Spotlight on Learning
a Pioneer Theatre Company Classroom Companion

Pioneer Theatre Company’s Student Matinee Program is made possible through the support of Salt Lake County’s Zoo, Arts and Parks Program, Salt Lake City Arts Council/Arts Learning Program, The Simmons Family Foundation, The Meldrum Foundation Endowment Fund and R. Harold Burton Foundation.

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Approx. running time:
2 hours and 15 minutes, including one fifteen-minute intermission.

Student Talk-Back:
There will be a Student Talk-Back directly after the performance.

Oliver
Music, Lyrics and Book by Lionel Bart
Dec. 2 - 17, 2016
Directed by Karen Azenberg

“Bleak, dark, and piercing cold, it was a night for the well-housed and fed to draw round the bright fire, and thank God they were at home; and for the homeless starving wretch to lay him down and die. Many hunger-worn outcasts close their eyes in our bare streets at such times, who, let their crimes have been what they may, can hardly open them in a more bitter world.”

“Please sir, I want some more.”
– Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist (1837)

All these years after Charles Dickens wrote these words, there are still families without homes and children who are hungry.

As this holiday season approaches, I am grateful for health, home, and family — but am also reminded by Oliver! to take a moment to remember those less fortunate.

I thank you for your support of Pioneer Theatre Company and wish you the merriest of holidays, and a happy and healthy New Year.

Karen Azenberg
Artistic Director

Note for Teachers: “Food, Glorious Food!”

Help win the fight against hunger by encouraging your students to bring a food donation (canned or boxed only) to your performance of Oliver!

Volunteers will collect your gift at the door, and deliver it to the Utah Food Bank, serving individuals and families in need this season. Cash donation collection envelopes will also be available for those who wish to provide a financial contribution instead.
Charles Dickens

Author of “Oliver Twist”

Charles John Huffam Dickens was born on February 7, 1812, the son of a clerk at the Navy Pay Office. His father continually lived beyond his means and was briefly imprisoned for debt in 1824. Twelve-year-old Charles was removed from school and sent to work at a boot-blacking factory, a dank, rat-infested warehouse by the river. He earned a meager six shillings a week to help support the family. This dark experience cast a shadow that became a defining experience in his life. He would later write that he wondered “how I could have been so easily cast away at such an age.”

From this experience we can easily see the gestation of the workhouse in Oliver Twist. This childhood poverty and feelings of abandonment would be a heavy influence on Dickens’ adult views on social reform. After a few months Dickens’s father was released from prison and Charles was allowed to go back to school. At fifteen his schooling ended and he found a job in an attorney’s office by day while he studied shorthand at night. From 1830 he worked as a court reporter; he went on to write for the newspapers. As a reporter he experienced the slums, thieves’ kitchens and night-shelters that became the stomping grounds of Fagin and Bill Sykes.

In 1833 Dickens began to contribute short stories and essays to periodicals. Dickens’s first book, a collection of short, colorful essays on London daily life, Sketches by Boz, was published in 1836. In the same year he married Catherine Hogarth, daughter of the editor of the Evening Chronicle. They had 10 children before they separated in 1858. Dickens would go on to write 15 major novels and numerous short stories and articles. He was known as a performer as well, giving over 400 readings of his work. In the closing years of his life, Dickens worsened his declining health by continuing to give public readings. He collapsed during one such reading in 1869, possibly with a mild stroke. He returned to his estate at Gad’s Hill and began work on Edwin Drood, which was never completed. Dickens died June 9, 1870, at the age of 58. His wish was to be laid to rest in a small cemetery in Rochester, but his popularity dictated otherwise. He was buried instead in Poet’s Corner, Westminster Abbey. The inscription on his tomb reads “He was a sympathizer to the poor, the suffering, and the oppressed; and by his death, one of England’s greatest writers is lost to the world.” His works were so revered that even today the term Dickensian is used to describe something that is reminiscent of his writings, such as poor social conditions or comically repulsive characters.

