

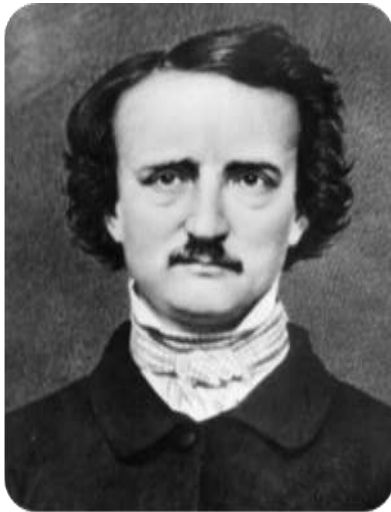
The English Theatre  
Frankfurt



**Teacher`s Support Pack**  
(Comprehensive Version)

2014

Arbeitsmaterialien für den Englisch - Unterricht  
(Sek II)



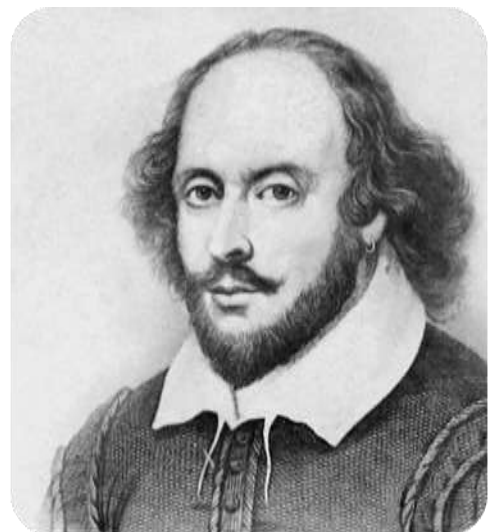
**The boundaries which divide Life from Death  
are at best shadowy and vague.  
Who shall say where the one ends,  
and where the other begins?**

*Edgar Allan Poe, The Premature Burial*



**GHOST**  
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.  
**HAMLET**  
Murder!  
**GHOST**  
Murder most foul, as in the best it is;  
But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

*William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act. I, sc. 5,*



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**Lea Dunbar, Dr. Karl Guttzeit, Michael Gonszar**



## 1. Synopsis

### Act I

The musical starts when Sam Wheat and his long-time girlfriend, Molly Jensen, move into a loft apartment in Brooklyn together ("Here Right Now"). Sam is a banker, Molly a sculptor, and their friend Carl Bruner is introduced as one of Sam's co-workers, come to help them settle in. The three of them seem to be a tight-knit group, with Sam and Molly very much in love. However, Sam clearly shies away from the word, which makes Molly visibly uncomfortable. She starts to say something about it, but soon stops herself, and Sam distracts her with a rendition of "Unchained Melody," leaving her insecurities temporarily forgotten.

At work, Sam notices some discrepancies with several accounts and is unwilling to let them go, despite the fact that he has a date with Molly that evening ("More"). He confides in Carl with his discovery, and his friend not only agrees to keep the findings a secret, but promises to investigate himself, so Sam can keep his date. Thanking him, Sam leaves, and meets up with Molly, who later confesses that she wants to marry him. Sam is taken aback and Molly suddenly asks why he never tells her that he loves her ("Three Little Words"); he assures Molly that he doesn't say it in so many words because he prefers to say it through his actions. Molly tells him that she'd still like to hear it every now and again, but his reply reassures her nonetheless. However, they're soon approached by an armed man that tries to steal Sam's wallet. Sam fights back instead of surrendering, and the two struggle for the gun. It goes off and Sam is fatally shot, leaving Molly to cry out for help ("Sam's Murder"). Instead of moving on, however, Sam becomes a ghost, and he stays behind with Molly instead of following the light; unable to leave Molly, he follows her to the hospital, and another ghost explains what he's become ("You Gotta Let Go"). A trapped Sam struggles to reach out to Molly ("I Can't Breathe / Unchained Melody").

Back at the apartment, Carl helps Molly clear out some of Sam's old things; clearly, she's hesitant to let go, totally unbeknownst to the fact that Sam is very close by, unable to move on himself. When she's alone, the man that killed Sam sneaks in and begins to ransack the place while Molly is upstairs, forcing Sam into a panic that he'll hurt her, too. Sam manages to spook the man and he flees. Needing to know who he is, Sam pushes himself through the front door with great effort, and follows the man all the way back to his own apartment. He finds out that the man's name is Willie Lopez, and that he'd eventually go back for what he was looking for. Desperate, Sam then seeks out a psychic, Oda Mae Brown, who seems to be a total fraud ("Are You a Believer?"). By some miracle, she actually hears Sam, and he convinces her to go talk to



Molly on his behalf - by singing '10,000 Bottles of Beer on the Wall' obnoxiously, no less. In the meantime, Molly is grieving and not taking the loss very well ("With You"). She gets a visit from Oda Mae, but Molly is hesitant to believe, until Oda Mae starts parroting things that only Sam would know. Eventually, she comes around, and agrees to listen. Through Oda Mae, Sam tells her that he was set up, murdered, and that she needs to go to the police; Oda Mae bails as soon as she hears the word. Molly takes this information to Carl, who tells her that it's crazy, but promises to check it out. She goes to the police and Carl goes straight to Willie's place where a distraught Sam discovers the truth, in that his murder was at Carl's own error. As Molly swears to suspend all disbelief, a drunken Carl wonders the streets trying to convince himself it was not his fault ("Suspend My Disbelief/I Had a Life").

**Act II**

At the police station, it's revealed that Oda Mae has quite the criminal record. Shaken, Molly leaves there with the knowledge that the psychic is a fraud and she loses hope, much to Sam's dismay ("Rain/Hold On"). Molly in her anger sits down to do some pottery as the radio plays. Static is heard and Molly gets up to change to station, as she turns the dial Unchained Melody is suddenly heard. Molly quickly turns off the radio in shock. After a moments pause she turns it back on and slowly returns to her pottery. Sam, who is watching, approaches her from behind singing along, longing for her touch. Just as Molly begins frustrated and starts to lean back as if she can feel Sam, there is a knock on the door. It's Carl. Molly tells Carl that he was right, that the whole thing was crazy, and that she was just grasping at straws. He assures her that it's only natural, but she has to move on, and he even makes a poorly received move on her (var. of "Here Right Now"). Enraged, Sam manages to break something, and a flustered Molly asks Carl to leave.

With the help of another ghost on the subway, Sam learns how to move objects ("Focus") and returns to Oda Mae's place to enlist her help once more ("Talkin' Bout a Miracle"). Suddenly, Oda Mae is a legitimate psychic, with the ability to call on other spirits instead of resorting to fraud. While Sam is there, Willie Lopez finds her, and she has to run for her life. Sam uses his newfound abilities to spook him and chase him away, but Willie runs into traffic and dies. Unlike Sam, he is not offered a white light, but it's implied that he's dragged somewhere completely different. However, Sam knows that it isn't over, and he begs Oda Mae to help him stop Carl from getting to the money, in order to protect Molly.

We then see Molly, trying to get her life together and move on ("Nothing Stops Another Day"); it's seen that she's selling pieces at her gallery and she apologizes to Carl for pushing him away. Carl, meanwhile, is anxiously awaiting a call and waves her off under the guise of having a busy day. Together, Sam and Oda Mae break into the account that Carl was extorting, Sam feeding her account numbers and information while she poses as 'Rita Miller.' The account is closed and Sam goes to find Carl in his office, in a panic. Moving objects around the room, Sam scares Carl, moving objects around again and making it clear that he knows what really happened. Scared, Carl tells Sam that he'll kill Molly if he doesn't leave him alone and get him the money. However, Sam runs back to Oda Mae.

When she's handed a check for around four million dollars, Oda Mae tries to take the money and leave the situation for good ("I'm Outta Here"), but Sam convinces her to donate the money. Sam then takes her to go see Molly again in order to warn her about Carl. At the apartment, Molly tries to send her away at first, but Sam is able to walk through the door and tell Oda Mae the significance of the earrings Molly is wearing, as well as read a letter for Sam that Molly has inside the apartment. After Oda Mae repeats these things, Molly is able to believe again, and she lets the psychic in. She explains everything to Molly, who is clearly emotionally distraught, and Oda Mae even lets Sam use her body to hold Molly and comfort her ("Unchained Melody (Dance)").

Carl comes into the apartment, armed and frightened for his own life; he owes dangerous drug dealers money and he's desperate. Even though it's clear that he doesn't want to resort to such measures, Carl grabs Molly and holds his gun to her, telling Sam that if he doesn't have Oda Mae tell him where the money is, he's going to kill her. There's a struggle, and Carl is killed, and he's dragged away in the same way as Willie.

Now that Carl is gone and Molly is safe, the light returns for Sam, and Molly is able to see and hear him. Knowing that it's time for him to go, Sam says goodbye to Oda Mae, and regretfully turns to Molly. They're able to say their goodbyes, Sam finally telling Molly that he loves her in the way that she wants to hear ("The Love Inside").

