Direction of the Musical: Fiddler on the Roof

Dennis J. Queenan
Direction of the Musical: *Fiddler on the Roof*

A Project Report

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Degree

Master of Arts

Theatre Production

By

Dennis J Queenan

July 10, 2012

1:30 PM
Dear Michael, Terri and Brenda,

I am so excited to send you my Creative Project Binder! Hooray! I can’t believe my time at CWU is almost done.

A quick note about the DVD’s: The recording of the show was an absolute nightmare! Batteries ran out and the recharger wouldn’t work, the camera wouldn’t open mid-show to put a new tape in, etc... Oy! The DVD’s are a bit of a mess. Life goes on.

The most important note is that since we placed platforms in the audience, we were only able to capture 2 of the 3 of them on film. As you know Michael, the third platform was at the back of the house. Sadly that is the platform that the fiddler played most from. So, when you hear the fiddler, but don’t see him, he is at the back of the audience on platform #3. For this reason I have also included what I have named the “student DVD”. In this copy I zoom in and move the camera around quite a bit. I have to be sure to get every kid’s face in a frame! If you feel the need to see the fiddler, he is caught briefly on this DVD.

Thanks for taking the time to review my binder!

Best,
DJ
Central Washington University

Graduate Studies

Final Examination of

Dennis J Queenan

B.F.A., Savannah College of Art & Design, 2004

For the Degree of

Master of Art

Theatre Production

Committee in Charge

Michael J. Smith

Terri Brown       Brenda Hubbard

Black Hall 138

Tuesday, July 10, 2012

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Total Credit Requirements: 56
Biographical Information

Student’s Name: Dennis J Queenan

Born: March 4, 1961

Undergraduate Study:

    Savannah College of Art & Design, 2002-04

    Brookdale Community College, 1991-2002

Graduate Study:

    Central Washington University, Summers, 2009-12

Professional Experience

    Teacher/Director: Savannah Country Day School, 2008-

    Director/Arts Coordinator: City of Savannah Department of Cultural Affairs, 2005-08

    Director/Independent Artist, 2002-2005
This project consisted of the selection, background research and documentation, musical analysis, casting, direction, staging and post production evaluation of Savannah Country Day School’s production of *Fiddler on the Roof* written by Joseph Stein, Sheldon Harnick and Jerry Bock. Documentation includes research and analysis of the play, its dramatic actions, its historic placement as well as thematic ideas that keep the piece relevant to today’s youth.
Courses presented for the Masters Degree

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CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

We hereby approve the project report of

Dennis J Queenan

Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts:

Theatre Production

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

7/10/12

__________________________  ______________________________
Date of Signature          Professor Michael Smith
Professor Brenda Hubbard

7/10/12

__________________________
Date of Signature

Dr. Terri Brown

Please note:
The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
This project consisted of the selection, background research and documentation, musical analysis, casting, direction, staging and post production evaluation of Savannah Country Day School’s production of *Fiddler on the Roof* written by Joseph Stein, Sheldon Harnick and Jerry Bock. Documentation includes research and analysis of the play, its dramatic actions, its historic placement as well as thematic ideas that keep the piece relevant to today’s youth.
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

Final Examination of

Dennis J Queenan

M.A. Central Washington University, 2012

For the Degree of

Master of Arts

Theatre Production

Committee in charge

Professor Micheal Smith

Professor Brenda Hubbard

Dr Terri Brown

McConnell Hall

Rm 117

Thursday, July 20, 2012

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F. Ideas of the Play

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I. Biographies

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B. Thesis Project Chair/Committee Evaluator’s Written Comments

C. Final Self-Evaluation

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B. Promotional Materials: Program, Poster

C. Renderings: Initial Sketches, Final Drafting

D. DVD’s: Final Dress, Performance, Student Version

E. Production Photos
Please make sure that you have read the Play Selection Criteria section in your Graduate Handbook.

**Script Title:** Fiddler on the Roof

**Playwright(s):** Joseph Stein/Sheldon Hamick/Jerry Bock

**Number of Acts:** 2  
**Approximate Total Playing Time:** 2 hours 45 minutes

**Cast:** (Fill in with the appropriate numbers)
- **Men:** 8+  
- **Women:** 5+  
- **Children:** 5+  
- **Over 40:** 4

**Roles Requiring People of Color:** 0  
**Roles Could Double:**

**Total Number of Cast:** 18+

**Other Casting Concerns:** All students who audition for the show will be cast. Size of cast will thus be determined by interest.

**Artistic Staff:**
- **Musical Director:** X  
- **Dance Choreographer:** X  
- **Fight Choreographer:**  
- **Dialect Coach:**  
- **Specialty Hire:** X  
  - Lighting Designer, Costumer, Props Mistress, Carpenter, Set Designer

**Orchestra/Band:** (Specify what size) 9 Pieces

Will a guest artist be fulfilling any of the above? If so, which? Set Designer

**Scenery/Props:**
- **Unit Set?** (Yes) No
  - **Number of Settings:** 10
- **Historical Period:** 1905
- **Geographical Location:** Anatevka or “Pale of Settlement”, Russia

**Brief Description of Set Concerns or Special Requirements:** The set will require numerous playing areas that will need to be isolated to create locations. Being a bare unit set, very little will be used to augment it.

**Approximate Number of Props:** 40  
**Period:** 1905

**Difficult or Unusual Props?** Just one.  
**Describe:** Tevye’s Cart.

**Weapons or Firearms?** How Many: 5-10  
**Describe:** Period Rifles, Sticks, Farm Tools

**Costumes:**
- **Approximate Number of Costumes per Character:** 2-3
- **Historical Period:** Late 19th Century Russia
- **Season:** Summer to Fall to Winter

**Special Requirements:**

**Justification for Choice of Script:**

Have you seen this script produced? (Yes)

Updated 6/22/10 NDP 3
HAVE YOU DONE THIS PLAY BEFORE? (NO) BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRODUCTION: N/A

WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION PRODUCE THIS SCRIPT? Fiddler on the Roof is a wonderful piece for upper School students. It’s themes of family, tradition and holding true to what you believe in are all worthy life lessons for young and old alike.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS (IF ANY) TO DOING THIS PRODUCTION AT YOUR SCHOOL? Drawbacks to this piece are few. It is appropriate for the age group and the venue. The real challenge will be to ask students who have grown up in the state of Georgia to step into a time and place that they have little reference to.

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE SCRIPT ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER AND ATTACH. PLEASE INCLUDE A COPY OF THE SCRIPT FOR THE THESIS COMMITTEE TO REVIEW.

SUBMITTED BY: (Printed Name) DJ Queenan Date: 7/5/11

Submitted: ___________________________ (signature)

Thesis Chair Approval: Date Approved: 7/25/11
Michael Smith

Thesis committee Members Approval: Date Approved: 7/28/11
Brenda Hubbard
Terry Brown

Graduate Coordinator Approval: Date Approved: 7/25/11
Scott Robinson

Please note: The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
Brief Synopsis of Script

*Fiddler on the Roof* is the musical retelling of Sholom Aleichem’s delightful 19th century tales of community life in the fictional Jewish settlement of Anatevka, Russia. Taken at times directly from Aleichem’s collected tales of *Tevye the Dairyman and the Railroad Stories*, this play specifically follows the story of Tevye, a common Jew, and his life with wife Golde and their five daughters. As the world changes around him, Tevye strives to balance the challenges of daily living with traditional Jewish values and his continuous debate with God.
GRADUATE COMMITTEE AND OPTION APPROVAL FORM
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
(Submit the original)

Note: This form is to be completed as soon as the student has formed a committee and selected an option from the list below. Submit original to the Office of Graduate Studies in Barge 305.

Name: DJ Queenan
Address: 
Birth Date: 
StudentID: 
Email: 

Check option:
- Written Exam*
- Project
- Creative Project
- Studio Project
- Portfolio Review
- Thesis (standard)
- Thesis (journal-read*)
- Provide journal guidelines plus a recent article from that journal in student's field of study.

Indicate credits to be received for the thesis or option:

- TH 700 - Title: Creative Project - Credits:

*Students taking written exam option may omit items 1-5 below.

1. Proposed Title (and title of targeted journal if appropriate): Fiddler on the Roof

2. Purpose of Study: M.A.

3. Scope of Study: Creative Project: Theatre performance

4. Procedure to be used: Director's Sourcebook Model

5. Does the procedure involve collection of data obtained from
   - Human Subjects (including use of surveys)? Yes** No X
   - Use of Animals? Yes** No X

   **If yes, your procedures must be approved in writing by the Human Subjects Committee or the Animal Care and Use Committee before you initiate your research.