Lionel Bart

Creator of “Oliver!” the musical

Lionel Bart was born Lionel Begleiter in London in 1930, the youngest child of seven. He grew up in Stepney, a poor district in the East End of London, and the center of the Cockney culture. Lionel attended art school on scholarship planning a career in graphic design, but became more interested in theater and music. Although he could not read or write music, he began to write songs for his actor friends, either whistling the tunes that he composed, or singing them into a tape recorder. Influenced by his upbringing, one of Bart’s first full length theatre endeavors was composing songs for Fings Ain’t Wot They Used To Be, a comedy that utilized popular Cockney stereotypes. Lionel changed his last name from Begleiter to Bart.

Bart continued his writing career in the Cockney vein with an adaptation of Ben Jonson’s 1606 comedy Volpone. Next was an adaptation based on an 18th century comedy by Henry Fielding, Lock Up Your Daughters, in 1959. In 1960, came Oliver! Bart was responsible for the book, music, and lyrics of this adaptation of the Charles Dickens’ classic, Oliver Twist. Oliver! was a huge success from the very beginning; on opening night the cast took 23 curtain calls. The first production ran for an astonishing six years in London, with 2618 performances. The musical previewed in the US in Los Angeles with Edwin Lester’s L.A Civic Light Opera Association, as a 1962 national tour. David Merrick brought Oliver! to the Broadway stage where it premiered at the Imperial Theater on January 6, 1963. The Broadway production was a critical success and received ten Tony Award nominations, including Best Musical, Best Actor in a Musical, Best Actress in a Musical and Best Featured Actor in a Musical. It won the awards for Best Scenic Design, Best Original Score and Best Music Direction, closing on November 14, 1964, after 774 performances.

After the runaway success of Oliver!, Bart became a celebrity in the pop and theater worlds, hanging out with the likes of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Muhammad Ali, David Bowie, Judy Garland, Noël Coward, and Princess Margaret. He continued to write pop songs, including the title song to the James Bond film From Russia With Love. Overnight, Lionel became a millionaire. He spent his new
Riches freely on expensive perfume, custom suits and patent leather boots and expensive and exclusive cars. His spending dramatically outweighed his income, and his life began to take a toll.

Bart was unable to replicate the theatrical success he had with Oliver! His next two shows, Blitz! and Twang!!, which was a Robin Hood spoof, failed. In 1968 Oliver! was made into a successful film, winning five Oscars, including Best Picture. However, Lionel Bart continued to have financial problems; to pay off debts, he had sold off the future rights to Oliver!, which meant that despite the success of the film and the numerous stage productions all over the world, he received no share in the profits.

His fortune disappeared; Bart went from having houses in London, New York, California, and Tangiers to living in a small London apartment. By 1972, Bart was bankrupt. He turned seriously to drink, and a twenty-year period of depression ensued, from which he ultimately recovered with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous.

His career had a brief revival in the 1980s, when he began writing commercial jingles. In 1994 renowned stage producer Cameron Mackintosh, interested in bringing a revival of Oliver! to the West End, generously returned to Bart some of the rights he had sold away earlier. The show was a lavish affair and moved from its original intimate melodramatic feel to a more cinematic and symphonic feel that would satisfy an audience familiar with the 1968 motion picture. This production featured brand new music and lyrics written by Bart, and also additional dialogue by Bart and Sam Mendes. Other updated elements include the addition of a prologue, in which the audience is witness to Oliver’s harrowing birth. New music arrangements and dance sequences were added as well.

Oliver! saw continued success in this, as well as subsequent, revivals, but Bart never regained his fortune, due to his terrible financial decision.

After a long battle with liver cancer, Lionel Bart died in Hammersmith Hospital, London, on the April 3, 1999. He left what little wealth he had regained to charity. Composer Andrew Lloyd Webber said “Lionel was the father of the modern British musical. As composer, book writer, and lyricist of Oliver!, he was responsible for one of the greatest musicals of all time. The loss to British musical theatre caused by his untimely death is incalculable.”

TUTS Content Guide, Oliver!, 2016

Characters in “Oliver!”

