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Musicals are America's premiere contribution to the theatre and MTI is firmly committed to supporting and nurturing a musical theatre that will continue to develop and flourish into the next century.





Based on a story and characters by DAMON RUNYON
Music and Lyrics by FRANK LOESSER
Book by JO SWERLING and ABE BURROWS

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About Guys and Dolls

One of Broadway's most hilarious shows, *Guys and Dolls* has been described as the perfect musical comedy. It is based primarily on the Damon Runyon short story "The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown," which describes the unlikely romance between a pure-at-heart urban missionary and a slick Broadway gambler. The show's second romantic storyline involves Nathan Detroit and Miss Adelaide, who have been engaged for fourteen years. Nathan organizes of the "oldest established permanent floating crap game in New York" and Adelaide is the main attraction at the Hot Box nightclub. *Guys and Dolls* opened on Broadway on November 24, 1950.

Producers Cy Feuer and Ernest Martin, longtime Damon Runyon fans, assembled an exceptional team to bring the author's racy, hard-shelled, but basically soft-hearted characters to the stage. The team, which included composer/lyricist Frank Loesser, bookwriter Abe Burrows, director George S. Kaufman and choreographer Michael Kidd, created a show that received unanimous ecstatic reviews and was praised as one of the most well-constructed musicals in Broadway history.

In 1951, *New York Times* drama critic Brooks Atkinson wrote of *Guys and Dolls*: "During the decade in which the musical stage has been developing into a form of art, we have all appreciatively paid our respects to the dynamic unities of *Oklahoma*, *Brigadoon*, *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, and *The King and I*. They have made art and considerable enjoyment out of a form of theatre that used to be a hackneyed convention. But none of them has been written and staged with more skill and finish than *Guys and Dolls*. It is a triumph of style. In the case of *Guys and Dolls* luck has been a lady. Everyone associated with the production has helped everyone else, and they are in top form."

The Characters in Guys and Dolls

SARAH BROWN, a young Sergeant in the Save-A-Soul Mission (A fictitious organization patterned after the Salvation Army)

ARVIDE ABERNATHY, Sarah's grandfather and a member of the Save-A-Soul Mission Band

NATHAN DETROIT, the proprietor of the oldest floating crap game in New York City

SKY MASTERSON, a high-rolling gambler

MISS ADELAIDE, the featured performer at the Hot Box Club

THE GAMBLERS:

NICELY-NICELY JOHNSON

BENNY SOUTHSTREET

RUSTY CHARLIE

HARRY THE HORSE

ANGIE THE OX

BIG JULE, a visiting gangster and gambler from Chicago

JOEY BILTMORE, the owner of Biltmore's Garage

LIEUTENANT BRANNIGAN, a policeman

GENERAL MATILDA B. CARTWRIGHT, the head of the Save-A-Soul Mission

MISSION BAND

HOT BOX GIRLS

HOT BOX MC

CHORUS

Plot Synopsis

Act I, Scene 1

After the overture, the curtain rises on a bustling street scene alive with Times Square characters: sightseeing tourists and their guide; teenaged girls in bobby socks carrying autograph books; street vendors selling apples and flowers from a tray; a heavy-weight prize-fighter with his manager; assorted street hustlers and pickpockets; and policemen (“Runyonland”). Three gamblers, Benny Southstreet, Nicely-Nicely Johnson and Rusty Charlie, enter, reading aloud the daily horse-race scratch sheet. They trade tips about different horses (“Fugue for Tinhorns”).

As the gamblers finish their pitch, Sergeant Sarah Brown and the Mission Band enter playing a hymn (“Follow the Fold”). Sarah delivers a street-corner sermon on the evils of gambling, inviting all the sinners to visit the Save-A-Soul Mission and repent before it’s too late. Nicely-Nicely and Benny observe that Sarah is wasting her good looks on Mission work. They are joined by Harry the Horse, another gambler. He asks if a location has been found for the floating crap game run by Nathan Detroit. Nathan has had trouble finding locations for his crap game because of increased pressure by the police, particularly Lieutenant Brannigan. Brannigan appears, also looking for Nathan, who soon enters. After Brannigan leaves, Nathan mentions he needs \$1,000 to secure Joey Biltmore’s garage for the game. Nathan is so broke he doesn’t even have money to buy an engagement anniversary present for Miss Adelaide, his fiancée of 14 years. Adelaide, a performer at the Hot Box Club, doesn’t approve of Nathan’s gambling activities. Nathan, Benny and Nicely sing about their frustration at possibly losing a chance to make lots of money from the game (“The Oldest Established”).

Angie the Ox, another gambler, mentions that Sky Masterson is in town and could surely supply the money needed for the garage. Nathan knows Sky will bet on almost anything and he comes up with a way to trick Sky out of the needed funds. He sends Benny to Mindy’s restaurant to find out how much strudel and cheesecake were sold the previous day. Adelaide (who seems to have a perpetual cold) enters with three other women from the club and gives Nathan his anniversary present just as Benny returns with the numbers on the strudel and cheesecake. Sky enters, and Nathan tells Benny and Nicely to take Adelaide to a drugstore for cold medicine. Nathan proposes a \$1,000 bet to Sky about which sells more at Mindy’s: strudel or cheesecake. Sky, suspecting the bet is not on the level, won’t take Nathan up on it. Nicely and Benny return with news that Adelaide expects Nathan to pick her up after the show. Sky, a confirmed bachelor, suggests Adelaide has trapped Nathan. When Nathan asks why Sky is traveling to Havana alone, Sky says he could get any woman he chooses to go with him. Nathan bets Sky \$1,000 that Nathan can pick a woman

that Sky can't convince to go. Sky accepts. Nathan points to Sarah Brown as the Mission Band passes by.

Scene 2

The Mission Band enters the Save-A-Soul Mission after a night of preaching on Broadway. Sky enters and presents himself as a gambler eager for redemption. When Sarah offers him pamphlets, he suggests she give him personal help over dinner. She declines the offer. Sky impresses Sarah with his knowledge of the Bible, gleaned from years of living in hotels with the Gideon Bible close at hand. Noting the absence of sinners in the Mission, Sky proposes a trade: he will give Sarah his marker, an IOU guaranteeing to fill the Mission with twelve sinners, if Sarah agrees to have dinner with him in his favorite restaurant, which happens to be in Havana. She indignantly throws the marker in the trash and asks him to leave. Sky accuses Sarah of hating men, a charge she denies. Sky asks her to describe the man of her dreams. She tells him she'll know when the right man comes around ("I'll Know"). Sky tells her that he, too, will know when the right woman comes along. Their song ends in a kiss. The mood is broken immediately as Sarah slaps Sky in the face.