   Michael Smith
   Committee Chair (typed or printed)
   Committee Chair (signature) 7/2/11
   Terry Brown
   Committee Member (typed or printed)
   Committee Member (signature) 7/6/11
   Brenda Hubbard
   Committee Member (typed or printed)
   Committee Member (signature) 7/8/11

   Approved by:
   Scott Robinson
   Signature is illegible.
   7/11
   Dept Chair/Designee* (signature) Date 7/21/11
   Dean of Graduate Studies

*In the case of inter disciplinary programs, this form should be signed by the relevant Program Director/Co-Director AND relevant Dept chair. In cases where they cannot come to sign for approval, the approval will be made or denied by the relevant inter/disciplinary program advisor.

Please note:
The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
August 1, 2011

Permission of Hiring Authority

As the Head of the Upper School at Savannah Country Day School, I authorize the hiring of—and permission for—DJ Queenan to direct a production of Fiddler on the Roof. This production will be performed at the school, in the Jelks Auditorium, on February 9, 10, and 11, 2012.

Thank You,

Stephen Kolman

Please note:
This signature has been redacted due to security reasons.
Production Dates and Project Parameters

The proposed dates for the Savannah Country Day School's production of *Fiddler on the Roof* are Thursday, Friday and Saturday, February 9th, 10th & 11th, 2012 at 7:00 PM. The show will be performed on campus in the Jelks Fine Arts Auditorium. Jelks Auditorium is a proscenium style theatre with a 30 foot wide and 20 foot high aperture, a depth of twenty three feet from the cyclorama to the grand curtain line and a 15 foot apron. Once an orchestra pit, the downstage area was made into a stage extension approximately fifteen years ago. The backstage area is comprised of limited wing space, a work area and loading dock as well as backstage access to the dressing rooms. Curtain legs are hung at downstage, mid-stage and upstage intervals with a mid-stage traveler running approximately fifteen feet downstage of the cyclorama. Containing no fly space, the air above does however contain three electrical batons.

The house of Jelks Auditorium has seating for an audience of three hundred and ninety nine people divided into three sections separated by aisles at mid-house left and right. The back of the house contains the lighting and sound booth with channels to power approximately forty lighting instruments and twenty body mics. Above the audience there is a lighting catwalk and speakers for the sound system.

In many ways Jelks is a very welcoming house for a production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. The stage has depth enough to handle a large cast and yet is small enough to encourage intimacy between the actors and the audience. Acoustics are good for a non musical production but microphones are needed once amplified music is utilized. The stage is made of wood but has been painted for years. This provides an opportunity for the set design to include the flooring as part of the palette and location and not be limited by a
natural wood or black finished floor. Being a part of the school campus is beneficial as well. We are not limited by the expense of a rental and are able to rehearse in the production space for most of the rehearsal period.

There are however, challenges with performing in Jelks. As I mentioned earlier, there is no fly space. Although I appreciate the air conditioning ducts above the stage, the opportunity to fly set pieces or actors is practically out of the question. As I also mentioned, the apron that was once an orchestra pit is now poorly aligned with the catwalk. Being designed to light a stage that originally began fifteen feet upstage of where it now sits, the catwalk supplies many challenges to lighting the downstage area without making everyone look dead. Subsequent lighting was added this year to the back of the house to help improve, with limited results, this condition. Another side effect of the apron addition is that Jelks now does not have an orchestra pit. Although I am hoping to settle the band upstage right, it may be more practical to remove a few rows of seating to be able to place them in front of the stage. Further design work will inform that decision.

Fiddler is being planned with a $14,000.00 budget. Expenses will include payment to artist/contractors, materials and royalties. For more budgetary information please see Appendix A. Preparation from designers and contractors will begin in late October, 2011 and continue through final dress rehearsal on Wednesday, February 8, 2012.
Project Schedule

~ August 2011 ~

Section I due to Chair

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<td>Begin Rehearsals 6-8:00 PM Hand out scripts Sing: Tradition</td>
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<td>5:30-8:30 Sing: If I were a Rich Man, To Life, Matchmaker, Miracle of Miracles</td>
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<td>5:30-7:30 Review Music-Act 1</td>
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<td>5:30-7:30 Sing: Now I have Everything Tevye's Rebutal Do You Love Me Chava's sequence</td>
<td>5:30-8:30 Sing: Anatevka Review: The Dream Sunrise, Sunset Tradition</td>
<td>5:30-7:30 Sing: The Rumor Far from the home I Love</td>
<td>5:30-8:00 Review: Music-Act 2 All ensemble music</td>
<td>1-4:00 Read/Sing: Act 2</td>
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Section 3 Due to Chair
Evaluation of the Play as a Production Vehicle

As one might imagine, the choosing of a theatrical production for students in Upper School can be a daunting task. Very often the desire of the teacher’s artistic heart is set directly against what might be considered appropriate for teenagers, what can physically be done in the space you have, and the limitations of the budget at hand. Added to the mix must also be the students; their availability and their interest in the project. At a school like Savannah Country Day School (SCDS), where the entire Upper School student body totals less than three hundred, lack of interest could mean the end of the project. Also, and this must be taken into consideration, SCDS is an old Southern school with a particularly conservative nature. Although smaller dramatic pieces may be allowed to push the political envelope, the large scale musical would be better chosen to appeal to the many rather than to the smaller, less conservative population. With all those thoughts in mind it would seem that a production of *Fiddler on the Roof* is a reasonably solid fit for the Upper School musical at SCDS.

Of the many elements that go into the choosing of the show, the first and foremost is subject matter and appropriateness. With themes of family, traditional values and the workings of God in a person’s daily life, *Fiddler on the Roof* is well suited to the conservative demographic served by this school. Ideas expressed in this play are appreciated by a broad spectrum of people and are not likely to ruffle many feathers. This is not to say that this piece has been chosen for political reasons. The overriding ideas of traditional values facing up to modern day choices are just the kind of questions that we at SCDS are encouraged to present to our students. Teaching young people to think critically by watching Tevye and his family struggle through the growing pains of a culture is a theatre teacher’s
dream come true. *Fiddler on the Roof* remains a strong mirror for today’s youth regarding who we have been as a people, who we are now and perhaps even who we could be.

Another important consideration when producing a play at SCDS is gender. Frankly said, how many roles are there for girls and how many for boys? I am sure that many teachers encounter a Drama program filled to the brim with eager young ladies and a little light on boys. Whatever the reason, theatre, which is so often male centered, does not seem to appeal to today’s young men the way it does to young women. Fortunately, *Fiddler on the Roof* has a bevy of parts for young women and equally as many for the young men. In that sense it is perhaps the perfect musical for us to produce.

Looking at *Fiddler on the Roof* from a design and production standpoint is another important consideration. What are the needs of the play and can our resources supply those needs? For better or for worse, I have always been a director bent on storytelling and the process thereof, and less concerned with spectacle. Number one in my mind is always process, followed closely by accomplishing the telling of the tale. Conceptually, this production will be a more streamlined version of the play than may usually been seen. Of course spectacle will arrive when needed, but for the most part this story will be told in the plainest of words and the strongest of actions. Once again, a perfect fit for this school’s Drama Department.

Whilst working in education and the arts it is also extremely important to consider budget in any project evaluation. I will say that I am less fortunate than some Drama Departments and more fortunate than others. A reasonable budget of $14,000.00 has been set for our *Fiddler on the Roof* (Appendix A). Hopefully with an equal sense of artistry and
frugality, we should be able to produce this piece and remain within our budgeting parameters.

A realistic evaluation of any theatrical project is at the heart of its success. After taking a closer look at *Fiddler on the Roof*, its educational opportunities for critical thinking, strong themes of family as well as its appropriate fit into our theatre space and available budget, it continues to confirm its appropriateness for our department and our students.
Concept Statement

*Fiddler on the Roof*

This heartwarming, and sometimes heart wrenching tale spins itself out in the prerevolutionary times of Czarist Russia. Jewish families lived in *shtetls* or small villages approved by the government and moved through their day to day joys and sorrows. The story predominantly focuses upon Tevye, the dairyman, and his family. Tevye’s struggle to bring sense to the changing world, while still holding close to the traditions of his culture, forms the main storyline of this musical piece. While keeping a running dialogue with his ever present God, he shares with us his joyful philosophies as he works to keep food on the table and clothing on his family’s back.

The images for this production are hard and soft as is this family’s life. Gentle birch trees, native to the Russian landscape, dress the upstage and downstage corners while the shadows of their leaves etch the ground. The light is mostly amber to represent an antiquity of time and yet to also suggest a simple people below a mostly benevolent sun. The furnishing is minimal and yet each piece has the feeling of an old friend. Starkness in this piece is meant to represent simplicity, and is not necessarily harsh. The design aims to pare down the excessive trappings of the garish musical and bring into focus the love that is at the heart of Tevye’s life.