*(From: Wikipedia)*



## 2. The main characters

**Sam Wheat** is a successful banker in his late 20's who is deeply in love with Molly. He has a cheerful spirit, a passion for living and a moral center. There's also practicality to him that is reassuring.

There is a lot for Molly to love in Sam, but there's also one thing about him that drives her crazy and, at times, even makes her sad. It is the fact that he will never say the words "I love you" to her. Sam sings the song "Three Little Words" that shows her in many ways he loves her. Yet, she still longs to hear him say those "three little words."

After Sam dies, he must readjust to his new state. This is complicated by the fact that he wants to protect Molly from the dangers she's facing. That means he must learn to span the gulf between the dead and the living.

Throughout the story, Sam shows amazing growth. After his death when he's given a second chance, he learns to appreciate the love that he shares with Molly and the beauty of being able to say to someone directly the words "I love you."

**Molly Jensen**, Sam Wheat's girl-friend, is a craftsperson in her late 20's who makes pottery. There is an openness to her that is disarming. She lives in a world that is tactile, artistic and filled with passion. She finds excitement in the life and potential future that she and Sam share. She is a trusting soul and a romantic. She loves sharing her hopes, dreams and passions with Sam and their friend Carl.

When Sam dies, Molly must deal with a terrible, life-changing loss. She runs a gamut of emotions, at different times feeling nostalgic, depressed, and hopeful. Much of the time, as she goes from one state to another, she is feeling simultaneously the loss and lost. She desperately longs to have what she cannot— Sam back in her life. We hear this in various songs, including "With You" and "Rain."

Molly goes through a major transformation in the play as she eventually learns how to let go of Sam. This doesn't mean that she no longer loves him, but it does mean that she understands she must have and does have the strength to carry on in this world.

At the end of the show, she also has the opportunity to communicate with Sam one last time and to hear the words "I love you" from him. This bittersweet, passionate, romantic moment is perhaps more life altering for her than Sam's death.

Throughout the play, she shows amazing strength and resiliency, and there's no doubt in the end that she will carry on.

**Carl Bruner** is Sam's best friend and associate at the bank. He is a wry guy who is very much into status. Carl was a major factor in bringing Sam and Molly together for he introduced them to one another. It was part of a ruse. Molly was at the bank demanding to see the president and Carl tried to pass Sam off as the head of the bank.

In many ways, Carl is a superficial person. He is into status. He puts down Brooklyn where Molly and Sam have chosen to live and brags about his place in the prestigious Upper East Side. He is definitely into the energy and power of Wall Street as he expresses his feelings about it in the song "More" and also in sections of "Suspend My Disbelief/I Had a Life."

But there is a darker side to Carl. He is a friendly guy on the surface, but he is devious underneath. He involved in laundering \$20 million in drug money and that deal is about to go sour because Sam has become suspicious and changed the passwords on the accounts that he needs to access to finish the deal. This makes it impossible for Carl or anyone else to access the illegal money.

For Carl, money has become more important than anything else. He is driven by his quest to be rich and powerful and that drive causes him to lie, cheat and deceive those closest to him. His actions lead to Sam's death and it seems as if he will stop at nothing to ensure his own physical safety and financial health. In every way, he is different than Sam and Molly, and in the end, he has learned nothing from his actions. His deviousness causes his undoing.



**Oda Mae Brown**

is a psychic of sorts. She claims to be one but when we first see her she is simply faking her connection to the spiritual world and cheating trusting individuals who want to contact the dead out of their money. Living in Spanish Harlem, her clients are diverse with many of them coming from the surrounding neighborhoods.

Oda Mae possesses a lot of energy, a quick wit and street smarts. Although she appears to be a typical con artist, it turns out that she really can connect with the dead. She learns this through Sam and that connection makes her grow as a person. Sam not only opens her link to the other world, he awakens her caring and tender spirit and even convinces her to give up \$20 million. Oda Mae goes from being the woman who emulates her con-artist anthem "Are You A Believer?" to the jubilant dreamer with \$20 million in "I'm Out of Here" to the woman who gives to others in numerous ways. She donates the hot cash to a group of nuns, aids Sam in his attempt to save Molly and unselfishly helps Sam and Molly have one final moment together.

Although Oda Mae starts out being a sort of penny ante Carl, her true, giving nature comes out through her connection with Sam. She travels a long road in this musical and finds her calling.

**Willie Lopez** is a young thug who seems to see life and death as a joke. He is the one Carl puts in charge of mugging Sam. Willie is supposed to get Sam's wallet that has the new passwords that Carl needs in order to access the bank accounts for the transfer of the drug money. Willie confronts Sam with a gun, which goes off in the struggle between the two. Although Willie kills Sam, he appears to have no remorse for what he's done. He will do what he has to do to make sure he and Carl are successful, but he is involved for his brawn and not for his brains. He lives by his own rules and apart from what would be considered mainstream society.

*(From: „Ghost - The Musical, Interactive Study Guide“)*

### 3. The authors

#### 3.1 Bruce Joel Rubin (music & lyrics)



**Bruce Joel Rubin** (born March 10, 1943 in Detroit, Michigan, USA) alias Derek Saunders and Bruce Rubin, is an American screenwriter, producer and director, known for *Ghost* (1990), *Stuart Little 2* (2002) and *Deep Impact* (1998). He graduated from New York University in the 1960s. He has been married to Blanche Rubin since January 29, 1970. They have two children.

(From: *imd.com*)

Bruce has expressed a fixation on matters of life and death -- or more specifically, on the afterlife and cognition immediately before death. As a writer, he has explored the human psyche in original ways, pushing both the limits of human thought and understanding, as well as the limits of filmmaking as a story-telling device. His screenwriting career has left marks both artistically, as well as in the realm of mainstream entertainment values, and has received awards for several motion pictures bearing his name in the credits. Rubin was born on March 10, 1943, in Detroit, MI. He spent time traveling to Greece, India, Tibet, and Nepal, where he explored religion and culture. He was married to Blanche Mallins, and returned to the Midwest to earn his graduate degree before relocating to Los Angeles. His film credits date back to 1970, when he co-directed (with Brian De Palma and Richard Schechner) a pseudo-documentary of a series of stage performances entitled *Dionysus*. He wrote the stories for both *Brainstorm* (1983), and director Wes Craven's *Deadly Friend* (1986). Twenty years after his first film credit, he would grace the world with two piercingly brilliant screenplays, both in 1990. One of these films was the artistically acclaimed *Jacob's Ladder*, directed by Adrian Lyne and starring Tim Robbins. The story involves a young Vietnam vet, formerly victimized by mysterious substance experiments, and the film itself experiments with viewer psyche in the way reality gets distorted, confused, and essentially made indecipherable. The protagonist is also plagued by memories of a lost child and a failed marriage, incorporating Rubin's classic themes of death and life events. *Ghost*, the devastating love story starring Patrick Swayze, Whoopi Goldberg, and Demi Moore, earned Rubin an Oscar for Best Screenplay in 1990. This film, a box-office smash, dealt with the interaction between real life and the supernatural, as well as the notions of lingering feelings and energy after death. Both a mystery-thriller and a romantic drama, the film was well received by an extremely wide audience range, and has earned its rank amongst the modern classics.

In 1991, Rubin's script for *Deceived* was made into an action-thriller starring Goldie Hawn. Two years later, he wrote and directed *My Life*, depicting a man's memoirs as he collected them for the child his wife was still carrying. The film starred Michael Keaton and Nicole Kidman. Rubin's Hollywood film credits continued with a writing credit alongside Michael Tolkin on *Deep Impact* in 1998. He also wrote the screenplay for the film *Stuart Little 2* (2002), based on the classic children's story by E.B. White.

(From: Sarah Sloboda, Rovi; *All Movie Guide*)



### 3.2 Dave Stewart (music & lyrics)

**David Allan "Dave" Stewart** (born 9 September 1952) is an English musician, songwriter and record producer, (...) He is usually credited as **David A. Stewart**, to avoid confusion with other musicians named Dave Stewart. He won Best British Producer at the 1986, 1987 and 1990 Brit Awards. (...) Stewart wrote the musical *Barbarella*, based on the 1968 film, which premiered in Vienna on 11 March 2004. Stewart wrote music and lyrics (with Glen Ballard) for *Ghost the Musical* (...).



Best known as one-half of the groundbreaking synth pop duo **Eurythmics**, **Dave Stewart** was also a highly successful producer and, on occasion, a solo artist. **David A. Stewart** (as he also sometimes was credited on record) was born September 9, 1952 in Sunderland, England; the product of an upper-middle class family, he enjoyed his first taste of musical success during the early '70s while fronting the band **Longdancer**. The group seemed poised for big things after signing to **Elton John**'s Rocket Records, but they quickly fizzled out; **Stewart** soon resurfaced in a variety of short-lived groups, and eventually began writing songs with friend **Peet Coombes**. In the late '70s he was also introduced to an aspiring singer named **Annie Lennox**; the two became lovers, and with **Coombes** they formed a group dubbed **the Tourists**, issuing a trio of new wave-influenced LPs between 1979 and 1980.