Scene 3

Nathan phones Joey Biltmore to tell him the \$1,000 for the garage is all but guaranteed. Joey reminds him the money is due in advance.

Scene 4

At the Hot Box, Adelaide and the chorus girls perform a musical number ("A Bushel and a Peck"). After the show, she tells Nathan she is getting a raise and suggests they finally get married. She shows him the wedding veil she has had for the past three years. She also explains she has told her mother that Nathan and she are married and have five children. As Nathan offers reasons why they shouldn't get married, one of the other dancers arrives and complains to Nathan that her date has been cancelled because of his crap game. Adelaide gets one of her chronic sneezing attacks as Nathan rushes off. She picks up a medical book which explains her cold symptoms are psychosomatic and caused by her frustration at being engaged (not married!) for 14 years ("Adelaide's Lament").

Scene 5

Benny and Nicely have been watching Sky follow Sarah and the Mission Band. They hope Sky fails in his attempts to take her to Havana so Nathan will get the cash to hold the crap game. They observe that men the world over have a weakness for falling in love ("Guys and Dolls").

Scene 6

Sarah and the Band return to the Mission. Arvide Abernathy, Sarah's grandfather and the bass drum player of the band, encourages her to pay some attention to Sky. General Cartwright, the head of the Save-A-Soul Mission, arrives and explains that the Broadway Mission's poor performance in attracting sinners is forcing her to close the branch. Sky appears and protests the closing of the Mission. He also retrieves his marker from the trash and gives it back to Sarah. She then guarantees the General there will be twelve sinners in the Mission on the following evening.

Scene 7

All the craps shooters, including Big Jule (a very tough gun-toting gangster from Chicago) are wearing red carnations as their badge of entry for the game, which still has no location. Brannigan appears and, noticing all the red carnations, asks Nathan what is going on. Benny sees Adelaide coming over with some of the other Hot Box dancers and tells Brannigan the carnations are for the guests of Nathan's bachelor party. Adelaide hears this and excitedly announces they should get married the following night after her show. As Adelaide rushes off with her girlfriends, Nathan tells Benny he still has not received the money from Sky. Benny wonders if Sky actually took Sarah to Havana.

Scene 8

Sarah and Sky are in Havana. Faced with constantly blaring mambo music and dancing couples ("Havana"), Sky and Sarah escape the noisy nightclub and end up at the fashionable Hotel Nacionale where Sarah orders a ham sandwich. After a bit of sight-seeing they end up in a street café. Sarah orders a milk shake, which Sky translates to the waiter as "Dulce de Leche," a potent alcoholic drink. After several drinks, Sarah jealously interrupts when a dancer flirts with Sky, precipitating a huge barroom brawl.

Scene 9

Sky has carried Sarah away from the brawl. As he sets her down, she kisses him. He asks her how she feels. She tells him she feels wonderful ("If I Were a Bell") and falls into his arms. Realizing he is falling in love with her, a guilty Sky tells her about the bet he made. "How else would a girl get to meet a gambler?" she responds. She reluctantly allows him to take her back to New York.

Scene 10

Outside the Mission at 4:00 AM, Sky and Sarah run into Adelaide, who is returning from a bridal shower thrown for her by the Hot Box dancers. Sky explains to Sarah

that 4:00 AM is his favorite time of day and that she is the only woman he has ever wanted to share it with (“My Time of Day”). After revealing to her his real name is Obediah Masterson, Sky and Sarah sing to each other about their newfound love (“I’ve Never Been In Love Before”). At the end of the song they are met by Arvide, who is returning from a night of Mission work. As they are talking, police bells are heard. Suddenly, Benny, Nicely, Nathan and the other gamblers run out of the Mission chased by Brannigan; Nathan has held the crap game in the Mission. Sarah is convinced Sky’s trip to Havana was part of Nathan’s plan all along, and angrily breaks off with him.

Act II

Scene 1

Adelaide and the other dancers perform another number at the Hot Box Club (“Take Back Your Mink”). After the number Sky enters and is approached by Nicely, who is looking for Adelaide. He has been sent to tell her Nathan won’t be coming to get her after the show. Nicely tells Sky that Nathan is still at the game because Big Jule, who is losing, won’t allow the game to end until he wins back his money. Adelaide arrives and, after hearing Nicely’s message, realizes Nathan is still running the crap game. She asks Sky to tell Nathan she never wants to see him again. (Reprise: “Adelaide’s Lament”)

Scene 2

Sarah, angry she is in love with Sky and convinced he helped set up the Mission crap game, tells Arvide she wants to leave. Arvide sings about his dreams for her future (“More I Cannot Wish You”). Sky and Nicely pass by, on their way to the crap game. Sky tells Sarah and Arvide he intends to honor his IOU to Sarah. He and Nicely open a manhole cover and descend to the crap game, being held in the sewer.

Scene 3

The game is proceeding furiously (“The Crapshooters’ Dance”). At the end of the dance, Big Jule again demands they all stay until he wins back the money he has lost (and then some) and uses his gun to back up the demand. He announces he will play with Nathan only, using his own dice, which have no marks on them. Only Jule can call the outcome of each throw, so Nathan is bound to lose. Jule also announces he will play his IOUs against Nathan’s cash. When Sky and Nicely appear at the game, Sky tries to talk to the gamblers about the Mission. Big Jule protests, and Sky punches him, knocking him down. Sky grabs Big Jule’s gun and tosses it to Nathan. He then

proposes a bet on one throw of the dice: if he loses, Sky will pay each gambler \$1,000; but if he wins, each gambler has to show up at the Mission for the meeting taking place that night. The gamblers all take up Sky's bet. As Sky prepares to throw the dice, he prays to Lady Luck for help ("Luck Be A Lady Tonight").

Scene 4

Harry the Horse and Big Jule complain about having to go to the Mission. Nathan sees Adelaide, who angrily tells him she has told her mother they are expecting their sixth child. Nathan tells her they can't get married before midnight because he has to go to a Mission meeting. Adelaide complains about all of Nathan's lies as Nathan tells her he loves her ("Sue Me").