The set is comprised of a table and chairs for Tevye’s house. A bed for his bedroom, a stool and his dairy cart to represent his workplace are all that is needed. The same will be true with Motel’s Tailor Shop and the Inn. The railroad station will be dressed with a bench and a sign to signal the approaching train. All furnishings meant to evoke time and place and
nothing more. The stage itself will be gently raked from mid-stage to upstage to create playing space amid the trees and a leveled upstage section for entrances, exits and crossovers.

In addition to the stage space, small platforms will be placed amidst the audience in order to bring the playing space out into the house. These three or four platforms will be utilized during the “Sabbath Prayer”, “Sunrise, Sunset” and “Anatevka.”

Lighting for the story will be utilized to carve out acting areas on the stage. Only the largest staged pieces of the show will require full stage lighting. A special will be used for Tevye, at downstage left and right, whenever he speaks to the audience or God. Specials will also be used to isolate the platforms located in the audience and on the downstage tabs of the wings. A cyclorama and back lighting will be utilized for silhouetting characters and to influence the time of day.

Costuming will be specifically of the time period and give evidence of being well-worn and yet well-loved. Colors based on warm hues should blend well with the organic nature of the stage design. Nothing too primary or crisp that might counteract the antiquity and warmth of this piece is to be used. Austere simplicity and well-worn warmth are the best descriptors of these garments and for all the design fundamentals involved in the show.

All of these elements are employed to witness as a simple man, whose love of family and the traditions inherent therein, moves through a time of heart breaking change, both culturally and personally.
Metaphor:

The mighty yet weathered birch tree that stands, roots exposed, continually growing toward the light as the earth and stone around it are washed away by the erosion of time and the evolution of the environment that gave birth to it.
VI. Section 2

Initial Action/Conflict Analysis

The Protagonist

The protagonist in Fiddler on the Roof is Tevye, the dairyman. His actions drive much of the dramatic action in the play. His goals and objectives are the ones that we see resolved, in one way or another, at the climax.

Opposing Forces

The opposing force of the protagonist of Fiddler on the Roof is made up of the changing world as experienced through the people in Tevye’s life. Basic elements in the political world in which he lives, combined with the changing lives of Tevye’s daughters, bring about the obstacles that may keep him from achieving his objective: By clinging to his traditions, Tevye strives to keep his family, and his faith, intact amidst the whirlwind of change happening in both his immediate world, and the greater world outside.

TEVYE. A fiddler on the roof. Sounds crazy, no? But in our little village of Anatevka you might say that every one of us is a fiddler on the roof, trying to scratch out a pleasant, simple tune without breaking his neck. It isn’t easy. You may ask, why do we stay up here if it is so dangerous? We stay because Anatevka is our home. And how do we keep our balance? That I can tell you in one word--- Tradition! (Stein, Bock, and Harnick 3)
Major Dramatic Question

The major dramatic question for the protagonist in *Fiddler on the Roof* is: How far can Tevye bend, and still keep hold of his daughters and his traditions; Both of which are inseparably tied up in his identity, faith and place in life? Early in the story, in response to his elder daughter wanting to marry without a matchmaker, Tevye sings: “... This isn’t the way it’s done, not here, not now. Some things I will not, I cannot allow. Tradition— Marriages must be arranged by the papa. This should never be changed. One little time you pull out a prop, and where does it stop? Where does it stop?” (67)

The Introductory Incident

The introductory incident to the conflict comes pretty early in Act I. Tevye, while obeying the tradition of arranging a marriage for his daughter Tzeitel, makes an agreement with Lazar Wolf, an older man in the village who is a widower. Upon hearing of her engagement, Tzeitel falls to her knees and begs her father not to force her to marry this man. This is the introductory or inciting incident to the conflict:

TZEITEL. Papa, I don’t want to marry him. I can’t marry him. I can’t---

TEVYE. What do you mean, you can’t? If I say you will, you will.

TZEITEL. Papa, if it’s a matter of money, I’ll do anything. I’ll hire myself out as a servant. I’ll dig ditches, I’ll haul rocks, only don’t make me marry him, Papa, please.

TEVYE. What’s wrong with Lazar? He likes you.
TZEITEL. Papa, I will be unhappy with him. All my life will be unhappy. I’ll dig ditches, I’ll haul rocks.

TEVYE. But we made an agreement. With us an agreement is an agreement.

TZEITEL. Is that more important than I am Papa? Papa, don’t force me. I’ll be unhappy all my days.

TEVYE. All right. I won’t force you. (62-63)

The Moment of Engagement

The moment of engagement for Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* is the moment he decides to allow Tzeitel to marry Motel. It is at this time that Tevye, despite the obstacles, actively decides to commit to achieving his goals. This is the moment that he commits to keeping his daughters, and his traditions, intact: “But look at my daughter’s face—she loves him, she wants him—And look at my daughter’s eyes, so hopeful. Tradition! Well, children, when shall we make the wedding?” (68)

The Climax

The climax of *Fiddler on the Roof* occurs when Tevye can no longer keep hold of both his daughters and his traditions. Throughout the play Tevye defines himself by his faith-based traditions. When his third daughter marries out of the Jewish religion, Tevye is pushed to the breaking point; He may either keep his traditions, the very faith that tells him who he is, or keep his daughter. He may not keep both.

CHA VA. . . . Papa, I beg you to accept us.
TEVYE. Accept them? How can I accept them. Can I deny everything I believe in? On the other hand, can I deny my own child? On the other hand, how can I turn my back on my faith, my people? If I try to bend that far I will break. On the other hand . . . there is no other hand. No, CHAVA. No—no—no! (135)

It is at this moment we see Tevye lose his battle to achieve his goal. He cannot look past what his daughter has done and continue to be the man he is: a man of faith, a man of God. To save himself, and all that he has known to be true, he let's go of his daughter and surrenders to her loss in order to continue to be the man that God expects him to be.
Given Circumstances

Geographical location

*Fiddler on the Roof* takes place in a mythical town in Western Russia created by playwright Joseph Stein to serve as the village of Tevye the dairyman, and his family. Based on the original tales of *Tevye the Dairyman* by Sholem Aleichem, Stein chose to change the name of Aleichem’s villages of Boiberik and Yehupetz to the now familiar Anatevka. Although the names were changed, these small towns and villages were to represent the sections of land set aside by the Russian government as acceptable places for Jews to live. Originally called the Pale of Settlement, these areas were located in the northwestern edge of Russia just north of the Black Sea and south of the Baltic Sea. The term “Pale” comes to us from a variety of cultures: a “former term for an area within determined bounds, or subject to a particular jurisdiction, as in the Pale, used to designate the English Pale in medieval Ireland, the territory of Calais in northern France when under English jurisdiction, and those areas of Tsarist Russia to which Jewish residence was restricted (known more fully as the Pale of Settlement).” (Palmowski) It has an even more basic description which is quite revealing: “Pale in Middle English, meaning a wooden stake used as an upright, along with others to form a fence, comes via Old French from Latin *palus* ‘stake’.” (Palmowski)

Joseph Stein has specifically chosen to give the reader of this play little information about Anatevka. About the people who inhabit, there is a lot more: “Here in Anatevka we have traditions for everything—how to eat, how to sleep, how to wear clothes.” (Stein, Bock, and Harnick 2) “And in the circle of our little village we have always had our special types. For instance, Yente the Matchmaker . . .” (5) Through such dialogue, we come to see
Anatevka as a warm and inviting place that stands mostly for a working village. Through lyricist Sheldon Harnick we find out quite a bit regarding Anatevka by how its inhabitants feel about leaving it: “What do we leave? Nothing much, Only Anatevka . . . Anatevka, Anatevka, underfed, overworked Anatevka, Where else could Sabbath be so sweet? Anatevka, Anatevka, intimate, obstinate Anatevka, Where I know everyone I meet.” (144)

Although few exact descriptions of Anatevka are given by Joseph Stein, it is through the play’s characters and how they regard their hometown that we come to know it. Anatevka then becomes a small and impoverished village that is loved because it is all that its inhabitants have come to know. Anatevka is nothing more, and nothing less than themselves; their families, their work, their joys and sorrows. This mythical town is the people who inhabit it.

Climate

In *Fiddler on the Roof*, little is mentioned in regards to climate or weather. Because the area of Western Russia once known as the Pale of Settlement and the city of Kiev are now part of the modern day country of Ukraine, the weather may be presumed to be as such: “Ukraine's climate is moderate. The yearly average temperatures range from 40 to 49 degrees Fahrenheit (6 to 9 degrees Celsius)—except for the southern steppes and in Crimea, where yearly average temperatures range from 50 to 56 degrees Fahrenheit (10 to 13 degrees Celsius).” (Countries) These particular facts would have us deduce that summers were mild and warm, autumn cool, winters cold but not brutal like Eastern Russia, and spring a welcomed end to the winter weather.
Date

The playwright has set *Fiddler on the Roof* in: “1905, on the eve of the revolutionary period.” (Stein, Bock and Harnick vi) Throughout the dialogue there are references to changes going on in Russia at that time:

AVRAM. Talking about news, terrible news in the outside world--- terrible!

