

THE MOST HAPPY FELLA

Goodspeed Opera House Sept 20 - Dec 1, 2013

BOOK, MUSIC AND LYRICS BY FRANK LOESSER

LIGHTING DESIGN BY
JOHN LASITER

COSTUME DESIGN BY THOMAS LEGALLY

SCENIC DESIGN BY
MICHAEL SCHWEIKARDT

CHOREOGRAPHED BY PARKER ESSE

DIRECTED BY ROB RUGGIERO

PRODUCED FOR GOODSPEED

MUSICALS BY

MICHAEL P. PRICE



5tudent Guide to the Theatre TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Show: The Story	٠
About the Show: The Characters	∠
About the Show: The Writer	5
Frank Loesser	6
Behind the Scenes: Costume Design	7
Behind the Scenes: Set Design	8
Immigration to California	9
Grape Farming in California	.10
Imparare L'Italiano!	.11
Resources	.12
How To Be an Awesome Audience Member	.13

The Student Guide for *The Most Happy Fella* was prepared by: Joshua S. Ritter, M.F.A, Education & Library Director Christine Hopkins, M.A, Education & Library Assistant Katherine Griswold, Creative Content Manager

Goodspeed's Student Guide can be found on our website: www.goodspeed.org/pages/guides

SHOW SYNOPSIS THE STORY

ACT ONE

In the early 1950s, the staff of the Golden Gate Restaurant located in San Francisco, California, prepares to close the restaurant for the evening. Two tired waitresses, Cleo and Rosabella, sigh after a long day of work.

As they continue their closing routine, Amy notices an odd tip that was left on one of her tables. She sees that a customer, who she was too busy to fully notice, left her a tie-pin and a flattering note. Antonio Esposito, Tony for short, signed the note and he wrote his address requesting that "Rosabella" write to him. Rosabella is the nickname he uses for Amy since he does not know her name.

Rosabella responds to Tony's note and the two begin a love affair through letter-writing. Tony, back at his home in Napa Valley, says he's "the most happy fella" and hopes that Rosabella will come to his grape farm to marry him. In her most recent letter, Rosabella includes a picture of herself and asks that, before she visits his home, Tony send a picture of himself to her.

Tony's jealous sister, Marie, points out that Tony is not a young man anymore nor is he good-looking or smart. Feeling insecure, Tony sends Rosabella a picture of his younger and more handsome foreman, Joe.

In preparation for Rosabella's arrival, Tony, his neighbors, and his friends decorate for a wedding celebration. Everyone is there to welcome her, including Joe—whom Tony thought had another job lined up and would be gone by the time Rosabella arrived.

Quickly after Rosabella arrives, she and Joe realize the confusion that Tony has caused and she wants to leave. As she tries to exit, a woman screams and everyone sees that Tony has been hurt. There was a terrible accident and Tony's truck turned over three times.

Rosabella, suitcase in hand, is overwhelmed and wants to leave immediately, but Tony, barely conscious, asks that she marry him before his pain medication makes him passout. Feeling sympathetic and overwrought, Rosabella agrees and the town priest marries them in Tony's house.

After the ceremony, Rosabella, trying to hold back tears, removes herself from the house. Joe, who was standing outside, attempts to comfort her and the two unexpectedly end up kissing. The curtain closes as the kiss escalates into a passionate embrace.

ACT TWO

The married couple, Rosabella and Tony, agree to become more acquainted with each other. The two are enjoying their time together and as Rosabella begins to steer Tony's wheelchair offstage, Cleo unexpectedly enters! Tony confesses that he offered her a job on the farm so Rosabella wouldn't be so lonely. Rosabella, touched by the gesture, admits to Tony that she likes it at the vineyard and that Tony is a nice, kind man.

As Cleo is settling in at the vineyard, she and Herman, a happy-go-lucky employee on Tony's grape farm, begin a quiet love affair. They spend a great deal of time together but Cleo becomes frustrated because Herman lets people push him around and doesn't stand up for what he cares about.

Meanwhile, Rosabella confesses to Tony that she loves him very much but she hates that he treats her like a child rather than a wife. Tony is elated with the information and professes that the love is mutual. He promises to treat her like his wife and they plan a large party to celebrate their love. At the party, neighbors and friends are having a wonderful time but Rosabella suddenly collapses and falls to the ground. After an examination, the doctor informs Rosabella that she is pregnant.