Scene 5

At a few minutes past midnight, all the gamblers enter the Mission to the surprise of Sarah Brown and the delight of General Abernathy. At the General's request for testimonies, various gamblers tell how they're sorry that Sky won his bet. The testimonies continue with Nicely recounting a dream he had about being on a boat to heaven ("Sit Down, You're Rockin' the Boat"). After the song Nathan confesses to Sarah about his bet with Sky, explaining that Sky admitted to losing the bet. Sarah is puzzled by Nathan's statement, since Sky had actually won his bet. She exits the Mission as the General begins to lead the gamblers in a hymn (Reprise: "Follow the Fold").

Scene 6

Sarah and Adelaide meet on the street in the early morning and commiserate about Sky and Nathan. They come to the conclusion they should just concentrate on getting married and worry about changing their men afterward ("Marry the Man Today").

Scene 7

Adelaide appears in a wedding gown and calls for Nathan, who now operates a newsstand. He emerges from the stand wearing an elegant cut-away and tells her he hasn't yet found a place for their wedding. The Mission Band enters, led by Sky and Sarah, and Nathan asks them if he and Adelaide could get married in the Mission. Arvide, who has already married Sky and Sarah, promises to do the same for them. When Adelaide details her plans for a little place in the country, Nathan lets out a huge sneeze (Reprise: "Guys and Dolls").

Themes And Topics To Explore

Questions and Assignments

Our study guide includes a wide-ranging list of themes and topics suggested by the style and content of *Guys and Dolls*.

Avenues for exploring each theme and topic are suggested in the form of:

QUESTIONS: Designed to prompt in-class discussions before and after viewing or reading the show.

ASSIGNMENTS: Designed to be researched and written out of class.

Guys and Dolls as Drama

Questions: Discussion Prompts

- Tell the story of *Guys and Dolls* in one sentence.
- Tell the story in one paragraph — include all main characters.
- Tell the story as it develops, action by action, through the musical.
- Tell the story as a series of causes and effects. List each action taken by a character (cause) and what happens in the story as a result (effect).
- When did the action of the show first grab your attention? Where did you start to become interested, care about the characters and plot, become excited or delighted?
- Turning points are key moments in our lives or in the lives of characters in musicals and plays. A turning point changes the course of our lives forever. What are the key turning points in the plot of *Guys and Dolls*?
- Is the plot the most important element of this musical? Why or why not?

Assignments: Research and Writing Prompts

- Retell the basic story of *Guys and Dolls*, setting it in a different time and place. What impact do these changes have on the basic dramatic structure of the plot?
- Write an essay describing how love plays a role in the plot of *Guys and Dolls*.
- Write an essay describing how the need to win plays a role in the plot of *Guys and Dolls*.

The Characters in Guys and Dolls

Questions and Discussion Prompts

- What is the function of the characters in a musical? Could you create a musical, story or film without characters?
- What is the difference between a major and minor character? Who are the major characters in *Guys and Dolls*? Who are the minor characters?
- Who was your favorite character? Why?
- With which character did you sympathize most? Why?
- Did anything about the characters remind you of yourself?
- How do Sarah, Sky, Nathan and Adelaide change by the end of the musical? Try to identify the specific moments of change.
- What do you think is more important: the musical play as it is written down or as it is brought to life by the performers? Which one is the “real” play?

- What makes the characters in *Guys and Dolls* comic?
- Do any of the characters have a sense of humor?

Assignments: Research and Writing Prompts

- List characteristics about Sarah, Sky, Nathan, Adelaide, Nicely and Arvide. Indicate how you learned this information: from dialogue, lyrics, music, design elements such as costumes, etc.
- Write an essay about what you think happens to each of these characters after the show ends.
- When playwrights create characters, they often invent “character maps” before they begin to write. These “maps” list everything about the characters, from their favorite color to their political beliefs. A character map tells us what is in that character’s pockets and that character’s heart. Write a character map for Sarah, Sky, Nathan and Adelaide based on details of your own invention.
- “Back stories” are the histories of characters before we meet them. Tell the “back stories” of these characters.
- Create a character map for a character other than Sarah, Sky, Nathan or Adelaide. Does your map suggest ways in which that character could be more important in the play?
- Create a character map for a character of your own invention. Write a short story about the character using the map as a departure point.
- Describe a typical day in Sarah’s life — perhaps the day before we meet her in *Guys and Dolls*.
- Describe a typical day in Sky’s life — perhaps the day before we meet him in *Guys and Dolls*.
- In describing his approach to writing theatre songs, Frank Loesser once said, “I try to examine characters, not events.” What role do songs play in defining the characters in the show?
- Describe the relationship between Sarah Brown and Adelaide. How does their unlikely sisterhood lead to the resolution of the plot?
- Both Sarah and Adelaide are in love and want the men they love to change to suit their needs. Write an essay about wanting to change someone else. Is it wise? Is it ever possible?
- Sarah and Sky appear to be opposites. Are they? Do you believe opposites attract? If so, why do you think this is the case? Write an essay about these two characters as “opposites.”
- What are the authors suggesting when Nathan sneezes at the end of *Guys and Dolls*?

Guys and Dolls as a Fable

Questions and Discussion Prompts

- A fable is a tale that contains a moral. What is a moral? *Guys and Dolls* is subtitled “A Musical Fable of Broadway.” Do you agree it is a fable? Why or why not?

Assignments: Research and Writing Prompts

- Read a collection of classic fables and a collection of modern fables.
- Write a set of five short original fables as a forum for making moral statements that concern you. Use the same group of characters in each fable. Write a song lyric for each of your fables.

The Theme of Gambling in Guys and Dolls

Questions and Discussion Prompts

- What is your definition of gambling?
- What is the difference between legal and illegal gambling? What kinds of gambling are legal in your town and state? What kinds are illegal?
- Do you think gambling should be controlled by the government?
- Should gambling be a punishable offense? If so, under what circumstances?
- At what point do you think gambling becomes an illness?
- Do you think *Guys and Dolls* romanticizes gambling?
- What do characters like Nathan Detroit, Big Jule and Nicely-Nicely Johnson do for a living?
- What is the difference between a game of chance and a game of skill? Which kind of games do the gamblers in *Guys and Dolls* bet on? What is the nature of Sky Masterson’s reputation as a gambler?
- Why must Nathan’s crap game “float”?
- What is a “marker”? Why is a marker a badge of honor for the gamblers? What role do markers play in the plot of the show?

Assignments: Research and Writing Prompts

- Have you ever gambled? Write about the experience. Did you win or lose? Did the experience leave you wanting to gamble again?
- Research the development of gambling casinos on Native American Reservations.
- Research and define “compulsive gambling.”