**Oliver Twist** – a workhouse boy  
**Mr. Bumble** – the pompous, blustering workhouse master  
**Mrs. Corney** – the sharp-tongued, middle-aged workhouse mistress  
**Noah Claypole** – the Undertaker’s whiny apprentice  
**Mr. Sowerberry** – the Undertaker  
**Mrs. Sowerberry** – the Undertaker’s wife and overseer  
**Charlotte** – the Sowerberry’s daughter  
**The Artful Dodger** – the young star of the pickpocket gang  
**Fagin** – heads the training ‘school’ for young pickpockets  
**Nancy** – former pickpocket, now barmaid, and romantic partner of Bill Sykes  
**Bill Sykes** – a despicable criminal leader, a violent man  
**Bet** – a young girl in Fagin’s gang who idolizes Nancy  
**Mr. Brownlow** – a gentleman of wealth and breeding  
**Mrs. Bedwin** – the Brownlow’s housekeeper  
**Dr. Grimwig** – the Brownlow’s physician  
**Old Sally** – a pauper  
**Charles Bates, and various other boys in the gang**
DEFINITIONS

**Workhouse** - A poorhouse in which paupers were given work.

**Gruel** - a light, usually thin, cooked cereal made by boiling meal, especially oatmeal, in water or milk.

**Cadge** - 1. To borrow without intent to repay. 2. To beg or obtain by begging.

**Pease pudding** - A pudding made chiefly of egg and strained peas.

**Saveloy** - A highly seasoned, dried sausage.

**Pauper** – a person without any means of support, usually depending on public welfare.

**Tinker** - originally a travelling mender of pots and pans, but also used as slang for a clumsy or mischievous child.

**Guineas** – a British gold coin taken out of circulation in the early 1800’s, worth about 21 shillings

**Pound** – a coin with the value of one pound sterling

**Vittles** – archaic slang for food

**Coffin-follower** – poor people were hired by undertakers to act as mourners at funerals, silently following the coffin with suitable dark clothes and sad expressions.

**Scallywag** – a scamp or rascal

**Bow Street Runners** – London’s first professional police force, a small group of men who worked out of the Magistrate’s office and generally served notices and warrants.

**Beak** - nose.

**Farthing** – a bronze coin worth ¼ of a penny; withdrawn from circulation in 1961; also slang for something very small and worthless.

**Larder** – pantry or room where food is kept.

**Furbiloes** – a ruffle, flounce, or bit of showy or fussy trimming

**Crumpet** – a round, soft, unsweetened bread, similar to a muffin; slang for an attractive girl

**Cheerio** – British slang, goodbye and good luck.

**Jemmy** – a crowbar; to pry something open with a bar

**Toff** – a fashionable person who wants to be considered a member of the upper class

**Slummin’** – to visit a place considered to be of low status

**Bloke** – a man

**Mealy-faced** – lacking healthy coloring; pale

**Magistrate** – a civil officer charged with administration of the law
THE WORKHOUSE AND THE POOR LAWS

...Boys have generally excellent appetites. Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months. A council was held; lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more; and it fell to Oliver Twist. The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The master, in his cook’s uniform, stationed himself at the copper; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him; the gruel was served out; and a long grace was said over the short commons. The gruel disappeared; the boys whispered each other, and winked at Oliver; while his next neighbours nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said, somewhat alarmed at his own temerity:

“Please, sir, I want some more.”

The scene in which Oliver dares to ask for more is one of the most familiar from *Oliver Twist* and *Oliver!* as well. Dickens perfectly captures the misery of life in the workhouse.

From the 1500’s, English law stated that local parishes should provide aid, generally in the form of food, to those who were temporarily without means of support. At the time, England’s population was such that everyone in a community knew everyone else and people were more likely to help their neighbors through difficult times. As the population grew, providing for the poor became more of a challenge. By the early 1800s and the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, farm machinery was becoming more widely used, and fewer laborers were needed to work the farms. The unemployed moved into the cities looking for work, crowding the urban slums.

