned mercantile establishments. . . As in other Southern communities, Richmond had had a Jewish mayor and Jews were active in civic and military affairs. About 2,000 Jews lived in Virginia at the beginning of the Civil War.

Statistics from the 1860 census:

Total number of slaves in the Lower South: 2,312,352 (47% of total population).
Total number of slaves in the Upper South: 1,208,758 (29% of total population).
Total number of slaves in the Border States: 432,586 (13% of total population).
Food for Thought

“As a boy brought up in the South [before the Civil War] I never questioned the rights or wrongs of slavery. Its existence I regarded as matter of course, as most other customs or institutions.” Oscar Straus, memoirs.

“The American people have this to learn: that where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob, and degrade them, neither person nor property is safe.” Frederick Douglass

“I had reasoned this out in my mind, there was one of two things I had a right to, liberty or death; if I could not have one, I would have the other.” Harriet Tubman

“Slaves Waiting for Sale, Virginia"
by Eyre Crowe (1824-1910)
from the London Illustrated News, Sept. 27, 1856.
For more on Crowe and this image see a site on his work, Slavery Paintings and Sketches.
The image is part of Special Collections and Archives' collection of 19th Century Richmond Prints.

The Civil War Timeline

Note – casualties listed generally include those killed, wounded, captured, and missing.

1860

November 6: Lincoln elected

December 1860-May 1861: Eleven Southern states secede and form the Confederate States of America, appointing Jefferson Davis president on February 4, 1861.

1861

March 4: President Abraham Lincoln inaugurated

April 12-14: Confederates take Fort Sumter and begin the Civil War

July 21: First Battle of Bull Run, Virginia; Confederate victory; nearly 5,000 casualties altogether.

April 6-7: Battle of Shiloh, Tennessee; Union victory, nearly 24,000 casualties altogether.
April 18-28: Union forces take Fort Jackson, Fort St. Philip, and New Orleans.

May 31-June 1: Battle of Seven Pines, Virginia; inconclusive, nearly 12,000 dead. April-July: Numerous other battles in the Richmond area, including Burnt Chimneys, Williamsburg, Front Royal; Seven Days' Battles around Richmond (June 25-July 1); Mechanicsville, Gaines’s Mill, Malvern Hill.

August 28-30: Second Battle of Bull Run (Manassas), Virginia;

September 12-15: Battle of Harpers Ferry, (West) Virginia;

September 17: Battle of Antietam, Maryland; 10,000 Confederate soldiers and 12,000 Federal soldiers left dead on the bloodiest day of the war. Lee withdraws from Maryland on Sept. 18-19, but the battle is indecisive.

December 13: Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia;

1863

January 1: Emancipation Proclamation goes into effect (announced Sep. 22).

May 1-4, 1863: Battle of Chancellorsville, Virginia; Confederate victory. Stonewall Jackson shot by his own men (dies of pneumonia on May 10).

July 1-3, 1863: Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; Lee retreats to Virginia after a Confederate defeat. About 50,000 casualties altogether.

November 19, 1863: Dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery, at which President Lincoln delivers the Gettysburg Address.

November 23-25, 1863: Battle of Chattanooga, Tennessee; Union victory; pivotal battle that made the 1864 Atlanta campaign possible by opening the “gateway to the Deep South.”

1864

March 9, 1864: Grant promoted to lieutenant general.

June 9, 1864-March 25, 1865: Richmond-Petersburg campaign, in which Grant’s troops constructed trenches from Richmond to Petersburg in an attempt to cut off supply lines and put the cities under siege.

July 30, 1864: Battle of the Crater at Petersburg, Virginia;

1865

March 3, 1865: Freedman’s Bureau formed.

April 8-9, 1865: Battle of Appomattox Court House, Virginia; Lee’s forces surrounded. He surrenders.

December 18, 1865: Thirteenth Amendment abolishes slavery.
Vocabulary

**Artillery shells** – projectile weapons.

**Gangrene** – tissue necrosis (cell death) caused by injury, infection, or insufficient blood circulation. The dead tissue must be removed, and in medieval times maggots were usually used for this purpose. Now, antibiotics are usually used, but amputation is still commonly required, especially in the lower extremities.

**Artery** – a blood vessel that conveys blood from the heart to any part of the body.

**Spindle** – a rounded rod tapered toward each end, suggestive of a spindle used in spinning thread.

**Ingratiating** – establishing (oneself) in the favor or good graces of others, especially with deliberate effort.

**Shabbat Shalom** – “May you have peace on your day of rest”

**Pesach** – the Hebrew word for Passover, the Jewish festival commemorating the Exodus of the Jewish people out of slavery in ancient Egypt. It lasts for seven or eight days.

**Leviticus** – the third book (out of five) of the Torah, the Jewish scriptures.

**Bondman/bondmaid** – a male/female slave.

**Bullwhip** – a rawhide whip with a short handle and long, plaited lash.

**Seder** – a ritual feast that marks the beginning of Passover.

**Haggadah** – a Jewish text written between 170-360 CE that sets forth the order of the Passover Seder and is meant to be read during the meal. The oldest complete manuscript dates to the 10th century.

**Charoset** – a sweet paste representing the mortar which the Jewish slaves used to cement bricks. It’s made from fruits and nuts, often walnuts and apples.

**Matzah** – unleavened bread eaten during Passover, when leavened bread is forbidden.

**Hardtack** – a simple cracker made from flour, water, and sometimes salt, given as food to Civil War soldiers.

**Unleavened** – bread that contains no leavening agent, such as yeast, so it does not rise and is subsequently much more dense with a different taste.

**Reveille** – a signal sounded early in the morning to awake military personnel for duty.

**Brio** – liveliness; vivacity.

**Minyan** – the number of persons required by Jewish law to be present to conduct a communal religious service, traditionally a minimum of 10 Jewish males over 13 years of age.

People and Places Referenced in the Text

**Frederick Douglass** – an escaped slave who became a leader in the abolitionist movement, and published three autobiographies (1845, 1855, and 1881).

**Caleb Legree** – a reference to Simon Legree, a cruel, greedy slave owner depicted in the novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe (1852).

**Appomattox** – refers to the location where the major Eastern campaign of the Civil War ended, when Lee surrendered to Grant on April 9, 1865.
**Pre-Performance Discussion Questions**

How does an audience member participate effectively in live performance?

How does the setting of a play, including time and place, affect the characters?

What are the consequences of slavery on a society? Please discuss short term and long term effects.

**Post-Performance Discussion Questions**

How was the relationship between slaves and owners changed after the Emancipation Proclamation?

When both are minorities, how does the slave/owner relationship differ from traditional relationships?

For example, how do the Jewish former slave owners in *The Whipping Man* differ from white slave owners?

Do the personal relationships revealed in the text alter traditional concepts of people as a commodity?

Explain the relationship of Seder to slavery in Egypt and why the characters feel that the Seder in 1865 is of particular importance.

**Online Resources for Additional Information**

The Whipping Man by Matthew Lopez – including video interview with the author!

The Whipping Man interview with Playwright Matthew Lopez

United States Civil War Center
[http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/](http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/)

The Civil War: A Film by Ken Burns
[http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/](http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/)

Civil War Trust Educational Resources
[http://www.civilwar.org/education/students/](http://www.civilwar.org/education/students/)

Understanding the Intrinsic Impact of Live Theatre
[http://www.theatrebayarea.org/Programs/upload/execsummary_samples.pdf](http://www.theatrebayarea.org/Programs/upload/execsummary_samples.pdf)

Glencoe History of Theatre Timeline