When **the Tourists** came to a halt in late 1980, **Stewart** and **Lennox**'s romance ended as well; they agreed to continue their musical partnership, however, rechristening themselves **Eurythmics**. Their soulful synth pop sound was created solely via **Stewart**'s technological mastery, capped off by **Lennox**'s powerful vocals; after the title track of 1983's **Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)** became an international smash, the **Eurythmics** rose to become one of the '80s most successful and innovative artists, scoring such major hits as 1984's "Here Comes the Rain Again," 1985's "Would I Lie to You?," and 1986's "Missionary Man." In 1985, **Stewart** also scored his first outside success as a producer, working on **Aretha Franklin**'s comeback album **Who's Zoomin' Who**; that same year, he also helmed

**Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers**' hit **Southern Accents**. In the years to follow, he went on to produce music for **Mick Jagger**, **Bob Dylan**, and **the Neville Brothers**.

By the end of the '80s, **Eurythmics**' popularity was on the decline, and after 1989's **We Too Are One** failed to recapture the magic of their earlier work, they essentially disbanded, with only a hits compilation and a live LP to follow. **Stewart**, who in 1987 had married **Bananarama/Shakespeare's Sister** vocalist **Siobhan Fahey**, initially turned to soundtrack work, scoring the Dutch film **Lily Was Here** in 1989; a year later, he put together a new band, **the Spiritual Cowboys**, with ex-**Pretenders** drummer **Martin Chambers**. Sporting a more atmospheric, guitar-driven sound than his previous work, **the Spiritual Cowboys** issued two albums, a 1990 self-titled effort and 1991's **Honest**, neither of which caught on with audiences. **Stewart** then spent the next several years in relative silence, accepting a few production jobs but otherwise staying out of the limelight. In 1995, he finally issued

his proper solo debut, **Greetings From the Gutter**.

In 1997, **Stewart** co-produced the album **Destination Anywhere** for **Jon Bon Jovi**. He emerged as an artist again in 1999; this time as a film composer scoring director **Robert Altman**'s film **Cookie's Fortune** in 1999. In November 2002, he worked with former South African president **Nelson Mandela**. **Stewart** came up with the idea of turning **Mandela**'s prison number into a telephone number. He wrote and recorded songs with **Paul McCartney**, **Bono**, and **the Edge** (among others) that could only be heard if you dialed this number; the cost of the call was in fact a donation in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the newly independent but beleaguered nation. Along with an ad agency, **Stewart** organized the entire campaign. In 2004, he collaborated with **Jagger** on the score for a remake of the film **Alfie**, and in 2007 scored **Ted Demme**'s film **The Ref**. In March 2007, **Stewart** unveiled an initiative called "Greenpeace Works," which he labeled a "think tank" to dream up ways celebrities and Greenpeace could work together on green issues. For the project, he issued *The Dave Stewart Songbook*, a large coffee table-size book full of stories and photographs. It was accompanied by a newly recorded CD of 21 songs that been co-written or co-produced by him. Also included was the song "American Prayer," written with **Bono**. In 2008, **Stewart** shot a video for the tune as support for **Barack Obama**'s presidential bid.

In 2011, he completed work on his musical, *Ghost*, which opened in England in March; he also finished work on **Stevie Nicks**' **In Your Dreams** album, which was co-produced by **Glen Ballard** and released in May. Simultaneously, he also completed his first album of new material in 13 years in Nashville, with help from **Martina McBride**, **Joss Stone**, **Colbie Caillat**, and **the Secret Sisters**. Entitled **The Blackbird Diaries**, the set was recorded at **McBride**'s husband **John**'s Blackbird Studios and issued in late May. **Stewart** also helmed the sessions and co-wrote the songs for **Stone**'s **LP1**, which was released in the summer of 2011. That same year, both **Stewart** and **Stone** joined **SuperHeavy**, a supergroup that also featured **Mick Jagger**, **Damian Marley**, and **A.R. Rahman**. A self-titled **SuperHeavy** album arrived in the fall of 2011, and then **Stewart** returned to Blackbird Studios, recording and releasing his solo effort **The Ringmaster General** in 2012. A year later, **Stewart** released **Lucky Numbers**, another solo album laden with guest stars, this time including **Martina McBride** and **Karen Elson**.

(From: allmusic.com, „Dave Stewart - Artist Biography“ by Jason Ankeny)

### 3.3 Glen Ballard (music & lyrics)



**Basil Glen Ballard, Jr.** (born March 1, 1953, Natchez, Mississippi, U.S.) is an American songwriter, lyricist, and record producer. He is best known for co-writing and producing Alanis Morissette's *Jagged Little Pill* (1995) (...). Instruments: keyboards, synthesizer, guitar. (From: Wikipedia)

Glen started playing the piano as soon as he could crawl. Later, he added the guitar to his list of accomplishments. Glen was ten years old when he wrote his first song, and he was in local rock bands beginning in the fifth grade.

Ballard has a love for diverse musical styles. When Glen was younger, Jerry Lee Lewis lived within ten miles of his Natchez home, and young Ballard grew up watching him perform. Glen's favorites included southern rhythm and blues singer Irma Thomas, Memphis-based soul singer Al Green, and nearly all of the great blues and jazz singers emerging from New Orleans. When the Beatles became popular, Ballard's appreciation of popular music expanded.

Glen Ballard attended the University of Mississippi, where he studied English, political science, and journalism and he graduated with honors. He had the option of attending either graduate or law schools, but Ballard was intent upon a career as a songwriter. Within a week of graduation (1975), he packed his bags and moved to the West coast.

After moving to the West coast, Ballard immediately joined Elton John's organization in Los Angeles. Starting out as a lower level assistant, Ballard eventually ended up playing piano for Kiki Dee. He was writing constantly, and when Dee recorded "One Step," one of Ballard's songs, in 1978, Ballard had his first chart singles. This success enabled him to secure a professional songwriting job at MCA Music Publishing. Even though Ballard was only earning \$100 a week, he was occupied full-time with the work he loved.

During the '70's and '80's, Ballard composed scores of songs, including "What's on Your Mind," a Quincy Jones produced hit for George Benson, along with many others for various artists. Quincy Jones saw promise in Ballard and took him under his wing. Thanks to his connection with Jones, Ballard's "Try Your Love Again" appeared on James Ingram's 1983 debut album, *It's Your Night*. Glen wrote and produced two tracks for Patti Austin entitled "It's Gonna Be Special" and "Shoot the Moon." By the time Austin's album came out in 1985, Ballard was writing and producing full time for his mentor, Quincy Jones, at Quest Records. Once Ballard learned to apply his wide-range of musical sensibilities, he produced for rhythm and blues artist Evelyn "Champagne" King, Teddy Pendergrass, and Jack Wagner. Ballard wrote "All I Need" for Wagner, and it soared to the top of Billboard's pop chart. Spurred by his own success, Ballard went independent. He had a number one hit for George Strait, "You Look So Good in Love," which became the 1986 country song of the year. The same year he co-wrote "Man in the Mirror," which appeared on *Bad*, Michael Jackson's acclaimed sequel to *Thriller*. "Man in the Mirror" was also produced by Quincy Jones, and it featured Ballard's synthesizer arrangement and keyboards. This song raced to the top of the rhythm and blues charts and today it remains one of the King of Pop's . . . and Ballard's most popular songs.

Ballard has worked with some of the most revered names in the industry: Aretha Franklin, Natalie Cole, Michael Jackson, Quincy Jones, George Strait and Barbra Streisand, just to name a few. He is also credited with launching the debuts by Curtis Stigers, Jack Wagner, Paula Abdul, Wilson Phillips and the multi-grammy winner Alanis Morissette. Ballard co-wrote and produced "Jagged Little Pill" for Morissette. This combination of talent resulted in five Grammy nominations and three wins of his own. He has followed this collaboration with Morissette by producing the upcoming Aerosmith album (their first for Sonny due this fall). Once the work on this album is complete, Ballard heads back to the studio for Alanis Morissette's new album.

He has performed on or produced the following: 1997 Grammy Nominees (1997), Jagged Little Pill (1995), My Cherie (1995), Naked And Sacred (1995), Time Was (1995), Alone In A Crowd (1993), Greatest Hits: Songs From An Aging Sex Bomb (1993), Lea Salonga (1993), Love Come Down: The Best Of Evelyn "Champagne" King (1993), Shadows And Light (1992), Trey Lorenz (1992), Curtis Stigers (1991), Shut Up And Dance (1990), Forever Your Girl (1989), Bad (1987), Workin' It Back (1985), Break Out (1983), All I Need, and Lighting Up The Night.

Ballard has written an original screenplay ***Clubland***. ***Clubland*** is a music-driven film which he plans to produce next summer with David Foster as executive producer. Ballard will oversee what promises to be a hit-laden soundtrack. He has written songs in half-a-dozen films including ***The Slugger's Wife***, ***Navy Seals***, and ***Batman: Mask of the Phantasm***.

Ballard has lived a very successful life, and he is still young. He describes himself as a "musical chameleon." His success is known throughout the world. Ballard currently resides in Encino, California, where he runs a recording studio called Java.

