



THE STAGE MUSICAL

BASED ON THE *Disney* FILM

PRODUCTION HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the jungle! Whether you were introduced to the Ape-Man through the classic Edgar Rice Burroughs novels, comic books, Johnny Weissmuller films, American television series, Disney’s hit animated movie or this stage musical, I’m sure you have come to love Tarzan as so many others have. Working on this show as the associate to the ingenious director/designer Bob Crowley for nearly a decade – and being inspired each night by the incomparable music and lyrics of Phil Collins – has only deepened that love for me.

This moving story of an innocent human boy raised among wild apes who grows up to become an open-hearted, accomplished, intelligent young man has been wonderfully retold for the stage by playwright David Henry Hwang. Realizing that true family provides unconditional love, not just biology, is the greatest message for anyone of any age to learn. Collins brilliantly musicalized this moment with Tarzan’s show-stopping 11-o’clock solo number, “Everything That I Am.”



Josh Strickland, Original Broadway Cast

This script has crafted the best elements of the story’s countless incarnations over the past century into one of the most daring stage musicals of our era. Bursting with African jungle adventure, a fresh young love story, and a dramatic journey of self-discovery, *Tarzan* will delight and deliver no matter which aspects you highlight in your production.

This is now your show. *Tarzan* offers every member of your company an unforgettable theatrical experience. Physicalize it. Musicalize it. Emotionalize it. Above all, live and breathe it. Your cheering audiences will affirm your commitment every night!

—Jeff Lee, Associate Director, Disney Theatrical Productions

INTRODUCTION

Edgar Rice Burroughs introduced Tarzan to the world in the October 1912 issue of *All Story Magazine*. An instant sensation, the character was a distinctly 20th-century hero – a man who “could spring twenty feet across space at the dizzying height of the forest top and grab with unerring precision the limb of a tree waving wildly in the path of an approaching tornado.” As exotic as the jungle he inhabits, Tarzan embodies the quintessential modern journey, the discovery of self: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where do I belong?

Tarzan has been featured in magazines, comic books, novels, radio and television programs, and nearly 50 motion pictures, including Disney’s 1999 animated feature. In 2006, Disney Theatrical Productions brought *Tarzan* to Broadway. The oft-told story was retold onstage by playwright David Henry Hwang and songwriter Phil Collins in a spectacular production conceived, designed and directed by Bob Crowley. The musical was then further developed abroad in The Netherlands and Germany and in select licensed regional productions in the United States.

Tarzan joined the collection of Disney musicals in the Music Theatre International (MTI) catalog in 2012. This Production Handbook, which includes insight into Disney’s development and production process and recommendations from licensed pilot productions, has been compiled by the staff at Disney Theatrical Group to help support dynamic and engaging new productions of the show.



Original Broadway Cast

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE

Barely surviving a shipwreck off the West African coast, a young English couple constructs a tree house to protect their newborn child. Nearby, among a tribe of gorillas, the silverback bull-ape Kerchak guards his mate Kala and their infant son (**Two Worlds**). The peace is shattered when a leopard runs off with the tiny ape and then emerges to kill the human parents. Mourning her lost son, Kala hears a lonely cry from above and rescues the human baby from the leopard. Kala names the hairless creature “Tarzan” and determines to give him a home, despite Kerchak’s refusal to accept the orphan as his son (**You’ll Be in My Heart**).



Jenn Gambatese and Josh Strickland, Original Broadway Cast

As years pass, Kala lavishes love and encouragement on Tarzan. Although the awkward ape-boy cannot keep up with the tribe, the lighthearted young ape Terk befriends him (**Who Better Than Me**). When Kerchak, who views Tarzan as a threat, discovers that the boy has innocently fashioned a spear, he exiles him from the others (**No Other Way**). Knowing her son won’t survive alone, Kala heads off to find him... despairing by the water’s edge (**I Need to Know**). Kala assures the boy that although he looks different, under the skin they are just the same.

Despite his challenging childhood, Tarzan grows up athletic and resourceful (**Son of Man**). Kala tries to convince Kerchak to accept the adult Tarzan (**Sure As Sun Turns to Moon**), but the bull-ape is resolute until Tarzan snares and kills the leopard that has terrorized the tribe for so long. Suddenly, gunshots blast through the jungle, the apes run off, but Tarzan investigates.

Elsewhere in the jungle, naturalist Jane Porter has just arrived. She is overwhelmed by the thrillingly diverse jungle life (**Waiting for This Moment**). Just as a giant beast bears down on her, Tarzan swings in to save this foreign yet strangely familiar creature (**Different**). Tarzan and Jane carefully assess each other as the curtain falls on Act One.

SYNOPSIS

ACT TWO

Terk and the apes “redecorate” the Porter expedition site (**Trashin’ the Camp**). Returning to camp with Tarzan, Jane is stunned by the presence of the gorillas, until Kerchak arrives, dispersing them. Jane tries to convince her eccentric father, Professor Porter, and their mercenary guide, Mr. Clayton, that she discovered a wild man and a tribe of apes.

Kerchak forbids contact with the humans, but Tarzan is irresistibly drawn to Jane again and again. Porter notices Jane’s transformation from bookish girl to a woman in love (**Like No Man I’ve Ever Seen**). Seeing the ape-man as a distraction from the mission to find real apes, Clayton is irritated as Jane teaches Tarzan more and more about humans (**Strangers Like Me**).

As she grasps that the apes are Tarzan’s family, Jane’s affection for this gentle “wild man” grows (**For the First Time**). Jane begs Porter to scrap plans to capture gorillas – but Clayton, set on capturing his prize, tricks Tarzan into leading the humans to the nesting grounds. Terk agrees to help Tarzan by keeping Kerchak away (**Who Better Than Me – Reprise**). But Kerchak appears anyway, scattering the humans and demanding that Tarzan decide who he is. Unable to keep the secret any longer, Kala leads Tarzan to the tree house and the belongings of his human parents (**Everything That I Am**).

Resolved to go to England as a man, Tarzan consoles Kala (**You’ll Be in My Heart – Reprise**), but after Clayton kills Kerchak, the leaderless tribe needs him (**Sure As Sun Turns to Moon – Reprise**). Jane, then, must grapple with a timeless question: What makes a family? For her, and Tarzan, the answer is obvious (**Two Worlds – Reprise**).



Chestor Gregory II and the Ensemble, Original Broadway Cast

CASTING

It is important to cast actors who can perform the nuances of Tarzan’s two worlds – ape and human – to show the contrast (and similarities) between cultures. For the gorillas and Tarzan, look for performers who are comfortable with movement but able to evoke the sentiment of the apes. For the British explorers, find astute character actors who can capture their mannerisms and accents. Your production of *Tarzan* will benefit from a variety of races and sizes; just make sure the diversity of your cast is spread across both human and ape roles.

Character Breakdown (in order of appearance)

FATHER is a strong, determined man who braves the unknown to provide for his wife and son after a shipwreck leaves them stranded in an unfamiliar jungle. This role is featured briefly at the top of the show but sets the tone for the entire musical. If cast size requires, the performer in this role can double as Tarzan.

Vocal Range:

Vocal Audition: “Two Worlds”

MOTHER protects her son with all her might, braving the shipwreck, storm, and jungle to keep him alive. Together with her husband, she builds a house in the canopy of the trees, trying to create a safe haven for her family to live in. If cast size requires, the performer in this role can double as Jane.

Vocal Range:

Vocal Audition: “Two Worlds”

THE APE ENSEMBLE is the tribe of gorillas who become Tarzan’s family. They are fun, loving and fiercely protective of their own. Performers comfortable with movement, singing and physically demanding roles should be considered for this ensemble.

Vocal & Movement Audition: “Son of Man”

KERCHAK is the gruff bull-ape who leads the tribe and insists that Tarzan, even as a baby, poses a threat to the family. He is conflicted by his dedication to his mate Kala and his responsibilities as leader of the tribe. This performer should have a strong, authoritative presence while being able to display key glimpses of the silverback’s tenderness. Kerchak can be a musical theater baritone but must have a big sound and commanding presence.

Vocal Range:

Vocal Audition: “No Other Way” or “Sure As Sun Turns to Moon”

Acting: pp. 3-5, 13-14

CASTING


KALA is a motherly ape who raises Tarzan after he loses his parents to the leopard. She is incredibly strong, even after suffering the loss of her own child. She shows a depth of emotion equal to that of any human, if not greater. Kala must have a warm sound that is more mature than Tarzan's voice. Ideally, she should understand pop phrasing. She needs be able to sing the low G in full voice but can cheat the lower notes if necessary.

Vocal Range: 

Vocal Audition: "You'll Be in My Heart" or "Sure As Sun Turns to Moon"

Acting Audition: pp. 3-5, 18-20


YOUNG TARZAN is an innocent ten-year-old human, raised by apes. He is immensely curious and possesses a keen ingenuity. Tarzan is daring but desperately wants to fit in with the rest of the family. Young Tarzan is written for an unchanged voice. His solos are challenging as many of them sit in a high register.

Vocal Range: 

Vocal Audition: "Who Better Than Me"

Acting Audition: pp. 7-9

YOUNG TERK is a sarcastic adolescent ape. He is an outcast due to his meager size and inability to keep up with his brothers and sisters physically. Terk replaces his physical inadequacy with eloquence and intelligence. He finds a kindred spirit in Tarzan, the other outcast of the family. He is a teenage tenor; cast someone with pop phrasing ability.

Vocal Range: 

Vocal Audition: "Who Better Than Me"

Acting Audition: pp. 7-9

TERK is a young adult male ape whose friendship with Tarzan has only grown stronger through the years. Other than Kala, Terk is the only ape who visits Tarzan in exile. He would like to think he knows it all and often relies on his great sense of humor. He tends to stay in one place, not growing much in life experience or knowledge. Terk is written to be a rock/pop/soul tenor with good understanding of groove and some ad-lib skills; he must be comfortable singing consistently in his upper register.

Vocal Range: 


Vocal Audition: "Trashin' the Camp" or "Who Better Than Me (Reprise)"

Acting Audition: pg 26-28, pg 56

TARZAN is twenty years old and still untainted by civilization. His curiosity has grown as his skills develop. Tarzan is long, lean and very athletic. He has great integrity and a strong sense of fairness.

CASTING

Tarzan falls passionately in love with Jane at first sight and wonders if she is the key to unlocking his mysterious past. Tarzan should be a pop high baritone or tenor. His solos primarily sit in a high register, but it works best if he can mix and belt equally well.

Vocal Range: 

Vocal Audition: "Strangers Like Me" or "For the First Time"

Acting Audition: pp. 26-28, 33-35, 60-62


JANE is a proper, well-bred, British young lady, but a bit of a tomboy, too. She is very much the turn-of-the-twentieth-century independent female adventurer and scientist. Jane is an attractive ingénue with a bit of a motor mouth brought on by her fascination and passion for all the expedition has to offer. Once meeting Tarzan, this young girl blossoms into a woman. Jane should be able to belt to D5; D5-F5 can be sung in a legit voice. She can have a bright, youthful sound, must understand pop phrasing and have some power in both her high and low registers.

Vocal Range: 

Vocal Audition: "Waiting for This Moment" or "For the First Time"

Acting Audition: pp. 32-35, 46-47, 60-61

PORTER is a British professor and gentleman who is traveling to Africa to prove his theory on the social habits of apes. A single father to Jane, he maintains his temper and demeanor to the very last moment. He offers a bit of humor through his slightly eccentric, mad-scientist enthusiasm. Porter is a baritone, but most of his solos can be spoken if necessary; it is more important to cast a strong actor in this role.

