Great Expectations
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Great Expectations

ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY
Gale Childs Daly

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY
Charles Dickens

DIRECTED BY
Michael Bloom

SCENIC DESIGNER
Michael Schweikhardt

COSTUME DESIGNER
Tracy Dorman

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Nancy Schertler

COMPOSER/SOUND DESIGNER
Scott Killian

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Nicholas Kowerko

HAIR, WIG & MAKEUP DESIGNER
Dave Bova

DIALECT COACH
Ralph Zito

STAGE MANAGER
Laura Jane Collins

CASTING
Paul Fouquet CSA/Elissa Myers CSA

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.

October 19 - November 6, 2016
BE PROMPT
Give your students plenty of time to arrive, find their seats, and get situated. Have them visit the restrooms before the show begins.

RESPECT OTHERS
Please remind your students that their behavior and responses affect the quality of the performance and the enjoyment of the production for the entire audience. Live theatre means the actors and the audience are in the same room, and just as the audience can see and hear the performers, the performers can see and hear the audience. Please ask your students to avoid disturbing those around them. Please no talking or unnecessary or disruptive movement during the performance. Also, please remind students that cellphones should be switched off completely. No texting or tweeting, please. When students give their full attention to the action on the stage, they will be rewarded with the best performance possible.

GOOD NOISE, BAD NOISE
Instead of instructing students to remain totally silent, please discuss the difference between appropriate responses (laughter, applause, participation when requested) and inappropriate noise (talking, cell phones, etc).

STAY WITH US
Please do not leave or allow students to leave during the performance except in absolute emergencies. Again, reminding them to use the restrooms before the performance will help eliminate unnecessary disruption.

As you take your students on the exciting journey into the world of live theatre we hope that you’ll take a moment to help prepare them to make the most of their experience. Unlike movies or television, live theatre offers the thrill of unpredictability.

With the actors present on stage, the audience response becomes an integral part of the performance and the overall experience: the more involved and attentive the audience, the better the show. Please remind your students that they play an important part in the success of the performance.
Dear Educator,

Live theatre is a place for people to gather and experience the joys, triumphs, and sorrows life has to offer.

The Syracuse Stage education department is committed to providing the tools to make learning in and through the arts possible to address varied learning styles and to make connections to curricula and life itself. It is our goal in the education department to maximize the theatre experience for our education partners with experiential learning and in-depth arts programming. Thank you for your interest and support.

Sincerely,

Lauren Unbekant
Director of Educational Outreach

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Syracuse Stage is committed to providing students with rich theatre experiences that explore and examine what it is to be human. Research shows that children who participate in or are exposed to the arts show higher academic achievement, stronger self-esteem, and improved ability to plan and work toward a future goal.

Many students in our community have their first taste of live theatre through Syracuse Stage’s outreach programs. Last season more than 15,500 students from across New York State attended or participated in the Bank of America Children’s Tour, artsEmerging, the Young Playwrights Festival, the Franklin Project, Young Adult Council, and our Student Matinee Program.

We gratefully acknowledge the corporations and foundations who support our commitment to in-depth arts education for our community.
Charles John Huffam Dickens was born in Portsmouth, England on February 7, 1812 to John and Elizabeth Dickens. In 1822, John Dickens was transferred to London. As naval clerk who already could barely make ends meet, he struggled to support his brood at the new lower pay. Finally, when Charles was twelve, his father was consigned to Marshalsea, a debtor’s prison. As was the custom, most of the family joined John there. Young Charles instead left school and went to work pasting labels on boxes in a shoe black factory to help pay his father’s debts. Charles returned to school when his father received an inheritance and was released from prison. Unfortunately, Charles left the family again at fifteen when they were evicted from their home for not paying rent.

This time, he found employment as a clerk in an attorney’s office. He became proficient in shorthand and freelanced as a reporter in the London courts, eventually publishing his own observations in periodicals under the pseudonym Boz, a family nickname. The pieces were collected in book form under the title *Sketches by Boz* in 1836. The same year he married Catherine Hogarth, with whom he would have ten children. His next literary endeavor, *The Pickwick Papers*, was a series of sketches intended to accompany featured illustrations. His comic stories proved more popular than the pictures, and Dickens career as a writer was now assured.