Rosabella tells Tony the truth and he immediately inquires who is responsible. Remembering her one-night fling when she had first arrived, Rosabella informs Tony that the father is Joe. Furious with her, Tony demands that Rosabella leave. She goes to pack her things and Tony is left alone. As he recalls how wonderful it's been getting to know Rosabella and being married to her, Tony realizes that he can forgive her.

Cleo enters as Tony comes to this revelation and encourages him to go after Rosabella. Marie also enters but she continues to put him down and discourages him from trying to get Rosabella back. Marie and Cleo get into a scuffle and Pasquale, another of Tony's employees, attempts to intervene. Just as Pasquale places himself between the two women, Herman walks in and sees Pasquale trying to separate them and accidentally pushes Cleo a little too hard leaving her sprawled on the ground. Herman, filled with anger for the first time, defends Cleo and slugs Pasquale. Cleo's love and admiration for Herman returns because he finally stands up for someone he cares about.

Meanwhile, Tony finds Rosabella just as she is about to leave town. The two reconcile and decide to raise the child together. They go back to Tony's vineyard where they have a large party.



Eloise Kropp, Natalie Hill, Kevin Vortmann, Christine Cornell, and Seth Danner. ©Diane Sobolewski.

ABOUT THE SHOW THE CHARACTERS



Rosabella (Mamie Parris) and Tony (Bill Nolte). ©Diane Sobolewski.



Herman (Kevin Vortmann) and Cleo (Natalie Hill). ©Diane Sobolewski.

TONY: A middle-aged grape farmer who immigrated to the Napa Valley from Italy. He is big, exuberant, well-liked in his neighborhood and is known to be energetic and friendly. Tony cares deeply for the people in his life and tries to make his vineyard an enjoyable place to live and work. He can be impulsive and unpredictable but also, at times, lacks self-confidence.

ROSABELLA: A spirited waitress at a small restaurant in San Francisco. Rosabella believes in true love and takes a great leap of faith in order to find it. She is beautiful, young, and dreams of life's possibilities. Rosabella is empathetic towards the struggles of others and puts forth an effort to help in any way she can.

MARIE: Tony's jealous and controlling sister. She is overwhelmingly present in Tony's life, maintains a maternal presence over him, and always keeps him at an arm's length. She is ill-tempered and constantly reminds Tony of his flaws.

JOE: The foreman of Tony's vineyard, Joe is handsome and young. He is career-driven and is seeking new job prospects. He comes across as a loner but he can also be very seductive.

CLEO: Rosabella's former coworker from the restaurant. Cleo is boisterous, playful, silly, and often brings humor into any situation. She always speaks her mind and tries to help the people she loves.

HERMAN: A happy-go-lucky worker on Tony's land. Herman likes everyone he meets and befriends all who cross his path. Herman is receptive to the suggestions of others, especially Cleo.

CICCIO: A handyman on Tony's grape farm.

PASQUALE: A cook on Tony's grape farm.

GUISEPPE: A watchman on Tony's grape farm.

ABOUT THE SHOW THE WRITER





CLICK HERE to listen to an NPR story on Frank Loesser





CLICK HERE to watch a clip from "Heart and Soul: The Life and Magic of Frank Loesser." FRANK LOESSER was born on June 29, 1910 in New York City. Although Loesser's father was a classical piano teacher, Loesser never formally studied music. As a child, Loesser fell in love with pop music, which inspired him to write his first song, "The May Party" at the age of six.

In his early teens, Loesser taught himself to play the harmonica and the piano. He attended Townsend Harris High School and later went on to New York City College but he dropped out during the Great Depression. Loesser took on many jobs during this time including selling newspapers, advertising, and editing a newspaper published in New Rochelle, NY.

In the 1930s, Loesser began singing and playing piano in New York nightclubs. This was when he began writing and performing his own music and lyrics. He later collaborated with

Irving Actman and the two wrote five songs for *The Illustrators Show* which opened in 1936 and closed after 5 performances. Loesser married Lynn Garland in 1936 and they gave birth to a son and daughter.

After the closing of *The Illustrators* Show, Universal Studios and Paramount Pictures in Hollywood

offered Loesser the opportunity to write songs for their films. In 1939, Loesser made his composing debut with music and lyrics for the title song of the film Seventeen.

In the 1940s, Loesser created his own music publishing company, Frank Music Corporation. His goal was to discover and develop new and popular young composers and lyricists. This corporation was instrumental in furthering the careers of many lyricists and composers including Richard Adler, Jerry Ross, and Meredith Wilson.