Vocal Range: 

Vocal Audition: "Like No Man I've Ever Seen"

Acting Audition: pp. 46-47

CLAYTON is a brutish British expedition guide and the villain of the show. He has been hired by Professor Porter to lead a scientific research trip but is actually planning to hunt apes for profit. Clayton is a greedy and self-centered macho male who will stop at nothing to get what he wants. This is a non-singing role.

Acting Audition: pp. 50-53, 61-62

SNIPES is head of the expedition crew. This is a non-singing role.

Acting Audition: pp. 72-73

EXPEDITION CREW are non-speaking, non-singing roles and may double with the apes ensemble.

SPEECH & MOVEMENT

The original concept of the show was to place a naturalistic acting performance into a stylized setting. These are not meant to be presentational, musical-theater characters; rather, they are slightly heightened, detailed personalities to be performed with subtlety and realism. Sometimes the easiest note to give is that the performers are acting for a camera, not a 2000-seat theater. The audience must be invited to the stage – drawn into the story to take the journey with the actors. In order to have a satisfying emotional experience at the end of the show, the audience must be *participants* every step of the way, not just spectators.



Aerial rehearsals at Steiner Studios, Brooklyn, NY

SPEECH & MOVEMENT

APE MOVEMENT: The more real the actor's ape physicality and movement, the more the audience buys the conceit (humans playing gorillas), which frees the actors to focus on their characters in voice and facial expression. There are several documentaries and websites that showcase gorillas in their natural habitat. Begin here with your research and try to capture not only the strength and speed, but also the playfulness. On Broadway, we supplemented gorillas' naturalistic movement with acrobatics and capoeira to suggest the apes' playful side in a theatrical way. Macaco, side runs, cartwheels and chest beats are also good options for the show's movement vocabulary.

APE SOUNDS: When approaching ape characters, actors often default to a high-pitched, monkey sound: "Oo-oo. Ah-ah. Ee-ee." This should be avoided, or at the very least, held to a minimum. These sounds represent spider monkeys or orangutans, not gorillas. Granted, we have stretched the natural truth a bit by putting our theatrical apes in the trees – where gorillas do not necessarily live – but their sounds must be kept deep in the diaphragm: a dark grunt, sometimes even sounding like a low dog bark. It's threatening at times, but it can also be very comforting and loving when cooed.

HUMAN CHARACTER MOVEMENT: Jane is feminine, contained and delicate, yet at times like a boy in a playground. Porter is a proper gentleman, always in a "stance" that dignifies him and is acceptable to his upbringing. On occasion, he drops this composure due to his over-excitement or level of passion. Clayton has an arrogant swagger in his walk. When at rest, he is tall, strong and rooted like a tree. The weight of his body is never on one leg; he always stands legs apart and solid, ready for incoming danger.

TARZAN'S CHARACTER MOVEMENT: Tarzan should be as well versed in the ape movement as the ape ensemble. The jungle is where he lives, where he grew up. Although he has learned to "rig" the jungle for his best movement from space to space, he was taught to walk and stand by an ape mother. When he meets Jane and begins his "civilization" education, Tarzan's ape physicality should taper off as his human nature surfaces. Once he has dressed in a suit and discovered that he is a man, his transformation is complete. It's as if we've watched the Darwinian calendar progress through Tarzan's evolving physicality. Of course, when he becomes the leader of the tribe following Kerchak's death, Tarzan will revert to ape movement – and the loincloth.

KALA: Although the show was written to be a story about Tarzan's journey of self-discovery, Kala consistently gets the most applause at each curtain call, regardless of country or actress. The audience relates to her struggles to save herself by raising this child. In the end, *Tarzan* is a story in which her emotional journey offers more challenges and triumphs than that of that of the title character. To some extent, Tarzan's story is one of victory, where Kala's is one of personal sacrifice.

DIRECTING TIPS

As a supplement to the stage directions in your Libretto Vocal Book, the following “directing tips” have been compiled to help support the blocking and focus of your production.

Page 1

- The Prologue sets the tone for the entire production. If you opt for a stylized design, silks can be a great representation of water.
- Make sure the stage action in Prologue clearly illustrates the following story beats:
 - Mother and Father cling to the ship with baby.
 - Mother and Father are thrown overboard with baby and belongings.
 - Mother and Father struggle to survive in stormy waters.
 - Mother and Father wash up on the shore with baby and trunk.
- The shipwreck can be tricky. Consider using dancers to lift Mother and Father to represent falling into the water and washing up on shore.
- During “Two Worlds,” highlight Father and Kala with blocking and lighting. Refer to the Music Direction notes on p. 15 for specifically underscored action.

Page 7

- “Odd Man Out” should showcase the following action beats:
 - Demonstrate “daily life” for gorillas. (This is a good moment to highlight cast members with tumbling skills.)
 - Young Tarzan tries to join the apes.
 - Young Tarzan is mocked and/or rejected by other gorillas.
 - Kerchak enters and observes Young Tarzan in the “family” mix.
 - Young Tarzan is rescued and protected by Young Terk.
- This is the first time we see Terk. It is very important that his costume is distinguished from the rest of the tribe. Otherwise, Terk will get lost in the crowd.
- This scene is the beginning of the friendship between Terk and Tarzan. As this friendship grows, consider creating some sort of special greeting or handshake between the characters that we see repeated throughout the show.

Page 18

- Create a hiding spot within the water hole for a small container of “mud” make-up. The container should be easily accessible for your young performer.

Pages 20-22

- “Son of Man” shows Tarzan growing up and should reflect the passage of many years. The number should show:
 - Tarzan slowly integrating with apes with the help of Terk and Kala.

DIRECTING TIPS

- Apes accepting Tarzan and teaching him how to take care of himself.
- Terk growing up.
- Adult Tarzan’s big entrance (this should be your biggest “flying” moment).

Page 22

- Kerchak playing with the younger gorillas is an important character revelation. Make sure we can see the actor’s face as he enjoys this bonding experience. Taking time here will also allow Kala to watch and react to this scene.

Page 26

- If you plan to use pyrotechnics for Tarzan’s torch, check your local laws for fire in the theater. You may need to obtain a special permit or use a substitute for a torch. See Props on p. 20.

Page 29

- The jungle plants and creatures that Jane documents should be played by your ensemble.
- Jane’s skirt should appear torn off and not just taken off. You may have your actor wear multiple layers and remove one at a time (each layer increasingly tattered).

Page 53

- “Strangers Like Me” needs to include the following beats:
 - Jane teaches civilized human behaviors to Tarzan.
 - Tarzan gradually acts more civilized.
 - A romantic moment transpires between Tarzan and Jane.
 - Tarzan shows Jane the jungle canopy.
 - Jane meets Kala.

Page 69

- Set aside rehearsal for Tarzan to time out his onstage costume change. Since the song is a key turning point for the character, the costume mechanics should feel like second nature to the actor.

Page 76

- The dialogue timing in the finale is very specific. Refer to the Piano Conductor Score and the Music Direction notes on p. 13.

MUSIC DIRECTION

by Jim Abbott, Music Supervisor

Welcome to the musical world of *Tarzan*. This show is very close to my heart, having worked as the music director on the Broadway production as well as productions in Holland and Germany. We were very fortunate to have Phil Collins involved at every stage of development. He created specific demos for many of the songs and was always around to work with the musicians during the show's creation.

Tarzan has several musical personalities (pop songs, film music and ethnic music, to name a few) but is always firmly grounded in one thing: rhythm. Even when there isn't a drum playing, Phil Collins's music always has a steady pulse. Give your cast some time to feel that pulse and bring it into their performance. In the following pages, I've listed some of the best practices we've discovered over the years. They will enable a smoother rehearsal process and allow your performers to feel comfortable with some challenging music that they might not be used to. And the Rehearsal CD is a great resource for things like ideal pacing, pronunciation and tone. The specific notes refer to the recording

For the Singers

- Unless indicated, try not to use any rubato or change in tempo. This music is written with little or no back phrasing, which will help keep that steady pulse moving forward.
- Avoid excessive vibrato. Whenever possible, encourage your singers to use straight tone with a touch of vibrato at the end of the phrase. This was a constant request from Collins.
- Pop phrasing is fine but riffing is not. The notes written on the page are very specific – please use them. A big exception to this rule is for the character Terk, especially in “Trashin’ the Camp.” Allow your performer to explore this section and make it his own.

For the Orchestra

- Many of the flute's solos were recorded using wood or PVC flutes. While you might be limited in your instrumentation, try to maintain the ethnic character of the composition.
- Drum fills and percussion fills should lean to the simple and direct rather than the technical and elaborate.
- The brass section needs to be aware of when they're orchestral brass and when they're a pop horn section. Work specifically on the big ensemble numbers like “Strangers Like Me” and “Trashin’ the Camp” as opposed to the sound required for “Sure As Sun Turns to Moon.”
- The guitar effects should tend toward the natural rather than the heavily distorted. Some suggestions have been written into the part.
- As the keyboards make up a large part of the orchestration, they need to be acutely aware of how they balance with the other instruments. In the passages where they have “sequencer-like” material, rhythm and volume make drastic differences.
- It is best if your drummer and percussionists are flexible and experienced. They are the

MUSIC DIRECTION

centerpiece of the orchestrations and the parts are challenging. The Drum chair has some electronic pad requirements and must be able to play Djembe as well as a few hand toys. The Percussion 1 part is written for both orchestral percussion (Mallets and Timpani) as well as hand drumming. The Percussion 2 part is primarily hand drumming but the performer has to be comfortable creating a groove in various styles.

- The guitar part is written in the style of rock and pop. There are sections that call for both nylon and steel strings.
- The bass part is written for a 5-string electric bass, but a fretless can be used sparingly if desired.

Specific Notes by Song

#1 – Prologue

The prologue is written as underscoring for the destruction of the ship and the family's arrival at the beach. Your performers should think of this number as film score music.

- m. 1-4: The opening measures act as a fanfare to immediately submerge the audience in the world of the show.
- m 5-16: We then dive right into the tumultuous storm. Let the tense atmosphere build gradually.
- m 17-24: The final section represents Mother and Father falling into the water. It should have a floating, disoriented quality but should in no way feel dreamy (i.e., not too slow).

#2 – Two Worlds

- m 1-16: The opening statements (both flute and vocal) should create the mystery, excitement and danger in the discovery of a new world. The tempo is moderate and the percussion should be ambient rather than featured.
- m 17: As a contrast to the opening bars, make this percussive transition strong and driving.
- m 58-130: The Piano/Conductor's score has tips on staging the leopard's attack. Share this information with your director as a tool for blocking. Your production does not need to match this guide exactly, but the spacing illustrated will ensure that all of the necessary story moments are hit. The most important moments are as follows:
 - m 58: The leopard approaches.
 - m 65: The leopard snatches the baby ape.
 - m 69: Kerchak chases the leopard.
 - m 79: The leopard attacks and kills Father and Mother.
 - m 113: Kala climbs into the treehouse and drops the music box.
 - m 118: Kala finds baby Tarzan.
 - m 126: Kala hides baby Tarzan from the leopard.
 - m 130: Kala fights the leopard and scares him away.
- m 148-149: Place the majority of your cast on the lower, moving part. The sustained D will carry with just a few voices.

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#3a – Ten Years Pass

- m 1: This song has a shimmery feel as the years melt away. The vocalist should have an African quality with a forward nasal placement. Listen to the Rehearsal CD for clarification on the vowels and tone.

#4a – Odd Man Out

Rely heavily on your percussionists and drummer to lead the way on this song.