(From: *mswritersandmusicians.com*, „Glen Ballard: A Biography“ By Justina Hamil)



## 4. The director of “Ghost - The Musical” at The English Theatre Frankfurt

### 4.1 Adam Penford (Bio)

Adam Penford is a theatre director. He trained at the *Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts* (LIPA). He directed the first London revival of Ayckbourn's *A Small Family Business* at the National Theatre (Olivier) in 2014. Adam received his first formal training at *The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA) graduating 1<sup>st</sup> Class B.A. (Hons) in Performing Arts*. In 2009, he completed the *National Theatre Studio Director's Course*. His most recent productions also include: *Is there WI-FI in heaven?* (2014), National Theatre winning the 2014 New Views Competition; *One Man, Two Guvnors* (2014) as revival director at the

National Theatre (West End, Broadway & Tour); **The Talented Mr. Ripley** (2014), Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts; *Legally Blonde* (2014) Arts Educational. His did first professional production as director of *Out of Bounds: Young Woodley / & Sympathy* (2006) at the Finborough Theatre.

(From: unitedagents.co.uk)

### 4.2 Interview: on his career

**If Only I'd Known: Adam Penford** 25/04/14

This week we hear from Adam Penford, the Associate Director and choreographer for international hit *One Man, Two Guvnors* who currently directs *A Small Family Business* at the National Theatre. He explains why you have to make your own luck as a director – and has some advice for his younger self...

**What is your name/age/job title?**

Adam Penford, 34, Theatre Director

**What one thing do you wish you had known at the start of your career that you know now?**

That you have to create your own luck. I used to believe that if you did your job competently and with good humour then potential employers would seek you out. Suddenly I realised that you have to go out there and make things happen and get noticed – if you don't ask then you don't get. I suspect this applies to most things in life but particularly a competitive industry like directing.

**If you could go back and give your younger (say 16-year-old) self any practical advice, what would it be?**

There is no set career path as a director. Every successful director has had a different experience. There's no point in trying to emulate someone you admire, and there's no point in comparing yourself to others, so you might as well just create the work you desire to create.

**If someone had told your 16-year-old self that you would be a successful creative person in your thirties, would have believed them? Or did you have other ambitions?**

I didn't know what I wanted to do at 16, other than working in theatre in some capacity. I went to drama school to train as an actor on a whim before realising I hated performing (all that people-staring-at-you and itchy-sweaty-costumes thing) and much preferred directing. I fell into it really.

**Is there an embarrassing episode from your past that you wish you could edit out?**



There's a story that involves Dame Maggie Smith and a lost passport but I'm saving that for my autobiography...

**Is there a single thing that you wish you'd had/known about when you started out? Something that has shaped the way you work today?**

Previews. Admittedly, not a very practical piece of advice for someone starting out but they become invaluable once you start being allowed them and you need to know how to make the most of them. Having the opportunity to learn from an audience's response can transform a production. Learning to really tune in to what they're telling you is a skill.

**What would you consider your "big break"? And how did you get it?**

I think I had a series of small breaks really, but assisting Nick Hytner on *One Man Two Guvnors* has definitely led to some amazing opportunities. I did the National Theatre Studio's young directors' course, which led to assisting Marianne Elliot and Nick Hytner, and consequently to directing *A Small Family Business*. (From: ideastap.com)

**Activity 1**

*What kind of responses can a director get from an audience? And how do you think he is informed?*

*What would you tell Adam Penford as a response to "Ghost The Musical" at The English Theatre?*

*What would you like to ask Adam Penford?*

*Do you know yet what you want to do after finishing school?*

*Would show business be something for you? Why /why not?*

**5. Why I wrote Ghost. By Bruce Joel Rubin**

People have been telling ghost stories since stories were first told and I had long wanted to write a



movie about a ghost told from the side of the ghost. I wanted to explore life as seen from the other side, from the perspective of a person who had died. I was always fascinated by the idea of an afterlife and what it would truly mean if we continued to exist in some form or manner after we left our bodies and this world.

From the beginning of time, world cultures have been defined by the question of what happens after we die. Many societies developed elaborate rituals to guide and accompany the soul after death. Where that soul went and what happened to it has been at the core of belief systems which extend from primitive man up to this very moment.

Much of our human existence is based on the idea of an afterlife and the possibility of consequence deriving from our behaviors in this world.

Clearly, human life would be a very different experience if nothing followed it, if we simply ceased to exist and there was nothing but blackout greeting us at the end. How would human beings behave if they could do anything they wanted on the earth and get away with it? Would laws be enough to govern our behavior? If you could do shameful things or even kill someone without consequence, would



people choose to live lawless and morally bankrupt lives?

Societies from the beginning of time have said that man will be held accountable for his worldly actions - in the afterlife if not always on earth. [...]

So, what if angels and demons really existed? What if there is Heaven or Hell? What if there is some final judgment? Theologians have considered these questions for thousands of years and so have storytellers. As a screenwriter I wanted to explore what those possibilities would mean to me as a living person, right now, in the world. **How would I feel if I died and discovered that I was still here?** What would it mean to get stuck in the afterlife? [...]

Sam Wheat, the protagonist in Ghost, is a banker. He loves what he does and the material rewards his high powered work brings him. He has no stated religious upbringing and only the occasional superstition suggests that he actually believes in anything. For example, he thinks that bad things happen in threes and is afraid to fly after two plane crashes have occurred in close succession. His views on death are expressed after he hears about those crashes, claiming that all of the people who died had experienced the ultimate blackout, total nothingness. Given that belief, he is more than shocked to discover at the moment he is killed that he is still there. Nothing has prepared him for that. He is desperately lost, frightened, and confused.

### Activity 2

*What do YOU think?*

*If Ghosts really existed, then... what kind of a world would we inhabit?*

*Write your own Ghost stories and present them in class!*

My problem in writing this story was that I knew I wanted to tell Sam's journey but that I didn't know what happened next, what his story was. It would not be a movie if he simply died and then sat around depressed, bemoaning what had happened. So until I figured out what he was going to do as a dead man, I couldn't begin writing the script. I spent years looking for a way into the story.

Then one day I went to the theater to see a production of Hamlet. In the second scene of the first act Hamlet is confronted by a ghost. It is the ghost of his father, standing on the castle parapet, telling him how his mother and uncle connived to kill him and how he wanted Hamlet to avenge his death.

At that moment I knew that Shakespeare had given me a huge gift. I decided that I wanted to tell the story of a man who was murdered and had to convince someone he loved to find the killer and avenge his murder. The idea that this would happen in 20th century America and not 15th century Denmark was very compelling and gave the story a whole new range of exciting possibilities.

It was challenging for me to show how a modern day person, not living in the world that Shakespeare portrayed, would react to the idea that a Ghost was communicating with them. In Shakespeare's day, ghosts were a common part of a communal belief system. Macbeth was undone by Banquo's ghost. Ghosts appear in JULIUS CAESAR and RICHARD III. Even as late as Dickens the belief in ghosts was a popular idea and a common story element in English storytelling. Just think of Ebenezer Scrooge and the Ghosts of Christmas past, present and future in A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

I wanted to take those ideas and themes and weave them through a modern day story so that audiences today could revisit them. [...] I wanted people to consider what being a Ghost might actually be like. What kind of universe do we inhabit if ghosts really exist? And how would a ghost's experience of the afterlife define the world of those who were still alive?

I began with the premise that many people don't believe in ghosts. Rightly or wrongly, I decided to create characters whose entire world would be shaken up by the appearance of a ghost in their lives. And, if the story worked, these people would carry the audience on a journey of conversion.



Oda Mae, a fake psychic who suddenly and terrifyingly begins to hear Sam, is the first person who must change her world view.

Her unwillingness to do this, her resistance, is the basis of much of the humor in the story. Molly, Sam's girlfriend, is much harder to persuade. Oda Mae can hear Sam. Molly can't. She has to make a powerful leap of faith by accepting this strange woman as a conduit to the man she loves.

It is easy for the audience to understand why Molly would resist Oda Mae and her claim that she is in touch with and actually speaking to Molly's dead boyfriend. It is likely that everyone in the audience would behave the same way. But strangely, all the unbelievers watching the movie and now the play, find themselves in the unexpected position of rooting for Molly to believe in Oda Mae. Of course, to believe Oda Mae implies that she must also believe in ghosts, in the afterlife, and in the possibility of a universe where death is not the end but a transition. In many ways, Molly's and Oda Mae's conversion is also occurring for many people in the audience.

Perhaps there are people watching the show who already hold these beliefs. For them, they are even more engaged in Sam's plight and the urgency he feels to break through from the other side. The extraordinary thing about this is that **it represents the core richness of the theatrical experience, the opportunity to view the world from a new perspective.** You enter the theater with one set of beliefs and leave with another, or at least a challenge to what you had thought before. It opens you to new possibility, a new way of looking at the world. Since the time of Aristotle and the Greek dramatists, seeing your own life in a new light was the purpose and goal of theater. [...] You can learn from others, especially if you feel their struggle, their joy. [...]

