

Welcome to *Cuesheet*, a performance guide published by the Education Department of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C. This *Cuesheet* is designed to help you enjoy the performance of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

 The picket fence marks topics for discussion or activities you may want to do with other students, friends, or family.

### What's in *Cuesheet*?

What Happens in the Musical? page 2

Meet the Characters, page 3

Telling a Story Through Song, page 4

What You See on Stage, page 5

From Page to Stage, page 6

Meet Mark Twain, page 7

On Performance Day and Resources, page 8

the adventures of

# TOM SAWYER

a musical

based on the novel by  
mark twain

conceived and written by

ken ludwig

music and lyrics by

don schlitz

# What Happens in the Musical?

musical—a play that tells its story using dialog and songs

mischievous—behaving in a playful way that annoys or harms others

*Setting: A town along the Mississippi River in the early 1840s*

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer is a musical about a mischievous boy, Tom, who lives with his Aunt Polly, and his brother, Sid.

Tom meets Becky Thatcher, the new girl in town, and falls in love with her.

One night, Tom and his friend, Huck Finn, witness Injun Joe and Muff Potter robbing a grave for Doc Robinson. During the robbery, Injun Joe murders Robinson, but blames Potter. Tom appears as a witness at Potter's trial and reveals that Injun Joe is the murderer. Injun Joe threatens to kill Tom, then escapes from the courtroom.

Later, Tom and Becky get lost while exploring a cave. Injun Joe finds the children and fights Tom. The surprise arrival of Huck gives Tom the chance to grab Injun Joe's knife. The fight ends with Injun Joe's death. Before leaving the cave, the friends find a buried treasure.



*To punish Tom, Aunt Polly makes him whitewash her fence. This part of the plot is so famous that the United States Post Office issued a stamp in 1972 featuring the scene.*

Tom, Becky, and Huck are missing so long that everyone assumes they are dead. They return home while their funerals are taking place. The funerals are interrupted and the town joyously welcomes the trio.



# Meet the Characters

## Seventeen Characters—Seven Actors

When actors play more than one role, it is called “doubling.” In this production, five actors play multiple roles. The actors playing Tom and Huck play only one role.

Playwright Ken Ludwig wants the audience to be aware that theater involves make-believe. As a result, the actors become different characters by making simple costume changes in full view of the audience. For example, you see the actor who plays Injun Joe, the meanest character in the musical, put on a different hat to become the kindly Reverend Sprague. Many actors step into and out of the role of **narrator**. As narrator, each actor turns to face the audience directly and speaks.

## Character Clues

Each character’s speaking style provides clues to the character’s personality. Model citizens like Aunt Polly and Judge Thatcher use good grammar. Tom and Huck Finn, characters who challenge authority and rebel against rules, speak in slang and use non-standard English.

“I’d druther die first.” – Tom

“If you ain’t afeared.” – Huck

## Different Points of View



In the musical, people see Tom in different ways. Tom is described as...

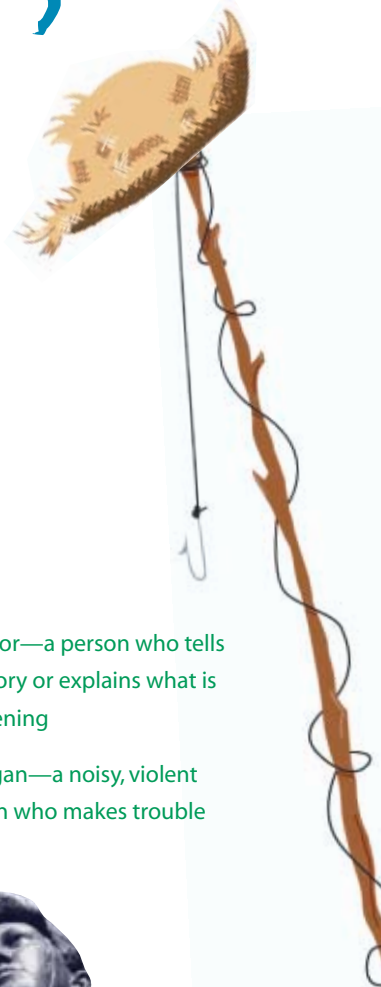
“*a hooligan*” –Tom’s teacher, Mr. Dobbins

“*Prince of Darkness*” –Aunt Polly

“*the master of all things good in life*”  
–Tom’s classmates

Discuss the meaning of these quotations. Why is it possible for people to have such different views of Tom?