- m 22-43: The eighth notes are swung in this section. The tempo returns at m 44.
- m 46: Once the dialogue starts, ensure that the percussion is soft. It grows by adding instruments, not in intensity of playing.
- m 59: The vamp can cue out on any bar

#5 – Who Better Than Me?

The groove of this song is taken directly from Motown. Give a slight swing to the eighth notes, but don't overdo it. Think of Terk as Smokey Robinson – a touch of belt, but never forceful. This song is very high for both boys. If it's uncomfortable for your performers, MTI has lower transpositions available. Contact your representative for information.

#6 – No Other Way

- m 1: The first 20 bars underscore the journey of Kerchak and Young Tarzan to the waterfall. Allow for some time in their journey and don't feel the need to rush the dialogue. However, make this section work for your production. If your staging necessitates a much shorter version, jump to m 34 on Kerchak's line "Let go!" and continue on.

#7 – I Need to Know

- m 9: Work with your Young Tarzan to produce a beautiful, pure, "choir-boy" sound for this solo. The rhythm is not strict – allow your actor to internalize Tarzan's feeling of helplessness and have it come through in his singing.
- m 47-66: The dialogue underscoring is flexible in this first section until you reach m 66. At Kala's line, "Here, close your eyes" the audience should begin to hear the "You'll Be in My Heart" theme. Work with your actors to find the proper pace (the Rehearsal CD is also a great resource). Same goes for Kala's line "We're going to live away from the family for a little while," which should sync with m 74. This will allow for the underscoring to end right before Young Tarzan gives his first big signature yell.

#8 – Son of Man

The song begins immediately after the Tarzan yell. Give your horn section permission to let loose and work with your cast to match their energy. After the quiet ballad of "I Need to Know," "Son of Man"

MUSIC DIRECTION

wakes the audience back up again. Please note that the ornamentation written into the vocal parts are an indication of vocal phrasing – don't make too much of them.

- m 5: Phil Collins based the "E-yea-o" on a section of "Regetta De Blanc" by The Police. Work with your actors to create a guttural sound that moves quickly to the "ye" sound.
- m 68: This marks the transition to Adult Terk.

#9 – Sure As Sun Turns to Moon

Most of the accompaniment consists of a repeated 4-bar phrase of 16th notes. Keep this figure steady, almost to the point of mechanical. It is a constant, just like Kala and Kerchak's relationship. The vocal lines are very conversational. They should have a natural flow that is half spoken/half sung, so don't feel tied to the rhythm on the page.

#9b – Leopard Fight

This is another cinematic action sequence that can be slightly tailored to your production. The big moments of storytelling are as follows:

- m 7: The first attack of the leopard.
- m 18: The leopard attacks again.
- m 22: Tarzan fights the leopard in an increasingly violent fight.
- m 30: The fanfare signifies that Tarzan is triumphant. He raises the leopard up and places him at Kerchak's feet (on the button in m 36).

#10 – Human Invasion

- m 3: This vocal shimmer should have a similar quality to the one in #3A. Some productions have interpreted this solo as a gorilla warning the rest of the family that humans are afoot. Make it work within the context of your production.
- m 24: Jane enters here.

#10a – Waiting for this Moment

- m1: Refer to the Rehearsal CD for correct pronunciation of the Latin words.

#11 – Different

- m 13: It helps to give a little accent on beat 4 to help Tarzan hear his cue in m 14. On the Accompaniment CD you'll hear the bell tree signify that it's time to go on.
- m 53: There is a lot of extra underscoring in this section to provide space for the dialogue. If your cast is waiting for the music to end, try cutting m 53-56 and m 60-66.

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#13 – Trashin’ the Camp

Here is another good place to refer to the recording for pronunciation. Once the main section is established, give Terk freedom to ad lib. Also allow time with your ensemble to lock in the harmonies. It’ll make a huge difference once they find the perfect blend. The main groove for this number is a swingy half-time funk feel.

- m 42: Push the tempo to full swing here. You’ll go back to the funk feel at m 65.
- m 110: It’ll be helpful to listen to the rehearsal recording to get the tempo transition. It starts out with half note = quarter note, but moves to a big swing ending.
- m 113: All of the hits are dictated. In rehearsals, change this tempo around to ensure your ensemble is following you closely. Once you’re working together as a unit, you can start to have fun with it. Just as with “Son of Man,” challenge your orchestra to go full tilt and encourage your cast to match their energy (without pushing or screaming of course!).

#15 – Like No Man I’ve Ever Seen

Don’t allow this song to get too slow or sappy. They’re British after all! If your Porter is not a strong singer, have him speak-sing through the lyrics.

#16 – Strangers Like Me

“Strangers Like Me” shoots out like a cannon and shouldn’t let up until the bridge begins at m 57. Tarzan is like a little kid discovering this brand new world and the orchestrations should reflect his curiosity. Like so many songs in the show, percussion is key.

- m 19: The male solo can be any member of your ensemble and can be sung onstage or off.
- m 57: As we transition to the treetops during the bridge, the entire mood changes. Let this section feel like it’s floating.
- m 105: During this section, it’s as if time stops for Jane and Tarzan. The quiet percussion acts as a heartbeat.
- m 112: Have fun with the big drum fill to take the number home through the final chorus.

#19 – Who Better Than Me (Reprise)

Just like #5, these vocal parts sit very high in the range. If you need a lower key, contact your MTI representative.

#20 – Meeting the Family

This orchestral cue is taken almost exactly from the Disney film. Keep it big and grand until the dialogue starts, and then take the volume way down.

#21 – Everything That I Am

- m 1: The beginning of the song starts with Young Tarzan offstage. As this is a memory for Tarzan, it should be played exactly like #7.

MUSIC DIRECTION

- m 23: Here is the real start of “Everything That I Am,” but don’t get too big too fast.
- m 59: The male vocalist that joins (offstage) should be light and airy and with less volume than Tarzan. Having them match their phrasing is important, but the offstage voice should follow Tarzan’s lead.
- m 108: Start transition to the tree house over the music box theme.

#21a – You’ll Be in My Heart (Reprise)

- m 1: The first few measures are very simple and heartfelt. When Kala joins at m 9, they have to set the tempo together. Phrasing together is of the utmost importance – Kala and Tarzan are always on the same page. They should sing as if they know exactly what the other one is thinking.
- m 39: Kala’s low part can be changed as needed for the singer.

#21c – Man vs. Ape Man

The percussion vamps underscore the fight between Tarzan and Clayton. Some freedom is okay for the hand drummers but make sure your instrumentalist is not too loud so as to obscure the dialogue.

#22 – Sure As Sun Turns to Moon (Reprise)

- m 1: The drone begins under dialogue and shouldn’t have a hard attack.
- m 2: Kala sings the second time at m 2, but this should have a stark feeling. Don’t let it get too slow and maudlin. The lyrics will speak for themselves.
- m 31-32: In several productions, we have included some rhythmic grunts as the tribe acknowledges Tarzan as their leader. It’s not specific, so make it fit your production.

#23 – Two Worlds Finale

The music and dialogue sync in this song is very specific so rely on the cues in the Piano Conductor Score. The important moments are as follows:

- m 1-10: Tarzan’s entrance harkens back to when his parents first landed on the beach.
- m 14: Jane and Porter exit so Tarzan has some time alone on the beach.
- m 19: If Jane begins her line here, (“I was halfway up the gangplank...”) she will finish right at m 30 for the kiss. Try to time the kiss with the bells.

#24 – Bows

Character entrances as marked, but feel free to edit as needed. The tempo is consistent throughout.

- m 39: The 12/8 is quarter = dotted quarter.
- m 59-74: Give this a half-time feel, but return to straight time at m 75.

SETS

On Broadway, Bob Crowley's design was stylized, not realistic. Strong, bold images representing isolated jungle locations were set against a maze of green vines. Simple swaths of white silk represented a waterfall and a round disc was the moon. The subsequent European productions gave the concept room to grow beyond the traditional Broadway proscenium stage. For example, in Hamburg the green vines reached out into the theater auditorium, enveloping the audience in the jungle environment. *Tarzan's* subsequent licensed pilot productions, free to re-design from scratch, discovered other exciting options for creating a compelling theatrical jungle.

UNIT SET: For your own production, aim for a unit set comprising structures that create varied depth and height. Successful sets have included three-level scaffolding units on wheels that can easily spin and move around the stage. The units should be light enough for the actors to move around the stage but sturdy enough to carry the weight of several actors. Alternatively, you can modify existing playground structures to create dynamic jungle elements on which your actors can climb and slide. For schools on a limited budget, consider reaching out to the physical education department for help with supplies and equipment. Build the set in transparent layers to dynamically create depth, which will allow you to stage scenes and musical numbers in and around your set pieces. An army-navy surplus store can be a great resource for decorating your structural units with material (such as camouflage netting) that will create a nice jungle feeling.

ENVIRONMENTAL: *Tarzan* should be an immersive experience for the audience. If you are performing the show in a traditional performance space, such as a proscenium or general auditorium, consider expanding the set out into the audience by dressing the walls of the performance hall like the jungle onstage. By extending the world of the play into the house, you will welcome the audience into the jungle from the moment they enter the theater. The show also lends itself to less traditional performance spaces, such as three-quarter thrust stages, as well as arena-style theaters in the round. Consider incorporating the audiences in these spaces into the jungle by staging the play in the aisles around the audience when it is appropriate to move the performances off the stage. Again, having a unit set with transparent layers will come in very handy when working in these less traditional spaces, since the audience may be on multiple sides of the stage. *Tarzan* is a non-traditional musical; don't be afraid to embrace the methods of environmental theater.

PROLOGUE: For the storm at the beginning of the show, consider using poly "silk" to create the water effects. Poly "silk" (also called China silk) is a soft but durable material that looks good under theatrical lighting and can be used to create dynamic water features that your actors can easily manipulate. It is inexpensive (because it's not really silk!) and can be found at most fabric stores or on craft websites. Depending on the type of performance space you are using, you may want to consider blocking the storm beyond the stage, pouring into the aisles around the audience.

SETS

TREE HOUSE: The tree house can be achieved in several ways, but keep it simple. It can be easily incorporated into one of the structures of your unit set. When it's not being used, cover it with set dressing, such as camouflage netting, to bury it within the jungle canopy. Uncover it when Kala leads Tarzan there in the second act. If your performance space is large enough, you may keep the tree house intimate by isolating it on the far side of the stage in a pool of light, which will keep your platforms free from obstruction.

HUMAN CAMP: The intermission gives you a little more time to set up the human camp. You can use few small pieces of furniture and a clothesline with canvas drapes to establish the tent. The more fabric you use, the easier it is to show the destruction by the apes. Keep in mind that anything still left in the camp after "Trashin' the Camp" must be cleared quickly to make room for the following jungle scene.

TRANSITIONS: Space and pace are vital to the storytelling in *Tarzan*. A specific amount of dramatic time often passes as we move from one jungle location to the next. Since this timing is delicate, avoid elaborate scene changes. Instead, aim for seamless, subtle, actor-driven transitions. (Keep your unit set pieces lightweight to move things along.) You may also consider designating different portions of your jungle set for specific scenes, or stage the jungle world on platforms while keeping the human world onstage. However you differentiate locations, be sure transitions are thoughtful and seamless so you can keep your audience focused on the story.