In 1834 the New Poor Law was passed, which required that parishes join together to build regional workhouses. The authorities aimed to make the workhouses unpleasant to discourage all but those with no other option. Food was meagre and of poor quality - thin gruel and a few ounces of bread each day. Inmates were given unpleasant jobs; men would break rocks into gravel, while women and children would either work in fields, or else pick old ropes apart into threads that were used in caulking the decks of ships.

The workhouses resembled prisons more than anything else. Inmates were separated by age and gender, breaking apart families. Diseases ran rampant as inmates were in close quarters with poor sanitation. Weakened by near starvation, many inmate who fell ill with otherwise treatable ailments died.

One of Dickens’ goals in writing *Oliver Twist* was to make the public aware of the true conditions inside the thick stone walls of the workhouses. In 1847 a major scandal came to light in the Andover workhouse; starving inmates were fighting over the animal bones which they were supposed to be crushing for fertilizer. The office governing the workhouses was overhauled, and new workhouses were constructed.

As the 20th century dawned, welfare systems were completely revised; the hope now was to keep people from having to resort to the workhouse. Some intuitions were converted to hospitals; others changed names but kept their operations the same. Workhouses were officially abolished in 1930, but the last one did not close until 1948.
Our Equity Cast

KAREN AZENBERG* (Director/Choreographer) enjoys her fifth season as Artistic Director for PTC.

COLLEEN BAUM* (Mrs. Bedwin/Ensemble) returns to Pioneer Theatre Company where she was last seen in Much Ado About Nothing, Our Town, The Heiress, Lost in Yonkers and You Can’t Take It With You. Other theatre credits include Sting and Honey Company, Caine Lyric Repertory Company, Plan-B Theatre and Salt Lake Acting Company.

JESSICA BLAIR* (Ensemble) returns to Pioneer Theatre Company where she was seen in It Happened One Christmas, The Music Man, Sweet Charity, and A Christmas Carol The Musical. Regional: Brigadoon (Goodman Theatre) Hello Dolly! (Drury Lane Oakbrook) and A Christmas Carol and Beauty and the Beast (Alabama Shakespeare).

KYLE BRAND (Ensemble) debuts at PTC. Regional: Hartford Stage’s A Christmas Carol: A Ghost Story of Christmas. He was a part of Goodspeed Musicals’ “Festival of New Artists” in the stage reading of Lincoln in Love.

LENNY DANIEL* (Associate Director/Choreographer) has assisted Ms. Azenberg on many shows including: Sweet Charity and A Christmas Carol: The Musical (PTC). Broadway credits: Cats – Final Original Company, The Wizard of Oz, NY: Sinatra (Radio City), Wonderful Town (NYC Opera). Choreographer credits: Mary Poppins which ran this summer at The Utah Shakespeare Festival and Spamalot at both the Geva Theatre Center and Arkansas Rep.

LINDA GRIFFIN* (Mrs. Corney/Ensemble) was an original cast member of Broadway shows Something Rotten! and The Drowsy Chaperone. This is her PTC debut. She performed the role of Mrs. Shrroeder/Narrator in Encores’ Anyone Can Whistle at New York’s City Center with Sutton Foster, Raul Esparza and Donna Murphy and has been featured in the Broadway tours of Wicked (Midwife), A Chorus Line (with Donna McKechnie), 42nd Street (featured in TIME magazine as Anytime Annie) and Disney’s Beauty and the Beast (Silly Girl).

NATALIE HILL* (Nancy) returns to PTC after roles in Miss Saigon (Ellen), In the Heights (Daniela), and Sweet Charity (Helene). Broadway credits include: Wonderland, Bye Bye Birdie & Grease. Las Vegas: Jersey Boys & Footloose. National Tours: Hairspray, The Grinch Who Stole Christmas; Joseph,.Dreamcoat Originally from Orem, Utah, and trained by Syd Riggs and Gayle Lockwood. After 16 years in NYC, Hill currently resides in Utah.

HOWARD KAYE* (Bill Sykes) returns to PTC where he recently appeared in It Happened One Christmas, The Music Man and Peter and the Starcatcher. On Broadway in Miss Saigon, Off-Broadway in Silence! The Musical. Toured with Mamma Mia!, and has performed at many regional theatres. Disney Cruise Line entertainer.