When World War II came, Loesser continued to write music and lyrics for over sixty films and was assigned to military special services. He provided

music and lyrics for camp shows. It was during this time that he composed the wartime hit, "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition."

After the war, Loesser went back home to New York and began writing Where's Charley. It opened on October 11, 1948 and was Loesser's first major hit. This was followed by Guys and Dolls, which opened on November 24, 1950 and won the Tony Award for Best Musical. During this time, he also wrote many hit Tin Pan Alley style songs including "What Are You Doing New Years Eve?" and "Baby, It's Cold Outside."

On May 3, 1956, Loesser's next major achievement, The Most Happy Fella, opened on Broadway. It ran for two years and took five years for Loesser to write the book and lyrics. It was also the first show recorded in its entirety by Columbia Records. In 1959, Loesser divorced from Lynn Garland and was married to The Most Happy Fella star, Jo Sullivan. They had two daughters together.

In 1960, Loesser's *Greenwillow* opened on Broadway. It received seven Tony Award nominations but no wins. The show ran for 95 performances at the Alvin Theatre.

In 1961, Loesser wrote another hit, How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying, which won the Pulitzer Prize and seven Tony Awards. The show ran for four years at the 46th Street Theatre. It is the longest running of any Loesser show.

Frank Loesser died of lung cancer at the age of 59 in 1969.

In 1976, Frank Music Corporation was absorbed by Paul McCartney's music publishing company, MPL Communications. In 1997, Jo Sullivan Loesser created Frank Loesser Enterprises to help manage Frank Loesser's work and to ensure the development of new Loesser projects.

FRANK LOESSER



FRANK LOESSER'S NOTABLE SONGS & MUSICALS

Songs (click to listen)

1937: "Moon of Manakoora"

1938: "Heart and Soul"

1938: "Two Sleepy People"

1942: "I Don't Want to Walk Without You"

1942: "Can't Get Out of This Mood"

1942: "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition"

1943: "Let's Get Lost"

1943: "The Ballad of Rodger Young"

1944: "Baby, It's Cold Outside"

1944: "Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year"

1947: "What Are You Doing New Year's Eve?"

1947: "I Wish I Didn't Love You So"

1948: "On a Slow Boat to China"

1952: "Inch Worm"

1952: "Thumbelina"

1952: "Wonderful Copenhagen"

Musicals

1948: "Where's Charley?"

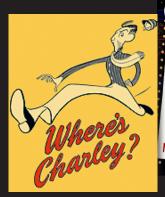
1950: "Guys and Dolls"

1956: "The Most Happy Fella"

1960: "Greenwillow"

1961: "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying"

1965: "Pleasures and Palaces"



THE PROCESS

Frank Loesser was a man of many talents. To help himself write areat music, he was known for seeking other creative outlets to find inspiration. Loesser drew, painted, sculpted and was a woodworker. When searching for inspiration, Loesser frequently asked his first wife, Lynn Garland, to drive him around the beautiful California landscape until an idea sparked. He would then go immediately to his home, sit at his piano, and play until something came together. Loesser also was a light sleeper; he rarely slept for more than four hours at a time and worked on his music in the hours between.

COMPOSITION

Frank Loesser was known for writing compositions that fell into many genres. More specifically, he gained an esteemed reputation for his songs in The Most Happy Fella which fell into the show tunes and opera genres. A show tune is a song written as part of a musical theatre score and serves in telling the story of a stage musical. A show tune fits into the context of a story. Opera is characterized by a Western classical music sound. It originated in Italy during the 16th century and consists of solo and choral singing, acting, and dancing all combined into a stage spectacle.

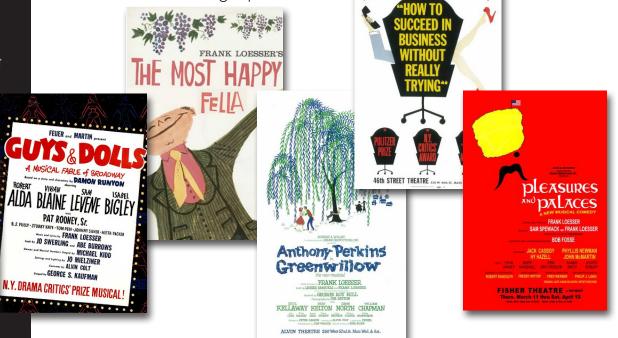
Frank Loesser's musicals, across the board, showcased many compositional techniques and styles. He wrote arias, duets, trios, and choral numbers while also writing pop standards and ballads.