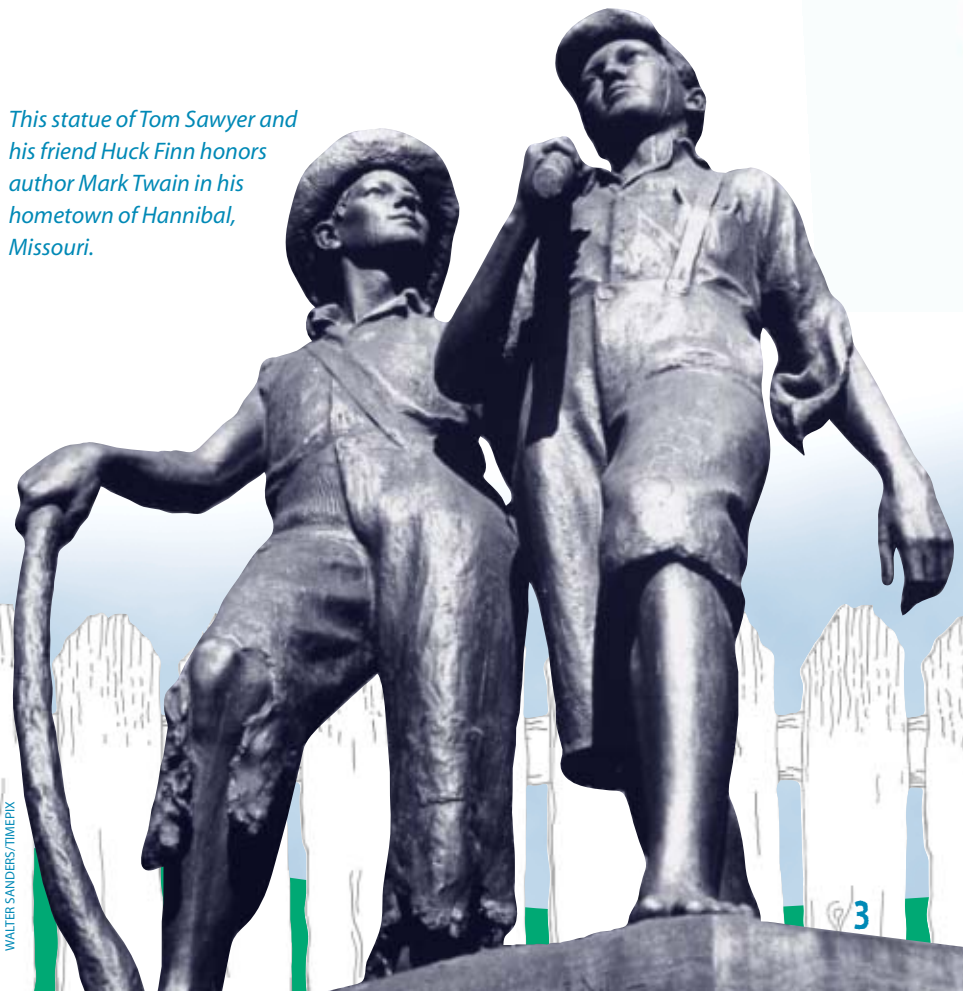
During the performance, identify what Tom says and does to make each of these descriptions appropriate. Afterwards, share your answers.



narrator—a person who tells the story or explains what is happening

hooligan—a noisy, violent person who makes trouble

This statue of Tom Sawyer and his friend Huck Finn honors author Mark Twain in his hometown of Hannibal, Missouri.



# Telling a Story Through Song

**T**he *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* uses songs and music to give information, express inner thoughts, and create a mood. The actors interrupt their spoken dialog to break into song.

## The Sound of a Name

After Tom takes the blame for Becky's misbehavior at school, a romance develops. Tom sings that he loves the sound of his name when Becky says it.

Working with a partner, practice saying each other's name in a variety of ways: friendly, loving, angry, impatient, or sad.

## Finding Comfort

When Tom and Becky are lost in the cave, they ease their fear by singing about things that comfort them. Make a list of things that comfort you. After the performance, compare your list with Tom's and Becky's list.