Each character in a play is important in the development of the story, action and themes. Audiences feel emotions for, have reactions to and connect with characters. Sometimes they feel a connection because they recognize themselves or someone they know in a character. Also, usually they discover something in the manner in which the character is written and portrayed that captures their interest and touches them emotionally.

## 6. Themes

Here are some of the themes that are central in “Ghost - The Musical”:

- Romantic love, loss, and grief
- Emotion, belief and gender
- Ambition and greed
- Aggression and fear
- Revenge and poetic justice
- Moments of being
- The paranormal

### Romantic love, loss, and grief

To a large extent, “Ghost The Musical” is a truly romantic love story. The young couple, Molly and Sam, are happily in love and have just moved together into their new apartment in Brooklyn, N.Y.C., when a tragic incident evaporates their dreams. On their way home, they are attacked by a thief who shoots Sam with a gun after his resistance to hand out his red notebook. Sam dies but is caught in limbo to exist as a ghost and to deal with this kind of existence. He longs to be with Molly, seeing her and in a way being near to her, but not being able to communicate or somehow connect with her. Molly on the other hand, is first left with her grief over her beloved partner and the task to go on with her life without him. She is confronted with a serious question: how do you cope with such a loss? Some people never overcome the loss of their loved one.

In the process of trying to overcome her sorrow, she suddenly gets messages from Sam via the medium Oda Mae. After initially resisting to believe this to be real, she understands she has one last moment of intimacy with Sam before he leaves for good. This also holds for Sam. Seen from both character perspectives, the object of desire is dramatically removed in a truly romantic way. The object is persistently sought but cannot really be attained any time soon which produces an almost heartbreaking kind of longing for the loved one. The last hope, which even more enkindles romantic feelings, is to be reunited again in heaven.

### Emotion, belief and gender



In the first scene Molly and Sam appear to be a happy couple but some disharmony surfaces as well. Sam cannot say the “three letter sentence” in response to Molly’s confession that she loves him. Apparently he has always replied “ditto” to that. Even though both sing of devotion to the moment and about how they are both meant to be together forever (“Here right now”), there is a slight sense of what might be called disbelief in the relationship – at least on Sam’s side. Perhaps he has not completely given up on his boyish phantasies revolving around Barbarella whose

poster he still wants to keep. Then again it is a stereotype that men have problems articulating their feelings and saying 'I love you'. More general, saying that phrase to another person is risky, confirms your commitment to them and often leads to the "next step," which may be a more serious, permanent relationship and even marriage. However, Sam also has a premonition that something bad, lifethreatening is going to happen which curbs his belief in the future of the relationship with Molly. When the issue comes up again later ("Three little words") he argues that he prefers to show his love for her in his actions.

Ghost The Musical uses the concept of belief in many ways. The first number sung by Oda Mae Brown and her entourage asks in the title "Are You A Believer?" This song is used to get Oda Mae's client in the right mood to thoroughly trust in her ability to connect with people in the afterlife. In "Suspend My Disbelief," Molly struggles with wanting to believe that Sam is with her despite the fact that he is dead. During the song, Carl tries to convince her to believe him as he claims the connection to Sam beyond the grave is "sick." Even the ghosts in the show get involved in the idea of belief. As a group, they express belief in Oda Mae's powers in the song "Talkin' 'Bout a Miracle." Also, in the number "Focus," where Sam finally learns to channel his energy in the spiritual realm into moving objects in the physical world, he must first, as instructed by the Subway Ghost, get rid of all his negative thoughts and what he knew in the other world to finally believe that he can move an object.

### **Ambition and greed**

Both Sam and Molly are quite ambitious in their effort to excel in what they are doing in their jobs. Molly has just organized a successful exhibition of her art work in the city and Sam has a top position as a banker which apparently sometimes is also quite a lot of stress on him and his digestion, otherwise he wouldn't need Tums now and then. Neither however is greedy nor aims higher than what is legitimate and appropriate for their middle class lifestyle. Carl is different in this respect. He is much more ambitious and seriously enjoys what might be called 'the rush for gold'. He fancies having enormous amounts of money at his disposition and does not shy away from illegal means and malicious intrigue to attain it. Even when this means he has to deceive his friend Sam and make him his enemy. On a different scale, Oda Mae has also shown a tendency to acquire money by illegal means and even deceive people by telling them as an alleged medium what they want to hear. But she still has a sense of equity and human understanding which has kept her out of big trouble. However, in the end she might have taken „the blood money“ of 10 million dollars for herself hadn't it been for Sam's persistence to give the money to charity. On a more general level the story poses the question of how much our society is driven by malicious ambition and greed.

### **Revenge and poetic justice**

In an interview regarding the Broadway version of Ghost The Musical the playwright Bruce Joel Rubin reveals the origin of his idea of revenge and justice.

*"One day I went to the theater to see a production of Hamlet. In the second scene of the first act Hamlet is confronted by a ghost. It is the ghost of his father, standing on the castle parapet, telling*

### **Activity 3**

#### **Writing a paper on: "Justice"**

- *Do we need ghosts to achieve justice?*
- *What is justice today?*
- *What is justice for you?*
- *The example of Antigone*  
*Find out more about her!*

*"If I am getting ready to speak at length about ghosts, inheritance, and generations, generations of ghosts, which is to say about certain others who are not present, nor presently living, either to us, in us, or outside us, it is in the name of justice" (J.Derrida 1994)*

*What is a young woman to do when confronted with great injustice in the world? **Antigone** provides the classic, heroic example refusing to bow to an unjust law and going to her brother's grave out of principle and love.*



*him how his mother and uncle connived to kill him and how he wanted Hamlet to avenge his death. At that moment I knew that Shakespeare had given me a huge gift. I decided that I wanted to tell the story of a man who was murdered and had to convince someone he loved to find the killer and avenge his murder. The idea that this would happen in 20th century America and not 15th century Denmark was very compelling and gave the story a whole new range of exciting possibilities."*

### The paranormal



Loss and grief will make someone desperate to once again recapture what no longer exists. They may start to believe that they can. When one is lost to death, those left behind often try to contact them. Many believe that a spiritual world exists and many of those believe that they can make a connection to that other world. Activity in that other world if seen in the physical world is known as paranormal activity.

The connection to the paranormal is central the *Ghost The Musical* and the creation of that world has to be believable for the audience for the story to make sense and for them to believe that Molly and Sam really do have a connection after he dies. Much of *Ghost The Musical* involves people adjusting to the paranormal world, dealing with their belief or lack of belief in it and attempting to bridge the gap

between the two realms. And unlike most ghost stories, this is one where that bridge offers the living and dead a way to move on in the most positive and best way possible.

### Moments of being

"We're a society looking for the answer in the next minute, and it won't be there," said Bruce Joel Rubin discussing his philosophy on life. "This moment is the only one you've got and it's the only one you'll ever have. And either you've got it working or you don't." He points out that often we're dwelling on the past or worrying about the future and not being in the present with our loved ones or anything else. Sam, the hero in *GHOST*, learns this the hard way by losing his chance to ever experience the moment again.

The notion that life is a daily gift is not a greeting card platitude, it's real wisdom. Ask anyone who's been told their time here is limited. The show reminds us to celebrate every day and not to be afraid to love one another. For in the end that feeling is all you're going to take with you. Leaving the theater we might be able to take a little extra love that night, given to us by the cast who give us such a celebration of life and love on the stage.

### Activity 4 Discussion

- *What are "moments of being"?*
- *Does the phrase mean anything to you?*
- *Anything that you would hold to be your "life wisdom".*
- *What did you take home after seeing the show?*





## AGGRESSION

When most people think of aggression, they think of road rage, physical fights, and violent crime. However, not all aggression is bad.

Aggression is adaptive, helping people and animals alike to guard their homes from intruders and protect their children from threats. Problems arise when aggression is taken too far, escalating abnormally and becoming violent.

Neuroscientists are working to identify brain regions, neurotransmitters, and genes that are involved in escalated aggression and violence. This research may one day help identify individuals at risk of developing dangerous behaviors and new treatments to prevent such episodes in at-risk individuals.

## FEAR

Interestingly, it appears that of all the emotions, the brain devotes the most space and energy to fear. Charles Darwin was one of the first scientists to suggest that fear has a biological basis, when he noted that nearly all animals exhibit fear in the same manner. From birds and rats to apes and humans, animals in peril display a stereotyped behavior pattern that includes freezing in place, increased respiration and heart rate, release of stress hormones, and increased tendency to startle. Because fear responses are so well conserved across species, it is possible to learn a lot about human fear from animal studies. Most of the research has focused on fear conditioning, which explores how an animal learns to fear specific stimuli within its environment.