- Have you ever known someone who was a compulsive gambler? Write about a person whose life is taken over by gambling.
- Learn about Gamblers Anonymous. What kinds of services does the organization offer to those in need of help?
- What is a “tinhorn”? What is a “scratch sheet”? What are the gamblers doing during the “Fugue for Tinhorns”?
- Explore the history of gambling in societies such as those of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome.
- Explore the role of gambling in other countries. In what countries is gambling very popular? In what countries does it hardly exist?
- Trace the history of gambling in America. Is there something in the American psyche which makes gambling attractive to Americans?
- Research the history of state lotteries in America. What role do they play in the economic health of the states in which they exist? Who plays the lottery? What is the lottery’s impact on individual lives?
- What role does organized crime play in gambling in America?

The “Lowlife” Characters in **Guys and Dolls**

Questions and Discussion Prompts

- What role do the normal responsibilities of everyday life seem to play in the lives of the characters in this show?
- What is a “lowlife” character? Are the gamblers and Hot Box girls in *Guys and Dolls* stereotypical “lowlife” characters? Why or why not?
- What kind of comment was Frank Loesser making about the characters when he chose seemingly incongruous classical musical forms for their musical vocabulary (such as the chorale for “The Oldest Established” or the canon for the opening song “Fugue for Tinhorns”)?

(“Fugue for Tinhorns,” musically speaking, is not a fugue. It is a canon, or round, since it repeats itself exactly — like “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Frank Loesser’s unerring ear told him “Fugue For Tinhorns” was a better title than “Canon for Tinhorns” or “Round For Tinhorns.”)
- Do you feel Damon Runyon and the creators of *Guys and Dolls* romanticized the “lowlife” characters in the story? What works of literature have romanticized “lowlife” characters?

- Why do creators and audiences feel drawn to the idea of “lowlife” characters who have redeeming qualities?
- What other popular musical theatre works depict “lowlife” characters?
- Writing about Runyon’s portrait of the gamblers of Times Square, Brooks Atkinson said, “... no genuine work of art is ever limited to a single community. If it expresses a coherent point of view about a group of people, it is likely to be intelligible everywhere and if it is not intelligible, it is probably not a genuine work of art.” Do you consider *Guys and Dolls* a work of art?

Assignments: Research and Writing Prompts

- Write about the seeming contradiction between the “lowlife” characters and their peculiarly pristine vocabulary.
- Read about Damon Runyon’s acquaintance with real gamblers and “lowlife” characters. What were the differences between the real criminals he knew and the way he portrayed those criminals in his writing?
- Explore the true lives of “lowlife” characters who have been romanticized in literature or film (e.g., Bonnie and Clyde, Bugsy Siegel).
- Write an essay supporting or challenging the contention that the gamblers and night-club entertainers in *Guys and Dolls* are rootless human beings who in spite of their rootlessness have standards and ethics of their own.

The Salvation Army

Questions and Discussion Prompts

- The Save-A-Soul Mission in *Guys and Dolls* is patterned after the Salvation Army. Is there a branch of the Salvation Army or a similar organization in your town? What kinds of services does this organization perform? Have you ever supported such an organization?
- Who are the individuals who devote their lives to such endeavors as the Salvation Army? Are they respected in American society? How do you respond to such individuals? Can you imagine devoting your life to such a cause?
- Why do the Save-a-Soul Mission Workers in *Guys and Dolls* set up a mission in Times Square? What are Sarah’s personal goals as a member of the Mission?
- Did you accept the idea that Sky Masterson became a member of the Save-A-Soul Mission band after his marriage to Sarah? What had you learned about the character that either allowed you to accept this idea or made you reject it?

Assignments: Research and Writing Prompts

- Read about the history of the Salvation Army and its founder William Booth. Explore the history of the Volunteers of America which was founded by Ballington Booth (William Booth's son) and his wife Maud.
- Why is the Salvation Army called an "army"?
- Learn about the basic training each Salvation Army officer undergoes.
- What is the role of music in the Salvation Army's ministry?
- Research other Broadway shows that have had Salvation Army heroines — *The Belle of New York* (1898) and *Smiles* (1930).

Adaptation and Musical Theatre**Questions and Discussion Prompts**

- *Guys and Dolls* is based on the writings of Damon Runyon. Musical theatre works are frequently adapted from sources such as plays, novels, fairy tales, short stories, films and television shows. How many examples of musical theatre works adapted from such source materials can you name?
- Name five musical theatre works not based on any other sources.
- What does a team of musical theatre collaborators add to a work from another medium in adapting it to the musical stage?

Assignments: Research and Writing Prompts

- Read "The Idyll of Sarah Brown" and other stories by Damon Runyon. How does the source material differ from the musical?
- What was the source material for the following musicals:

Fiddler on the Roof

Hello, Dolly!

Sweet Charity

The King and I

Cabaret

The Fantasticks

A Little Night Music

South Pacific

Guys and Dolls as Musical Theatre

Questions and Discussion Prompts

- Would *Guys and Dolls* have been as successful as a play? Why or why not? How does the score move the action of *Guys and Dolls* forward? How does it affect our emotional responses to the show? What does the music tell us about the characters or plot we might not know otherwise?
- How does the music contribute to our understanding of the larger themes of the show?
- How did the music and lyrics evoke time and place for you?
- In what ways is the music indispensable to the plot?
- *Guys and Dolls* features an overture. What is an overture? What purpose does it serve? Do other art forms have conventions analogous to the overture in musical theatre? What is established during the *Guys and Dolls* overture? Identify all you learn about the show's theme, setting, characters and energy level from listening to the overture.
- Where in the score do you hear the sounds and rhythms of Broadway street life?
- What does the score tell you about the characters and setting of the show?
- How do the big dance ensemble moments (such as the opening sequence in Times Square and the "Luck Be A Lady" sequence) help to define the world in which the show takes place?
- List the musical styles found within the score for *Guys and Dolls*. How does the choice of style inform what the dramatic action of each musical number?
- What sounds do you hear in Frank Loesser's music for "Adelaide's Lament" which deepen the emotional texture of this seemingly comic song?