At this time, novels were often published in installments in periodicals. While whole books might be out of the budget for many, a portion of a novel in thirty-two pages with two illustrations could be had for a shilling (around five cents). As his writing career expanded, Dickens edited the periodical *Bentley’s Miscellany* where his first novel, *Oliver Twist* was serialized in 1838 to great success. He soon left *Bentley’s Miscellany*, and over the next few years, he would publish weekly magazines of his own to showcase his work.

In 1842, Dickens, now quite famous, set out on his first lecture tour of America, a country which he observed with amusement and annoyance. In his enormously popular talks in the U.S., he spoke out passionately against slavery.

With the publication of *David Copperfield*, (1849) Dickens, already a celebrity, gained superstar status. *Copperfield*, which simply told of the daily life of a bright young man whose trials and brushes with poverty resembled those of the author in many ways, took England and indeed the entire English speaking world by storm.

The marriage of Dickens and Catherine became increasingly tense, and the restless author became enamored of a young actress by the name of Ellen Ternan. He and Catherine legally separated in 1858. Dickens and Ellen remained close for the rest of his life.

Dickens wrote twenty novels, among them such classics as *Nicholas Nickleby, Hard Times, A Tale Of Two Cities, Bleak House, The Old Curiosity Shop*, and *Great Expectations*.

In 1865, Dickens, along with his companion Ellen Ternan, was in a train accident. While he was not seriously injured, this marked the beginning of his physical decline. He subsequently suffered several strokes and died in 1870. His final novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* was unfinished on his desk.
Characters

Pip/Philip Pirrup - an orphan living with his much older sister and her kindly husband. Through the sponsorship of an anonymous benefactor, he goes to London to become a gentleman.

Joe Gargery - His brother-in-law, a blacksmith to whom Pip is supposed to be apprenticed. He is kindly and humble, a father figure for Pip.

Mrs. Joe - Pip's stern, often angry sister who administers punishment with "the tickler." She is twenty years older than Pip.

Uncle Pumblechook - Joe's pompous uncle, a successful merchant.

Abel Magwitch - a convict escaped from a prison ship who frightened the child Pip into helping him.

Miss Havisham - a wealthy elderly spinster who still wears the wedding dress and one shoe she wore when she was jilted at the altar many years earlier.

Estella - Havisham's adopted daughter, whom she has raised to be cruel to men in retaliation for her own humiliation.

Herbert Pocket - a Havisham relative, he's the "pale young gentleman" who as a boy challenges Pip to a fist fight. He later becomes Pip's roommate and best friend.

Matthew Pocket - Herbert's father, who tutors young would-be gentlemen.

Mr. Jaggers - a London lawyer who represents Miss Havisham. He serves both criminal and civil clients.

Mr. Wemmick - Jaggers' clerk.

Molly - Jaggers' servant, whom he saved from hanging.

Mr. Wopsle - the clerk in the church in Pip's village. He leaves to become an actor in London.

Compeyson - the man who jilted Miss Havisham as part of a plot against her. He escapes from the prison ship with Magwitch.

Biddy - a young woman from the village who is close to Pip's age. She cares for Mrs. Joe after she has been attacked.

Bentley Drummle - a crude young man from a prominent family. He, along with Pip, is being tutored in gentlemanly ways by Matthew Pocket.
SYNOPSIS

Pip, a young orphan who lives with his stern sister and her kindly husband in a village in Kent is accosted in the churchyard by an escaped convict in a leg iron who frightens him into providing food and a file from his home. Terrified, Pip tells no one what he has done. Sometime later, he is taken to the manor of Miss Havisham to play with her haughty adopted daughter, Estella, whom the older woman is training to break men’s hearts. Pip’s regular visits are practice for her, and she succeeds in enchanting him. Of course he knows that as a village boy he can never marry her. But as he begins an apprenticeship with his blacksmith brother-in-law, he receives an irresistible offer. An anonymous benefactor will provide him with a tutor in London, where he will train to become a gentleman. There, sharing a flat with Herbert Pocket, he befriends the law clerk Wemmick and eventually discovers the identity of his mysterious benefactor.