MORDCHA. What is it?

MENDEL. What does it say?

AVRAM. In a village called Rajanka, all the Jews were evicted, forced to leave their homes.

MENDEL. For what reason?

AVRAM. It doesn’t say. Maybe the Tsar wanted their land. Maybe a plague.” (24-25)

During the years preceding and following the turn of the 20th Century, Tsarist Russia was well known for pogroms, or military-based harassments of Jews. In his introduction to the 1984 translation of Aleichem’s original stories, translator Hillel Halkin helped pinpoint the era by saying:

But in the context of its own time and place, the era of 1881-1917 in Russia was an exceedingly black period, the most savage experienced by Jews anywhere since the terrible massacres . . . in 1648-1649. Moreover, not only were the pogroms that took place under Alexander III, and his successor
Nicholas II, actually incited and approved by the Russian government, they were part of an official policy of anti-Semitism calculated to render life so intolerable for the country’s Jewish inhabitants that, in the words of Alexander III’s advisor Constantine Pobyedonostsev, a third of them would be forced to emigrate, a third convert, and a third to perish from hunger. (Aleichem x)

What we do know from the dialogue is Tevye’s daughter Tzeitel is not yet married when the story begins. By the end of the story Tzeitel is married and has a babe in arms. It is easy to see Fiddler as a year in the life of Tevye and his family.

Economic Environment

In the story of Fiddler on the Roof, Joseph Stein leads us to believe that, although wealth at this time and place were certainly relative, there were those within the village that fared better than others. Tevye considered himself, in no uncertain terms, a poor man. He often mentions his terrible plight in life and his great wish to be delivered from it: "As the Good Book says, 'Heal us, O Lord, and we shall be healed.' In other words, send us the cure, we’ve got the sickness already. I’m not really complaining---after all, with Your help, I’m starving to death.” (Stein, Bock, and Harnick 21) Stein also introduces wealth into the story through the character of Lazar Wolf, the butcher. Golde and Tevye see a life filled with comfort for their daughter Tzeitel should she marry this wealthy man. Although Tevye has always wished that his daughters marry scholars, due to his experience of poverty, Tevye relinquishes his daughter to wealth instead.
Beyond the economic infrastructure of Anatevka, Jewish villages within the Pale of Settlement had the financial burdens placed on them by the government. Harassment was not left strictly on the doorstep of ethnicity. Financial sanctions and unreasonable taxation were all part of the government sanctioned anti-Semitism. “As sporadic pogroms became the norm, Jews endured harassment, were banned from trading on Sundays, and were denied the possession of agricultural property in their principal area of settlement, Pale.” (Palmowski)

Another aspect of the economic environment of this story comes along with the character of Perchik. Perchik represents the growing unrest occurring between the classes at the turn of the 20th Century. As was quite common at the time, the gap between the very wealthy and the very poor was ever-expanding. Soon after meeting Perchik he clearly states his position: “In this world, it’s the rich who are the criminals. Some day their wealth will be ours.” (Stein, Bock, and Harnick 29)

Political environment

The political environment of Tsarist Russia in the late 19th/early 20th century was one of great change. Nicolas II has come to power and goes on to suffer great losses in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Uprisings against this political rule in 1905 sent shock waves throughout the country. “It began on Bloody Sunday (January 22), when a peaceful demonstration in St Petersburg was fired on by troops. Strikes and peasant risings spread, culminating in a general strike in October, which forced the Tsar to institute a democratically elected Duma (parliament).” (Russian)
At the start of *Fiddler on the Roof* it is easy to see the people of Anatevka are isolated enough to barely get wind of these changes when Tevye tells us: “Then, there are the others in our village. They make a much bigger circle. His Honor the Constable, his honor the Priest, and his Honor---many others. We don’t bother them and they don’t bother us.” (Stein, Bock and Harnick 7)

The presence of the Russian and Christian authorities may come and go, but the vague feeling of tension or an underlying threat is never forgotten:

FIRST RUSSIAN. Tevye is marrying off his eldest daughter.

CONSTABLE. May I offer my congratulations, Tevye?

TEVYE. Thank you, your Honor.

CONSTABLE. Oh, Tevye, I have a piece of news that I think I should tell you as a friend.

TEVYE. Yes, your Honor?

CONSTABLE. And I’m giving you this news because I like you. You are a descent, honest person, even though you are a Jewish dog.

TEVYE. How often does a man get a compliment like that? And your news?

CONSTABLE. We have received orders that sometime soon this district is to have a little unofficial demonstration.

TEVYE. A pogrom? Here?
CONSTABLE. No---just a little unofficial demonstration.

TEVYE. How little?

CONSTABLE. Not too serious---just some mischief, so that if an inspector comes through he can see that we have done our duty. Personally, I don’t see why there has to be this trouble between people, but I thought I should tell you, and you can tell the others.

TEVYE. Thank you, your honor. You’re a good man. If I may say so, it’s too bad you’re not a Jew.

CONSTABLE. That’s what I like about you Tevye, always joking. (52-53)

The separation between these two men who obviously have no personal grudges is completely fueled by politics. Men in other parts of the country who, in order to stay in power, feel the need to oppress those that might threaten that power. Throughout European history that has been the plight of the Jews, and in this story the oppression is evident.

Within the story of Fiddler on the Roof, Joseph Stein uses three main characters to bring news of a changing Russia to the village of Anatevka. We have seen this already through the words of Avram and his newspaper and the Constable and his military orders. Lastly, Stein brings us the character of Perchik. Perchik is a Jew that has lived in the big city of Kiev. He has traveled the country and brings news not only of political change, but of a change within in his own people. This change introduces the idea that, at this time of a changing world, the Jews themselves may change right along with it:
PERCHIK. Our ways are changing all over but here. Here men and women must be kept apart. Men study. Women in the kitchen. Boys and girls must not touch, should not even look at each other.

HODEL. I am looking at you!

PERCHIK. You are very brave! Do you know that in the city boys and girls can be affectionate without the permission of a matchmaker? They can hold hands together, they even dance together---new dances---like this. (57)

Not groundbreaking perhaps for us today, but for the Eastern European Jews of Anatevka, ideas like this could shake the very foundations of their traditions; traditions that we know are at the very heart of this story!

In the end, the political environment is the demise of Anatevka. Following military edicts, the Constable must order the villagers to leave their beloved town.

CONSTABLE. I came here to tell you that you are going to have to leave Anatevka.

TEVYE. And how did I come to deserve such an honor?

CONSTABLE. Not just you of course, but all of you. At first I thought you might be spared, Tevye, because of your daughter Chava, who married---

TEVYE. My daughter is dead!

CONSTABLE. I understand. At any rate, it affects all of you. You have to leave.
TEVYE. But this corner of the world has always been our home. Why should we leave?

CONSTABLE. I don’t know why. There’s trouble in the world. Troublemakers.

TEVYE. Like us!

CONSTABLE. You aren’t the only ones. Your people must leave all the villages---Zolodin, Rabalevka. The whole district must be emptied. I have an order here, and it says that you must sell your homes and be out of here in three days. (139-140)

With these words, the people of Anatevka, as uninvolved in the political world as they might think they are, are caught in the gears of a changing regime and a new Russia.

Social & Religious Environment

The Social Environment in *Fiddler on the Roof* is one that is seemingly set in stone. Knowing who you are in the little village of Anatevka, which is, for the most part, their world, is as important as knowing who your neighbors and family are. Each and every social piece of this village’s caste system is attended to by their cultural traditions:

TEVYE. . . . Here in Anatevka we have traditions for everything---how to eat, how to sleep, even how to wear clothes. For instance, we always keep our heads covered and wear a little prayer shawl. This shows our constant devotion to God. You may ask, how did this tradition start? I’ll tell you---I
don’t know! But it’s a tradition. Because of our traditions, everyone knows who he is and what God expects him to do. (2-3)

Although Anatevka may seem like an obscure part of Russian life, still, within their world they still have the “haves and have nots”. It is a life where the poorer, working class folk still dream of becoming wealthy. Their sons are raised to carry on in the family business, study the Torah and marry girls who will bear them sons. Prior to Tevye’s daughter’s wedding, the girls in the village were destined to arranged marriages and lives filled with the chores of domestic work and the raising of their children. If they were lucky they would marry a rich man and live a life of ease.

In Anatevka it is very difficult to separate the Social Environment from the Religious Environment. So deeply based on their religious beliefs are the social norms that one would find it difficult to separate the two. Even upon the arrival of Motel the Tailor’s new sewing machine:

MOTEL. Look, Rabbi, my new sewing machine.

RABBI. Mazeltov.

MOTEL. Rabbi, is there a blessing for a sewing machine?