The Wagon Wheel Theatre. Warsaw, IN

PROPS

All hand props and human props should be realistic and of the period. Any “jungle” props (e.g., Young Tarzan’s “fruit picker” and Tarzan’s knife) should look as if they were made from natural materials (e.g., bamboo, twine or vine, stone, etc.). Essential props include:

- **Baby Ape:** Find a realistic-looking baby gorilla doll at a toy store.
- **Baby Tarzan:** Swaddle a small human doll in a plain white blanket.
- **Music box:** This should look authentically Victorian. If you cannot find an actual antique, make sure the box has a lid that can be lifted at the hinge and painted to look like beautiful dark wood.
- **Fruit picker:** Paint and distress a dowel or broom handle to look like a branch. Tie a piece of shaved gray Styrofoam (to look like a rock) to the end with a piece of rope. The rope will be more secure if you cut a small groove into the Styrofoam.
- **Torch:** Adhere red, yellow and orange cellophane paper to the end of a bamboo tiki torch to create the illusion of fire.
- **Tarzan’s knife:** This should look like a shorter and more evolved version of the fruit picker.
- **The Creature:** The giant creature that attacks Jane can be anything you desire. If you choose spider (as in the Broadway production), secretly place a back pack stuffed with elastic “web” material on Jane’s back during “Waiting for This Moment.” The ensemble can pull the web out of the pack at the end of the song, creating the illusion of Jane becoming stuck in a giant spider web. The dancers can then also become the spider.
- **Victorian travel trunks and boxes:** Check antique and thrift shops to find old-looking cases. Alternatively, you can use classic hat boxes for Jane’s belongings and over-the-shoulder canvas laundry bags (made to look dirty) for Porter, Clayton and the expedition crew.
- **Photo of Tarzan’s family:** Use a brown frame and a sepia-toned photo. For a more authentic look, do a photo transfer onto wood to give an antique feel (use a photocopy of a photograph, adhere it to a wooden board using gel medium, and then rub off all the paper so you’re left with just the image).
- **Sketchbooks for Jane and Porter:** Leather binding is appropriate for the Victorian period.
- **Cage:** For the penultimate “battle” scene, you’ll want to fashion a cage that’s large and sturdy enough to hold Clayton but light enough to move on and offstage. Materials could include PVC pipe (painted and distressed), bamboo or dowels.



Dos Pueblos High School. Goleta, CA

COSTUMES

In the Broadway production, Bob Crowley’s human costumes reflected Victorian fashions. His ape costumes were stylized to suggest gorilla fur in movement, softness and color variation, but enabled the performers to dance and tumble. For your production, here are a few suggestions.

FATHER: White shirt, half-tucked or fully un-tucked, to give him a disheveled look. Add a pair of black or khaki pants with a belt and a pair of dark boots. Options: Vest, suspenders and mustache.

MOTHER: Full-skirted dress with a shawl and black dress boots. Options: a petticoat and brooch. If you don’t have access to a full dress, pair a long sleeve shirt with a full skirt and add lace to the shirt neckline and skirt bottom for a Victorian feel.

APES: The actors playing gorillas should be comfortable and able to move freely. Dance clothing (tights, leotards) with embellishments to suggest fur is the simplest solution. It’s okay to show the human shape – no need for gorilla suits!

- Option: add layers of ripped fabric to a black or dark brown sweatshirt, long-sleeve t-shirt or leotard and wrap yarn around the arms to create muscles. For students comfortable showing skin, use a black or dark brown vests with layered fabric or yarn to create fur and muscles.
- Hair: Dreadlock-style or curly wigs with added colors or styling to personalize each ape’s look. Use the sweatshirt hood to create a unique hairstyle for each ape. If you use a t-shirt, create a hood using Velcro and fabric glue.
- Makeup: Add face and body paint to personalize the look of each ape. Consider using paint to create various families of apes within the ensemble.



Bradford High School. Kenosha, WI

KALA: Add motherly colors, such as purple or warm browns, to her hair and layered fabric.

KERCHAK: Add in dominant colors, such as red, dark blues, dark gray and silver, to his hair and layered fabric techniques.

LEOPARD: Dress in a dark leotard or fitted long-sleeved t-shirt with pants or leggings (leopard-printed if possible). Add face paint, eye mask, ears, tail, black dance shoes. The look here is stealthy and sleek.

YOUNG TARZAN: A brown loincloth is Tarzan’s signature look. Use body paint to give a dirty feeling and unruly hair. Add a ripped undershirt covered in dirt if the actor is uncomfortable taking his shirt off.

COSTUMES

YOUNG TERK: Use one of the Ape options as a base and add orange or greens to give him a youthful appearance. Consider a short fauxhawk – the ape version of a rebellious teenager.

TERK: Terk's costume should be similar to Young Terk, with just a few additions that he's picked up over the years.

TARZAN: Give him a loincloth, dread-locks and body paint to create dirty look – an older version of Young Tarzan. The actor should be comfortable showing skin. For the tree house scene in the second act, use a period suit jacket, dark pants and a white shirt that is half un-buttoned or un-tucked. Tarzan does not wear shoes with his suit. Options: vest, top hat.

JANE: The modern Victorian woman. Aim to create a few different looks for her:

- High-neck button-down shirt, high-waisted full skirt, women's Victorian walking shoes.
- A Victorian-style dress.
- Khaki equestrian-styled pant, white buttoned shirt, waist coat, black boots. Options: woman's safari hat, petticoat, brooch, neck kerchief.

If your budget is limited, add lace to sleeves and collar of button-up shirt or add lace to bottom of skirt; add waist sash to skirt.

PORTER: White shirt, khaki pants, belt, khaki vest, and black boots. Options: moustache, bow tie, pocket watch, safari hat.

CLAYTON: Green, brown or khaki pants and a khaki buttoned shirt (either short-sleeved or rolled-up sleeves). Black or brown boots, belt, red neck kerchief, and a safari hat. Options: over-the-shoulder water canteen, hip knife, vest.

SNIPES: Khaki shorts, boots, white shirt, vest, blue neck kerchief, supply belt or backpack.

EXPEDITION CREW: A mixture of brown, green, or khaki pants or shorts with boots and various combinations of shirts and vests. Options: suspenders, jackets, safari hats, hunting weapons, neck kerchiefs or water canteens.



Bradford High School. Kenosha, WI.

LIGHTING & SOUND

The lush jungle environment is dynamic and exciting compared to Victorian life back in England. *Tarzan* presents an opportunity to use rich lighting to create the vibrant world of the jungle. Don't be afraid to think big when it comes to lighting your production.

In the natural world, the sun and moon have a difficult time penetrating the thick jungle canopy. On Broadway, Natasha Katz used fractured lighting – exciting color flashes that found their way through the stylized trees and plants. Shadows played a big role, as did the warm colors of daytime contrasted with the cool colors of night. Only in a rare jungle clearing (the opening of Act 2 in the human camp) was there a brighter and more general lighting given to the stage.



Wagon Wheel Theatre, Warsaw, IN

Since much of the jungle set can look the same, lighting will help you define space and time and differentiate between the ape and human worlds. Use the transparency of the set to cast exciting shadows around the stage. Light through the camouflage netting will suggest sunlight sneaking through the treetops down to the jungle floor below. If you have a spotlight, it can help you isolate intimate moments, such as "You'll Be in My Heart" and "Everything That I Am."

Sound should be as environmental and naturalistic as possible. A complete soundscape of jungle animals, rustling of wind in the trees, dripping water, thunder, rainstorms, etc., can play intermittently throughout the show. Work with your designer to create an atmospheric quality that gently supplements the music and dialogue of the show. Use sound to enhance scene transitions and to punctuate key dramatic moments, such as the prologue's storm and shipwreck.

FLYING

While “flying” is naturally associated with the ape-man who swings through the trees, an elaborate flying system is not required to make your production of *Tarzan* a success. Flying through jungle can be represented by lighting tricks, dance and simply climbing or jumping between set pieces.

Regardless of your approach, make adult Tarzan’s entrance in “Son of Man” your biggest “flying” moment. For a simple solution, dead-hang a rope just off stage and have Tarzan swing on and release in mid-air like he’s jumping from a swinging vine. A fancier option might be utilizing a backyard zip line on which adult Tarzan can enter from the back of the house. After that, you can keep the flying simpler, more representative. No matter how your Tarzan flies, remember that the key to any “wow factor” is not to overuse a device.

During “Strangers Like Me,” Tarzan teaches Jane to “fly” by sweeping her up into the jungle canopy. You can accomplish this feat without rigging either actor. Construct a one-level platform that can easily roll on and off stage and paint umbrellas to represent jungle leaves and flowers. With Tarzan and Jane atop the platform, have the ensemble surround the pair with open, undulating umbrellas and move across the stage, varying levels.



Original Broadway Cast

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

If you are directing *Tarzan* in a high school or youth-theater setting, chances are you understand the importance of arts education. Students involved in the arts are often engaged and perseverant learners. Your musical production is an excellent arts education in and of itself; young performers, designers, musicians and stage crew are bound to grow and learn throughout the rehearsal and performance process.

But *Tarzan* can also be a springboard for learning beyond the rehearsal room. Given its literary source material, animal inhabitants and historical era, *Tarzan* presents a unique opportunity to engage your cast through cross-curricular investigation. Arts integration is the technique of teaching through the arts, and it allows students to explore varied subjects through an engaging and accessible forum.

We’ve generated a few suggestions in this section to help get you started. You may want to hand these lesson-inspirations off to science, English or social studies teachers. Alternatively, you may use them within your theater class or rehearsals as a method for developing robust characters and encouraging academic transfer. Take what works, adapt freely and encourage your colleagues to embrace the arts as a teaching tool.



Jenn Gambatese and Josh Strickland, Original Broadway Cast

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

A Novel Approach to Theater

Use this activity in the ELA classroom to investigate the process of adaptation, or use it during rehearsals to nurture a deep understanding of process and source material.

Explore the process of adapting literature for the stage. Have students brainstorm a list of modifications they would need to adapt a novel for a live performance. What freedoms does a novel have that a stage play does not? What are the limitations of a novel that a musical can better present? Provide students with an excerpt from Edgar Rice Burroughs's novel *Tarzan of the Apes*. Ask each student to write a stage adaptation of the excerpt within the parameters of live theater.

Next have students work in small groups to select and stage a classmate's scene. Present the scenes for the class and reflect by critically analyzing the differences between the source material and the stage adaptation.

Me Tarzan, You Jane

Use this activity in the English language arts classroom to develop creative writing skills and encourage character analysis. Or, use this activity during rehearsals to hone actors' objectives and develop specific performances.

When Tarzan first encounters Jane and the other humans, he cannot communicate through language. Still, Tarzan is compelled to understand these new visitors. Working in pairs, one student should assume the role of Tarzan, while the other takes on Jane or one of the other explorers in her envoy. Instruct the students playing Tarzan to come up with an objective in their heads, and to keep it a secret. Side coach the class as they brainstorm – does Tarzan need to warn this new visitor of danger? Does he want to understand where the visitor came from? Once students have decided upon an objective, they must try to get their partner to understand using only gibberish, gesture, body language and facial expression.

The students in role as explorers must work to understand their partners. Give the class 5 minutes to participate in this exercise before switching roles and repeating.

After the activity, task students with writing a journal entry in role as Tarzan or the visitor. Students should recount the experience in character and describe their partner's behavior in their character's voice.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

SCIENCES

Ape the Apes

Use this activity in biology or general science classes to explore gorillas in their natural environment, or use this activity during rehearsals to develop nuanced characters based on researched behavior.

Tarzan presents a rich opportunity for students to investigate gorillas and their relationship to their natural environments. Disciplined actors research their characters throughout the rehearsal and performance process. Play some Internet video footage of gorillas in their natural environment. After a cursory viewing, play the footage again, this time instructing students to follow an individual gorilla and document its behavior. Side-coach the class by asking questions. What do you notice about the gorilla's movement? What about size and pacing? Play the video a third time, this time asking students to document what they noticed about the way the gorilla interacts with the rest of the band. Play the video a final time, now asking students to document what they notice about the way the gorilla interacts with its environment. After the researchers have documented their observations, take a moment for the class to share some of their ideas.