So, throughout life, our worst weaknesses and meannesses are usually committed for the sake of the people whom we most despise.

-Charles Dickens
Part of the genius of Charles Dickens is his ability to create vivid portraits that leap off the page. When we see Dickens’ characters on stage or screen, we recognize them immediately. We could pick out Scrooge, Mr. McCawber, or Madame DeFarge in a crowd. We know to walk away from someone who looks like Bill Sikes or Uriah Heep.

One way he does this is through the use of evocative names. In *Great Expectations*, Miss Havisham lives in a fantasy world; the impecunious Herbert Pocket has nothing in his own pockets. There’s a built-in contrast between Biddy, a homey village woman who is defined by caring for others, and Estella, the distant object of Pip’s affection and aspiration. Even his name, Pip, suggests a seed, a yet unformed creation.

Even more brilliant are the terse character descriptions that invite us into the novels’ worlds with all the skills of a caricaturist. In *Great Expectations*, Pip introduces us to a gallery of quickly sketched, but thoroughly recognizable characters. Even his own family is defined by how they look. “My sister, Mrs. Joe, with black hair and eyes,” says Pip, “had such a prevailing redness of skin that I sometimes used to wonder whether it was possible she washed herself with a nutmeg grater instead of soap.”

Dickens’ picture of Pip’s brother-in-law cues our sympathy. “Joe was a fair man, with curls of flaxen hair on each side of his smooth face, and with eyes of such a very undecided blue that they seemed to have somehow got mixed with their own whites.”

Mr. Jaggers is identified by “his large head, his dark complexion, his deep-set eyes, his bushy black eyebrows, his large watch-chain, his strong black dots of beard and whisker, and even the smell of scented soap on his great hand.”

Perhaps the most dramatic description is that of Miss Havisham:

...the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes ... Once, I had been taken to see some ghastly waxwork at the Fair, representing I know not what impossible personage lying in state. Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress, that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement. Now, waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. I should have cried out, if I could.

PHOTO: Illustration of Miss Havisham by Harry Furniss
Late in his life, while escorting some American friends around London, Charles Dickens stopped and pointed to a theater saying, “That’s what I should have done with my life.” Acting in the theater was an early passion for the boy who was to become the most famous writer of the Victorian age. He acted in dramas at school and devised plays at home for his family to perform. As a young man clerking in a law office, he attended the theater every night. It appears that a bout of illness on the morning of an important audition kept him from embarking on a performing career himself.

His affection for the theater is evident in several of his books, most notably through the pathetic troupe of Vincent Crummles in *Nicholas Nickleby* and the ridiculous performance by Mr. Wopsle in *Great Expectations*. At the height of his fame as a novelist, Dickens wrote several plays for theaters in the West End. Slavishly imitating the conventions of the theatrical performances he frequented, these were surprisingly lackluster affairs and only moderately successful. More impressive were the productions he staged for charity, which were performed by his family and famous friends and often staged at his home. Besides acting the star roles, he was involved in every aspect of these performances, including scenery and costumes. The audiences for these were the wealthy and politically important. Queen Victoria herself even attended the second evening of his production of Ben Jonson’s *Every Man in his Humour*. As his own life started to take on darker undertones, he asked his friend and fellow novelist Wilkie Collins to create a play for his amateur troupe. The result was the melodramatic *The Frozen Deep*, in which Dickens played the lead and was judged to be a very fine actor.

When his marriage was falling apart and his scandalous affair with the actress Ellen Ternan was in full flower, Dickens embarked on his first series of public readings, in which he performed scenes from his own works. These readings, performed in Europe and America brought him even more fame, even as their intensity took a toll on the aging author. His reading of the death of Nancy from *Oliver Twist* was a performance so vivid that audiences trembled in their seats. Indeed, it proved so taxing for him, that his doctor warned him against any further public readings. Of course, after a short rest during which he began his final, unfinished novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Dickens was back on stage. Now he appeared as a frail gentleman seated in a chair, hardly able to speak until the words of his characters issued from his mouth with all the strength he could muster. This last set of farewell performances probably hastened his death.