RABBI. There is a blessing for everything. (Prays) Amen. (128)

Of course, events leading to the play’s climax bring their religious beliefs into a more poignant perspective when Tevye’s third daughter speaks of marrying a non-Jew:

CHAVA. The world is changing, Papa.
TEVYE. No. Some things do not change for us. Some things will never change.

CHAVA. We don’t feel that way.

TEVYE. We?

CHAVA. Fyedka and I. We want to be married.

TEVYE. Are you out of your mind? Don’t you know what this means to marry outside of the faith?

CHAVA. But, Papa---

TEVYE. No, Chava! I said no! Never talk about this again! Never mention his name again! Never see him again! Never! Do you understand me?

CHAVA. Yes, Papa. I understand you. (131-132)

Another very important social and religious more at this time was the place that women occupied. Women were still considered second-class citizens, were supposed to do what was expected of them, and otherwise keep their mouths shut. It was a man’s world and the woman was there to be dutiful to her husband and raise her children to be devoted, productive adults. The woman was second class in the home as well is in the temple.

Previous action

- The village of Anatevka has been the home of Tevye the dairyman, his family and many in others, for most of their lives. (2, 141)
- The people of Anatevka live a life steeped in the traditions of their Jewish heritage. (2-9)

- The Jews of Anatevka have been waiting their whole lives for the arrival of the Messiah. (142)

- The forefathers of the Jews living in Anatevka have been forced out of many places. (145)

- Many of those from Anatevka had lived and died in pain, poverty and hardship. (92)

- Tevye and Golde have been married for 25 hardship laden years and, at the beginning of the story, their eldest child is 19 years old. (116, 11)

- Tevye and Golde have been poor since they were married. (11, 117)

- Tevye and Golde, as was the tradition, were part of an arranged marriage and met on their wedding day. (117)

- Tevye and Golde had 5 daughters and Tevye always wanted a son. (51)

- Tevye and Golde have an uncle, named Abram, who lives in America. (151)

- Anatevka is a male dominated world where the women are expected to stay at home and raise a family while the men and boys are free to work and study outside the home. (3,4)

- Yente the Matchmaker has already been to Tevye’s house to attempt a suitable match for his eldest daughter Tzeitel. (11)
- Tzeitel and Motel, the Tailor, have been friends since childhood. (13)

- Motel has met someone who will sell him a used sewing machine which, he hopes, will give him the financial freedom to ask for Tzeitel’s hand in marriage. (35)

- A year before the story begins Motel and Tzeitel have made a secret pledge to be married. (66)

- Hodel, Tevye’s second eldest daughter, has had her eye on marrying the Rabbi’s son. (18)

- Hodel was happy to live her life in Anatevka. (123)

- It is clear that Chava, Tevye’s third daughter, has not been satisfied with living the role of the typical Jewish girl of her times. (10)

- Yente, the Matchmaker, is the widow of a loveless marriage and has no children of her own. (12, 14)

- The Jews of Anatevka lived in close proximity to the Christian Russians of Anatevka as well as some of their military. (7, 140)

- Tevye does not like Lazar Wolf, the butcher. (15)

- Lazar Wolf is the widow of a woman who has been dead for years and who Golde considers to have been bitter. (60-61, 72)

- Lazar Wolf has a brother in law that lives in Chicago, IL. (149)

- All Jews have been evicted from the neighboring village of Rajanka. (25)
• Pogroms, or government authorized anti-Semitic harassment had occurred in other parts of Russia. (52-53)

• Perchik, a young traveler, had been a student at the University in Kiev. (26)

• Fyedka, a young Russian soldier has noticed Chava previously at the bookseller. (87)

Polar Attitudes

Principal Characters:

• Tevye
  
  • At the Beginning: “Because of our traditions, everyone knows who he is and what God expects him to do.” (2-3) 
  
  • At the End: I don’t know who God expects me to be, but I will honor Him, and take my traditions, even those I have compromised, with me to my new world.

• Tzeitel
  
  • At the Beginning: I know what is true and right; Love is what will ensure my happiness, not a tradition that has no meaning in my life.
  
  • At the End: I am as strong as the parents who raised me and I will keep my family together and alive.

• Hodel
• At the Beginning: “We have only one Rabbi and he has only one son. Why shouldn’t I want the best?” (18)

• At the End: I see now that there is important work to be done; that life can have deep, deep meaning and resonance.

• Chava

  • At the Beginning: I am a girl with a brain caught in a world where women do not think.

  • At the End: There is a price for thoughts and ideas and freedom can come at a great and terrible cost.
Analysis of Dialogue:

The dialogue for *Fiddler on the Roof* was conceived and written by Joseph Stein. Basing the libretto on the famous tales of Sholem Aleichem’s *Tevye the Dairyman*, Stein had a wealth of Jewish-based storytelling to draw from. Written originally in Yiddish, Aleichem’s stories drew their flavor from the life of the people living in the Jewish *shtetles*, and what was then called the Pale of Settlement. Yiddish, derived from a language most common to the Ashkenazi Jews of Germany, is a combination of Hebrew, German and Aramaic. The language is written using the Hebrew alphabet and has become a favored language to the displaced Jews of Eastern Europe. The use of this particular vernacular, with its common and earthy rhythms and imagery, helped Aleichem infuse a warmth and honesty into his work. Carrying forward this vernacular, translated of course into English, helped Stein retain that warmth in his retelling of the tales. Although many have come to think that little of *Fiddler on the Roof* was taken directly from Aleichem’s stories, it is easy to see that Stein’s writing was crafted to echo the familiar voice of this common man Aleichem had created.

Besides the original writings, there were others that influenced Stein as well. In the 1950’s Arnold Perl mounted two productions in New York based on these same stories: *The World of Sholem Aleichem* in 1953 and *Tevye and his Daughters* in 1957. “Stein said that he never saw Arnold Perl’s play *Tevye and his Daughters*, but did ‘read it after we had finished the draft of *Fiddler*.’” (Lambert 140) Also included as one of Stein’s major influences at the time was Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog’s *Life is with People*. “Few books written in the last half-century have more resolutely enveloped the Eastern European Jewish past in
nostalgic amber. It was, to be sure, only one of a cascade of books, some of them translated from Yiddish, that sought to do much the same thing in the midst or the immediate wake of Hitler's war, among them Maurice Samuel's *The World of Shalom Aleichem, ...*” (Zipperstein)

Another wonderful device used by Aleichem in his stories was to write them as a conversation between Tevye and Aleichem, himself. By writing himself into the stories, they became casual and familiar. Stein chose to adapt this particular device by creating an ongoing conversation between Tevye and God. Although speaking with God may seem a bit more formal than the conversation one might have with a contemporary, Stein's use of God as the hopefully benevolent ear to Tevye's hopes and dreams, brought the warmth and intimacy of Aleichem's original work to the newly crafted piece.

Adding to this familiarity which Stein incorporated into *Fiddler* was his retention of Aleichem's humor: "Tevye consistently rendered the listener his ally rather than his critic, and on one level, this was a subtle revelation of the author's own manipulation of the reader through self-effacing humor." (Miron) This humor in the face of, or despite, the coming of night, kept hope, and the chance of a happy ending, ever on the reader's mind. So too, in Stein's *Fiddler*, do we meet a warm and gracious man who never misses the opportunity to make light of his sad plight in an uncertain world.

Although Joseph Stein uses this familiar and jovial type of dialogue throughout his play, it is most noticeable when it isn't there. Stein moves that dramatic action along, revealing Tevye's devotion to tradition and the values that define his life. And yet, at Tevye's greatest crossroads, when his traditions are questioned beyond a point he has
previously considered, we find a very different language. Stern and strong Tevye becomes the master of the family and the giver, and taker, of familial law. The conversations with God do not stop, but they become questioning and riddled with doubt:

TEVYE. Accept them? How can I accept them. Can I deny everything I believe in? On the other hand, can I deny my own child? On the other hand, how can I turn my back on my faith and my people? If I try to bend that far, I will break. On the other hand . . . there is no other hand. No, CHAVA. No---no---no! (Stein, Bock and Harnick 135)
Analysis of the Dramatic Action: Units of Action for Act II of *Fiddler on the Roof*:

Unit #1: “Am I Bothering You?”
- Tevye Cajoles God
- God listens, passively
- Unit objective: Tevye asks God for help.

Unit #2: “Great Work to Do”
- Perchik validates his life to Hodel
- Hodel dismisses Perchik
- Unit Objective: Perchik must show the value of his choices.

Unit #3: “Theoretical Marriage”
- Perchik proposes to Hodel
- Hodel Accepts
- Unit Objective: Perchik must get Hodel to agree to marry him.

Unit #4: “Me: Man. You: Woman.”
- Perchik gushes to Hodel
- Hodel revels in Perchik’s joy
- Unit Objective: Perchik must share with Hodel his fulfilled dreams.
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- Hodel revels in Perchik’s joy
- Unit Objective: Perchik must share with Hodel his fulfilled dreams.
Unit #5: “Home is Where the Hodel Is!”