Next, clear desks to create a large open space in the classroom. Instruct the students to begin walking about the space as themselves in a neutral state. Remind the class that this is a silent activity for now. Then, ask the group to recall their first round of observations about their individual gorilla. Challenge the class to begin taking on some of those mannerisms. Side-coach the group by asking the same questions you asked during the observation. Next, layer on the observations the students made about interactions with other gorillas. Ask the students to begin interacting with each other, based on what they observed in the video. Finally, ask the group to interact with the imaginary environment.

For an added challenge, pause the activity and ask the class to consider what might happen if a human entered the space. Allow some students to try entering the space as humans, reminding the class that safety is a priority.

Reflect on this activity with the class. What did they learn about animal behavior and environment? How did the physical exploration inform this learning? Why might an actor use a similar process? Is the scientific process useful for artists as well as scientists? Why or why not?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Brave New World

Use this activity in biology, botany or general science classes to explore the flora and fauna of a specific eco-system. Or, use this activity during rehearsal to encourage specific performances from your ensemble.

In “Waiting for this Moment,” Jane becomes enthralled by finally encountering the plant species she has studied so diligently. As the song progresses, she becomes more and more enraptured, singing each plant’s Latin genus and species as she goes.

Break your class into small groups of four or five. Instruct each group to select an ecosystem from around the world (if you are using this activity in a rehearsal setting, use the western jungles of Africa specific to your story). Have each group generate a list of flora and fauna specific to their selected environment, and document each plant or animal’s genus and species.

Next, have the groups select a musical genre (rap, country, hip-hop, pop, etc.), and instruct the class to create an original song about a scientist encountering these species for the first time. Ask each group to perform for the class, pausing to see if the broader class can identify which part of the globe the group explored after each performance.

If you are using this activity in a rehearsal setting, be sure to have your jungle ensemble create specific movements and vocalizations based on their research.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The “Colonization” of Africa

Use this activity in social studies or world history classes to examine the dramaturgical background of *Tarzan*. Alternatively, use this activity in the rehearsal process so that students more fully realize the various power struggles and expectations their characters might encounter.

Break your class into small groups of four or five and have each group research the European colonization of Africa in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Which countries colonized African nations? What was the motivation behind such colonization? What were the class and social structures of the colonizers and colonized nations at the time? Who were the people who voyaged from Europe to Africa, and what did they hope to gain?

After the class has sufficient background information, introduce them to the setting and characters of *Tarzan*. Tell the groups that they will assume the roles of Clayton, Porter, Jane and the rest of the

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

expedition headed to Africa. Encourage the groups to examine the relationships between these characters – who works for whom? To which social class might each character belong?

Next, ask the groups to go into character and improvise a discussion about the upcoming voyage to Africa. In role as their characters, and using what they know about the history of the time, ask each group to improvise a meeting called by Professor Porter to prepare for the journey. What are the goals and expectations? Who will be responsible for what? How do these fictional characters operate within a real time period?

After the activity, ask students to imagine they are now several weeks into their visit to Africa. In role as their characters, ask them to write a letter home documenting their experience.

The “Invasion” of Africa

Use this activity in social studies or world history classes to examine the dramaturgical background of *Tarzan*. Alternatively, use this activity in the rehearsal process so that students more fully understand the world of the play.

Tarzan is set in the jungle, far from the human residents of the region. But it is important that young audiences and performers fully grasp the larger social picture during the time our story is set.

Working within small groups again, charge your students with researching imperial era maps of western Africa. Where, specifically, might *Tarzan* take place? Where might the British explorers in our story have landed? Once the groups have formed a consensus, invite students to research the culture of the African nation or region at the time. Were there cities, towns, villages or tribes? What languages were spoken? What is the official language today?

Invite students to create a character who might have lived in their selected region during the late 1800s. Using what they know from their research, ask students to create a name, age, occupation, family and home environment for this original character. Have the groups share their work, and discuss how each character relates to the others.

Next, have the groups improvise a meeting called by the group leader to discuss the influx of Europeans to their home. What are the goals and expectations of the group? Who will be responsible for what? How do these fictional characters operate within a real time period?

After the activity, ask each student to imagine they are now several years into the colonization of their land. In role as their character, ask them to write an editorial to a publication, speaking out against colonization.

BACKGROUND

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS



Edgar Rice Burroughs was a restless man. Just like his characters, he craved action, adventure and passion. He felt a constant need to see new places, to learn new things, to move forward. Burroughs was 36 years old when he began his writing career; before that he spent his life moving from job to job, never settling on one thing. He was a geology teacher, an army officer, a ranch hand, a railroad policeman, a book salesman and a stenographer. He tried art school and running a stationary store. Nothing satisfied him; nothing could quench his imagination. But Burroughs was desperate. He had married his childhood sweetheart, Emma Hulbert, in 1900, “and was broke. I had a wife and two babies, a combination which does not work well without money,” he later said.

Edgar Rice Burroughs was born on September 1, 1875, in Chicago, the fifth son of George and Mary Burroughs. George Burroughs had been a major in the Union Army during the Civil War. The Burroughses were always a very close family. Having lost two sons in infancy, George and Mary provided a strict yet loving and secure environment for young Edgar.

In 1888, Edgar was enrolled in the Harvard School, a private high school, where he began to study Latin and Greek. This began a lifelong fascination with ancient mythology, which would later serve his stories well. In 1896, after a brief turn as a geology teacher, he started a career as an officer in the military. But soon his old restlessness kicked in, and after only a year at Fort Grant in Arizona, he was discharged. In January of 1900, he married Emma Hulbert, and tried, unsuccessfully, to settle down.

Burroughs began to run a small business that sold pencil sharpeners. It was his job to wait for his salesmen to come back to the office to gauge their sales. It was, like most of his attempted careers, a boring job, but it allowed him time to daydream. One of his tasks was looking through magazines, checking on the placement of advertisements for his pencil sharpeners.

These magazines were “pulp” – publications that featured fantastic escapist literature written in serialized form on very inexpensive paper. Looking through these magazines, Burroughs saw poor writing, overblown characters and ridiculous plots. But he also saw adventure, romance and danger, all the things he had been looking for all his life. He thought, “if people were paid for writing rot such as I read in some of those magazines ... I knew absolutely that I could write stories just as entertaining and probably a whole lot more so than any I chanced to read in those magazines.”

BACKGROUND

His first story was “Under the Moon of Mars,” a sweeping, romantic adventure about a man from Virginia who was mystically transported to Mars where he encounters giant green warriors, eight-legged horses and a beautiful princess. The story had elements of fairy tales, science fiction and mythology; it was as if all of Burroughs’s excitement, passion and imagination that had been bottled up for 36 years had bubbled to the surface. “Most of the stories I wrote were the stories I told myself just before I went to sleep,” he later said.

After the rejection of his second story, “The Outlaw of Torn,” Burroughs was unsure of his chances. “The story I am on now is of the scion of a noble English house – of the present time – who was born in tropical Africa where his parents died when he was about a year old. The infant was found and adopted by a huge she-ape...” Would this latest story fly? “I did not think it was a very good story, and doubted it would sell,” he later wrote. But *Tarzan of the Apes* was published in *All Story Magazine* in October of 1912 to massive success.

“No other literary creation of this century has a following like Tarzan. Another character with a world-wide public is Mickey Mouse, but he belongs to a different art...” wrote Alva Johnston in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1939. Burroughs went on to write 23 more Tarzan novels, becoming one of the most popular and influential writers of the twentieth century. Burroughs novels have been translated into 30 languages and have sold over 100 million copies throughout the world. He would often joke, “I write to escape – to escape poverty,” but there was more to his writing than escapism. The strength and power of his action scenes are what made his work popular, but his vividly drawn characters and the vision of two cultures colliding is what made it timeless.

Where did it all come from? He said, “I suppose it was just because my daily life was full of business ... and I wanted to get as far from that as possible. My mind, in relaxation, preferred to roam in scenes and situations I’d never known. I find I can write better about places I’ve never seen than those I have seen. ... Perhaps the fact that I live in Chicago and yet hated cities and crowds of people made me write my first Tarzan story. ... Tarzan was, in a sense, my escape from unpleasant reality.”

After serving as one of the oldest war correspondents during World War II, Burroughs retired to his ranch in the outskirts of Los Angeles, where he battled many health problems. Burroughs died of a heart attack on March 19, 1951, having written almost 70 novels. The area around his property ultimately became a suburban neighborhood called Tarzana.

BACKGROUND

ORIGINS

Where did the idea for Tarzan come from? Burroughs was asked this question many times throughout his life and could never arrive at a definite answer. “I have tried to search my memory for some clue to the suggestion that gave me the idea, and as close as I can come to it I believe that it may have originated in my interest in Mythology and the story of Romulus and Remus. ... Then, of course, I read Kipling; so that it probably was a combination of all these that suggested the Tarzan idea to me.”

When asked about the similarities between Tarzan and Mowgli the hero of Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*, Edgar Rice Burroughs acknowledged his debt to Kipling, but added, “The Mowgli theme is several years older than Mr. Kipling. It is older than books.” Throughout history and mythology, many classic heroes like the Roman figures of Romulus and Remus were able to communicate with animals. Like Tarzan, Romulus, Remus and Mowgli walk in two worlds. Rather than dying in the wild, they adapt to their new lives and are able to gain the best of the human and the animal worlds.



Dos Pueblos High School. Goleta, CA

BACKGROUND

PHIL COLLINS (COMPOSER/LYRICIST)



In 1970, young Phil Collins answered an ad in *Melody Maker* magazine; a new band called Genesis was looking for a drummer. For the next five years, Collins helped to create Genesis’s success by playing drums as well as writing and arranging many of their most successful songs. When lead singer Peter Gabriel left the band in 1975, Collins stepped up to the mic. In 1981, Collins’s debut solo single, “In The Air Tonight” became the number 2 song in the United Kingdom and was in the top 20 in the U.S. His first solo album, *Face Value*, was massively successful, and allowed Collins to expand his musical horizons with his next album in 1982. *Hello I Must Be Going* featured a cover of an old Supremes song, “You Can’t Hurry Love,” which may have disappointed Collins’s rock fans but blasted to the top of the charts on its optimism and cheer. Collins never wanted to be tied down to one style of music, saying, “You don’t wear the same clothes you wore ten years ago, do you?” Between 1984 and 1990, Collins had 13 straight Top Ten songs. In 1999, his single, “You’ll Be In My Heart” from the Disney film *Tarzan* earned him an Academy Award® for Best Song. He was eager to create his first score for musical theater. “I began my career as the Artful Dodger in *Oliver!* In ‘64,” he told LaughingPlace.com, “and I always felt that theater ran parallel with everything I did despite the fact that, like everyone else, I was listening to The Beatles, John Coltrane and even Motown at the same time. Broadway doesn’t feel alien to me...”

