

**THEATRE**  
& **DANCE**  
at **WAYNE**

# Sister Act

## The Musical

Music by Alan Menken  
Lyrics by Glenn Slater  
Book by Bill Steinkellner and Cheri  
Steinkellner

Bonstelle Theatre  
April 13 to 22, 2018

**EDUCATOR'S  
SHOW GUIDE**



## GENERAL INFO

### DEAR EDUCATORS,

Wayne State University is proud to produce plays for young people's enjoyment and to actively explore the beauty, diversity, complexity and challenges of the world around them through the dramatic arts. We wish to support the development of their creative voice, imagination, and understanding of drama and its role in our global society.

This play guide is designed to be a tool in helping you prepare your students for our performance as well as extend the production experience back into the classroom.

Activities presented assist in achieving the Michigan Common Core State Standards (MI-CCSS).

Your comments and suggestions about this guide, presentation and/or programming are greatly appreciated.

### YOUR STUDENT'S ROLE

You may wish to have a discussion with your students before attending the play. Remind your students that they have an important role to play at the performance being the audience. It is because of the audience that the theatre exists. It will be their energy and response that will directly affect the actors onstage. Young audiences should be reminded that live theatre is not like watching TV, a movie or DVD; the actors cannot pause or be rewound, there are no commercial break for running to the bathroom, the volume cannot be turned up to hear better if someone other than the actors are talking.

Encourage your students to listen and watch the play. They can laugh and cheer for their favorite characters. At the end of the play, applause is appropriate and is the opportunity for your students to thank the actors while the actors are thanking you for the role you played as the audience.

## ABOUT THE CREATORS

### Lyricist: Glenn Slater

Glenn Slater was nominated for the Tony Award for Best Original Score for the Broadway version of *The Little Mermaid* in 2008, his second Tony nomination for *Sister Act* in 2011, and his third Tony nomination for *School of Rock* in 2016.

Slater wrote the lyrics for the Off-Broadway stage revue *New Yorkers* produced by the Manhattan Theatre Club in 2001. He has written lyrics for six editions of Ringling Brothers & Barnum and Bailey Circus. His first work with Alan Menken was writing the lyrics for the film *Home on the Range* in 2004 and the stage production *Sister Act the Musical* (2006). He wrote the lyrics for the stage adaptation of *Disney's The Little Mermaid*. He has also composed the lyrics and co-wrote the book for the major Andrew Lloyd Webber musical *Love Never Dies*, which is a sequel to Lloyd Webber's 1986 musical *The Phantom of the Opera*. Adding to his career as a lyricist, Slater wrote the lyrics for the songs in *Disney's Tangled*. In 2015 he worked again with Andrew Lloyd Webber for the Broadway musical *School of Rock* and of *Galavant* on ABC.

### Composer: Alan Menken

Menken is best known for his scores for films produced by Disney. His scores for *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, and *Pocahontas* have won him two Academy Awards. He also composed the scores for *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Newsies*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Hercules*, *Home on the Range*, *Enchanted*, and *Tangled* among others.

With eight Academy Award wins (four each for Best Score and Best Song), Menken is the second most prolific Oscar winner in the music categories. He has also won eleven Grammy Awards, a Tony Award and other honors.

## SYNOPSIS

Deloris Van Cartier is an aspiring singer in Philadelphia, where she is auditioning to perform at her gangster boyfriend's nightclub. Deloris believes that Curtis is going to introduce her to a big producer, but is upset when he tells her she is not ready. Hurt and rejected, Deloris decides to break up with him, but when she goes to find him she accidentally sees him kill one of his cronies. Deloris runs to the police, who place her in hiding at a convent until Curtis is brought to trial.

At first, Deloris feels as though it will be the worst thing in the world, chafing against the constraints of convent life and an immovable Reverend Mother, but once she is introduced to the struggling choir at the convent, everything changes. She finds that many of the nuns at the convent are not that different from her, and that they are quite fun to be around. They help give her a bigger purpose in her life, showing her a genuine love and affection that was missing prior to her arrival at the convent. *Sister Act* is a joyous show that uses music to bring different communities, and lifestyles, together.

# THINGS TO KNOW - WAYS TO GROW

## BEFORE AND AFTER THE SHOW

### SPEAKING AND LISTENING

[Sharing of any writing project orally in class will also fit under the Speaking and Listening (SL) Standard]

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1, 2.1

Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade level topics and text with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 7.1, 8.1, [9-10.1, 11-12.1]

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in small groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade level topics and text, building on others; ideas and expressing their own clearly [and persuasively].

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1, [2.4]

Describe people, places, things and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly [audibly in coherent sentences].

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4, [4.4, 5.4]

Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details [to support main idea or theme] speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.4, 7.4, 8.4

Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details: appropriate eye contact, adequate volume and clear pronunciation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4, 11-12.4

Present information, findings, and supportive evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience and range of formal and informal task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.6, 7.6, 8.6, 9-10.6, 11-12.6

Adapt speech to a variety of context and task, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

#### Pre-Show Questions:

1. Have you ever seen a musical before?
2. Have you ever performed in a musical? In school, youth theater or camp?
3. What theatrical elements set musical theater apart from other genres of theater?
4. Why do we sing? Why do we dance?
5. When do you sing and dance?
6. How do you think the actors and creative team (director, composer, designers) will bring this musical to life on stage?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.9, 2.9, 3.9, (5.9, 6.9)

Compare and contrast the adventures and experience of characters in stories. (in different forms or genres in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.7

Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.7

Compare and contrast a written story, drama or poem to its audio, film, staged or multimedia version, analyze the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g. lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.7

Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g. recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry) evaluating how each version interprets the source text.