Assignments: Research and Writing Prompts

- Why do theatre song lyrics rhyme? Write a few verses in prose about something you wish would happen. Then write it in rhyme.
- How is the experience of writing in the two forms different?
- What is internal rhyme? What is alliteration? What is assonance?
- Discuss the ways in which music and lyrics can compress and elevate the importance of information.
- What role does music play in your life? Which moments in your life might be set to music?
- Select one of the following songs or musical segments of *Guys and Dolls*:

“Runyonland”
“Fugue For Tinhorns”
“Follow The Fold”
“The Oldest Established”
“I’ll Know”
“A Bushel And A Peck”
“Adelaide’s Lament”
“Guys and Dolls”
“Havana”
“If I Were A Bell”
“My Time of Day”
“I’ve Never Been In Love Before”
“Take Back Your Mink”
“Reprise: Adelaide’s Lament”
“More I Cannot Wish You”
“Luck Be A Lady”
“Sue Me”
“Sit Down, You’re Rockin’ The Boat”
“Reprise: Follow The Fold”
“Marry The Man Today”
“Reprise: Guys and Dolls”

Discuss your selection in terms of the following:

- a. What do we learn about the singing character or characters? What do we learn about each character’s personal philosophy?
- b. How does the song relate to the larger themes of the show?
- c. What makes singing appropriate at this moment? Does the emotional energy of the moment make song more appropriate than dialogue?
- d. What does the song accomplish in terms of the plot? Where is the action when the song begins and when it ends?
- e. Every dramatic scene has a “main beat” or central moment of importance. Is the song the “main beat” of the scene in which it appears?
- f. Does the song exist in real time (does each minute of stage time represent one minute of actual time in the world of the play)? Or does it take place in suspended time (does it magnify or expand the moment temporally) or compressed time (does it speed up time)?
- g. What is the physical action of the singing character or characters during the song?

- What is a “reprise”? What is its function? Which of the songs are reprised? What do you learn when you hear the reprise of a song you didn’t know the first time you heard the song?
- Imagine you have been asked to create a new song for the show. Who would sing it? Where in the show would it take place? What would it be about? What kind of music would it involve?

The Creators of Musical Theatre

Questions and Discussion Prompts

- What is the meaning of the word “collaboration”? Why is the process of having more than one person create a musical a “collaboration”?
- How would you imagine a librettist, composer and lyricist work together?

Assignments: Research and Writing Prompts

- Read a biography or autobiography of a famous musical theatre collaborator or collaborative team. Report on their creative and/or collaborative process.
- Read and listen to other works by Frank Loesser and Abe Burrows to obtain a broader view of their approach to their craft and a deeper understanding of their artistic sensibilities.
- Composers and lyricists in the American Musical Theatre are often known for their admiration of, and willingness to help, others in the field. Frank Loesser’s career was marked not only by his own accomplishments but by his championing of other writers as well. Read a biography of Loesser and write about this aspect of his career.
- Investigate Loesser’s role in the careers of three of the most successful theatre songwriters of the 1950’s: Richard Adler, Jerry Ross and Meredith Willson.
- Research the “salon” headed by George and Ira Gershwin that served as a meeting place and point of inspiration for many of their peers.
- Explore the mentor relationships between Jerome Kern and George Gershwin, George Gershwin and Vincent Youmans, Otto Harbach and Oscar Hammerstein II, and Oscar Hammerstein II and Stephen Sondheim.

The AABA Song Form

Questions and Discussion Prompts

- Just as stories can be divided into paragraphs, songs can be divided into sections called stanzas. The arrangement of ideas into stanzas and the placement of these

stanzas in relation to each other are very carefully thought out by the composer and the lyricist. Songs may be arranged in different patterns, depending on which structure best serves their meaning. One classic pattern is called "AABA". "Luck Be A Lady" is a classic AABA song with a verse introduction.

- VERSE/INTRO: THEY CALL YOU "LADY LUCK,"
 BUT THERE IS ROOM FOR DOUBT.
 AT TIMES YOU HAVE A VERY
 UNLADY-LIKE WAY OF RUNNING OUT.
 YOU'RE ON THIS DATE WITH ME.
 THE PICKINGS HAVE BEEN LUSH —
 AND YET BEFORE THIS EVENING IS OVER,
 YOU MIGHT GIVE ME THE BRUSH.
 YOU MIGHT FORGET YOUR MANNERS,
 YOU MIGHT REFUSE TO STAY
 AND SO THE BEST THAT I CAN DO IS PRAY.
- A LUCK, BE A LADY TONIGHT.
 LUCK, BE A LADY TONIGHT.
 LUCK, IF YOU'VE EVER BEEN A
 LADY TO BEGIN WITH,
 LUCK, BE A LADY TONIGHT.
- A LUCK, LET A GENTLEMAN SEE
 HOW NICE A DAME YOU CAN BE.
 I KNOW THE WAY YOU'VE TREATED
 OTHER GUYS YOU'VE BEEN WITH.
 LUCK, BE A LADY WITH ME.
- B A LADY DOESN'T LEAVE HER ESCORT.
 IT ISN'T FAIR. IT ISN'T NICE.
 A LADY DOESN'T WANDER ALL OVER THE ROOM
 AND BLOW ON SOME OTHER GUY'S DICE.
- A' SO LET'S KEEP THE PARTY POLITE.
 NEVER GET OUT OF MY SIGHT.
 STICK WITH ME BABY, I'M THE
 FELLOW YOU CAME IN WITH.
 LUCK, BE A LADY —
 LUCK, BE A LADY —
 LUCK, BE A LADY TONIGHT.

- The stanzas of this song are arranged as a classic *AABA* pattern. This means that 3 sections (*As*) are basically alike and one section (*B*) is different. Can you find the *A* stanzas and the *B* stanza in the song?
- The last *A* stanza in an *AABA* song is often somewhat different in design from the first two *As*. Is this true in this song? An *A* stanza that is slightly different in design from the other *As* in an *AABA* song is called an *A'* (“*A* prime”).
- Each part of an *AABA* song has a job to do. The first part of the song, the first *A*, sets up the situation. How does the first *A* of this song accomplish this?
- The second *A* tells more about the situation and deepens its importance to the singer. How does the second *A* in this song accomplish this?
- The third section, the *B*, moves the action of the song forward. How does the *B* section of this song accomplish this?
- The final section, the *A'*, intensifies the emotion and the stakes, summarizing the message of the song. How is this accomplished in the last *A* section of this song?
- Listen to the song. How does the music for the verse-intro differ from the music for the *A* sections? How does the music for the *B* section differ from the *A* sections? How does the music for the *A'* section differ from the *A* sections? How does the music reinforce what is happening in the song?
- Many songs have a key or central idea around which they are organized. This idea is called a “hook” because it catches and brings the listener into the song. Often the hook is expressed in the title. What is the hook in this song?
- Does understanding the form of a song help you to appreciate it more or does it get in the way of your listening to it effectively?