In this stage adaptation of *Great Expectations*, playwright Gale Childs Daly takes advantage of the innate theatricality of Charles Dickens’ work, with one actor playing Pip and the remaining cast members portraying five narrators. These narrators, through minimal costume changes and sparse use of props, become all the other characters: the country folk of Pip’s Kentish village and the various citizens of teeming London.

The style takes advantage of the author’s distinctive style of characterization, the Dickens shorthand that helps us identify characters so quickly and see them so indelibly. It engages the audience’s imagination and makes them complicit in creating Pip’s world. This also meshes closely with the way that Dickens approached his famous reading series by playing all characters. A consummate actor, he would become all the characters, shifting his voice and changing his bearing to bring his heroes, villains, and victims to life. Charles Dickens created a vivid theater of the mind on the page and on the stage.
David Copperfield, Great Expectations, and Autobiography

Both David Copperfield and Great Expectations, the two novels that bookend Dickens’ greatest success, are first person coming-of-age stories with a central character who survives a harrowing youth to emerge into adulthood firmly ensconced in the Victorian middle class. Dickens himself recognized the similarities between the two protagonists’ situations, and when plotting Great Expectations, he consulted Copperfield to be sure that he wasn’t reusing material. The result is a novel that evokes the regrets of a writer who has seen great success at great emotional expense.

David Copperfield contains many clearly autobiographical elements. David, like Dickens, attended a harsh school and toiled in a factory as a child. The impecunious but genial Mr. McCawber, who lands in debtor’s prison with his entire family, is an affectionate portrait of the author’s own father. The beautiful but frivolous Dora could be drawn from Dickens’ first love, Maria Beadnell, who rejected him because of his low station and seemingly bleak prospects. But despite the Dickensian brushes with tragedy and melodrama, Copperfield has a sunniness to it. David is a plucky noble fellow who ends up with practical loving Agnes after the childlike Dora dies, just as Dickens married Catherine Hogarth after having his heart broken by Beadnell.

Great Expectations pulls from fewer literal autobiographical strands, but appears to be a spiritual and psychological x-ray of the author. Written after his divorce and during his relationship with actress Ellen Ternan, the novel presents a central figure who is wracked by guilt and social insecurity. Pip is scarred by his childhood aid to the criminal Magwitch, whom he feeds and helps to escape. Magwitch is both the source and the symbol of the unworthiness he feels in the face of his adult success.

In Great Expectations, the Dickens style is still sharp and entertaining, and the supporting characters are vividly drawn, but their personalities and fates often enforce the novel’s rueful tone. Practical Biddy, who mirrors Copperfield’s Agnes, ends up with Joe Gargery instead of the protagonist. The haughty Estella, unlike childlike Dora, appears almost irredeemable. Instead of the enthusiastic eccentric Aunt Betsy Trotwood, who changes David’s life, Pip suspects the bitter and unbalanced Miss Havisham is his benefactor, only to find out that he is actually being fostered by a convict, which makes his success feel illegitimate. Even the novel’s briefly sketched ending, hinting at a future for Pip with a chastened Estella, feels unnatural and was actually substituted for a bleaker denouement at the last minute.
Dickens wrote two endings for *Great Expectations*. After reading both, discuss which ending is more enjoyable. Which is more fitting with the mood of the entire piece? Is the change in Estella at the end of the published ending realistic?

Like many of Dickens books, *Great Expectations* presents social criticism. It says something about the society in which it was written. What are some of the ideas and practices Dickens criticizes? Are any of those still present in our own society?

Much of *Great Expectations* deals with the effects of money on people’s lives. Pip’s life changes with his anonymous gift. Are all the changes good? Does he lose anything? If you were the hero of *Great Expectations* would you continue to accept the money after you learned its source?

Discuss the title of the novel and the play. How do Pip’s expectations turn out? Is he the only character with *Great Expectations*? Is there some irony in the title?
Dickens creates vivid portraits with words. Using those brilliant descriptions, create a visual portrait of a character from *Great Expectations*. You may draw or paint a picture, or if you choose, create a collage using pictures from magazines.

Before seeing the play, small groups of students can choose scenes from the book to adapt into a play scene. The groups may stage those scenes with scripts in hand. After seeing the play, the class can compare their adaptations with playwright’s scenes.