DAVID HENRY HWANG (BOOK WRITER)



David Henry Hwang was awarded the 1988 Tony®, Drama Desk, Outer Critics, and John Gassner Awards for his Broadway debut, *M. Butterfly*, which was also a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. For his play *Golden Child*, he received a 1998 Tony nomination and a 1997 OBIE Award. His new book for Rodgers & Hammerstein’s *Flower Drum Song* earned him his third Tony nomination in 2003. His play *Yellow Face* won a 2008 OBIE Award for Playwriting and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. His play *Chinglish* won a 2011 Chicago Jeff Award before moving to Broadway, where it received a 2012 Drama Desk Nomination. Other plays include *FOB* (1981 OBIE Award), *The Dance and the Railroad* (1982 Drama Desk Nomination), *Family Devotions* (1982 Drama Desk Nomination), *The Sound of a Voice* and *Bondage*. He co-authored the book for Elton John and Tim Rice’s *Aida*, which ran almost five years on Broadway, and was the book writer of Disney’s *Tarzan*, with songs by Phil Collins. As America’s most-produced living opera librettist, he has written four works with composer Philip Glass, as well as Osvaldo Golijov’s *Ainadamar* (two 2007 Grammy Awards), Bright Sheng’s *The Silver River* (1997), and Unsuk Chin’s *Alice in Wonderland* (2007 “World Premiere of the Year” by *Opernwelt Magazine*). Hwang penned the feature films *M. Butterfly*, *Golden Gate*, and *Possession* (co-writer), and co-wrote the song “Solo” with composer/performer Prince. Hwang won the 2011 PEN/Laura Pels Award for a Master American Dramatist, the 2012 Inge Award for Distinguished Achievement in the American Theater, and the 2012 Steinberg Distinguished Playwright Award. New York’s Signature Theater produced a season of his plays in 2012-13, including the premiere of *Kung Fu*, a play about Bruce Lee.

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TARZAN SWINGS ONTO DISNEY'S BROADWAY

by Ken Cerniglia, dramaturg, Disney Theatrical Productions

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Put your faith in what you most believe in:

Two worlds, one family

Trust your heart.

Let fate decide

To guide these lives we see.

“Two Worlds” underscores the opening sequence of Disney’s Broadway production of *Tarzan*: after a terrible shipwreck, Lord and Lady Greystoke wash up on the shore of western Africa with their newborn son and face survival in frightening, uncharted territory. Phil Collins’s omniscient and somewhat abstract lyrics reflect the ontological and ecological ethos of Disney’s retelling of the famous tale of the upper-class English orphan who, raised by apes, must discover his identity under highly unusual circumstances.

Animating a new *Tarzan* for the screen

Disney’s relationship with *Tarzan* began in the midst of the animation renaissance brought about by the hit films *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), and *The Lion King* (1994). The medium of animation – especially with rapid developments in computer-generated technology – would allow the creation of the Ape-Man’s story on film without the limitations of live action. Known for reinventing well-known source material for family audiences and having previously succeeded with “feral boy” stories from the same period – J.M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan* (1904) in 1953 and Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book* (1894) in 1967 – Disney sought to unlock Edgar Rice Burroughs’s classic *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912) in a way that would resonate in the coming twenty-first century.

The first step in this process was identifying a theme with an emotional hook. As co-director Kevin Lima first read of the novel, an image came to mind that would guide the film he ultimately created with Chris Buck: two hands held up against one another – the infant human Tarzan and the grown gorilla adoptive mother Kala. In his chronicle of the development of Disney’s *Tarzan* (1999), Howard Green writes: “A perfect symbol of the depth of feeling that the lead characters have for one another, this image of the two hands lent the film the same kind of emotional resonance that is found in all the best-loved Disney animated features” (Green 17). The thematic question that would emerge

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from this image was, “what constitutes a family?” Besides having a storytelling appeal for core Disney audiences, this theme sat squarely in contemporary social and scientific debates about “nature vs. nurture” in identity formation. Is one’s family defined by blood or by home? Torn between “two worlds,” Tarzan must decide for himself where he belongs. While this narrative re-framing took the traditional Tarzan story in a decidedly new direction, the filmmakers felt that they were honoring Burroughs’s intentions. Another advantage of animation is that it provided a mechanism for Tarzan to interact with his jungle family in a way that had yet been unrealized in film. Where Burroughs invented an ape language to symbolize this communication in his novel, anthropomorphized animation had long established the convention of using human language for “animal” communication. This convention would allow the narrative creation of a sympathetic family for Tarzan before the “foreign” humans enter the story. Then-president of Feature Animation, Thomas Schumacher elaborates:

What struck me most when reading the book was that Burroughs had created the perfect template for an animated film. ... [Tarzan] is at one with the animals; he talks to them. In other film versions, this connection is marginalized with Tarzan riding an elephant or having a chimpanzee on his shoulder. Now we have Tarzan speaking with them, living with them, learning from them. The combination of the ultimate animation concept and this great story about who and what your family is, seemed like a great idea. Frankly, our biggest deficit was that the title was so familiar that almost everyone had a preconceived notion of it. (Green 19)

Through hundreds of permutations over eight decades, Tarzan was ubiquitous, as was Disney. This was a perfect partnership for a hit movie with a jackpot theme, but it would only deliver if the characters and story were believable, sympathetic, and entertaining. Easier said than done.

Screenwriter Tab Murphy, who had written *Gorillas in the Mist* and was finishing Disney’s *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), was attracted to the theme of man-versus-nature and began writing a treatment for *Tarzan* in January 1995. During the story development process, a debate emerged over the third act. Murphy suggested following Burroughs and having Tarzan go to England, but directors Lima and Buck felt strongly that after two acts establishing a family in the jungle, abandoning it for the human world would not gel. After allowing Murphy to write the story his way, the directors were even more convinced of their hunch, and the story took a turn into uncharted territory. In order to enable this departure from Burroughs, a new villain, Clayton (who, despite the name, is not related to Tarzan in this version), was created. Hired as a guide for Professor Archimedes Q. Porter and his daughter Jane’s jungle expedition, this narcissistic and self-serving blowhard would ultimately betray them and put the gorillas in danger. Driven by rage and greed in the final confrontation, Clayton becomes worse than the animals he has hunted. Still, according to Lima, “[U]ltimately Tarzan is his own villain. He causes the downfall of his family himself. He gets pushed a bit by Clayton but ultimately he acts on his own. It’s not the classic hero’s journey where there’s a strong external force playing against him. Tarzan’s conflict is internal and we searched throughout the film to find ways to take his internal journey and make it external” (Green 26). Another departure from Burroughs is the recharacterization

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of Kerchack from savage silverback to protector of the tribe. A reluctant father to Tarzan due to his fear of humans, Kerchack's change of heart and murder by Clayton are what lead Tarzan to stay in the jungle.

As with any great Disney story, humor was needed to balance the emotional weight. In January 1997, Bob Tzudiker and Noni White, a husband-and-wife writing duo who had worked on *The Lion King* and *Hunchback*, were enlisted to bring a fresh perspective to the development process. Co-director Chris Buck recalls, "Bob and Noni came in at a time when we were hurting in the story room; we were wounded. They not only brought good story sense to the process but also managed to uplift us emotionally" (Green 29). Complementing their sense of humor was a keen insight into the simple story building blocks. In the scene where Kala takes Tarzan to the tree house – essentially telling him he was adopted – there are few words but the emotional impact is huge. According to Tzudiker, "The film has a lot of feeling and emotion because the filmmakers chose to focus on Tarzan's transformation. His journey is universal. At first, he thinks he's one thing, an inadequate ape, and then he discovers that he's actually something else. He's not just this strange-looking gorilla, but he really is a different species" (Green 32). It may seem odd to describe the journey of an English boy raised by a gorilla mother in the African jungle as "universal," but this particular moment in the story is emblematic of a parent revealing an important truth to a child that unlocks self-knowledge and growth – or really any moment when a dark secret comes into bright light.

Disney enlisted pop icon Phil Collins to write music for the film. Initially paired with veteran theater lyricist David Zippel, who had collaborated with Alan Menken on *Hercules* (1997) and Matthew Wilder on *Mulan* (1998), Collins set out to write the kind of musical-theater narrative songs that drove nearly all of Disney's animated features since *The Little Mermaid*. However, this particular pairing proved unfruitful, so Collins retreated to his studio and began creating pop demos on his own, which the producers loved. Having abandoned the confines of musical-theater structure, Collins's signature-style songs would establish theme and mood, with his world-renowned drumming setting the jungle beat. "Two Worlds" underscores the tragic killing that brings the survivors of two families together with Collins's omniscient lyrics and voice. "You'll Be in My Heart" begins as a lullaby sung by Kala to her newly adopted son, but Collins's voice takes over to expand and finish the song. "Son of Man" underscores a montage that follows the awkward young Tarzan's "journey from boy to man." The exuberant scat number "Trashin' the Camp" features Tarzan's best ape friend Terk leading percussive yet destructive fun with the humans' belongings. Lastly, "Strangers Like Me" is sung by Collins from Tarzan's point of view as he discovers all that he shares with the invading humans. Critic Janet Maslin noted, "[I]t's a relief this time to find the songs used as background music rather than narrative devices. That way Tarzan never has to sing a soliloquy about his secret hopes and dreams." Maslin and other critics had begun to accuse Disney of resting on its laurels and relying on a musical-theater "formula" to drive its continued success in animation. So in *Tarzan*, the typical protagonist's "I Want" song would be absent, or at least filtered through the omniscient narrative voice of Collins.

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Disney Feature Animation's blockbuster box office in the 1990s invited a sometimes crippling amount of scrutiny. The previous decade's critical theory explosion, especially around identity politics, resulted in an atmosphere of extreme political correctness. Given the global market of its films, theme parks, and consumer products, Disney could not afford to alienate anyone, so every project underwent extensive social sensitivity screening. With Burroughs's source material so filled with sexism, racism, and other early-twentieth-century ideological handicaps, Disney needed to be especially careful with *Tarzan*. Jane would become a self-possessed "modern" woman. African "savages" would be eliminated from the story (even though an Africa without Africans presents other issues). The team initially cast a prominent African-American actress in the role of Kala, but Dr. Alvin F. Poussaint, the prominent psychiatrist and civil-rights veteran who had consulted for *The Cosby Show* on responsible media programming, gently advised against it. Given the problematic association of the African racial type with primates in earlier Disney films, the dark-skinned gorilla Kala, who raises a white human baby (Burroughs established that "Tarzan" meant "white skin"), could not be perceived as a "mammy" character. Therefore, the casting of a white actress (Glenn Close) in this role became essential. These key sensitivities and artistic decisions successfully steered *Tarzan* clear of public-relations disasters.

Featuring a lead character animated by Disney veteran Glen Keane (Ariel in *The Little Mermaid*, Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*) and backgrounds inspired by a 1996 safari research trip and employing the latest computer-generated Deep Canvas technology, Disney's take on *Tarzan* opened on June 16, 1999. The film received generally positive reviews, was the number-one movie on its opening weekend, and ultimately grossed \$171 million domestically and \$448 million worldwide. (Still a decade before widespread 3-D and Imax releases and inflated ticket prices, this was an impressive sum.) Phil Collins went on to win an Academy Award for "You'll Be in My Heart." Disney's theme parks celebrated *Tarzan*'s popularity by converting the classic Swiss Family Tree House into Tarzan's Tree House at Disneyland and developing the high-octane, rollerblading live show *Tarzan Rocks!* at Walt Disney World's Animal Kingdom. With Disney's global distribution engine at his back, Edgar Rice Burroughs's hero was poised to thrive well into the next century.