- Perchik questions the future
- Hodel assures Perchik
- Unit objective: Perchik must resolve his love for Hodel.

Unit #6: “Tell me more”

- Hodel pressures Perchik
- Perchik validates Hodel
- Unit objective: Hodel makes sure Perchik’s pretty words mean a real marriage.

Unit #7: “Well, there’s bad news . . .”

- Perchik prepares Tevye
- Tevye comforts Perchik
- Unit objective: Perchik must prepare Tevye for his news.

Unit #8: “. . . and then there’s bad news!”

- Perchik defies Tevye
- Hodel interprets
- Hodel affirms Perchik
• Unit objective: Hodel and Perchik must get Tevye’s blessing.

Unit #9: “Tear out my Beard!”

• Tevye demands answers from God
• Tevye bares himself to Perchik and Hodel
• Tevye interrogates Perchik
• Hodel and Perchik justify their actions to Tevye
• Unit objective: Tevye must tell Hodel and Perchik no!

Unit #10: “Hit and Run”

• Tevye surprises Golde
• Golde interrogates Tevye
• Tevye dominates Golde
• Unit objective: Tevye must deliver the news and still keep the upper hand.

Unit #11: “You’re a Fool!”

• Tevye seduces Golde
• Golde resists Tevye
• Golde avoids Tevye
- Golde acquiesces

- Unit objective: Tevye gets Golde to admit that she loves him.

Unit #12: “Would I Lie?”

- Yente intimidates Tzeitel

- Yente warns Tzeitel

- Tzeitel resists Yente

- Unit objective: Yente must let Tzeitel know that she knows what is going on in Tevye’s family. And, if Yente knows, everyone knows!

Unit #13: “Telephone Talk”

- Yente gossips to the villagers

- Villagers gossip amongst themselves

- Unit objective: Yente makes sure everyone knows what trouble can come when people break traditions (and don’t listen to Yente)!

Unit #14: “Never Let Go”

- Tevye clings to Hodel

- Hodel leaves Tevye

- Unit objective: Hodel must validate to Tevye, and herself, that her choices are right.
Unit #15: “Sewing the Seeds”

- Avram and villagers spread news
- Unit objective: To introduce the idea of a new arrival

Unit #16: “A Stitch in Time”

- Motel gushes with pride
- Tzeitel affirms Motel
- Unit objective: Motel must prove that he has begun to accomplish what he said he would.

Unit #17: “From the Frying Pan . . .”

- Fyedka infiltrates Tevye’s family
- Tevye’s family passively keeps him out
- Unit objective: Fyedka must become a presence in their world in order to be accepted.

Unit #18: “Love and Fear”

- Fyedka convinces
- Chava refuses
- Unit objective: Fyedka must get Chava to tell Tevye about them.

Unit #19 “. . .and into the Fire”
• Fyedka confronts Tevye

• Tevye dismisses Fyedka

• Unit objective: Fyedka makes himself known to Tevye.

Unit #20: “The World Stands Still”

• Chava reasons with Tevye

• Chava pleads with Tevye

• Tevye destroys Chava

• Unit objective: Chava must make Tevye change. Tevye must eliminate Fyedka.

Unit #21: “Flies don’t Dare to Fly!”

• Tevye dominates Golde

• Golde perseveres

• Unit objective: Tevye must declare that he is still the head of his household!

Unit #22: “The Priest”

• Golde unloads on Tevye

• Golde pleads for help from Tevye

• Tevye shuts down
• Tevye resolves for Golde and himself

• Unit objective: Tevye must cling to his traditions.

Unit #23: “I don’t Understand”

• Tevye reflects inwardly

• Unit objective: Tevye must decide what he will do.

Unit #24: “The Breaking”

• Chava begs Tevye

• Tevye questions God

• Tevye abandons Chava

• Unit objective: Tevye chooses tradition over his daughter.

Unit #25: “Which one for which one?”

• Yente asserts herself to Golde

• Golde considers Yente

• Unit objective: Yente must reestablish herself as Matchmaker to Tevye’s family.

Unit #26: “Troublemakers”

• Constable decimates Tevye
• Tevye exiles Constable

• Unit objective: Constable must destroy the village of Anatevka.

Unit #27: “Three Days”

• Villagers disbelieve and cope

• Unit objective: Villagers must wrap their minds around what they have just heard and seen.

Unit #28: “Nothing much . . .”

• Villagers minimize Anatevka

• Unit objective: Villagers come to know how simple their love for Anatevka is.

Unit #29: “Next year in the Holy Land”

• Yente bestows her hopes to Golde

• Golde parts with Yente

• Unit objective: To say goodbye to the people of Anatevka with a sense of hope.

Unit #30: “Not at All”

• Golde mourns

• Tevye masters Golde
• Unit objective: To relinquish their children to their lives.

Unit #31: “Peace be with you”

- Lazar forgives Tevye
- Tevye honors Lazar
- Unit objective: Tevye and Lazar must resolve their unhappy past to move forward.

Unit #32: “Driven by Silence”

- Chava proudly stands up to Tevye
- Tevye bends, forgives Chava
- Chava leaves Tevye
- Unit objective: Chava must make one last try to gain her father’s forgiveness.

Unit #33: “Come to us soon”

- Tevye re-asserts
- Golde acquiesces
- Unit objective: To start out on a new life.

Unit #34: “Fiddle on!”

- Tevye beckons to the Fiddler
• The Fiddler follows

• Unit objective: Tevye chooses to take his traditions with him into the new world.
ACT TWO
PROLOGUE

The exterior of Tevye's house. Tevye is sitting on a bench.

Tevye

(To heaven)

That was quite a dowry You gave my daughter Tzeitel at her wedding. Was that necessary? Anyway, Tzeitel and Motel have been married almost two months now. They work very hard, they are as poor as squirrels in winter. But they are both so happy they don't know how miserable they are. Motel keeps talking about a sewing machine. I know You're very busy—wars and revolutions, floods, plagues, all those little things that bring people to You—couldn't You take a second away from Your catastrophes and get it for him? How much trouble would it be? Oh, and while You're in the neighborhood, my horse's left leg—Am I bothering You too much? I'm sorry. As the Good Book says—Why should I tell You what the Good Book says? (Exits.)

SCENE ONE

The exterior of Tevye's house. Afternoon. Hodel enters, petulantly, followed by Perchik.

Perchik

Please don't be upset, Hodel.
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PERCHIK

I have work to do. The greatest work a man can do.

MODEL

Then goodbye, Perchik.

PERCHIK

Before I go (*he hesitates, then summons up courage*), there is a certain question I wish to discuss with you.

MODEL

Yes?

PERCHIK

A political question.

MODEL

What is it?

PERCHIK

The question of marriage.

MODEL

This is a political question?

PERCHIK

(*Awkwardly*)

In a theoretical sense, yes. The relationship between a man and woman known as marriage is based on mutual beliefs, a common attitude and philosophy towards society—
And affection.

And affection. This relationship has positive social values. It reflects a unity and solidarity—

And affection.

Yes. And I personally am in favor of it. Do you understand?

I think you are asking me to marry you.

In a theoretical sense, yes, I am.

I was hoping you were.

Then I take it you approve? And we can consider ourselves engaged, even though I am going away? (She nods.) I am very happy, Hodel. Very happy.

So am I, Perchik.
["Now I Have Everything"]

I used to tell myself
That I had everything,
But that was only half true.
I had an aim in life,
And that was everything,
But now I even have you.

I have something that I would die for,
Someone that I can live for, too.

Yes, now I have everything—
Not only everything,
I have a little bit more—
Besides having everything,
I know what everything's for.

I used to wonder,
Could there be a wife
To share such a difficult, wandering kind of life.

I was only out of sight,
Waiting right here.

Who knows tomorrow
Where our home will be?

I'll be with you and that's
Home enough for me.
Percik
Everything is right at hand.

Hodel and Percik
Simple and clear.

Percik
I have something that I would die for,
Someone that I can live for, too.

Yes, now I have everything—
Not only everything,
I have a little bit more—
Besides having everything,
I know what everything's for.

Hodel
And when will we be married, Percik?

Percik
I will send for you as soon as I can. It will be a hard life,
Hodel.

Hodel
But it will be less hard if we live it together.

Percik
Yes.

(Tevye enters.)

Tevye
Good evening.
Good evening, Reb Tevye. I have some bad news. I must leave this place.

When?

Right away.

I'm sorry, Perchik. We will all miss you.

But I also have some good news. You can congratulate me.

Congratulations. What for?

We're engaged.

Engaged?

Yes, Papa, we're engaged. (Takes Perchik's hand.)

No, you're not. I know, you like him, and he likes you, but you're going away, and you're staying here, so have a nice
trip, Perchik. I hope you'll be very happy, and my answer is no.