## Always Improving

Don Schlitz composed the music for the Broadway musical *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. That production had a typical **Broadway** orchestra with large sections of string instruments and brass instruments. For this production at the Kennedy Center, Schlitz adapted the music to make a better match between the music and the story. He changed the **instrumentation** to include guitars, a **mandolin**, and a fiddle, and reduced the size of the orchestra. Then, the music was recorded for this production.

Broadway—area in New York City famous for its theaters

instrumentation—the assortment of instruments playing a piece of music

mandolin



*This illustration from a 1931 publication of The Adventures of Tom Sawyer depicts the moment in the plot when Tom, Huck and Becky climb out of the cave into daylight. During the performance listen for the lines, when Tom says, "Becky, look! Daylight! Daylight!...Let's get out of here. We're goin' home."*

# What you See on Stage


## Theater is Theatrical

**M**usicals have a strong **theatrical** quality. With music playing in the background and actors bursting into song, the audience is constantly reminded that they are watching theater rather than real life.

Watch...

- how irregularly shaped “boxes” are rearranged to suggest each setting.
- how the actors playing Tom’s friends, Judge Thatcher, and Aunt Polly peep out from behind the “boxes” and react to Tom’s and Becky’s first meeting.
- how the dialog is interrupted by song three times during the graveyard scene.
- how the actors fight in slow-motion.
- how the scenery keeps shifting to suggest Tom’s and Becky’s continuing exploration of the cave.
- how actors become cave walls, **stalactites**, or **stalagmites**.
- and listen to the actors making various sounds effects.

## In Full View


 What was it like to see a musical in which moving sets, making sound effects, changing costumes—everything—is done in full view of the audience? After the performance, write your reactions.



*The audience sees the actors move and turn the boxes to suggest different settings, such as the church, the cave, or the graveyard. In this rough model, the markings indicate the design for each side of the boxes.*



## Mood Makers

 The lighting, songs, and background music help establish the mood of the scenes.

During the performance...

- watch for the lighting effects. Which scenes were your favorites because of the lighting? Why? Draw a favorite scene.
- listen for the fence-painting song, particularly the section where Tom and Huck sing different lyrics from the rest of the boys. Afterwards, discuss how the song helps establish mood.
- listen for the background music during both the picnic scene and the cave scene. Afterwards, describe each scene’s mood and how the background music helped establish the moods.

theatrical—included for dramatic effect

stalactites—icicle-shaped rock hanging from a cave roof

stalagmites—icicle-shaped rock sticking up from a cave floor

# From Page to Stage

Approximately 125 years after *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was published, playwright Ken Ludwig and composer Don Schlitz created a musical version of the novel. Ludwig used the original story as a starting point, but he made adaptations, or changes. Here's what Ludwig had to say about his script:

"The book jumps from one story to another. The toughest part of the adaptation was to find a way to link separate stories so they felt like a single story with a beginning, middle, and end. That's what is needed for a stage play. I decided to make the stories about Tom and Injun Joe the focus of the musical and to weave the stories about Becky into the main story.

"The point is to create an adaptation where the audience has the feeling, 'Oh, this is the *Tom Sawyer* I remember,' when, in fact, the details have changed significantly."

## Thinking About Themes

After watching the musical, discuss or write about what Tom and Huck learned about...

- friendship
- courage
- loyalty
- growing up

Also, explain the ways in which Tom's and Huck's understanding of these themes is similar to or differ from your own ideas.

### 232 LOST IN THE CAVE

she would get up and follow wherever he might lead if only he would not talk like that any more. For he was no more to blame than she, she said.

So they moved on again — aimlessly — simply at random. All they could do was to move, keep moving — not to revive when the spring has not been taken out of it by any reason to back it, but only because it is its nature to revive when the spring has not been taken out of it by any reason to back it.

By and by Tom took Becky's candle and blew it out. This economy meant so much! Words were not needed. Becky understood, and her hope died again. She knew that Tom had a whole candle and three or four pieces in his pockets — yet he must economize.

By and by, fatigue began to assert its claims; the children tried to pay no attention, for it was dreadful to be of sitting down when time was grown to be so precious; moving in some direction, in any direction, was at least progress and might bear fruit; but to sit down was to invite death and shorten its pursuit.