Developing a new *Tarzan* for the stage

Although live performance had been in the repertoire of Disney's entertainment offerings since Disneyland opened in 1955, its official foray into legitimate theater began in 1994 with the stage musical *Beauty and the Beast*. Based on the 1991 hit animated movie and dramaturgically constructed as musical theater even in the medium of film, the show featured songs by Alan Menken and Howard Ashman, who had written the off-Broadway hit *Little Shop of Horrors* and Disney's *The Little Mermaid*. While *Beauty and the Beast* earned mixed reviews, it found and developed a family audience on Broadway, ran for an impressive thirteen years, spawned several touring and international productions, and has been licensed for over 5,000 professional, amateur, and school productions. The commercial success of *Beauty and the Beast* on Broadway led to two rather sizable and risky

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investments: the restoration of the dilapidated New Amsterdam Theater on 42nd Street, and the hiring of avant-garde theater and opera director and designer, Julie Taymor, to lead an international team to re-invent *The Lion King* for the stage. The high return on both investments led to further Broadway endeavors, including Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida* (2000). These three initial Disney productions ran simultaneously and successfully on Broadway until *Aida* closed in late 2004.

Meanwhile, Stuart Oken, then executive vice president of Disney Theatrical, and Thomas Schumacher, now president and producer of the division, enlisted Bob Crowley, who had successfully designed the set and costumes for *Aida*, to conceive and design Disney's next major stage musical: a spectacle based on Disney's hit animated *Tarzan* and the original Burroughs novel. (After Cirque du Soleil creative head Franco Dragone dropped out of initial conversations to direct, Crowley would pick up helming duties as well.) The project would explore uncharted territory on nearly every front. Despite decades of experience and accolades as a designer, Crowley had never directed a Broadway show. Although inducted as a child into professional theater with a stint as the Artful Dodger in the original London production of *Oliver!*, Phil Collins had never written a theatrical score. Modern-dance master and Pina Bausch protégé Meryl Tankard had never choreographed a musical. Aerial designer and De La Guarda co-founder Pichón Baldinu (*Villa Villa*) had never worked on a book musical, let alone a Broadway show. While Tony-winning playwright David Henry Hwang (*M. Butterfly*) worked on *Aida*, he had never penned a musical libretto solo. And Disney had never premiered a musical cold in New York. With the fearlessness of Burroughs's hero as a guide, *Tarzan* was destined to become one of the most ambitious musical undertakings in Broadway history.

It is common for the stage concept and book/score content of commercial musicals to develop simultaneously and interdependently. The artistic and commercial breakthrough of Taymor's production of *The Lion King* had set a new standard for what was possible – and what was expected – from the next musical with “Disney” over the title. (*Aida* was not based on a Disney animated feature nor Disney-branded.) Taymor followed the basic narrative of the film yet captured theatergoers' imaginations with non-literal design, expanded South African musicality, and emphasis on the human body in a dramatic world populated by animals. While maximizing the theatricality of the inherited source material remained the goal in the current project, *Tarzan* presented the additional challenge of comprising both animal and human characters, all of whom were to be played by humans.

Crowley wanted to be able to design an environment that would reflect the “Two Worlds” theme, so that the audience would come from the street into a completely different world once they entered the theater. The initial circus-inspired concept called for a specially designed building that would hold an audience in the round. At one point in the brainstorming there were two buildings. According to Crowley, “We were going to hopscotch these buildings across the country and one would be under construction while we were performing in the other. The show was getting epic, and I think we began to get very tense that all our energies were going into where we were performing and not about what

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we were performing.” As exciting as this concept was, the model proved to be cost-prohibitive, so Crowley began to adjust his design toward a more conventional proscenium-style Broadway house. Having to put his design back in the box, both figuratively and literally (Crowley's final set design was affectionately called “the green box”), the developmental focus turned to storytelling. Schumacher recalls shifting the scale from epic to “an intimate story, a domestic story, if you will, that happens in an intimate space.” Even so, some of the initial visual elements remained intact. “First of all, the jungle would be completely abstract,” recounts Crowley.

There would be no literal vines on stage, although a lot would go on in the air. There would be a shipwreck event at the beginning, and that would be done with a Japanese-like simplicity of painted silk. Nothing would look ‘natural.’ The reality would be highly theatrical rather than literal. Doing the show in a proscenium forced me into new solutions to things. And slightly wittier solutions to things, I think, that put the emphasis back on the performer. (Lassell 25, 28)

The radical shift from a physically immersive and visceral audience experience to an aesthetically pleasing and emotionally intense evening at the theater was never fully realized, and the tension between these two concepts has fueled debate about the show's ideal form ever since.

As the stage target became clearer, a more traditional book musical could be created on paper and through demo recordings by Hwang and Collins, respectively. The character structure from the movie remained intact, with a few exceptions. Tarzan's elephant sidekick Tantor was jettisoned early on, but Terk remained to represent Tarzan's jungle peers. The human villain Clayton was reconceived as a younger American explorer with romantic interest in Jane to increase the stakes. As for the Broadway score, the film soundtrack's five songs were supplemented with a dozen more traditional musical-theater numbers, which characters sing in the context of the drama. Decisions were made fairly early about what storytelling would be carried by dialogue and what would be delivered through song. The first workshop featured Broadway star Adam Pascal as a “narrator” of sorts who sang for Tarzan. This conceit preserved the omniscient function of Collins's original songs, but it proved more distracting than useful and was jettisoned in favor of on-stage characters singing whenever possible. The film's “Two Worlds” and “You'll Be in My Heart” perform similar thematic and character introductions on stage. (However, who exactly is singing “Two Worlds” has undergone many shifts in both development and performance and continues to be a challenge, since disembodied omniscient voices in the theater are often confusing, especially at the beginning of a show.) A song for Terk and Young Tarzan's first scene was replaced three times before settling on the upbeat “Who Better Than Me.” After being banished by Kerchak, Young Tarzan sings “I Need to Know” as he searches for answers. A melody for a song that was to track Kala's journey with the baby Tarzan from the human tree house to the gorilla nesting grounds was repurposed for Kerchak to sing about the dangers of raising a human (“No Other Way”) after the Tony-winning baritone Shuler Hensley was cast in the role. As in the movie, “Son of Man” scores Young Tarzan's physical and mental development and introduces the adult Tarzan

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by song's end. Despite the knowing lyrics, Terk voiced the song on Broadway (the assignment has since shifted to Kala). To balance the ferocity of this Kerchak, Collins wrote the tender duet "Sure As Sun Turns to Moon" as a check-in for the estranged couple after many years of Kala raising Tarzan on the periphery of the tribe. Written during rehearsals as Collins's third divorce was announced, this song carried additional meaning for the company. "Waiting for This Moment" introduces Jane as she encounters the wonders and dangers of the jungle. After Tarzan saves Jane from a giant arachnid (rather than the film's baboons), he examines this fascinating intruder while singing his inner monologue "Different," which ends the first act.

The enthusiastic scatting number "Trashin' the Camp" opens the second act. After exploring the jungle for a few days with Tarzan in secret, Jane and her father analyze her intrigue in "Like No Man I've Ever Seen." Tarzan sings "Strangers Like Me" as he receives his formal education about the human world, and in different areas of the jungle, Jane and Tarzan express that they've each found a soul mate with "For the First Time." Jane's invitation to bring Tarzan home to England propels emotional crises, which are tracked by reprises of five songs that constitute the remainder of the score. The one exception is that the reprise of "I Need to Know," sung by Young Tarzan in a memory, segues into a new melody for "Everything That I Am," which Tarzan sings in the tree house after Kala finally shows him where she found him as a baby – the emotional poignancy captured so eloquently with visuals in the film is here translated into a beautiful ballad. Due to physical staging restrictions that do not affect animation, the movie's action-packed final battle was condensed to a final confrontation between Clayton and Tarzan, during which Kerchak is fatally wounded. As in the film, which departs from Burroughs, Tarzan decides to stay in the jungle to take Kerchak's place, and Jane decides to stay with him.

Crowley's fascination with the concept of feral children helped him steer clear of character clichés. In conceiving *Tarzan*, he was particularly inspired by Kipling and François Truffaut's film *The Wild Child* (1970): "This Tarzan means to be a sort of feral innocence... obviously innocent of the human world. But because he is human, he has instincts inside of him that he can't understand. He knows he's not an ape, yet he has no other reference, so he's conflicted" (Lassell 75). This preoccupation with how a boy raised by apes might exist in the modern world led to bold casting decisions. It was clear early on that this stage musical would feature not the fully formed Weissmuller Ape-Man, but a late adolescent at the threshold of adulthood, caught between two worlds in more ways than one. His physical maturation would coincide with first love, traumatic self-discovery, and selfless decision-making. After a long search and much deliberation, Disney's stage Tarzan was identified in the 22-year-old Josh Strickland. One of very few singers who could match Phil Collins's high tenor range, the Broadway newcomer was a natural in the role. Like Tarzan, he was an adopted only child. Strickland's relative lack of stage experience helped him capture the character's innocence and eagerness to learn, and his tenacity to develop a lean build suggested the Tarzan for the ages was yet to come. Playing his younger self were child actors Daniel Manche and Alex Rutherford alternating in the role. The sparkling Broadway veteran Jenn Gambatese portrayed Tarzan's famous mate. Filling the role of

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Kala opposite Shuler Hensley's Kerchak was Merle Dandridge, a former Aida who delivered a fierce maternal quality in addition to tenderness. Rounding out the principals were Chester Gregory II as Terk, Tim Jerome as Porter, and Donnie Keshawarz as Clayton. An ensemble of over a dozen dancers and acrobats played gorillas, expedition crew, and even jungle flora! Given historical concerns about Burroughs and racism, it was important that the ensemble be multiracial – which brings us to how the apes were conjured on stage.

Crowley was insistent that those playing gorillas would not be swallowed by their costumes, which were "designed to show off the actors' bodies, to make the actors appear as apes and humans at the same time. They aren't meant to imitate nature. Their reality is strictly theatrical, but based in nature" (Lassell 50). While the desire to see actor and character at the same time seems Brechtian, the intention was not to make the characters seem strange; in fact, it was quite the opposite. If audiences could clearly see the humans playing the apes, they would be able to relax and focus on the characters and story, which would be virtually impossible if a bunch of people were running around the stage in gorilla suits. After testing various materials with "special creatures" designer Ivo Coveney, the team discovered that lightweight Lycra strips when stretched curled in on themselves and became tubular. When sown to undergarments, they would evoke "fur" while allowing the actors the maximum range of motion. Some of the gorilla wigs, which were also fashioned from Lycra, were inspired by elaborate African hairstyles but in final design only resemble them tangentially.