Assignments: Research and Writing Prompts

- Think of a current pop song arranged in an *AABA* format. Analyze it according to the process described above. Often a pop song does not have as much dramatic action as a theatre song. Does the character in your pop song progress in understanding his or her situation during the course of the song? What is the hook?
- Write the lyric and/or music for an *AABA* song on a subject you feel deeply about. Be sure to use a hook.

Other Production Elements

Questions and Discussion Prompts

- Design your own sets and costumes for *Guys and Dolls*. Explain the reasons for your choices.

- Read about set designers and lighting designers to learn more about their role in creating musical theatre.

Create Your Own Musical

Assignments: Research and Writing Prompts

- Select a work from a newspaper columnist or short story writer that could be turned into a musical.
- What elements of your writer's subject matter makes it relevant today?
- Where would your musical be set in terms of time and place?
- Why would this material make a good musical? How would it "sing"? What about it is inherently musical? What could music add to the work?
- What elements of the source would be hard to transfer to musical theatre form?
- Make a list of the characters in your musical.
- Outline your musical, scene by scene.
- What role would music play? Would the work be all sung? Would it include dialogue? What role would dance play in your work? How would dance be used? What would the musical style of your adaptation be?
- Make a list of songs and musical segments you might include.
- Try to write the first scene, a turning point scene and the final scene of your musical.
- Try to write a lyric or melody for one of the musical segments.

Quick Takes

- See the film version of *Guys and Dolls*. Compare the film with the stage musical. Which is more artistically satisfying? What songs were added to the film? What did they add to the meaning and effectiveness of the plot?
- Read a biography of Damon Runyon. Write about his experiences in New York City and how they compared to those of the characters in *Guys and Dolls*.
- In addition to being a brilliant songwriter, Frank Loesser was also an astute businessman. Read about his company, Frank Music, and his activities as founder of Musical Theatre International.
- Learn about the history of the Times Square area. In what year did Runyon set the story "The Idyll of Sarah Brown"? What was Times Square like at that time?
- Research Havana in the 1950s before the takeover of the country by Fidel Castro. What kind of city was it at the time of the musical?
- What kind of night spot is the Hot Box Club?

Critical Analysis

Assignment: Writing Report

- Write a review of a performance of *Guys and Dolls*. You may wish to include any combination of the following elements in your review:
 1. Did the show hold your interest? Why?
 2. Describe the manner in which the story was presented to the audience. What was the dialogue like?
 3. What was the structure of the story? Was there one story or were there multiple stories? Was anything about the story unexpected? How did the story begin and end?
 4. Describe the way music and lyrics worked in the show.
 5. Describe the sets, costumes, lighting and musical accompaniment. How did these elements add meaning to the show?
 6. Discuss the effectiveness of the performers.
 7. Discuss the ideas presented in the show. Analyze their importance to your reader.
 8. Explain why your reader should make an effort to see the show.

APPENDIX

The following background material and bibliography are designed to enrich your exploration of the Themes and Topics.

About The Creators

FRANK LOESSER (Music and Lyrics): One of America's great composer/lyricists, Frank Loesser began his songwriting career during the Depression as a lyricist, contributing songs to Broadway revues and nightclub acts. His work with composer Irving Actman in the 1936 revue *The Illustrator's Show* led to a songwriting contract in Hollywood, where he spent the next eleven years working with such composers as Burton Lane, Jule Styne, Arthur Schwartz and Hoagy Carmichael. Some of his film songs from that period include "Two Sleepy People," "Jingle Jangle Jingle" and "I Don't Want To Walk Without You." The first song for which Loesser wrote both words and music was "Praise The Lord And Pass The Ammunition," written during his World War II service. His Hollywood work after the war included the hit songs "Spring Will Be A Little Late This Year," "A Slow Boat To China," and the 1949 Oscar-winning song "Baby, It's Cold Outside." In 1948 Loesser was approached by fledgling Broadway producers Cy Feuer and Ernest Martin to write music and lyrics to George Abbott's libretto for an adaptation of the classic Brandon Thomas play *Charley's Aunt*. The musical, which starred Ray Bolger, was called *Where's Charley?* and was a hit. This led to Loesser's next show, the hugely influential and successful *Guys and Dolls* (1950), also produced by Feuer and Martin, with a script was by Abe Burrows and Jo Swerling. In 1956 Loesser wrote the libretto, music and lyrics for his next show, *The Most Happy Fella*, adapted from Sidney Howard's play, *They Knew What They Wanted*. This impressive score contains over 30 musical numbers and makes extensive use of operatic techniques and forms, including recitative, arias, duets, trios and choral numbers. In 1960 he provided the score and was co-librettist for *Greenwillow*. In 1961, Loesser wrote the score for the Pulitzer Prize-winning *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. His last show, *Pleasures and Palaces*, closed in 1965 during out-of-town try-outs.

ABE BURROWS (Co-librettist): After studying to be a doctor and an accountant, Abe Burrows had a career in sales before becoming a successful radio script writer and writer/performer of musical parody numbers. His first Broadway libretto was *Guys and Dolls*, co-written with Jo Swerling, with a score by Frank Loesser. Among the musicals for which he provided librettos are *Make A Wish*, *Can-Can* and *Silk Stockings* (both with scores by Cole Porter), *Say, Darling*, and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (which he also directed; score by Frank Loesser). His non-musical plays include *Cactus Flower* (wrote and directed) and *Forty Carats* (directed).

JO SWERLING (Co-librettist): Born in Russia in 1897, Jo Swerling was a playwright, screenwriter and vaudeville sketch writer. Mr. Swerling's long career began as a reporter and feature writer in New York and Chicago.

MICHAEL KIDD (Choreographer): After 5 years as a soloist with the Ballet Theatre and later as a dancer and choreographer of Hollywood musicals, Michael Kidd went on to win fame as choreographer of such Broadway musicals as *Finian's Rainbow*, *Hold It, Guys and Dolls*, *Can-Can*. He directed and choreographed *L'il Abner* (which he co-produced), *Destry Rides Again*, *Subways Are For Sleeping*, *The Rothschilds* and *The Goodbye Girl*.

