"The Great American Mousical"



For Classroom Teachers, Teaching Artists and Arts Educators

An imprint of **#** HarperCollins Publishers

A Letter from the Authors

Dear Teachers, Teaching Artists and Arts Educators,

THE GREAT AMERICAN MOUSICAL was written as an affectionate tribute to the world we know and love - the world of musical theater. But we also hope to offer something more: a glimpse backstage, a sense of how 'theater magic' is achieved, and a bit of theater history, etiquette and tradition. Perhaps by promoting arts appreciation for the next generation, we might play our own small part in keeping theater alive.

We hope you will find this guide a useful tool, both as a curriculum enhancement in the classroom and as a means to foster arts advocacy and creative expression in the young people you work

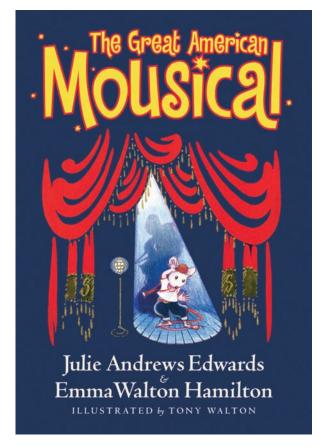
with. As little Ping would say, "big things are only achieved by attending to small

beginnings!"

Warmly,

di andrews Edwards

Julie Andrews Edwards & Emma Walton Hamilton



About the Book: THE GREAT AMERICAN MOUSICAL

Ages: 8–12, Grades 3-7

Tr 0-06-057918-8 \$15.99 (\$21.99) Lb 0-06-057919-6 \$16.89 (\$22.89)

In the heart of New York City beneath a venerable Broadway theater, a troupe of theater mice busily prepares its own performance. Rehearsals are in the usual state of chaos when suddenly the theater is threatened with destruction and the leading lady disappears. Somehow, the show must go on! Theater fans of all ages will delight in this humorous insider spoof – written and illustrated by a best-selling team with firsthand experience of this much-adored world.

Praise for THE GREAT AMERICAN MOUSICAL

"A hilarious adventure! I love these mice — they remind me of some of my best friends!" - Carol Burnett

"Deserving of an enthusiastic round of applause!" – Publishers Weekly

"Sure to keep young theater buffs rolling in the aisles!" - ALA Booklist

"Genuinely sweet and very funny. Delicious." Mary Rodgers, author of Freaky Friday



About the Authors:

Julie Andrews Edwards is one of the most recognized figures in the world of entertainment, best known for her film performances in Mary Poppins, The Sound of Music and more recently The Princess Diaries. She also received critical acclaim for her legendary performances on Broadway in My Fair Lady, Camelot and Victor/Victoria. Her dedication to children has been steadfast throughout her career, and she began writing books for young readers over 35 years ago. She is married to film director Blake Edwards, and they have five children, seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren.



Emma Walton Hamilton serves as the Editorial Director for *The Julie Andrews Collection* imprint at HarperCollins Publishers. A co-founder of Bay Street Theatre in Sag Harbor, New York, she is dedicated to bringing theater to young adults through her work as Director of Bay Street's Educational Outreach, Young Playwrights and Kidstreet programs. She and her mother, Julie Andrews Edwards, share a passion for children and a commitment to supporting literacy and the arts. Together they have co-authored fifteen children's books. She is married to actor/producer Stephen Hamilton and they have two children, Sam and Hope.



About the Illustrator:

Tony Walton is a renowned set and costume designer for the theater and film, including Anything Goes, Pippin, Guys & Dolls, Chicago, Grand Hotel and Mary Poppins, The Wiz and All That Jazz. Among his many accolades he counts three Tony® Awards, an Emmy®, and an Oscar®. He is equally well represented in print and is the illustrator for the Dumpy the Dump Truck series, also by Julie Andrews Edwards and Emma Walton Hamilton.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Social Studies -

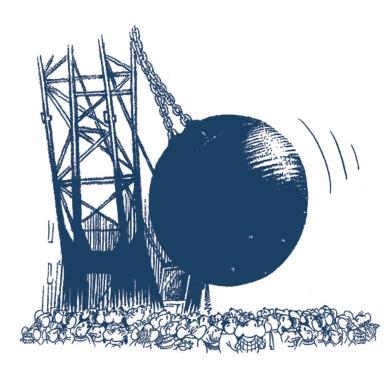
1) On page 48, the young son of the Sovereign's new owner tells a construction worker hired to demolish the building that it will soon be converted into a television studio. "Huh!" the construction worker snorts, "Progress!"

*** DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- What does he mean?
- What do you think the authors might be trying to say here?
- How do YOU feel about a historic building being torn down to make way for a modern one, or a theater being replaced by a TV studio?
- 2) On page 64, Henry, the gentle mouse professor, says to Scud the Rat, "I'm sure the Sons of Vermin would be only too happy to tell the Big Cheese you were on his dock..."

***** DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Who might the Sons of Vermin be, and who is the Big Cheese?
- Why does Scud fear them enough to run away?



Language Arts -

1) Harold, the Character Actor in the 'Mousical' company, often uses Shakespearean quotes to make a point or enhance his story.

ACTIVITY:

Have students research the sources of the following quotes, and explain why Harold might have chosen to use this quote at that particular moment in the story...

- P. 3 'parting is such sweet sorrow...'
- P. 9 'Once more into the breach'
- P. 52 'Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!'
- P. 52 'a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors'
- P. 54 'Distill'd almost to jelly with the act of fear'
- P. 114 'The die is cast...'
- P. 122 'Our revels now are ended...'
- 2) Learn to 'talk theater'!

 Here are some words (or 'stage directions') a

 director or stage manager might use when talking
 to an actor...
- Downstage toward the audience
- Upstage away from the audience
- Stage Right and Stage Left always from the actor's point of view... that is, from the perspective of facing the audience
- Fourth Wall the imaginary wall of scenery between the actors and audience, i.e. if an actor appears to be looking out a window, but is actually looking at the audience, the window (and the view through it) is on the 'fourth wall'
- Cue the word, moment or event that triggers an actor's next line or action
- 'Places, please' the expression used to tell actors to get into their positions for an entrance at the start of the show

* For a full glossary of theater terms and definitions, please see pages 135-144 in THE GREAT AMERICAN MOUSICAL.

ACTIVITIES: Students can take turns being the 'actors' on stage and the 'director' or 'stage manager' in the audience...

- a) Have the directors/stage managers call "Places, please!" then cue the actors to cross stage left, stage right, upstage and downstage. (Remember, stage left will be the actor's left, the director's right!)
- b) Give the actors different choices to explore for their Fourth Wall. How would their acting, or 'behavior' onstage, be different if their Fourth Wall was...
- A window (what's outside the window?)
- A mirror (can they 'see' themselves in it? Comb their hair, put on makeup etc.?)
- A warm fireplace (on a cold night)
- A TV (can they change channels? How do they react to what they 'see'?)
- The ocean (Where is the sun or moon? What else can they see?)

Geography -

1) Henry and Adelaide travel from Brooklyn to Broadway to get Adelaide back in time for the show. Along the way they pass through Chinatown and Little Italy, among other famous New York City destinations.

ACTIVITY: Have students map out and trace Henry and Adelaide's journey, taking note of how many different neighborhoods and cultures the mice encounter along the way.

- * <u>DISCUSSION QUESTION:</u> What impact has immigration made on New York City, and what are some 'New York' traditions that originated elsewhere?
- 2) At the end of the book, Pippin says the Sovereign may become a "New York City Landmark"...

ACTIVITY: Have students research what 'landmark status' means, and make a list of existing New York City landmarks. Then ask them to identify sites THEY would recommend for landmark status, in their own town or elsewhere.

3) When Fausto escorts Henry and Adelaide through the sewer, he says: "It's not the Appia Antica, but it's the guickest way to Houston Street!"

***** DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Where and what is the Appia Antica, and why does Fausto make this comparison?

4) Fausto describes Boris, the pretzel cart man from the Ukraine, as the only person who "works outside in weather like this."

***** DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Where is the Ukraine, and why do you think coming from there enables Boris to work outside, even in bad weather?

Art ·

1) Tony Walton, the illustrator of THE GREAT AMERICAN MOUSICAL is also a Tony® Awardwinner. Over the course of his career he has designed many of the shows referenced in the book, but many other designers around the world have designed their own versions of these shows as well. Every designer's approach to a show is uniquely their own....