Once a suitable gorilla garment was engineered, jungle movement needed to be tackled. After studying gorillas at the Bronx Zoo with Crowley, contemporary ballet choreographer Meryl Tankard expanded the physical repertoire of these naturally slow-moving creatures with monkey movements and Brazilian capoeira. This combination evoked a "theatrical" gorilla physicality that distinguished these animal characters from their human counterparts without devolving into a broad parody that would have distracted from storytelling. Since he was adopted as a baby, Tarzan would naturally learn to move from the gorillas around him. "In this production," explains Crowley, "Tarzan starts out much more ape-like than he is in the films. His journey is from jungle creature to human. He actually never stands up fully straight until the scene when he dresses in his father's clothing" (Lassell 78). The greatest movement challenge was delivering the essence of "swinging from the trees" that is inextricable from any version of the *Tarzan* story and which animator Glen Keane accomplished in the Disney movie through the metaphor of skateboarding, or "vine-surfing." When experiments with traditional Broadway "flying" technology popularized by Mary Martin and her successors in *Peter Pan* (called "Foy" after the stage flight innovator Peter Foy and the 60 year-old company that bears his name) proved less than ideal, Schumacher stumbled upon the metaphor of rock climbing during a conversation with Keane:

What if Tarzan's loincloth is actually a harness, with the carabiner that held him onto the rope totally exposed? Bob Crowley, who had actually seen an Icelandic production of *Romeo and Juliet*

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in which Romeo was on a bungee cord for the balcony scene, essentially had a similar idea at the same time. Because the exposed apparatus of the aerial work was part of the central metaphor of the show: that this is a theatrical reality, a universe different from nature but representing nature. So the movement became a combination of rock climbing and bungee jumping, and it also became part of the entire language of the production. (Lassell 29)

After a disappointing traditional flying workshop in Las Vegas in 2004, associate director Jeff Lee applauded the suggestion that,

Tarzan should be a mountain climber, someone who ‘rigs’ the jungle to answer the demands of his needs. Not only would this provide for a more rough-and-tumble, unrefined approach to the flying, it would exhibit his ingenuity and intellect above and beyond that of his gorilla counterparts. In fact, the clinching thought was not to apologize for this concept, not to hide the carabiners, harnesses, rings, or ropes, but instead to highlight them and expose the language. In my mind, an ingenious chord had been struck. (Lee)

Ever since *The Lion King*, where Julie Taymor revealed and emphasized the “double event” of humans playing animals, the Disney team was comfortable revealing the mechanics of theater “magic,” as long as it supported storytelling. In this case, we needed to find a safe and practical way to get Tarzan in the air. As a theatrical substitute for jungle vines and knots, ropes and carabiners would also serve as a metaphor for Tarzan’s human ingenuity, so he would “clip-in” within full view of the audience. Coincidentally, Buenos Aires-based aerial performance troupe De La Guarda had created a sensation with their vertical, high-octane show *Villa Villa* that was still playing at the Daryl Roth Theater in New York’s Union Square. Co-director Pichón Baldinu, who shared the exposed-mechanics aesthetic, was quickly brought aboard the *Tarzan* creative team to design what would happen in the air: “What I love about flying is that it’s a dream. It’s a dream we all have. So flying in the theater is not just about changing the physical vocabulary of the art form, but of moving it past the literal to the unconscious” (Lassell 64). Lee recounts a significant breakthrough at this point in the creative process: “All of our original approach to the flying with silks and traditional Foy wires simply didn’t offer the organic, wild, animalistic approach to the aerial language. Needless to say, our introduction to Pichón Baldinu and his unleashed, seemingly high-risk attack on the air played into our hands” (Lee).

Once this final piece of the physical-production puzzle was in place, the train to Broadway ran full-steam ahead. A new flying workshop in Buenos Aires proved the concept in April 2005, and the technicalities were refined that summer in another workshop at SUNY Purchase. The Broadway company assembled and began its rehearsals just after Christmas at Steiner Studios in Brooklyn, where a replica of the set, which included opening that apes could “fly” into, was erected in spaces that normally operate as filming sound stages. Normally, Broadway shows open “out of town” so that the creative team can work out the kinks without the intense scrutiny of New York critics and audiences. Because of the expensive technical complexity of the show, which had to be staged in the

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exact environment where it would play, and because in the Internet age there’s nowhere to “hide,” Schumacher decided to risk *Tarzan* opening “cold” in New York. Following a model that *Billy Elliot* had recently tried with its premiere production in London, *Tarzan*’s extended preview period included light performance schedules, which accommodated more rehearsal and adjustment than the standard 8-show performance week.

Good word-of-mouth, general curiosity, and the strong pedigree of Disney and the creative team led to sell-out houses through previews and opening night. The score soared, the play delivered humor and pathos, and the design was transporting, especially the ten-minute prologue that included a bird’s-eye view of the Greystokes washing up on the beach and making a home in the threatening jungle. After five years of painstaking and pioneering development, *Tarzan* premiered at the Richard Rodgers Theater on May 10, 2006. While the musical found many devoted fans, critical response from the New York press was mixed to negative. Because so many theatergoing tourists outside of Manhattan, as well as New Yorkers, read *The New York Times*, a negative review can quickly shut down a production that deserves a longer life. Unfortunately, the publication’s chief theater critic Ben Brantley found *Tarzan* to be overstuffed and lacking focus, and the first sentence of his review called the production “a writhing green blob with music” (Brantley) – hardly quotable for advertising.

The general dismissal of *Tarzan* by the New York critics, who are among the most prolific theatergoers in the world, was particularly disappointing, since the creative team was aiming to deliver something more artful and intimate than what many people assume to be “Disney” and “Broadway.” Despite more positive notices from national and international critics, such as David Rooney of *Variety* and Charles Spencer of London’s *The Telegraph*, who wrote, “The opening minutes of *Tarzan*... are among the most exciting and inventive I have ever witnessed in the theater,” *Tarzan* pleased but failed to consistently thrill audiences, and simply “good” word of mouth wasn’t good enough to sustain an expensive Broadway show. The production struggled to fill houses during the year that followed, and when summer tourism failed to provide a sales boost, *Tarzan* was forced to end its Broadway run in July 2007, falling short of recoupment – a disappointing first for Disney Theatrical. In the final assessment, it seems that *Tarzan* on Broadway was neither “artistic” enough to please the critics or “commercial” enough to draw the life-sustaining crowds.

Exporting *Tarzan* to other stages

Thankfully, the story of *Tarzan* on stage was far from over. Earlier that spring, in collaboration with Dutch theater impresario Joop van den Ende’s Stage Entertainment, Disney’s *Tarzan* opened at the Circustheater in Scheveningen, The Netherlands. Due to significant growth in the physical production, television-show casting, and Phil Collins’s enormous popularity in Europe, *Tarzan* ran for two sold-out years. With *Tarzan* outselling even the record-setting *The Lion King* in The Netherlands, in a bullish move Stage Entertainment decided to open another, even more ambitious physical production in

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Hamburg in the fall of 2008. As of this writing, *Tarzan* is in its third successful year and will play at least one more year in Hamburg before moving to another city or touring.

Associate director Jeff Lee, who staged *Tarzan* in Scheveningen and Hamburg, believes that *Tarzan's* success in Europe – where Burroughs, *Tarzan*, and the movies don't resonate (possibly due to Burroughs's negative depictions of Germans in his novels) – comes from "Phil Collins, Disney, and a European aesthetic appreciation of the design and presentation of the show not shared by traditional musical-theater audiences." In both the Netherlands and Germany, the government subsidizes the performing arts and at least one legitimate theater in every city, so citizens grow up going to the state-sponsored theater, which is often avant-garde. At the same time they are open-minded to abstract design by virtue of their artistic exposure, audiences also desire more "entertainment value" in the commercial theater. Celebrity casting, expanding *Tarzan's* physical production with 60 percent more flying and 30 percent more "jungle," and more entertaining and explosive choreography by Sergio Trujillo (which replaced Meryl Tankard's ballet-inspired movement) helped to raise the profile of *Tarzan* as top-dollar, high-class entertainment in both Scheveningen and Hamburg. Where "Disney" can be somewhat of an anathema to critics and some audiences on Broadway, the brand is a huge draw in these two overseas markets – "a valuable calling card," Lee claims.

Despite the many departures from Burroughs, Disney's adventures with *Tarzan* always had the full support of his estate, especially the novelist's grandson, Danton. Schumacher remembers: "Danton was great. We were honest and faithful to the intention of the material. In a sense our version was closer [to the novel] than many of the others. Danton told me that. [The estate] never resisted any of it and Danton loved both the film and the stage version" (Schumacher). A century after *Tarzan of the Apes'* publication and over a dozen years since Disney entered the *Tarzan* pantheon, the Ape-Man still has allure. Perhaps the innocent, dreamlike wonder that brands Disney is a suitable, if not ideal, match for Burroughs's naïve yet hopeful imaginings of a feral English boy raised by apes on an exotic continent that the author had never visited. Where Disney's *Tarzan* film took about four years from inception to release, its theatrical incarnation has been in the making and remaking for over a decade, with licensed productions guaranteed to continue the story well into the future.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

TARZAN ON STAGE

MTI Showspace

<http://www.mtishowspace.com/>

This website is a forum for theaters to share ideas and challenges as well as offering set and costume rentals

Music Theatre International

<http://mtishows.com/>

Any questions regarding your license can be directed here.

TARZAN & EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

Edgar Rice Burroughs

<http://www.tarzan.com/>

The official website of Edgar Rice Burroughs features biographies of Burroughs and a fantastic history of *Tarzan* in seven chapters.

Online Literature Library – Edgar Rice Burroughs

<http://www.literature.org/authors/burroughs-edgar-rice/>

This site contains many of Burroughs's novels in an online format, including the first seven *Tarzan* novels. Burroughs originally planned a *Tarzan* trilogy, consisting of the first three books; most *Tarzan* movie plots, including Disney's, incorporate elements of the second book.

Paul Belloni Du Chaillu

<http://www.erblast.com/erbmania/duchaillu.html>

A Burroughs Bibliophile article on the American explorer of Africa whose books and life story may have influenced the creation of *Tarzan*.

AFRICA, THE CONGO & RAINFORESTS

Facts About African Countries

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/africana/map/index.html>

A clickable map of Africa links to current information in the CIA World Factbook about the continent's diverse countries, peoples and histories. Although Burroughs never traveled to Africa and the setting of *Tarzan of the Apes* is thus fictional, our production is set on Africa's west coast near the mouth of the Congo River, which corresponds to present-day northern Angola and coastal Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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American Museum Congo Expedition, 1909-1915

<http://diglib1.amnh.org/index2.html>

The American Museum of Natural History's entire holdings on the 1901-1915 expedition are available here. Contains a searchable database of all the explorers' notes and photographs, including photos of their campsites. The supporting materials help to put the expedition in its cultural context, both in terms of science and the oppressive realities of colonialism.

Learning About Rainforests

<http://www.srl.caltech.edu/personnel/krubal/rainforest/Edit560s6/www/what.html>

A "Rainforests 101" introduction, including general facts, geography, rainforest layers, plants, animals, people and preservation.

GORILLAS & CONSERVATION

Gorillas

<http://www.seaworld.org/animal-info/info-books/gorilla/>

An overview of gorillas, including habitat, diet, senses, behavior, communication, reproduction and care of young.

Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund

<http://www.dianfossey.org/home.html>

Information on gorillas and the dangers they face from poaching, habitat destruction and warfare. Emphasizing mountain gorillas, the "picture portfolio" has amazing images of the jungle landscape and expeditions, including camp set-up.

The Gorilla Foundation

<http://www.gorilla.org>

Everything you ever wanted to know about the world's most famous gorilla. Photos and facts on Koko, gorillas in the wild and gorilla communication.

VICTORIAN CULTURE

1876 Victorian England Revisited

<http://www.logicmgmt.com/1876/intro.htm>

An online museum of Victorian upper-middle class family life (like that of the Greystokes – Tarzan's biological parents.) Introduces social customs and daily life via a house tour conducted by the Ashton family of 1876 London and their servants.

BACKGROUND

The Gentleman's Page: A Practical Guide for the 19th Century American Man

<http://walternelson.com/dr/?q=node/18>

A thoroughly researched guide to etiquette and dress for the proper American gentleman. Full of period documents and quotes from literature of the day. Includes a page on how Europeans perceived American men and a bibliography of sources on Victorian etiquette.

Late Nineteenth-Century Dance

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/dihtml/divideos.html#vc001>

The Library of Congress's directory for online clips of period dance. Each clip also features a link to its instruction page in the dance manual from which it is taken.



Chattanooga High School Center for Creative Arts,
Chattanooga, TN

TARZAN[®]

THE STAGE MUSICAL
BASED ON THE *Disney* FILM

Music and Lyrics by
Phil Collins

Book by
David Henry Hwang

Adapted from the story “Tarzan of the Apes” by Edgar Rice Burroughs
Originally Produced on Broadway by Disney Theatrical Productions

PRODUCTION HANDBOOK CREDITS

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