GEORGE S. KAUFMAN (Director): A prolific playwright, director and screenwriter, Kaufman began his career as a newspaper columnist. Along with Dorothy Parker, Ring Lardner and Robert Benchley (among others), he was one of the participants of the Algonquin Round Table in the 1920s. His Broadway plays include *Dulcy*, *Merton of the Movies*, *Beggar on Horseback* (all co-written with Marc Connelly), *The Cocoanuts* (starring the Marx Brothers) and *Dinner at Eight* (co-written with Edna Ferber). He wrote or co-wrote the libretti for *Strike Up the Band*, *Of Thee I Sing* and *Let 'Em Eat Cake* (all were co-written by Morrie Ryskind and had scores by George and Ira Gershwin), *The Band Wagon*, *I'd Rather Be Right* (co-written with Moss Hart), *Park Avenue* (co-written with Nunnally Johnson) and *Silk Stockings* (co-written with Leueen McGrath and Abe Burrows). In addition to *Guys and Dolls* his directing credits included *Of Thee I Sing*, *Let 'Em Eat Cake*, *I'd Rather Be Right* and *Park Avenue*. Kaufman was half of the most successful playwrighting team of the 1930s: with Moss Hart, he created such shows as *Once In A Lifetime*, *Merrily We Roll Along* (the source material for the 1981 Stephen Sondheim/George Furth musical), *You Can't Take It With You* (Pulitzer Prize For Drama, 1936) and *The Man Who Came To Dinner*. The latter two plays remain among the most frequently produced American comedies.

CY FEUER and ERNEST MARTIN (Producers): Feuer, the former head of the Music Department at Republic Studios in Hollywood, and Martin, who started his theatrical career as an usher at CBS in 1942, formed a partnership in 1948 to produce the Frank Loesser/George Abbott musical *Where's Charley?* The show was a hit and led to a string of Broadway shows over the next 18 years, including *Guys and Dolls*, *Can-Can*, *The Boy Friend*, *Silk Stockings* (Feuer also directed), *Whoop-Up* (Feuer directed and was co-librettist), *How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *Skyscraper* (Feuer directed) and *Walking Happy* (Feuer directed).

About Damon Runyon

Alfred Damon Runyan was born in Manhattan, Kansas in 1884. His grandfather and father both ran newspapers and printing presses. His family moved to Pueblo, Colorado, and in his early teens Runyan began working at *Pueblo's Evening Press*, writing feature stories about children and dogs, covering courthouse and police news, and writing light verse, some of which was published in the paper. A printer

misspelled his name as Runyon on one of his stories; he liked the change and it stuck. At the age of 14, during the Spanish-American War, Runyon enlisted in the army and was sent to the Philippines. After being discharged in 1899, Runyon rode the rails from San Francisco back to Colorado. He said later that his experiences with hobos (homeless men who secretly rode in empty freight cars) marked the beginning of his association with criminal lore and slang. Back in Pueblo he began working at a larger paper, *The Chieftain*, reporting the day's events and continuing to write verse. Various newspaper jobs led him to San Francisco, and in 1911 he moved to New York City. He obtained a job in the sports department of William Randolph Hearst's *New York American*. His sports writing quickly gained him recognition as a writer with a personal style, and in 1914 he began writing his own column. In 1920, his popularity allowed him to sign a very lucrative contract with Hearst, giving him the freedom to write whatever he wanted in his column, which featured human interest stories of the sports, theatrical and underworld characters of Broadway. One column carried the byline "Amos (A.) Mugg".

Runyon had taken a break from short story writing, but began again in the 1920s, selling many of his stories featuring his Broadway characters with their distinctive dialects. Many of his stories were published in collections, the best known of which is *Guys and Dolls*. A remarkable number of these stories have been transferred to the stage and screen, the most famous being the musical *Guys and Dolls* (based on "The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown") and the Shirley Temple movie *Little Miss Marker* (based on the story of the same name).

About Times Square

The first theatres in New York City operated in lower Manhattan in the early 1700s. As the city expanded northward, new theatre districts developed. By the middle of the 19th century, many theatres operated along Broadway, Canal Street and Eighth Street. The theatre district continued its push north to Union Square, then Herald Square, and finally to Longacre Square, at the convergence of Broadway, 7th Avenue and 42nd Street.

Prior to 1893, the area now known as Times Square was little more than a collection of apartments, churches, general stores and stables. However, theatre operators viewed this area as a land of opportunity, and after the first three theatres were built there in 1893, a tremendous ten-year building boom occurred. In 1901, observing the glow from countless white incandescent bulbs that lit the theatre marquees and electric billboards, advertising man O.J. Gude dubbed Broadway "The Great White Way." On January 1, 1905, Longacre Square was renamed "Times Square" after *The New York Times* moved into its new building on West 43rd Street. On Dec. 31, 1907, the Artcraft Strauss Sign Corp. began the tradition of marking the new year by lowering a ball from the *New York Times* Tower at 11:59 p.m. New Year's Eve. Armistice Day was cele-

brated in Times Square on November 11, 1918, and on August 15, 1945, more than one million New Yorkers gathered there for official word of the end of World War II.

From the start, the concentration and variety of entertainments in Times Square — including legitimate and musical theatres, vaudeville and burlesque houses, night-clubs, bars, restaurants, dance-halls, pool halls, dime museums and penny arcades — attracted a diverse population of actors, sports figures, musicians, newspaper writers, gangsters, con-men and tourists who mingled day and night on the streets. Today the Times Square area is still the nerve center of New York City and attracts millions of tourists and theatre-goers each year.

About The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army, a Christian evangelical ministry serving the urban poor through its social welfare programs, was founded in London in 1878 by Methodist minister William Booth. Booth had been a minister in the Methodist New Connexion Church, but he resigned his post when he was not allowed to evangelize full-time. In 1865, Booth and his wife Catherine started the East London Revival Society, later changing its name to the “Christian Mission.” Recognizing that hunger and homelessness were barriers to the acceptance of a Christian life, the Mission distributed food and provided shelter to the poor of the East End. Volunteers and converts flooded in. In 1878 Booth reorganized his ministry along a military pattern, changing its name to the “Salvation Army.” The head of the organization became the general, the basic worship unit became the corps. Ministers were officers with a rank ranging from lieutenant to brigadier, while the parishioners became soldiers. Each officer and soldier pledged a declaration of faith — the Articles of War — entitling them to wear the uniform of the ministry with its symbolic red shield. Like many other Protestant evangelical groups, the Army’s services featured joyous music and hand clapping, personal testimony and an invitation to repent.

The Army quickly spread throughout England and internationally. The first Salvation Army missionaries came to America in 1880. By 1900, there were almost 100 corps operating in this country. In 1896 a schism over control of the American branch of the Army resulted in the formation of the Volunteers of America. Founded on New York City’s Bowery by Ballington and Maud Booth (William Booth’s son and daughter-in-law), this religious-social welfare group was also organized along quasi-military lines, and served the poor through summer camps, day nurseries, homes for the aged, rehabilitation programs, food programs and shelters.