ACTIVITIES:

- a) Visit www.julieandrewscollection.com for black and white line illustrations from the book available for downloading in .PDF form. Have students print and color the illustrations as they see them.
- b) Ask students to design their own scenery and costumes for the various musical numbers in *Broadway Airs*, such as "the flower girl song," "the schoolroom number" and "the staircase routine."

Theater Arts/Drama

1) THE GREAT AMERICAN MOUSICAL salutes
Broadway in many different ways. With chapter headings such as "Act One", Scene Change" and "Intermission," and chock full of theatrical characters and references (including an extensive glossary of theatre terms at the back), it offers young readers a peek at life backstage as well as an opportunity to learn about theater history and tradition...



"TEST YOUR THEATER IQ" ACTIVITIES:

a) In their rehearsals for *Broadway Airs*, the mice are practicing numbers from 5 well-known Broadway musicals, which are never referred to by their real names. Help students identify which shows are being referenced, and which song from each show the mice are actually rehearsing. Can they spot any other show references elsewhere in the book?

Answers:

- "The Flower Girl Song" MY FAIR LADY/"Loverly"
- "The Schoolroom Number" -THE KING AND I/"Getting to Know You"
- "The Staircase Routine", aka HALLO, MOUSEY! HELLO, DOLLY! /"Hello, Dolly!"
- "Little June's song" ANNIE/"Tomorrow"
- "Harold's 'Cap' number" FIDDLER ON THE ROOF/"If I Were A Rich Man"
- Other references:
 "FELINES," P. 12 CATS!
 "MICE AND DOLLS," P. 99 GUYS AND DOLLS
- b) All the mice in the 'Mousical' company are named after famous characters from Broadway musical history. Using the cast of characters at the front of the book, help students identify which show each name originates from.

(A complete list of answers can be found at www.julieandrewscollection.com)

- c) The theater in THE GREAT AMERICAN MOUSICAL is called 'The Sovereign'. Have students research or imagine why many old theaters were given regal names, such as the Imperial, the Royale, and the Ambassador. What is the *new* trend in naming theaters?
- d) Have students look in a newspaper or online to find out the following:
 - How many performances a week are 'standard' on Broadway?
 - -What is the traditional 'dark night' or night off'?
- 2) Incorporating the arts in education has been shown to have a major impact on social, emotional and cognitive development. Study of the performing arts in particular:
- promotes self-expression, creativity, confidence and self-esteem
- enhances arts, literature and theatre appreciation
- provides an understanding of dramatic structure
- improves writing, language arts, critical thinking and problem solving skills
- fosters compassion, awareness and social consciousness.

PRACTICAL THEATRE ACTIVITIES:

a) **SCRIPT ANALYSIS – In-Depth Study**

Choose <u>one</u> famous Broadway musical and break it down into a field of study. Have students explore the following questions:

- Who are the central characters and what do they want?
- What is standing in their way?
- How does each song further the action of a scene, or speak to the continuation of a character?
- When and how is a song used for comic relief or dramatic effect?
- Why is the intermission placed where it is?
- Is there an 'eleven o'clock number'? (This is a song in which the main character has some kind of revelation or major emotional discovery that brings the musical to a climax and is often, but not always, the final or next-to-last song. Well-known eleven o'clock numbers include "Rose's Turn" from GYPSY, "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face" from MY FAIR LADY, and "If He Walked Into My Life" from MAME. The term originates from the days when show time was at 8:30 PM and it was desirable to have audiences leave soon after 11:00.)
- What is the message of the show what is it trying to say or make the audience feel, and how many different ways does it achieve that?
- How might the setting or design of the show support the overall message?

b) PUT ON A SHOW - From Page to Stage!

Choose your material. You can obtain the rights to do a well-known show (see 'Resources'), do a 'revue' style show (like *Broadway Airs*, where students perform a series of individual songs or 'numbers'), or you can have students adapt a story (like a fairy tale, fable or book) into a non-musical play. Students can even write their own play, or series of one-act plays, from scratch. If students choose to write their own, have them think about the following:

- Who are the characters?
- What do they want?
- What do they say and do, and how do they try to overcome their problems to get what they want?
- What happens at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of your play?
- Where and when does your story take place? (Think about how this will affect the scenery and costumes)
- What is your message what do you want your audience to think or feel during and after the performance, or what are you trying to say to them with your story?



c) Create a 'THEATER COMPANY'