At last Becky's frail limbs refused to carry her farther. She sat down. Tom rested with her, and they talked of home and the friends there, and the comfortable beds and above all, the light! Becky cried and Tom tried to think of some way of comforting her, but all his encouragements were grown threadbare with use and sounded like sarcasms. Fatigue bore so heavily upon Becky that she drowzed off to sleep. Tom was grateful. He sat looking under the drawn face and saw it grow smooth and natural under the influence of pleasant dreams; and by and by a smile dawned and he rested there. The peaceful face reflected somewhat of healing into his own spirit, and his thoughts



Lost in the Cave

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER ILLUSTRATIONS BY PETER HURD PUBLISHED 1931 BY THE JOHN H. WINSTON COMPANY

A.F. BRADLEY, NEW YORK (C) 1907, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



# Meet Mark Twain

pen name—name used by an author instead of his or her real name



Mark Twain is such an important American author and humorist, that the Kennedy Center created a prize for humor in his honor. The winner is given this sculpture of Twain. Recent winners include Whoopi Goldberg and Bob Newhart.

**M**ark Twain is the **pen name** for Samuel Clemens (1835-1910), one of America’s most popular authors. Clemens grew up in Hannibal, Missouri. The town, its people, and Clemens’ boyhood adventures there became part of his book *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

As a young man, Clemens was a riverboat pilot. He then worked in the Nevada Territory. Clemens’ first published works were newspaper articles about his adventures in the west.

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) was Clemens’ first novel. Clemens wrote many other novels, including *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), which further developed the character introduced in his first novel.


Clemens was a popular speaker. He performed by reading selections from his writings and telling stories which gently poked fun at human behavior.

## Navigation and a Name

Riverboats needed at least 12 feet of water to sail safely. To measure water depth in the 19th century, a sailor would drop a rope with knots spaced six feet apart into the river. The amount of wet rope would indicate water depth. The sailor would call out the measurement, beginning with the word “mark.” The word “twain” means two. Therefore, Samuel Clemens’ pen name, Mark Twain, means “two marks,” or enough water to sail ahead safely.




## Your Pen Name

 Using vocabulary words drawn from one of your interests or hobbies, create a pen name for yourself. Share your pen name and explain its significance.

# Musical Moments

## Listen for These Lyrics

 During the musical, characters reveal their thoughts and feelings in song. What do these lyrics reveal about each character? Share your ideas.

### Tom:

*I'm on my way somewhere,  
I don't have any doubt.  
But it's something I can not live without.  
Nobody in this town understands  
the future of the world is in my hands.  
Some day the boy is gonna be the man.  
That's my plan.*

### Injun Joe:

*It's been this way my whole life through,  
When rich folk need some bad deed done  
it's always me that you turn to.  
Old Injun Joe, Yeah, I'm the one.  
You call me trash, you call me mean,  
but it's me who keeps your hands all clean.*

### Huck:

*They said I couldn't do it.  
They said I never would.  
They told me education  
wouldn't do me any good.  
It was like they had some secret  
a poor boy weren't allowed.  
They said I couldn't do it  
but I did it anyhow.  
I can read and I can write and they  
were wrong...*

### Tom:

*So if you've got a prayer, deep down in  
your heart,  
Becky, pray it with all your might.  
Tell 'em we've had our fill of the dark.  
Please send us some light.  
Lord, we've had our fill of the dark,  
Please send us some light.*

Words and music by Don Schlitz

# On Performance Day

## You, the Audience

The performers in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* need help from you, the audience. You are an important part of the play. Being a member of an audience in a theater is different from watching a movie or television show. The performers are in the same room with you and are affected by what you do. To do their best, the performers need you to watch and listen closely. Other audience members also depend on your quiet attention during the performance so they can watch and listen, too.

*Watch. Listen. Think. Imagine.  
Enjoy The Adventures  
of Tom Sawyer!*

## Resources

### You may want to... read:

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (many editions available).

### go online:

The Quotable Mark Twain.  
[www.salwen.com/mtquotes.html](http://www.salwen.com/mtquotes.html)  
To get a sense of Twain's humor, read the quotes on this site.

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*  
[www.kennedy-center.org/tomsawyer](http://www.kennedy-center.org/tomsawyer)

### visit:

Hannibal, Missouri. The boyhood home of Samuel Clemens and the cave where Tom and Becky get lost are some of the tourist attractions in this town.

### watch:

Mark Twain. Videocassette or DVD. Produced and directed by Ken Burns. Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2002.



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### **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer**

Adapted by Ken Ludwig  
Directed by Nick Olcott  
Music and Lyrics by Don Schlitz

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