Both the Salvation Army and the Volunteers of America have survived to the present. Today the Salvation Army has a membership in excess of one and one-half million, spread throughout the world, while the Volunteers of America serves one million people through 400 programs in over 200 communities.

About Guys and Dolls

After their successful collaboration with Frank Loesser on the 1948 musical *Where's Charley?*, producers Cy Feuer and Ernest Martin decided their next project would be an adaptation of a Damon Runyon story, "The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown." The rights to the collection containing the story were held by Paramount, the movie studio which had made the Shirley Temple film *Little Miss Marker*, based on the Runyon story of the same name. Feuer and Martin hoped the participation of Loesser, who had worked at Paramount in the 1930s and '40s, would help in the negotiations. Paramount accepted the right of first refusal on the screen rights in exchange for releasing the story. Feuer and Martin auditioned 10 writers before hiring Jo Swerling to write the book.

Swerling, a Hollywood screenwriter whose credits included *Pride of the Yankees* and the Alfred Hitchcock film, *Lifeboat*, worked with Loesser on the show for a number of months. Feuer and Martin then released Swerling and replaced him with Abe Burrows, a highly successful and respected radio writer. Burrows wrote a new book around the songs Loesser had already written for the show, allowing for a high level of story-song integration. He was also able to capture and transfer Runyon's characteristic dialogue to the stage. Feuer and Martin approached George S. Kaufman, a prolific playwright and highly regarded director, to direct the show. Kaufman agreed after hearing the score and reading the book. His participation allowed Feuer and Martin to raise the money to produce the show. The rest of the original production team included choreographer Michael Kidd, set and costume designer Jo Mielziner, costume designer Alvin Colt and musical director Irving Actman.

After assembling the cast, which included Robert Alda as Sky Masterson, Isabel Bigley as Sarah Brown, Sam Levene as Nathan Detroit, Vivian Blaine as Miss Adelaide and Stubby Kaye as Nicely-Nicely Johnson, the show held out-of-town try-outs in Philadelphia. *Guys and Dolls* opened on Broadway on November 24, 1950 at the Forty-Sixth Street Theatre to unanimous critical raves, and played a total of 1,200 performances. The show won 8 Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical, Best Score, Best Producer, Best Direction of a Musical, Best Choreographer, Best Actor in a Musical and Best Featured Actress in a Musical. In 1955, Samuel Goldwyn produced the film version of the show, which starred Marlon Brando as Sky Masterson, Jean Simmons as Sarah Brown, Frank Sinatra as Nathan Detroit, and Vivian Blaine and Stubby Kaye reprising their original Broadway roles. The show has had two Broadway revivals, in 1976 and 1992. The 1976 version featured an all-black cast starring Robert Guillaume as Nathan Detroit, Norma Donaldson as Miss Adelaide, James Randolph as Sky Masterson, Ernestine Jackson as Sarah Brown and Ken Page as Nicely-Nicely. The 1992 version starred Nathan Lane as Nathan Detroit, Faith Prince as Miss Adelaide, Peter Gallagher as Sky Masterson, Josie de Guzman as Sarah Brown and Walter Bobbie as Nicely-Nicely Johnson. It ran for over two and a half years and won 4 Tony Awards in 1992: Best Revival, Best Actress in a Musical, Best Director of a Musical and Best Scenic Design.

Critical Response

To the original 1950 production:

The big trouble with *Guys and Dolls* is that a performance of it lasts only one evening, when it ought to last about a week. I did not want to leave the theatre after the premier last night and come back here and write a piece about the show. I wanted to hang around, on the chance that they would raise the curtain again and put on a few numbers they'd forgotten — or, at least, start *Guys and Dolls* all over again. For here is New York's own musical comedy — as bright as a dime in a subway grating, as smart as a sidewalk pigeon, as professional as Joe DiMaggio, as enchanting as the skyline, as new as the paper you're holding. In all departments *Guys and Dolls* is a perfect musical comedy. Under the masterful direction of George S. Kaufman, it is swift, crisp, and precise, with not a lagging instant. The book is a work of easy and delightful humor. Its music and lyrics, by Frank Loesser, are so right for the show and so completely lacking in banality, that they amount to an artistic triumph. Another just-right element is the staging of the dances and musical numbers by Michael Kidd; his ballet number about a crap game being played in a sewer is a dazzling bit of invention and execution. Jo Mielziner's sets are, like all Mielziner sets, just right, and so are Alvin Colt's costumes.

— John Chapman, *Daily News*, November 25, 1950

This doesn't have to be a very long review because I can state the case of *Guys and Dolls* in one sentence: it is the best and most exciting thing of its kind since *Pal Joey* [1940]. It is a triumph and a delight, and I think it will run as long as the roof remains on the Forty-Sixth Street Theatre. Run, don't walk, to the nearest ticket broker.

— John McClain, *The Journal-American*, November 25, 1950

Guys and Dolls is just what it should be to celebrate the Runyon spirit, vigorous, noisy, humorous, tough on the surface, and shamelessly sentimental underneath, filled with the salty characters and richly original language sacred to the memory of the late Master, and a pleasure to all beholders.

— Richard Watts, Jr., *The Post*, November 25, 1950

To the 1992 Broadway revival:

Everyone is entitled to a favorite Broadway musical, and mine is *Guys and Dolls* — if you're counting, the runner-up is *Pal Joey* — and I imagine I would probably enjoy this gorgeous gem of a musical even in the poorest setting known to a dog, open-air and sitting in a rainstorm. Without a raincoat. With the flu. So I'm prejudiced. Sue me! But believe me, offered the splendid new staging *Guys and Dolls* has been given by Jerry Zaks, which opened at the Martin Beck Theatre last night, my heart sings, my soul roars and I feel tingly good all over. Baby, I'm a bell, and I'm ringing.

— Clive Barnes, *The New York Post*, April 15, 1992

If you have ever searched Times Square to find that vanquished Broadway of lovable gangsters, wisecracking dolls and neon-splashed dawns, you must not miss the *Guys and Dolls* that roared into the old neighborhood last night. As directed with a great eye and a big heart by Jerry Zaks and performed by a thrilling young company that even boasts, in Faith Prince, the rare sighting of a brand-new musical-comedy star, this is an enchanting rebirth of the show that defines Broadway dazzle.

— *Frank Rich, New York Times, April 15, 1992*

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The Music Theatre International Study Guides are edited by John W. Lowell. Tom Dunn is associate editor.