- *Sister Act: The Musical* is based on the film on the same name. Provide students with clips or DVD viewing and then compare and contrast it to the theatrical version.
- After the play, as a class, discuss the similarities and difference between *Sister Act* movie to the theatrical production.
- Divide the class into small groups. Provide a Venn diagram with the name of the main character: Deloris, Mother Superior, and Sister Mary Robert. Students work together writing what they know, or think they know, about the character before viewing the production or reading the story. Then students revisit the diagram after viewing/reading the story and add their new perspective on each.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.(6.2) 7.2, 8.2, [9-10.2, 11-12.2]

Determine (a theme) two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; [including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account: provide an objective summary of the text.]

## WRITING

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.3, 2.3, 3.3

Write narratives in which they recount a well elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thought, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3, 5.3, 6.3, 7.3, 8.3, 9-10.3, 11-12.3

Writes narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.1, [2.1]

Write opinion piece in which they introduce the topic or name of book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reasons for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure. [use linking words to connect the opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section]

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1, 4.1, 5.1

Write opinion pieces on topics or text, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1, 7.1, 8.1, [9-10.1, 11-12.1]

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. [Write an argument to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or text, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence]

## HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

Evaluate various explanation for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveals an author's point of view or purpose (e.g. loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6

Evaluate author's differing points of views on the same historical events or issues by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning and evidence.

### Post Show Questions

What was the musical you saw about (the plot)?

1. Who were the main characters?
2. Who were your favorite characters? Why?
3. What was your favorite part of the performance?
4. Were there any aspects of the show that stood out to you (e.g. sets, lighting, costumes, music, and/or dancing)?
5. What did you like most about those aspects of the show?

**DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**  
(modify as needed to meet the needs of your students)

**Character Profiles: Part 1**

The following activity should be done BEFORE your students see the show as it will explore perceptions of self and of others.

1. On large sheets of butcher paper, draw three outlines of bodies and draw large speech bubbles coming from each outline and copy the quotes below.

(Answer: Deloris)

Look at my style, could it be more glam?

Look at my look, can you say, hot damn?

Look, an' at once, you know what I am:

Me, I'm fabulous baby!

(Answer: Sister Mary Robert)

I've never talked back,

I've never slept late,

I've never sat down when told to stand straight,

I've never let go and gone with the flow, and don't even know, really, why.

2. Explain to your students that their task is to build a character profile of each person based on the quotes in the speech bubbles, and invite them to individually write words or phrases that describe each character on the OUTSIDE of the outline. Use the following questions to prompt the brainstorm process:

- What kind of words or phrases can you use to describe this character?
- What do you think their profession is?
- What do you think they look like? Describe their appearance?
- How old do you think they are?
- Do you think you will immediately recognize them in the musical? If so, why?

3. Set aside each outline until after students have seen the performance. While watching the show, see if any of the characters fit your character profile.

## DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

(modify as needed to meet the needs of your students)

### Character Profiles: Part 2

The following activity should be done AFTER your students have seen the show, and if possible as a continuation of the previous activity. The objective is to discuss and debate the qualities of the three main characters in *Sister Act – The Musical*, and ultimately question the way we judge each other.

1. Display the character outlines from the previous activity.
2. Ask your students to identify which character profile belongs to which character from the show.
3. Once they have collectively decided, clearly label each outline with their character's name. Now that you have seen the show, were your character profiles accurate?
4. Divide your class into three groups and assign each group one of the character profiles.
5. Looking at the information we now have after seeing the show, ask each group to write words or phrases on the INSIDE of the outline to describe that character's personality and inner feelings.
  - What is this character like on the inside?
  - What qualities of this character cannot be seen from the outside but still exist?
  - How might these characters describe themselves?
  - Is there anything that surprised you about Deloris, Sister Mary Robert or the Mother Superior?
  - Can they create a character profile about another character in the play?

### SPECIAL THANKS

Thank you to LaWanda Smith for her assistance in the development of this study guide.

#### THEATRE ETIQUETTE

The phrase "theatre etiquette" refers to the special rules of behavior that are called for when attending a theatre performance.

Above all, it is important to remember that the actors on stage can see and hear you at the same time you can see and hear them. Be respectful of the actors and your fellow audience members by being attentive and observing the general guidelines below:

Before you go:

- Please help us create a respectful environment for your fellow audience members and for the actors by turning off your cell phone and other electronic devices (iPods, games, etc.). Not only will it be historically inaccurate, but it can be very distracting, not to mention embarrassing, when a cell phone goes off during a performance. The lights from cell phones, iPads, and other electronic devices are also a big distraction, so please turn them off.
- We're sure that you would never stick your gum underneath your chair or spill food and drinks, but because we try to keep this theatre beautiful, we ask that you spit out your gum before entering the theatre and leave all food and drinks in the lobby.
- We don't want you to miss out on any of the action of the play, so please visit the restroom before the performance begins.

During the performance:

- Please feel free to have honest reactions to what is happening on stage. You can laugh, applaud and enjoy the performance. However, please don't talk during the performance; it is extremely distracting to other audience members and the actors. Save discussions for intermission and after the performance.