Although Loesser is most commonly known for writing musical hits, he also built his reputation as a versatile composer by writing popular novelty, patriotic, and holiday songs. He also became known for his many Hollywood composition credits. He wrote more than 1,500 songs, many of which appeared on the top of the music charts.

THE DREAM

In his early career, Loesser expressed interest in transitioning from songwriting and movie composing to writing the music and lyrics for musicals. In 1948, he began this transition with Where's Charley and continued writing musical theatre pieces until 1965, ending with Pleasures and Places. Five of the six compositions within those years went to Broadway. Throughout his career, Loesser received several Tony Awards, a Grammy Award, and the Pulitzer Prize for his music and lyrics.

the Cefebrated Musical Comedul



BEHIND THE SCENES COSTUMES BY THOMAS CHARLES LEGALLEY

1950s FASION

In the 1950s, women's fashion was largely dictated by their focus on rearing children and keeping house. Thus, there was an emphasis on practical, but attractive housedresses, not only suitable for household chores, but for running errands or dropping off the kids at school.

The hourglass silhouette featuring full skirts reigned supreme. The emphasis on this silhouette created a dependency on foundation garments like bullet bras, corsets, waistcinchers and girdles to pull the waist in and crinoline to lift and shape full skirts.

The '50s brought about ready-to-wear fashion and standardized sizing for the garment industry. America led the way with readyto-wear, making high fashion affordable to the general population.



BEHIND THE SCENES SCENERY BY MICHAEL SCHWEIKARDT



IMMIGRATION TO CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH

Beginning on January 24, 1848, James Marshall discovered gold at Sutter's Mill in Coloma, California. Word spread that there was gold free for the taking in California, causing people from all over to flock to California to find their fortunes. In 1848, a large population of Asian immigrants came to the U.S. after hearing stories of a land filled with gold. Civil war, homelessness, and famine in China enticed its people to head to the United States for a better life. The Chinese learned of a place in California called "Gold Mountain" where gold covered the ground. In steamships, many Chinese arrived in San Francisco harbor beginning California's Gold Rush.

Chinese immigrants. DN-0089489, Chicago Daily News negatives collection, Chicago History Museum

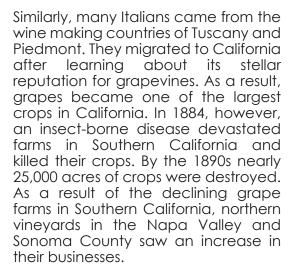
Today, California is home to more than ten million immigrants. As a result of Chinese immigrants and their families settling in California in the early 1800s, large populations of California immigrants still originate from Asian countries. In the 1880s, however, many Italian immigrants faced struggles with overpopulation and the French capture of the Italian wine country; so many Italian people chose to leave their homes as

well. The Italians were some of the first European settlers to arrive in California. Most immigrants traveled through Ellis Island in New York and, over time,

migrated to California. Today, roughly four of the ten million immigrants in California come from Italy.

FROM ITALY TO CALIFORNIA

California was attractive to Italians because had a small immigrant Cities population. New York were known for being overpopulated with immigrant communities. Also, California was known for having a Mediterranean climate like Italy. Immigrants needed this climate for the type of crops that they were used to growing in their homeland. California had the perfect soil for popular Italian foods like egaplant, artichokes, broccoli, lemons, and grapes.



In The Most Happy Fella, Tony and much of his staff are immigrants from Italy. They came to California looking for more opportunities and found them in the beautiful landscape of Napa Valley.



Italian immigrants arriving on Ellis Island, 1905.

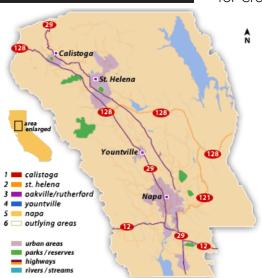
GRAPE FARMING IN CALIFORNIA

GLOSSARY

Viticulture: the cultivation, study, and production of grapes and grapevines.

Viniculture: when the cultivated grapes are used for wine making.

Fermentation: the process of bacteria, such as yeast, breaking down sugars into alcohol.



to San Francisco

HISTORY OF VITICULTURE

Viticulture, or the study of grapes, became popular in California in the late 1700s. Friars from Spain traveled to California to plant and pick grapes for the production of sacramental wines.