HODEL

Please, Papa, you don't understand.

TEVYE

I understand. I gave my permission to Motel and Tzeitel, so you feel that you also have a right. I'm sorry, Perchik. I like you, but you're going away, so go in good health and my answer is still no.

HODEL

You don't understand, Papa.

TEVYE

(Patiently)

You're not listening. I say no. I'm sorry, Hodel, but we'll find someone else for you, here in Anatevka.

PERCHIK

Reb Tevye.

TEVYE

What is it?

PERCHIK

We are not asking for your permission, only for your blessing. We are going to get married.

TEVYE

(To HODEL)

You're not asking for my permission?
ODEL

But we would like your blessing, Papa.

TEVY

[“Tradition” Reprise]

I can’t believe my own ears. My blessing? For What?
For going over my head? Impossible.
At least with Tzeitel and Motel, they asked me,
They begged me.
But now, if I like it or not,
She’ll marry him.
So what do you want from me? Go on, be wed.
And tear out my beard and uncover my head.
Tradition!
They’re not even asking permission
From the papa.
What’s happening to the tradition?
One little time I pulled out a thread
And where has it led? Where has it led?

Where has it led? To this! A man tells me he is getting mar­ried. He doesn’t ask me, he tells me. But first, he abandons her.

ODEL

He is not abandoning me, Papa.

PERCHIK

As soon as I can, I will send for her and marry her. I love her.
"I love her." Love. It's a new style. On the other hand, our old ways were once new, weren't they? On the other hand, they decided without parents, without a matchmaker. On the other hand, did Adam and Eve have a matchmaker? Yes, they did. Then it seems these two have the same matchmaker. (Sings.)

They're going over my head—
Unheard of, absurd.
For this they want to be blessed?—
Unthinkable.
I'll lock her up in her room.
I couldn't—I should!—
But look at my daughter's eyes.
She loves him.
Tradition!
(Shrugs.)

Very well, children, you have my blessing and my permission.

MODEL

Oh, thank you, Papa. You don't know how happy that makes me.

TEVYE

(To the audience)

What else could I do?
PERCHIK
Thank you, Papa.

TEVYE
(Worried)

"Thank you, Papa." What will I tell your mother? Another dream?

PERCHIK
Perhaps if you tell her something—that I am going to visit a rich uncle—something like that.

TEVYE
Please, Perchik. I can handle my own wife. (PERCHIK and HODEL exit. He calls aggressively.) GOLDE! GOLDE! (She enters from the house. He speaks timidly.) Hello, Golde. I've just been talking to Perchik and Hodel.

GOLDE
Well?

TEVYE
They seem to be very fond of each other—

GOLDE
Well?

TEVYE
Well, I have decided to give them my permission to become engaged. (Starts into the house.)
GOLDE

(Stopping him)

What? Just like this? Without even asking me?

TEVYE

(Roaring)

Who asks you? I'm the father.

GOLDE

And who is he? A pauper. He has nothing, absolutely nothing!

TEVYE

(Hesitating)

I wouldn't say that. I hear he has a rich uncle, a very rich uncle. (Changes the subject.) He is a good man, Golde. I like him. He is a little crazy, but I like him. And what's more important, Hodel likes him. Hodel loves him. So what can we do? It's a new world, a new world. Love. (Starts to go, then has a sudden thought.) Golde—(Sings.)

"Do You Love Me?"

Do you love me?

GOLDE

Do I what?

TEVYE

Do you love me?
GOLDE
Do I love you?
With our daughters getting married
And this trouble in the town,
You're upset, you're worn out,
Go inside, go lie down.
Maybe it's indigestion.

TEVYE
Golde, I'm asking you a question—
Do you love me?

GOLDE
You're a fool.

TEVYE
I know—
But do you love me?

GOLDE
Do I love you?
For twenty-five years I've washed your clothes,
Cooked your meals, cleaned your house,
Given you children, milked the cow.
After twenty-five years, why talk about
Love right now?

TEVYE
Golde, the first time I met you
Was on our wedding day.
I was scared.

GOLDE
I was shy.
I know—

I was nervous.

So was I.

But my father and my mother
Said we'd learn to love each other.
And now I'm asking, Golde,
Do you love me?

I'm your wife.

I know—

But do you love me?

Do I love him?
For twenty-five years I've lived with him,
Fought with him, starved with him.
Twenty-five years my bed is his.
If that's not love, what is?

Then you love me?

I suppose I do.
And I suppose I love you, too.

It doesn't change a thing,
But even so,
After twenty-five years,
It's nice to know.

SCENE TWO

The village street. YENTHE, TZEITEL, and other villagers cross. YENTHE and TZEITEL meet.

FISH SELLER

Fish! Fresh fish!

YENTHE

Oh, Tzeitel, Tzeitel darling. Guess who I just saw! Your sister Chava with that Fyedka! And it's not the first time I've seen them together.

TZEITEL

You saw Chava with Fyedka?

YENTHE

Would I make it up? Oh, and Tzeitel, I happened to be at the post office today and the postman told me there was a letter there for your sister Hodel.

TZEITEL

Wonderful, I'll go get it. (Starts off.)
YENTE
I got it! It's from her intended, Perchik. (Hands letter to Tzeitel.)

TZEITEL
Hodel will be so happy, she's been waiting—But it's open.

YENTE
It happened to be open. (TZEITEL exits. YENTE watches her leave, then turns to a group of villagers.) Rifka, I have such news for you.

["I Just Heard"]
Remember Perchik, that crazy student?
Remember at the wedding,
When Tzeitel married Motel
And Perchik started dancing
With Tevye's daughter Hodel?
Well, I just learned
That Perchik's been arrested, in Kiev.

VILLAGERS
No!

YENTE
Yes!

( YENTE and the FIRST GROUP exit. A WOMAN crosses to a SECOND GROUP.)

FIRST WOMAN
Shandel, Shandell Wait till I tell you—
Remember Perchik, that crazy student?  
Remember at the wedding.  
He danced with Tevye's Hodel?  
Well,  
I just heard  
That Hodel's been arrested, in Kiev.

VILLAGERS  
No! Terrible, terrible!

(The SECOND GROUP exits. A SECOND WOMAN crosses to a THIRD GROUP.)

SECOND WOMAN

Mirital  
Do you remember Perchik,  
That student, from Kiev?  
Remember how he acted  
When Tzeitel married Motel?  
Well, I just heard  
That Motel's been arrested  
For dancing at the wedding.

VILLAGERS  
No!

SECOND WOMAN  
In Kiev!

(The THIRD GROUP exits. MENDEL crosses to a FOURTH GROUP.)

MENDEL  
Rabbi! Rabbi!
Remember Perchik, with all his strange ideas?
Remember Tzeitel’s wedding
Where Tevye danced with Golde?
Well I just heard
That Tevye’s been arrested
And Golde’s gone to Kiev.

VILLAGERS
No!
MENDEL.
God forbid.
VILLAGERS
She didn’t.
MENDEL.
She did.

(The fourth group exits. AVRAM crosses to the fifth
group. YENTE enters and stands at the edge of the
group to listen.)

AVRAM
Listen, everybody, terrible news—terrible—

Remember Perchik,
Who started all the trouble?
Well, I just heard, from someone who should know,
That Golde’s been arrested,
Motel studies dancing,
And Tevye’s acting strange.
Shprintze has the measles,
And Bielke has the mumps.
And that's what comes from men and women dancing!

SCENE THREE

The exterior of the railroad station. Morning. MODEL enters and walks over to a bench. TEVYE follows, carrying her suitcase.

MODEL
You don’t have to wait for the train, Papa. You’ll be late for your customers.

TEVYE
Just a few more minutes. Is he in bad trouble, that hero of yours? (She nods.) Arrested? (She nods.) And convicted?

MODEL
Yes, but he did nothing wrong. He cares nothing for himself. Everything he does is for humanity.

TEVYE
But if he did nothing wrong, he wouldn’t be in trouble.

MODEL
Papa, how can you say that, a learned man like you? What wrongs did Joseph do, and Abraham, and Moses? And they had troubles.

TEVYE
But why won’t you tell me where he is now, this Joseph of yours?
HODEL
It is far, Papa, terribly far. He is in a settlement in Siberia.

TEVYE
Siberia! And he asks you to leave your father and mother and join him in that frozen wasteland, and marry him there?

HODEL
No, Papa, he did not ask me to go. I want to go. I don't want him to be alone. I want to help him in his work. It is the greatest work a man can do.

TEVYE
But, Hodel, baby—

HODEL
Papa—(Sings.)

["Far From the Home I Love"]

How can I hope to make you understand
Why I do what I do,
Why I must travel to a distant land
Far from the home I love?

What

Once I was happily content to be
As I was, where I was,
Close to the people who are close to me
Here in the home I love.