Aside from their physical appearances, characters can be distinguished by the objects they cherish, use, or by which they are identified. Snatches of fabric, things they might carry, and pieces that may be symbolic to their personalities give us clues to their inner lives. Create vision boards or collages that feature some of these important objects for the following characters: Pip, Joe, Estella, Miss Havisham, and Magwitch.
elements of drama

PLOT
What is the story line? What happened before the play started? What do the characters want? What do they do to achieve their goals? What do they stand to gain/lose?

THEME
What ideas are wrestled with in the play? What questions does the play pose? Does it present an opinion?

CHARACTER
Who are the people in the story? What are their relationships? Why do they do what they do? How does age/status/etc. affect them?

LANGUAGE
What do the characters say? How do they say it? When do they say it?

MUSIC
How do music and sound help to tell the story?

SPECTACLE
How do the elements come together to create the whole performance?

Other Elements: Conflict/Resolution, Action, Improvisation, Non-verbal communication, Staging, Humor, Realism and other styles, Metaphor, Language, Tone, Pattern & Repetition, Emotion, Point of view.

Any piece of theatre comprises multiple art forms. As you explore this production with your students, examine the use of:

WRITING
VISUAL ART/DESIGN
MUSIC/SOUND
DANCE/MOVEMENT

ACTIVITY
At its core, drama is about characters working toward goals and overcoming obstacles. Ask students to use their bodies and voices to create characters who are: very old, very young, very strong, very weak, very tired, very energetic, very cold, very warm. Have their characters interact with others. Give them an objective to fulfill despite environmental obstacles. Later, recap by asking how these obstacles affected their characters and the pursuit of their objectives.

INQUIRY
How are each of these art forms used in this production? Why are they used? How do they help to tell the story?
**elements of design**

**LINE** can have length, width, texture, direction, and curve. There are five basic varieties: vertical, horizontal, diagonal, curved, and zig-zag.

**SHAPE** is two-dimensional and encloses space. It can be geometric (e.g. squares and circles), man-made, or free-form.

**FORM** is three-dimensional. It encloses space and fills space. It can be geometric (e.g. cubes and cylinders), man-made, or free-form.

**COLOR** has three basic properties: **HUE** is the name of the color (e.g. red, blue, green), **INTENSITY** is the strength of the color (bright or dull), **VALUE** is the range of lightness to darkness.

**TEXTURE** refers to the “feel” of an object’s surface. It can be smooth, rough, soft, etc. Textures may be **ACTUAL** (able to be felt) or **IMPLIED** (suggested visually through the artist’s technique).

**SPACE** is defined and determined by shapes and forms. Positive space is enclosed by shapes and forms, while negative space exists around them.
Sources and Resources:

Dickens and the Theater


Biography


Great Expectations


Great Expectations Filmography

Not surprisingly, Dickens’ plot-filled, character-rich novels have had many film adaptations. The first film version of *Great Expectations* was released in 1917 and starred Jack Pickford. There was even a Taiwanese version in 1955 starring a very young Bruce Lee. Among the most important are the following:

*Great Expectations*, 1946. Directed by David Lean, this black and white British film is the definitive screen version. It stars John Mills, Toby Wager, Jean Simmons, and Valerie Hobson.

*Great Expectations*, 1974. This made for TV version stars Michael York and Sarah Miles. Available to stream on Amazon.


VIDEO

There are several versions of *Great Expectations* posted on Youtube. The most useful may be *Great Books: Great Expectations*, a fine 52 minute introduction to the story and the age using segments of several versions as Victorian photos, period illustrations and a reading by Ethan Hawke and commentary by novelist John Irving.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGFnor_V_Dg.
GREAT EXPECTATIONS
OCTOBER 19 – NOVEMBER 6

DISNEY AND
CAMERON MACKINTOSH’S
MARY POPPINS
NOVEMBER 26 – JANUARY 8

DISGRACED
JANUARY 25 – FEBRUARY 12

AIN’T MISBEHAVIN’
THE FATS WALLER
MUSICAL SHOW
MARCH 1 – 26

HOW I LEARNED
TO DRIVE
APRIL 5 – 23

DEATHTRAP
MAY 10 – 28

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