## Activity 5

**Re-enact and discuss scenes where aggression and fear are portrayed in "Ghost the Musical".**

**Discuss these scenes in reference to the texts provided on this page!**

## 7. Reviews of earlier productions

### 7.1 Ghost The Musical at Lunt-Fontanne Theater, Broadway (April 2012)



#### Theater Review

In a Broadway Afterlife, Time Goes by So Slowly  
'Ghost the Musical,' at the Lunt-Fontanne Theater

By CHARLES ISHERWOOD

Published: April 23, 2012

Generally speaking, I don't believe in ghosts. But I'm convinced that the spirits of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne have taken up temporary residence in the wings of the Broadway theater that bears their names, where the new musical adapted from the popular movie "Ghost" opened on Monday night.

Toward the close of Thursday night's performance of this thrill-free singing theme-park ride, the sound of grinding metal echoed through the Lunt-Fontanne Theater. The complicated machinery of the moving sets stopped moving, and the curtain was brought down for almost a half-hour while a technical glitch was solved.

Surely the ghosts of the foremost acting couple of the Broadway theater in the 20th century had been roused from their posthumous slumbers to make a little mischief, aghast at the dreary digital spectacle taking place on the boards they once nobly trod.

"Ghost," with a book and lyrics by Bruce Joel Rubin, who (unbelievably) won an Oscar for the movie's screenplay; and music and lyrics by Dave Stewart (of the fab 1980s synth-pop duo the Eurythmics — say it ain't so!) and Glen Ballard, may not be the very worst musical ever made from a movie. I might give that palm to either "Dirty Dancing" or "Fame," neither of which has yet made it to Broadway. (Thank the theater gods for small blessings.) But it is just as flavorless and lacking in dramatic vitality as many that have come before.

Directed by the gifted Matthew Warchus, presumably in search of the big money that only big musicals can provide, the show relies mostly on elaborate video imagery, modestly ingenious special effects and the familiarity of its ectoplasmic romance to entertain. There is also, of course, the comic relief provided by the brash, sassy Da'Vine Joy Randolph in the role of the brash, sassy psychic played in the movie by Whoopi Goldberg, who also (unbelievably) won an Oscar for her performance.

Recreating the roles they originated in the London production that opened last year, Richard Fleeshman and Caissie Levy play the gilded young couple portrayed by Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore in the 1990 movie. Molly is a sculptor who wants to hear those three little words; Sam is a banker who has trouble spitting them out. A brutal twist of fate separates them when Sam is killed, apparently in a mugging.

But while Sam has shuffled off this mortal coil, he has not departed the earth entirely. His spirit remains in limbo, able to move about the world but saddled with the usual ghostly handicap of invisibility. He is also inaudible to all but the psychic Oda Mae Brown (Ms. Randolph), whom he

enlists to act as his proxy in a battle to protect his love from the nefarious plottings of his erstwhile best friend, Carl (Bryce Pinkham), and the thug (Michael Balderrama) he's in cahoots with.

Well, you probably know the story, anyway. It is embroidered in the musical by a series of innocuous, forgettable pop songs, mostly love ballads in which Sam and Molly exchange endearments while they are both alive, and yearn for each other when death splits them apart.

The lyrics are rudimentary: "How can it be/It must be true/This thing I feel/I know it's you," Molly sings when she is convinced that Sam's spirit is still hovering around. The melodies are pleasant but just as bland.

The musical highlights, at least in terms of audience-rousing energy, belong to Ms. Randolph's Oda Mae, who is given the boilerplate Generic Gospel Number in Act I, as she and two assistants raise the roof to scam a potential client. She also gets a splashy disco anthem in Act II, when she finds herself briefly in possession of a \$10 million check and cavorts atop a stack of Louis Vuitton-ish luggage, as cartoon images of luxury living dance across the video wallpaper of the set.

That video wallpaper plays a major role in the production, with Sam and Molly's love scene blown up to Times Square billboard scale, and images of busy New Yorkers caroming around the streets amplifying the formless gyrations of Ashley Wallen's choreography. Nifty special effects by Paul Kieve are used to show how Sam learns (from a rapping ghost he meets in the subway, in the show's one truly risible number) to break through the life-death barrier and make objects move.

These high-tech flourishes lend the show the feel of one of those sensory-bath, movie-inspired rides at the Universal Studios and Disney theme parks. But the thrill is fairly minimal, since the seats in the Lunt-Fontanne can't make like a roller coaster and jolt us around, addling our brains to the point of forgetting the plodding apparatus of the story.

As the cranky Oda Mae, half-disgusted to discover that she actually possesses the psychic powers she has been faking, Ms. Randolph provides some real pleasure with her tart delivery of a few laugh lines lifted straight from the movie. Ms. Levy has a strong, appealing pop voice, as does Mr. Fleeshman, who also looks quite fetching in the blue spotlight that follows him around to signal his otherworldliness.

But you quickly grow weary of Sam's obtuseness about the rules of the post-mortem game. Long after a friendly fellow ghost (Lance Roberts) has laid down the law about the separation between the living and the dead, Sam can't seem to get it into his head that people can't hear him. He keeps angrily chasing around the stage, shouting things like, "Molly, get out!" and "Molly, don't listen to him!" Clearly death does not do much to improve I.Q. We can only hope there are no SATs in heaven.

(From: nytimes.com)

## 7.2 Ghost The Musical at the Pantages Theater, Hollywood (July 2014)



'Ghost: The Musical': Theater Review (*The Hollywood Reporter*)

1:24 PM PDT 7/1/2014 by Myron Meisel

The Oscar-winning Patrick Swayze/Demi Moore romantic fantasy has been turned into a Broadway musical, put on tour and brought to the Pantages in Hollywood.

If I pale at writing this review, it's because I've just seen a *Ghost*. Screenwriter **Bruce Joel Rubin** won an Oscar for the 1990 film as did **Whoopi Goldberg**, supporting **Patrick Swayze** and **Demi Moore**. The film was also nominated for best picture back when there were only five a year. But all that star power and the sub-**Borzage** skills of director **Jerry Zucker** helped to camouflage the flimsy clunkiness of the story's material, exposed in all its clumsy manipulation by a musical adaptation that emphasizes artificial big moments and sentimental sign-posting over grace notes and anything else that might distinguish it from plain-wrap romanticism.

Sam Wheat (**Steven Grant Douglas**), a young Wall Street success, and ceramist Molly Jenson (**Katie Postotnik**) have just moved into a fabulous fix-up Brooklyn apartment and are edging toward marriage when Sam is murdered in a staged mugging. Sam's ghost remains invisible yet earthbound, capable of supernatural powers but powerless to reach out to the grief-stricken Molly — except through the intercession of phony medium Oda Mae Brown (**Carla R. Stewart**), who feels panicked by the onset of true psychic powers. Sam must find a way to protect Molly from harm at the hands of his money-laundering, two-faced colleague Carl (**Robby Halmi**), whose blandness is perhaps the only counterbalance to his mustache-twirling villainy.

The comic, spiritual and romantic elements are so generic that only the slightest pretext is made to create any character or situation beyond signaling stereotypes, offering thundering cues as to how to react to every situation. There is no progression or development, only the invocation of a fuzzy pedestrian transcendentalism. It's as if our feelings are being subject to chiropractic adjustment, entertainment by carefully applied blunt force. By contrast, *Topper* bubbled.

Fatally for a musical, the songs reinforce the innate phoniness with pop lyrics devoid of nutritional content and music of such little character that the ornamental belting can sound like braying, despite the good voices of the cast. Composers and co-lyricists **Dave Stewart** (of Eurythmics fame but more recently a songwriter with and producer for **Stevie Nicks**, **Tom Petty**, **Katy Perry** and **Bon Jovi**) and **Glen Ballard** (**Alanis Morissette**, **Michael Jackson**, **Aerosmith**, **Dave Matthews**, **Christina Aguilera**) may together have sold a quarter-billion albums. Yet for all their prolific success, they have mastered the art of formula, having here produced a full program of anonymous soundtrack power ballads and anemic novelty numbers.

It's something of a pity because there is a lot of misapplied theatrical talent on display under strenuous yet savvy direction by **Matthew Warhus**. While the show elements may lack conviction, they are topnotch, if spottily credited. The production design is smartly tricked out, if at times self-consciously "cinematic," and the costumes and choreography are vivid despite the roteness of the conceptions. In particular, the stage special effects are rather impressive, a very 21st-century translation of 19th-century **Belasco**-style spectacle: Spectral figures pass through apparently impermeable barriers yet are unable to break through the invisible shield separating the dead from the living, literalizing the imagined quest of the soul for connection with our uncomprehending bodies.

But when — spoiler alert — Carl's soul rises from his corpse only to be sucked downward into red-lighted hell, there is none of the existential terror that was felt when the same stunt was accomplished so much more simply the week before in the **David Lang** opera in Long Beach (even though that dematerializing character was a complete cipher), because there we were provided a musical and dramatic context for the experience, and here it is merely an opportunity for ostentatious display.

Yet who's to quibble with brand-name uniformity? *Ghost: The Musical*, which may have died on Broadway after a mere 136 performances in 2012, now resurrects itself through this touring edition of the U.K. production, reaching out to connect with its audience on the road: The Pantages was near capacity at the first Sunday matinee and it played to them like *Ghostbusters*.

The Bottom Line: Lame Broadway musical of popular film packs plenty of spectacle and obvious sentiment into a standardized touring package.