In the 1800s, more travelers came to California, this time looking for gold. The California Gold Rush increased the state population significantly and many realized the land's potential for grape farming and wine production.

HISTORY OF VINICULTURE

Grapes are the one necessary ingredient for creating wine. A vintner must have

access to a grape farm in order to start a profitable business. The process begins with picking fresh grapes and then follows a series of steps including **fermentation**.

Grapevines are one of the largest fruit crops in the world. In order to grow, the plants need specific weather conditions. The summers need to be warm and dry and winters cannot be constantly cold. Continuous cold temperatures kill grapevines very quickly. High humidity also kills grapevines.

NAPA VALLEY

to Sacramento ➤ California is known for its rich farming industry. More specifically, the state has many highly esteemed grape cultivating regions. One of these regions, Napa Valley, is located about 50 miles northeast of San Francisco in the Bay Area and is

the setting for *The Most Happy Fella*. The valley itself is roughly 30 miles long and 5 miles wide.

Napa Valley is one of the most well-known grape farming and wine producing regions in the United States. It was discovered in 1836 by George Calvert Yount and other settlers who recognized the land's potential for cultivating grapes. Yount was the first to settle on the land and established himself in a small town in Napa Valley, now called Yountville. In 1861, Charles Krug opened the first commercial winery in the Napa Valley and by 1889 more than 140 wineries existed in the Valley.

NAPA VALLEY DURING AND AFTER PROHIBITION

From 1920 through 1933, prohibition hit the United States and thus the sale, production, and transportation of alcohol were illegal. As a result, grape farming and the wine industry drastically plummeted. Vintners from the Napa Valley and the surrounding areas had to find other jobs during this time period. Some wineries and grape farms were able to remain open under the exception of production of wine for sacramental purposes. For the most part, however, California vineyards were abandoned during Prohibition and the industry declined.

In 1933, the Napa Valley immediately began recovering from Prohibition and vintners came back to replenish the land. In 1944, a group of Napa Valley vintners met and created a plan to make the Valley more accessible for visitors. As a result, many restaurants opened in the area and Napa wines were being sold domestically and abroad.

Today, there are 400 wineries in Napa Valley and it is considered one of the premiere grape growing and wine producing regions in the world. It is estimated that roughly 4.7 million people visit Napa Valley each year.

In The Most Happy Fella, Tony owns a grape farm that produces wine. The musical takes place in the 1950s—a time when Napa Valley was thriving and just beginning to attract the considerable amount of tourists that now come to the beautiful wine country.

IMPARARE L'ITALIANO! (LEARN ITALIAN!)

IT'S A GREAT BIG ITALIAN SPOSALIZIO!

Italy has some interesting wedding traditions that were at one time common throughout the country and although a few may still be followed today, most have gone by the wayside.

The following are examples:

- The groom used to carry a piece of iron (toc ferro) in his pocket to ward off evil spirits, or mal 'occhio.
- Sunday was considered the only acceptable day for a wedding if the married couple was to have a life of happiness. Being married on other days of the week was considered unlucky. The only exception to this was Saturday, which was generally reserved for widows remarrying.
- The bride traditionally spent the night before the wedding at her parents' home and wore green, as this was considered to bring good luck and the promise of fertility.
- The bride and groom broke a vase or a glass, and the number of shattered pieces predicted the number of years of married bliss.

Throughout The Most Happy Fella the characters use Italian words and phrases in their speech and in songs. See if you can match some of these Italian words that are used in the musical with their English counterparts.

- 1. Abbondanza
- a. Wedding
- 2. Andiamo
- b. Abundance
- 3. Bellisima
- c. Suitcase
- 4. Benvenuta
- d. Beautiful

5. Fiori

- e. Flowers
- 6. Formaggio
- f. Cheese
- 7. Frutta
- a. Gifts
- 8. Luminosa
- h. Fans
- 9. Regali
- i. Fruit
- 7. Regui
- 1. 11011
- .

10. Sposalizio

- j. Go!
- 11. Valigia
- k. Welcome
- 12. Ventagli
- I. Light



DID YOU KNOW...

According to the Bologna statistics of the European Union, Italian is spoken as a native language by 59 million people in the EU, which is 13% of the population. Italian is spoken as a second language by 14 million or 3% of the EU population. The total number of Italian speakers worldwide is 85 million.