KEVIN LIGON* (Mr. Bumble) debuts at PTC and has appeared in the Broadway productions of On The Twentieth Century, Bullets Over Broadway, The Phantom Of The Opera, Sister Act, Finian’s Rainbow, Young Frankenstein, The Producers, Kiss Me Kate, 1776 and The Secret Garden, Film/TV: The Producers (2005), Law & Order: Svu. Ligon will play headwaiter Rudolph in the highly anticipated Broadway revival of Hello, Dolly! starring Bette Midler this spring.

STEPHANIE MALONEY* (Ensemble) makes her PTC debut. She has toured nationally and internationally with the Broadway musical Chicago. She has also performed regionally at the Pittsburgh CLO, Pittsburgh Public Theatre and Cleveland Musical Theatre.

MYLES MC HALE* (Ensemble) debuts at PTC. Recent credits include Footloose (Uncle Wes, Willard u/s) at the Fulton Theatre and Sister Act (Joe) at Stages St Louis. Other credits: Chicago (Amos Hart) at Media Theatre, Good News! (Beef Saunders) at Goodspeed Opera House, and Damn Yankees (Vernon) at Arrow Rock Lyceum.

BILL NOLTE* (Fagin) debuts at PTC. He has appeared in 11 Broadway shows: The Producers, Amour, Jane Eyre, 1776 Revival, King David, A Christmas Carol, Me And My Girl, Joseph...Dreamcoat Revival, The Secret Garden, La Cage Aux Folles Revival and Cats. He recently appeared in Geva Theatre’s Forum as Marcus Lycus, Cape Playhouse’s Mousetrap as Major Metcalf and Maine State Theatre’s Fiddler on The Roof as Tevy earlier this summer.

ADAM PELLEGRINE* (Ensemble) returns to the PTC stage after he was last seen as Rocky in Rocky Horror. Credits include the Broadway tours of Chicago and Urban Cowboy, and Katy Perry’s “Unconditionally” video.

JAMES MICHAEL REILLY* (Mr. Sowerberry/Dr. Grimmwig) is making his debut at PTC. Tours: West Side Story (Europe). TV/Film: “Unforgettable,” “The Blacklist,” “Elementary,” “Person of Interest,” “Law & Order,” “SVU.” Regional: Geva Theatre (A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Inherit the Wind), Denver Center Theater Company (All My Sons, Glengarry Glen Ross, A Christmas Carol), and more.

CAROL SCHUBERG* (Mrs. Sowerberry/Ensemble) returns to PTC after appearing in Sweet Charity, Fiddler on the Roof and How to Succeed in Business... Broadway; Meet Me in St.Louis. National Tours: Cats, Gigi, Barnum, The Tap Dance Kid and Promises, Promises. Schuberg earned her BFA in Ballet from the University of Utah.

RICHARD SCOTT* (Mr. Brownlow) has more than 30 years of experience as a producer, director, actor and instructor. He has worked with Pioneer Theatre Company (West Side Story, Fiddler on the Roof, Grapes of Wrath, Inspecting Carol, Front Page,View From the Bridge), Salt Lake Acting Company, Sundance Summer & Children’s Theatre, the Egyptian Theatre in Park City and SLCC’s Grand Theatre where he last appeared in Death of a Salesman.

The articles in this study guide are not meant to mirror or interpret any productions at Pioneer Theatre Company. They are meant, instead, to be an educational jumping-off point to understanding and enjoying the plays (in any production at any theatre) a bit more thoroughly. Therefore the stories of the plays and the interpretative articles (and even characters, at times) may differ dramatically from what is ultimately produced on the Pioneer Theatre stage. Spotlight on Learning is published by Pioneer Theatre Company, 300 S. 1400 E. SLC, UT 84112. Copyright © 2015, Pioneer Theatre Company. Please feel free to download and print Spotlight on Learning, as long as you do not remove any identifying mark of Pioneer Theatre Company.

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