Theater is a truly collaborative medium, and there are *many* important jobs.... Students who do not wish to perform can sign up for a different 'role', so that everyone has a sense of ownership and participation in the production. Among those to choose from are:

THEATER COMPANY MEMBERS:

- Director/Assistant Director in charge of the whole show, helps the actors 'find' their characters, tells them what to do onstage, when to cross, how to move etc., makes final decisions about all creative elements
- Producer raises the money to produce the show, oversees and manages the 'creative team', troubleshoots any issues that come up
- Stage Manager/Assistant Stage Manager in charge of the production backstage: keeps the schedule, keeps a written record of everything that gets decided during rehearsal, calls for light and sound cues and actor entrances during performances, issues rehearsal and performance reports to key personnel
- Set Designer designs the scenery and/or selects furnishings and props, supervises any construction and/or painting
- Costume Designer designs or finds and adapts the costumes/clothes
- Lighting Designer designs the placement, color and mood of the lighting

- Sound Designer makes sure all actors can be heard, chooses incidental music for scene changes etc. and creates sound effects if needed
- Box Office/Ticket Sales Manager takes reservations, sells and distributes tickets to the audience
- Marketing/Publicity Director designs the program for the event, as well as any ads, posters or flyers that promote it, handles all publicity
- Scenic Shop/Builder manufactures the stage scenery
- Scenic Painters paint the scenery and props
- Costume Shop Manager/Costumers build, sew, fix and clean or maintain the costumes
- Concessions Manager organizes, sells and/or serves snacks and drinks before and after the show and during intermission
- House Manager/Ushers manages the audience, makes sure they know where their seats are and have the right tickets, hands out programs etc.

3) Who - or what - is it all for?

In THE GREAT AMERICAN MOUSICAL, *Broadway Airs* is a benefit performance to help other mice in need. With this idea, the authors are paying tribute to the charitable organization "Broadway Cares/ Equity Fights AIDS", which supports people affected by HIV/AIDS and other critical illnesses. (A portion of the sales proceeds from THE GREAT AMERICAN MOUSICAL is being donated to Broadway Cares.)

***** DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Ask students to identify a cause that their performance might aid. They can donate a portion of the ticket sales, or they can include information in the program to raise awareness for the cause.
- The 'Mousical' company dedicates their performance to Adelaide, to honor the contribution she has made to their lives and to theater in general.... Who might the students dedicate their performance to?

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Making a Difference-

In speaking about young Pippin near the end of the book, Emil says to Don Q., "It is amazing what he pulled off tonight... that a mouse, so small, could do something so monumental, for so many."

***** DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How and where else do the authors emphasize this point throughout their story?
- Can you think of a time when you did something unexpected that made a big difference?

Perseverance -

Citing the well-known theater expression "The show must go on!", the 'Mousical' company votes to continue with their performance in spite of their leading lady's disappearance. Henry and Adelaide demonstrate equal resolve in braving all manner of elements and dangers to get Adelaide back to the theater in time for the show.... Even little Ping says, "A superior mouse is modest in speech but exceeds in actions."

*** DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- Have you ever demonstrated outstanding commitment to something, or persevered in spite of the risks involved? How did you feel about yourself afterwards?

Teamwork -

Throughout THE GREAT AMERICAN MOUSICAL, the mice rely on support from each other - and even from strangers - to achieve their goals. Theater itself is a collaborative medium; a successful show is the result of the hard work and contributions by *many* different company members.

***** DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Cite some examples of teamwork and collaboration in the book, and then tell or write about a time when you accomplished something by collaborating with, or reaching out to, others. How might the results have been different if you had tried to 'go it alone'?

Courage-

Henry is a mild-mannered professor of "mouse lore," who stutters and has never been far from home - but who has always dreamed of adventure. In rescuing Adelaide and trying to get her back to the theater, he demonstrates surprising courage: facing down an evil rat, braving snow, wind and ice, navigating the wilds of New York City, even leaping onto the tailgate of a moving newspaper truck.

※ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What other acts of courage are demonstrated in the book, by Henry and by others?
- When in your life have you acted courageously, in spite of fear or danger... and how or why were you able to do it?

Wonder —

The Julie Andrews Collection imprint at HarperCollins Publishers is dedicated to publishing books for young readers of all ages that "nurture the imagination and celebrate a sense of wonder."