Although most Italian speakers are from Italy, Italian is actually one of Switzerland's four official languages. It is studied and learned in all swiss schools and spoken as a native language by the large number of Italian immigrants who live in the country. It is also the official language of San Marino and the primary language of the Vatican City.

RESOURCES

IMMIGRATION

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NAPA VALLEY, GRAPE FARMING, WINERIES

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THE MOST HAPPY FELLA, FRANK LOESSER, THE CHARACTERS

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VINICULTURE AND VITICULTURE

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HOW TO BE AN AWESOME AUDIENCE MEMBER

Seeing a musical at the Goodspeed Opera House is a unique and exciting experience. All the members of the production, both cast and crew, work hard to give you a great show. As an audience member, you also have an important job. You must help the performers give their best performance possible. You can do this by practicing these rules of theater etiquette:

- Do laugh when the performance is funny.
- Do applaud when the performance is over. Applause is how you say "Thank you" to the performer. The actors will bow as you applaud. That is how they say "Thank you for coming."
- Do stand and applaud if you thought the show was outstanding.
- Don't forget to turn off your cell phone. A ringing or buzzing phone can be very distracting. It can also be embarrassing for you if it is your phone that is disrupting the show!
- Don't text during the performance.
- Make sure to visit the restroom before the production begins.
- Don't speak or whisper during the performance...whispering is still speaking, so only in an emergency should whispering occur.
- Remember that the overture (introductory music) in musical theatre is part of the performance, so remain silent when the show begins.
- Don't take pictures during the performance. It can be very distracting to the actors and it can result in an accident.
- Don't put your feet up on the seats or kick the seat in front of you.
- Do sit ONLY when your seat is in the folded down position.
- Do remain in your seat for the entire performance. If you must leave, exit during intermission. In an emergency, calmly walk toward the nearest exit.



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF GOODSPEED'S EXCITING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN 2013 & 2014!

AUDITION MASTER CLASS • Oct 27, 2013

Preparing a Successful Musical Theatre College Audition

Goodspeed's Audition Master Class is a one-day workshop with Brent Wagner, Chair of the acclaimed Musical Theatre Department at the University of Michigan.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES • Oct 26 & Dec 14, 2013

Directing a High School Production

Earn your CEU Credits with Goodspeed! This seminar series designed especially for teachers will address the challenges that arise in directing high school productions.

SCENE PAINTING INTENSIVE

SPECIAL SKILLS SEMINAR: BACKDROP PAINTING FOR THE THEATRE • Jan 20 - 26, 2014

Don't miss this program for college-age participants, professionals, and educators.

MUSIC DIRECTION INTENSIVE • Jan 20 - 26, 2014

During this week-long intensive, participants will use the latest technology to receive hands on training from internationally renowned Music Direction experts in the management and implementation of the audition, rehearsal, and orchestration processes.

AUDITION INTENSIVE • Aug 1 - 3, 2014

Goodspeed's Audition Intensive is a dynamic three-day program to help high school Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors prepare for college musical theatre auditions.

MUSICAL THEATRE DANCE INTENSIVE • Aug 3 - 10, 2014

Goodspeed's Dance Intensive is designed as a musical theatre dance boot camp for college age performers and young professionals. Sessions are focused on preparing dancers for professional musical theatre auditions and the week will culminate with a full Broadway style mock audition.

GOODSPEED MUSICAL THEATRE ACADEMY • Summer 2014

Goospeed is offering a summer musical theatre day camp for students beginning grades 3 through 9. It will be at the Norma Terris Theatre and will include dance, acting, voice, arts & crafts, and engaging fun outdoor activities!

MUSICAL MINDS

A team of world class performers and staff from Goodspeed Musicals can visit your location to give an educational presentation. The Musical Minds experience is appropriate for any age level and the program incorporates live dance, music, and acting to improve any group's appreciation of musical theatre.

INTERNSHIP & APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Goodspeed's Administrative Internship and Technical Apprenticeship programs serve as a training ground for aspiring theatre professionals by providing experiential learning, networking opportunities, regular seminars taught by staff members, and bimonthly meetings with members of the senior staff.

OBSERVERSHIP PROGRAM

This tuition-based program allows talented young theatre artists to shadow Goodspeed's Director, Choreographer, or Music Director during rehearsals for a Goodspeed Opera House or Norma Terris production.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT www.goodspeed.org/education-library

The Max Showalter Center for Education in Musical Theatre