### Activity 6

1. *Read the two reviews and in pairs work out the necessary elements for a drama review.*
2. *Read the two reviews and detect positive and negative aspects expressed by the authors. Discuss whether one outweighs the other.*
3. *Write a review of the production at The English Theatre Frankfurt.*

## 8. Ghost the Movie (1990)

### 8.1 Ghost an American romantic fantasy/crime thriller

***Ghost*** is a 1990 American romantic fantasy/crime thriller film starring Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore, Tony Goldwyn, and Whoopi Goldberg. It was written by Bruce Joel Rubin and directed by Jerry Zucker. The plot centers on a young woman in jeopardy (Moore) and the ghost of her murdered lover (Swayze), who tries to save her with the help of a reluctant psychic (Goldberg). The film was an outstanding commercial success, grossing over \$505.7 million at the box office on a budget of \$22 million. It was the highest-grossing film of 1990. Adjusted for inflation, as of 2013 *Ghost* was the 91st-highest-grossing film of all time.

The film was nominated for five Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Score and Best Film Editing. It won the awards for Best Supporting Actress for Goldberg and Best Original Screenplay. Swayze and Moore both received Golden Globe Award nominations for their performances, while Goldberg won the BAFTA, Golden Globe, and Saturn Awards in addition to the Oscar.

[...] The music for *Ghost* was written by veteran composer Maurice Jarre. The soundtrack also contained use of the 1955 song "Unchained Melody", composed by Alex North with lyrics by Hy Zaret, which appears in both instrumental form and the 1965 recording by The Righteous Brothers. Jarre's score was nominated for the 1990 Academy Award for Best Original Score, though it lost to John Barry's work for *Dances with Wolves*.

(From: Wikipedia)





## 8.2 A 1990 review of the film

Looking to the Dead For Mirth and Inspiration

By JANET MASLIN

Published: July 13, 1990

**LEAD:** Current Hollywood thinking extends into the next world, but not very far. Being dead has lately been presented on screen as a character-building experience, but beyond that the current ghost films hedge their bets. The questions of just what ghosts can do, of what effect ghosts may have on others or even of how ghosts regard their new status are seldom even addressed.

Current Hollywood thinking extends into the next world, but not very far. Being dead has lately been presented on screen as a character-building experience, but beyond that the current ghost films hedge their bets. The questions of just what ghosts can do, of what effect ghosts may have on others or even of how ghosts regard their new status are seldom even addressed. What seems most important is that ghosts come to the aid of their loved ones, and that the ghost film manages, at least on its own terms, to be sincere.

"Ghost," which stars Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore as lovers separated by that great, trend-minded screenwriter in the sky, is nothing if not earnest. It's also eccentric enough to remain interesting even when its ghost story isn't easy to believe. As directed by Jerry Zucker, previously known as part of the three-man directing team behind comedies like "Airplane!" and "Ruthless People," "Ghost" veers repeatedly from the somber to the broadly comic, with a number of strange but appealingly offbeat digressions along the way. This may, for instance, be the only film with a steamily romantic sequence in which the hero and the heroine get together and make pottery.

"Ghost" begins by presenting Sam Wheat, an improbably named investment banker (Mr. Swayze), and Molly Jensen, an up-and-coming artist (Ms. Moore), as an idyllically happy New York couple moving into a new loft. But an angel being hoisted into the loft's window, a news report of an airplane crash and even Molly's desire to see a performance of "Macbeth" - all these things foretell trouble. Sure enough, Sam and Molly are strolling amorously down a deserted street when a gun-toting mugger appears. Sam's number is up.

The film's attitude about ghosthood is so uncertain that it doesn't allow Sam much chance to adjust. He finds himself in a hospital emergency room, where a fellow ghost (Phil Leeds) talks like a borscht-belt comic; he wanders around dazedly trying to get used to the fact that he can walk through doors and turnstiles. He returns to Molly but can't communicate with her at all. He discovers a terrible secret about a colleague, even though the audience is already miles ahead of him. (For the foreseeable future, it looks as though the mere sight of suspenders will be enough to seal a yuppie film character's fate.) Fortunately, the third of the film's three stars is Whoopi Goldberg, the one performer here who seems to have a clear idea of what she's up to. Dressed in a long teased wig and flowing gold robes, Ms. Goldberg plays a disreputable medium named Oda Mae Brown who is horrified to find one of her bogus seances interrupted by a real ghost. Oda Mae becomes Sam's means of communicating with the corporeal world, and Ms. Goldberg plays the character's amazement, irritation and great gift for back talk to the hilt. This is one of those rare occasions on which the uncategorizable Ms. Goldberg has found a film role that really suits her, and she makes the most of it.

Mr. Swayze duly registers all the emotions called for by Bruce Joel Rubin's screenplay, and does best when called upon to look uncomplicatedly stalwart or express himself in some physical way. Ms. Moore combines toughness and delicacy most attractively, but the story requires her to look terminally wistful much of the time. Mr. Zucker's direction needlessly defuses much of what goes on between these two separated lovers by keeping Mr. Swayze on screen too much of the time, so that he's less like a ghost than an albatross in certain scenes. Unable to communicate with the living or even react very much, he must simply sit by helplessly until they finish talking.

Only late in the story, with the help of a strange fellow ghost who inhabits the subway (Vincent Schiavelli), does Sam develop the power to express himself directly, and to wreak revenge on those who have betrayed him. Even at this stage the film has its odd inconsistencies, particularly in a scene for which Mr. Zucker bends the rules of ghosthood to allow the lovers one last dance.

"Ghost" is too slow moving at times, and a few of its special effects look incongruously silly, particularly those showing what happens to ghosts not as virtuous as Sam. These days, as movie-making logic seems to dictate, it's the nice guys who are allowed to stay.

"Ghost" is rated PG-13 ("Special Parental Guidance Suggested for Those Younger Than 13"). It includes one sexual sequence and occasional off-color language. [...]

(From: nytimes.com)

## 9. A Spotlight on the Lyrics

The word lyrics has its origin in the ancient Greek word “lýra” (the lyre), meaning a harp-like string instrument to be plucked and stroked for it to resonate and produce melodic sounds. It could support the singing of a tune that included text. By metonymic transfer of meaning, first the act of singing to the lyre was denoted with the expression “lyrikos” (Grk.).

Then in modern times, the text “the lyrics” meant >words of a popular song< (first recorded 1876).  
(check: dictionary.reference.com)

Although lyrics like dialogue are in essence words, they are different from dialogue. Lyrics tend to be more compact than dialogue and have a poetic quality that includes rhythm, rhyme, metaphor, simile, symbols and other elements. The lyrics in Ghost The Musical are designed to reveal character, emotions and actions. The lyric for “Here Right Now” expresses hope by emphasizing the moment through the repetition of the title, giving the present moment urgency, and then examines the emotions the characters are feeling. The lyric to “Rain/Hold On” utilizes images connected to making a journey, emphasizing the unknown that both Molly and Sam are dealing with and the need to continue on.

The conflict and difficulty in trying to bridge the material and spiritual worlds is expressed in this lyric. The lyrics like the music in Ghost The Musical are very complex. At times various music themes and lyrics are woven together to create a new, powerful moment on the stage.

Here are the lyrics for the song “Here right now”:

SAM	MOLLY
<p>Here right now Here is where we make it Everything we'll ever need</p> <p>Here right now here right now And for once it feels like It was always meant to be One foot in front of the other, So much for us to discover still</p> <p>We'll get there,</p>	<p>Here right now here right now This is what we're living for This is when we give into the moment and let go Here right now everything we're dreaming of Is coming through if we step up and own it Let it flow Here right now, here right now</p>

### Activity 7 Lyrics

#### Questions to consider

1. Is there a phrase from a lyric that stayed with you after seeing the show? If so, what was it about the lyric that made that happen? Did the music help you remember the lyric and emotion connected to it?
2. What song has the most emotionally moving lyrics?
3. Is there an image, symbol or metaphor that helps to create the emotion?

<p>As long as we stay together, We'll just keep getting better till</p> <p>We get there</p> <p>I don't believe in luck, I don't believe in fate</p> <p>But this is so much more than I could ever contemplate</p> <p>I can't believe you walked into my life and your still here When I'm with you there's no confusion everything is clear And we'll have weeks and months and years to to treasure We were meant to be together You were sent to me forever</p> <p>Here right now This is what we're living for This is when we give into the moment and let go</p> <p>Here right now Everything were dreaming of Is coming through If we step up and own it Let it go Here right now, here right now</p>	<p>Here is where we make it Everything we'll ever need</p> <p>And for once it feels like It was always meant to be One foot in front of the other, So much for us to discover still</p> <p>This is why we give it Everthing we have and more</p> <p>As long as we stay together, We'll just keep getting better till</p> <p>It doesn't really matter what Comes after Or before But this is so much more than I could ever contemplate</p> <p>I can't believe you walked into my life and your still here When I'm with you there's no confusion everything is clear And we'll have weeks and months and years to to treasure We were meant to be together You were sent to me forever Here right now This is what we're living for This is when we give into the moment and let go Here right now Everything were dreaming of Is coming through If we step up and own it Let it go Here right now, here right now.</p>
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### Activity 8 Lyrics

#### Question to consider

1. How is the moment “here right now” described? If “here right now” is Sam and Molly’s most wonderful dream come true then what would be their worst nightmare?
2. Do you know of any song that expresses a similar notion that could be substituted for “Here right now?”
3. To what degree does the song feature rhythm, rhyme, metaphor, simile, and symbols?