☆ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Where and how is the theme of 'wonder' reflected and celebrated in this story?
- Have you ever felt a powerful sense of wonder? Describe what inspired it and how it made you feel.



FUN FACTS

Did you know...?

1) ... Theater people are famously superstitious!
For instance: The title of one famous Shakespeare play is never, ever mentioned (especially INSIDE a theater) and ALWAYS only referred to as 'The Scottish Play,' because it is thought to bring such bad luck. Whoever accidentally voices the name of this play inside a theater must leave the building, turn around 3 times and spit on the ground (or swear!) to reverse the bad luck...

ACTIVITY:

Have students research which Shakespeare play has this 'curse' upon it, and what the origins of the curse are thought to be. Discuss where and how in THE GREAT AMERICAN MOUSICAL a similar superstition and tradition plays out.

Other famous theatrical superstitions include:

* Never whistle backstage!

Before electricity, whistling was how stage managers cued stagehands to bring down a scenic drop... so a whistle at the wrong moment could result in a sandbag on your head!

* Never say "Good luck" on opening night!

Say, "Break a Leg!" instead. There are many theories as to how this tradition started, but its precise origins are unknown.

* Don't forget the 'ghost light'!

On the cover of THE GREAT AMERICAN MOUSICAL, Pippin is posing beside a simple caged light bulb on a stand. This theater icon is traditionally placed on stage before and after a performance, to keep just enough light in the theater for safety purposes... and to keep any theater ghosts at bay!



Did you know...?

2) ... A familiar nickname for Broadway is "The Great White Way," which encompasses the Theater District, between 42nd and 53rd streets, in New York City. Nearly a mile of Broadway was illuminated in 1880 by Brush arc lamps, and was the first electrically-lighted avenue in America – but the nickname was inspired by the millions of lights on theater marquees and billboards that illuminate the area.

Did you know...?

3) ... Mice actually 'sing'!

Though the sounds are outside the range of human hearing, scientists at Washington University have analyzed the vocalizations of mice and found that they have the characteristics of song, with distinct types of syllables uttered in phrases and motifs. Apparently these 'songs' – often hundreds of squeaky 'syllables' long – resemble bird and whale songs, because certain sequences tend to be repeated. Researchers have even found that individual mice sing distinct songs, indicating that there might be some learning involved. Perhaps with a bit more rehearsal they could put on a show!

An Interview with Julie Andrews Edwards & Emma Walton Hamilton





QUESTION: How did you come up with the idea for the story behind THE GREAT AMERICAN MOUSICAL?

JULIE: When I was performing in VICTOR/VICTORIA on Broadway, a mouse was discovered in our wardrobe department. I suggested a humane trap and asked if someone kind might release the creature in the suburbs or countryside. Something was said about there being a number of mice beneath Broadway theaters, and suddenly a light-bulb went off in my head.

I spoke to Emma and we agreed it would be fun to collaborate on a project about Broadway mice since we could both write from such a basis of knowledge.

After the novel was underway, I was taping for the PBS documentary "The History of the Broadway Musical" in a grand old Broadway theatre. I was in the dressing room and, brazen as you please, a little mouse popped out, wandered around and, finally, ambled out the door heading for the stage. I hoped it was a good luck omen for the book... (but was rather glad I wasn't moving into that dressing room for any length of time!)

QUESTION: You must have had fun working together on this book – did you pull from a lot of your own experiences? Are the mouse characters modeled after people you've worked with?

EMMA: We had a ball! As we began to write, we hit upon the notion of naming all the mice after well-known characters from musical theatre history, thinking it might be fun for any theatre-savvy parents who read with their children to guess whom we were referencing. And we definitely had certain friends and colleagues in mind when we were creating the characters... though we'll never say whom!

JULIE: Tony Walton, our illustrator (and Emma's dad), also modeled many of his character drawings after real-life theatre folk we know and love. Another area where we had a lot of fun was hinting at particular famous shows from Broadway musical history – we purposely chose not to use real titles of songs or shows, so that readers might have fun with the spoof and figure it out on their own.

QUESTION: What advice do you have for a young person who is thinking about becoming an actor?

JULIE: Be ready! Opportunities can come up out of the blue - and they will - but what makes the difference is being ready to meet the opportunity when it arises. While you're waiting, take acting, voice and dance classes, read plays, hone every skill you can...you never know when you might get 'that call'!

QUESTION: Henry admits to Adelaide "To be able to sing, to dance, to act...to touch so many. I envy you. I confess I'm often tongue-tied in front of even a small class". Do you ever suffer from stage fright, and if so, how do you handle it?

JULIE: I don't think I've met an actor who doesn't feel nervous as opening night approaches. It's very normal. You wouldn't be human if you didn't feel nerves. It takes a lot of courage to get up in front of an audience and give of yourself and be willing to fail.

There are techniques that can help a little, though. Adrenalin from nerves and excitement can leave one feeling shaky. I find that being sure to have a small meal of protein before the show helps me deal with the physical shakes. Try to sort out what is really nerves and what is simply anticipation and excitement about the joy of offering something to the public that is hopefully going to give them a good time. Single out some faces in the audience that appear friendly, someone either side of the auditorium and someone in the middle, perhaps, and do the show for them. Above all, try not to watch your own performance as you proceed. Think as your character would think, do as your character would do, and stay in the 'giving mode...' send your character out across the footlights. Finally, try to pretend that this is a lovely party - 'your' party - and that everyone has come to visit you, at your home. Feel the joy.

QUESTION: What are some important 'theater etiquette' tips?

EMMA: Good question – and this applies to ALL audiences, young and old alike! Of course, the most important thing is to be quiet – no talking during the performance. This can distract fellow audience members as well as the actors. It's also very disruptive to hear the rustling and crinkling of candy wrappers

or lozenges! Try to open anything like that before the show starts. These days theatergoers are always reminded to turn off their cell phones before the show – but it's important to remember to turn them off again after intermission! Finally, try to stay seated until the show is officially over and the cast has finished their bows.

QUESTION: Adelaide shares her passion for theater with Henry, describing "...the intangible magic of the theater, the giving, the receiving, the intimate communion between artist and audience." Why do you think live theater is still so important, especially today?

JULIE: Actually, these days it seems more important than ever... I think in our media-driven world of television, the internet, Blackberries, iPods, electronic games and the like, we run the risk of becoming very isolated, ironic as that may seem. I worry that we are spoon-feeding them a steady diet of "manufactured" slices of life, so that all they have to do is receive rather than participate in any way. The magic of theater is that it asks us to connect, to engage our imaginations, to suspend our disbelief, to open our minds to new ideas... and above all, to unite - and be fully present - with other 'live' human beings.

EMMA: The exchange between audience and actor is so powerful... unlike film or TV, no two live performances are ever the same, since each audience affects the performance differently and vice versa. Every performance is unique in a hundred subtle ways, and can be influenced by anything from the weather to coughs and colds to current events. At its best, live theater is really a kind of 'communion', a way in which people can collectively share an experience that makes them think, feel, laugh, cry – and about which they can later engage in dialogue or debate. As Enoch, our stage manager in the book, says, "...it's the one thing that binds us together, the one thing that tells us who we are."



RESOURCES

Recommended books and websites for further information on theater:

BOOKS: -

Broadway: The American Musical By Michael Kantor, Laurence Maslon

Broadway Musicals: The 101 Greatest Shows of All Time

By Ken Bloom, Frank Vlastnik

Let's Put on a Show!: A Beginner's Theatre Handbook for Young Actors

By Adrea Gibbs

Respect for Acting

By Uta Hagen, Haskel Frankel

WEBSITES: -

www.ibdb.com - Internet Broadway Database

www.playbill.com - News, features, performance listings for Broadway

www.theatermania.com - Listings, news, reviews, interviews, and online ticketing

www.broadway.com - Complete editorial coverage of theater industry

www.mti.com - Music Theatre International, licenses many Broadway musicals. Detailed information on cast size, instrumentation, production histories, and study guides. They also offer The Broadway Junior Collection - condensed, author-approved versions of classic musicals with interdisciplinary teaching tools and orchestral performance CD's.

www.rnhtheatricals.com - Licenses the works of Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II, Irving Berlin, Lorenz Hart, Jerome Kern, Andrew Lloyd-Webber and others.

www.tamswitmark.com - The third major Broadway show licensing organization

www.theatrecrafts.com - Practical information and advice about technical theatre

www.julieandrewscollection.com - Choose your sets and costumes and make the mice sing and dance in "The Show Must Go On," a new interactive web game based on *The Great American Mousical*.