Sam sings of the idea that they Molly and him are meant to be together forever but he also sings “I don’t believe in luck, I don’t believe in fate”.

What do you make of that?



## 10. Eight Rules for Writing Musicals

While **no one can tell you how to write a musical**, (is there an echo in here?), there are a few basic rules that may help aspiring authors and composers along the road to their first opening night. But don't take my word on any of them -- prove them yourself. They will apply to any great musical currently in existence. The first four rules apply to good writing of any kind --

**1. Show, Don't Tell** -- This is job one for all writers, now and forever. Don't tell us what your characters are -- let their actions show us! Drama is expressed in action, not description. No one has to tell us that Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors* is a gullible nerd; his every action screams it out. Peggy Sawyer never has to declare that she is a naive newcomer to *42nd Street*'s hard-edged world of show business -- her wide-eyed behavior makes that clear from her first scene.

There is another aspect to "show, don't tell." Since theater and film are visual as well as literary mediums, musicals are not limited to words and music. Many a great musical uses the power of visual images to communicate key information. (Plays are called "shows," no?) The waiters in *Hello Dolly* never have to tell us that they love Dolly -- their visible reaction to her presence shows it all. And no one in *My Fair Lady* has to announce when Liza Doolittle becomes a lady -- her wordless, elegant descent down the stairs before leaving for the Embassy Ball shows that the transformation has occurred.

**2. Cut everything that is not essential** -- Some call this the "kill your darlings" rule. Every character, song, word and gesture has to serve a clear dramatic purpose. If not, the whole structure of your show can suffer. If something does not develop character, establish setting or advance the plot, **you must cut it** -- even if it is a moment that you love. The next time you see a musical that seems to be losing steam, odds are that the writers did not have the heart to cut non-essential material. Never show your audiences such a lack of respect -- ruthlessly cut everything that does not serve a clear and vital purpose to your premise.

**3. Know the basics of good storytelling** -- Musicals are just another form of telling stories, an art humans have been practicing since the invention of speech. Can you tell me what your show is really about (the **premise**), and define the essential dramatic purpose of each character? And does every scene offer a character with deep desire confronting a powerful obstacle?

Learning the art of storytelling does not mean getting a masters degree -- good news, friend: the basic tools of storytelling are already in you. Reading a few good books can get you thinking in the right direction. For starters, try **Jerry Cleaver's *Immediate Fiction: A Complete Writing Course* (NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002)**. It will open your eyes to the unseen elements that make a great story absorbing, and a great story is the best starting point for any book musical. If you need to go deeper, read **Robert Olen Butler's *From Where You Dream: The Process of Writing Fiction* (NY: Grove Press, 2005)**. Both of these books are ground breaking, and both can save you years of misguided effort.

On the specific subject of writing original musicals, ***Making Musicals* (NY: Limelight Editions, 1998)** by **Tom Jones** is the only book on the subject written by a bona fide creator of musical hits (*The Fantasticks*, etc.). He offers no magic formulas, but his gentle wisdom can enrich anyone facing the creative process.

**4. Your first duty in writing a musical is to tell a good story in a fresh, entertaining way -- NEVER to teach or preach.** If you make one or more intelligent points along the way, that's fantastic, but it won't matter much if your audience has lost interest, or simply stayed away. *Dance a Little Closer* condemned war and homophobia, and closed on its opening night. On the other hand, *Hairspray* skewered bigotry and ran for years. And while some critics dismiss *The Sound of Music* as fluff, it has

probably done more harm to the ongoing threat of Nazism than all the World War II documentaries ever made.

If you always put the story and characters first, you won't have to hit anyone over the head with a lesson or message. A well-told story lives in the memory long after any sermon or lecture. I beg you: if you want to preach, build a pulpit. When you are really lucky, the one who will learn something from your writing is **you**.

Now, some rules that apply specifically to the musical form –

**5. Find the Song Posts** - Song placement in a musical is not arbitrary! Irving Berlin said that he evaluated potential projects by looking for the "posts" – points in the story that demand a song. Call these key moments whatever you like, but they are the places where characters have some emotional justification for singing. Think about your favorite musical; the songs all have something to say, expressing important feelings or concerns of the characters. Joy, confusion, heartbreak, love, rage – at the points or posts where these life-defining feelings break through, characters can sing.

**6. Open With a Kick-Ass Song** – Every now and then, a successful musical (*My Fair Lady*, *The King and I*) opens with a few pages of dialogue before the opening number, but these are the exceptions. In most cases, the quickest way to touch a musical theatre audience is through song. An effective number or musical scene sets the tone for the show to come and also allows swift plot exposition & character development. By the end of the opening number, audiences should know where the story is set, what sort of people are in it, and what the basic tone of the show (comic, satiric, serious, etc.) will be. This is why the opening number ought to be one of the strongest in the score. A great opening number reassures audiences that there more good things to come. Think of *Ragtime*'s title song, which handily introduces audiences to an army of characters and the distant era they lived in! Other examples: *Oklahoma* ("Oh, What a Beautiful Morning"), *Les Misérables* ("At the End of the Day"), *Urinetown* ("Too Much Exposition"), and *Hairspray* ("Good Morning, Baltimore").

**7. Book, Score and Staging MUST Speak as One** – In contemporary musical theater, the score, libretto and staging (both direction and choreography) share the job of storytelling. This results in frequent passages of sung dialogue, as well as scenes where characters move seamlessly between spoken word, dance and song. Think of the hilarious "Keep It Gay" in *The Producers*, the achingly beautiful "If I Loved You" bench scene in *Carousel*, or the powerful dances ignited by the songs in *Moving Out* – the dialogue, lyrics and staging form a single fabric. The trick is to keep the content smooth and varied. A hint – if your libretto goes on for pages and pages between isolated musical numbers, something is probably wrong. And if your score has a stretch of ballad after ballad, give your audiences a break and vary the tone. In other words, lighten up!

**8. Songs Are Not Enough** – When you turn an existing story into a musical, you need a fresh vision. Just adding songs won't give you an effective musical. You have to tell the story with a fresh dose of energy, of re-inspiration. *Annie* took the characters from a classic comic strip, added some new faces and placed them all in an entirely new story. Some of the best moments in *My Fair Lady* did not come from Shaw's *Pygmalion* -- including the crux of the pivotal "Rain in Spain" scene. When you add songs, you must also re-ignite the material at hand.

**9. Sing It or Say It; NEVER Both** – Rouben Mamoulian, the original director of *Porgy & Bess*, *Oklahoma* & *Carousel* put it this way: "It's the basic law that the music and dancing must extend the dialogue. If you say the same thing in a song you already have said in the speeches, it's without point. . . a song must lift the spoken scene to greater S than it was before, or the song must be cut no matter how beautiful is the melody. The song must not merely repeat in musical terms what has already been put across by the dialogue and actions." (Maurice Zoltow, NY Times, 1/29/1950, "Mamoulian Directs a Musical," section 2, p.1)

(From: *musicals101.com*)

## 11. Resources and Links for further Studies

*Ghost The Musical [Broadway version] – Interactive Study Guide : For Teachers and Students*

<http://broadwayeducators.com/?p=99>

Ghost on Tour

[www.ghostontour.com](http://www.ghostontour.com)

Ghost on Broadway

[www.ghostonbroadway.com](http://www.ghostonbroadway.com)

Ghost the Musical, Original Cast Recording (Original Broadway Soundtrack)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Htwv19kYa8&list=PL2EEDF736BB407FOC>

„Unchained melody [Oh, my love...]“ (Ghost -- film soundtrack sung by the Righteous Brothers [1966]):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eS9LQrgNQHA>

Ghost the Musical (London) – Official Trailer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sw5a5beiLSw>

The Ghost Light Sessions (Broadway), includes sound bites of with Glen Ballard, Dave Stewart, Bruce Joel Rubin, Matthew Warches)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qq1RsajZbzw>

The Illusions of GHOST THE MUSICAL - Featuring Master Illusionist Paul Kieve

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGd0pJTnWcE>

Backstage tour of Ghost The Musical at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGd0pJTnWcE>

Highlights From "Ghost The Musical" on Broadway

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59EYZOGXi8Y>

Backstage at "Ghost" with Richard Fleeshman [Broadway]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvcKklNwlgg>

Show People with Paul Wontorek Interview: Caissie Levy of "Ghost" on Broadway

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ix8XGRa-z1Y>

General online resources to teaching ghost stories:

- <http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resources/secondary-44354/english-44816/ks3-prose-45222/genre-45368/ghost-45381/>
- <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/teaching-epic-through-ghost-225.html>