Who could see that a man would come
Who would change the shape of my dreams?
Helpless, now, I stand with him
Watching older dreams grow dim.

Oh, what a melancholy choice this is,
Wanting home, wanting him,
Closing my heart to every hope but his,
Leaving the home I love.

There where my heart has settled long ago
I must go, I must go.
Who could imagine I'd be wandering so
Far from the home I love?
Yet, there with my love, I'm home.

And who, my child, will there be to perform a marriage
there in the wilderness?

Papa, I promise you, we will be married under a canopy.

No doubt a rabbi or two was also arrested. Well, give him
my regards, this Moses of yours. I always thought he was a
good man. Tell him I rely on his honor to treat my daughter
well. Tell him that.

Papa, God alone knows when we shall see each other again.

Then we will leave it in His hands. (He kisses Hodel, starts
to go, stops, looks back, then looks to heaven.) Take care of
her. See that she dresses warm. (He exits, leaving Mordcha seated on the station platform.)

SCENE FOUR

The village street, some months later. The villagers enter.

AVRAM

Rob Mordcha, did you hear the news? A new arrival at Motel and Tzeitel's.

MORDCHA

A new arrival at Motel and Tzeitel's? I must congratulate him.

AVRAM

Rabbi, did you hear the news? A new arrival at Motel and Tzeitel's.

RABBI

Really?

MENDEL

Mazeltov.

FIRST MAN

Mazeltov.

SECOND MAN

Mazeltov.

(SHANDEL crosses quickly, meeting a woman.)
WOMAN
Shandel, where are you running?

SHANDEL
To my boy, Motel. There's a new arrival there.

VILLAGERS
Mazeltov, Mazeltov, Mazeltov, Shandel.

SCENE FIVE

Motel's tailor shop. Motel and Chava are in the shop. Golde and the villagers crowd around Motel, congratulating him. They fall back, revealing a used sewing machine.

VILLAGERS
Mazeltov, Motel. We just heard. Congratulations. Wonderful.

MOTEL
Thank you, thank you, very much.

(TZEITEL enters.)

AVRAM
Mazeltov, Tzeitel.

TZEITEL
(Ecstatic)

You got it!
I got it!

It’s beautiful.

I know.

Have you tried it yet?

(Holds up two different-colored pieces of cloth sewn together.)

Look.

Beautiful.

I know. And in less than a minute. And see how close and even the stitches are.

Beautiful.

I know. From now on, my clothes will be perfect, made by machine. No more handmade clothes.

(The RABBIT enters.)
The rabbi, the rabbi.

Motel.

Look, Rabbi, my new sewing machine.

Rabbi.

Mazel tov.

Tzeitel.

Rabbi, is there a blessing for a sewing machine?

Rabbi.

There is a blessing for everything. (Prays.) Amen.

Villagers.

Amen. . . Mazel tov. (Villagers, Rabbi exit.)

Golda.

And the baby? How is the baby?

Tzeitel.

He's wonderful, Mama.

(Fyedka enters. There is an awkward pause.)

Fyedka.

Good afternoon.

Motel.

Good afternoon, Fyedka.
I came for the shirt.

MOTEL

It's ready.

TZETTEL

See, it's my new sewing machine.

FYEDKA

I see. Congratulations.

MOTEL

Thank you.

FYEDKA

(After another awkward moment)

Good day. (Leaves the shop.)

MOTEL

Good day.

GOLDE

How does it work?

MOTEL

See, it's an amazing thing. You work it with your foot and your hand.

(CHAVA exits from the shop and meets FYEDKA outside.)
They still don't know about us? (She shakes her head.) You must tell them.

I will, but I'm afraid.

Chava, let me talk to your father.

No, that would be the worst thing, I'm sure of it.

Let me try.

No, I'll talk to him. I promise.

(Tevye enters.)

(Extending his hand)

Good afternoon.

(Takes the hand limply.)

Good afternoon.

(Looks at Chava)

Good day. (Exits.)
TEVYE

Good day. What were you and he talking about?

CHAVA

Nothing, we were just talking. (TEVYE turns to go into motel's shop.) Papa, Fyedka and I have known each other for a long time and and—

TEVYE

(Turning back)

Chava, I would be much happier if you would remain friends from a distance. You must not forget who you are and who that man is.

CHAVA

He has a name, Papa.

TEVYE

Of course. All creatures on earth have a name.

CHAVA

Fyedka is not a creature, Papa. Fyedka is a man.

TEVYE

Who says that he isn't? It's just that he is a different kind of man. As the Good Book says, "Each shall seek his own kind." Which, translated, means, "A bird may love a fish, but where would they build a home together?" (He starts toward the shop, but CHAVA seizes his arm.)

CHAVA

The world is changing, Papa.
TEVYE
No. Some things do not change for us. Some things will never change.

CHAVA
We don't feel that way.

TEVYE
We?

CHAVA
Fyedka and I. We want to be married.

TEVYE
Are you out of your mind? Don't you know what this means, marrying outside of the faith?

CHAVA
But, Papa—

TEVYE
No, Chava! I said no! Never talk about this again! Never mention his name again! Never see him again! Never! Do you understand me?

CHAVA
Yes, Papa. I understand you.

(GOLDE enters from the shop, followed by SHTRINTZ and BLEIK.)

GOLDE
You're finally here? Let's go home. It's time for supper.
TEVYE
I want to see Motel's new machine.

GOLDE
You'll see it some other time. It's late.

TEVYE
Quiet, woman, before I get angry. And when I get angry, even flies don't dare to fly.

GOLDE
I'm very frightened of you. After we finish supper, I'll faint. Come home.

TEVYE
(Sternly)

Golde. I am the man in the family. I am head of the house. I want to see Motel's new machine, now! (Strides to the door of the shop, opens it, looks in, closes the door, turns to Golde.) Now, let's go home! (They exit. Chava remains looking after them.)

SCENE SIX
A road. Late afternoon. Tevye is pushing his cart.

TEVYE
(Sinks down on the cart.)

How long can that miserable horse of mine complain about his leg? (Looks up.) Dear God, if I can walk on two legs, why can't he walk on three? I know I shouldn't be too upset
with him. He is one of Your creatures and he has the same rights as I have: the right to be sick, the right to be hungry, the right to work like a horse. And, dear God, I'm sick and tired of pulling this cart. I know, I know, I should push it a while. (He starts pushing the cart.)

GOLDE

(Offstage)

Tevye! (She enters, upset.) Tevye!

TEVYE

(Struck by her manner)

What? What is it?

GOLDE

It's Chava. She left home this morning. With Fyedka.

TEVYE

What?

GOLDE

I looked all over for her. I even went to the priest. He told me—they were married.

TEVYE

Married! (She nods.) Go home, Golde. We have other children at home. Go home, Golde. You have work to do. I have work to do.

GOLDE

But, Chava—
Chava is dead to us! We will forget her. Go home. (GOLDE exits. TEVYE sings.)

["Chavaleh"]

TEVYE
Little bird, little Chavaleh,
I don’t understand what’s happening today.
Everything is all a blur.
All I can see is a happy child,
The sweet little bird you were,
Chavaleh, Chavaleh.

Little bird, little Chavaleh,
You were always such a pretty little thing.
Everybody’s fav’rite child,
Gentle and kind and affectionate,
What a sweet little bird you were,
Chavaleh, Chavaleh.

(CHA.VA enters.)

CHA.VA
Papa, I want to talk with you. Papa, stop. At least listen to me. Papa, I beg you to accept us.

TEVYE
(To heaven)

Accept them? How can I accept them. Can I deny everything I believe in? On the other hand, can I deny my own child? On the other hand, how can I turn my back on my faith, my people? If I try to bend that far, I will break. On the other hand . . . there is no other hand. No Chava. No—no—no!
CHAVA
Papa, Papa.

VILLAGERS
(Seen behind a transparent curtain,
sing as CHAVA exits slowly.)


SCENE SEVEN

TEVYE's barn. YENTE enters with two boys, teenage students, who are obviously uncomfortable in the situation.

YENTE
Golde, are you home? I've got the two boys, the boys I told you about.

(GOLDE enters, followed by SHPRINTZE and BIELKE.)

Golde darling, here they are, wonderful boys, both learned boys, Golde, from good families, each of them a prize, a jewel. You couldn't do better for your girls—just right. From the top of the tree.

GOLDE
I don't know, Yente. My girls are still so young.

YENTE

So what do they look like, grandfathers? Meanwhile they'll be engaged, nothing to worry about later, no looking around, their future all signed and sealed.

GOLDE
Which one for which one?
YENTE

What's the difference? Take your pick.

GOLDE

I don't know, Yente. I'll have to talk with—

(Enter LAZAR WOLF, AVRAM, MENDEL, MORDECHA,
and other villagers.)

AVRAM

Golde, is Reb Tevye home?

GOLDE

Yes, but he's in the house. Why, is there some trouble?

AVRAM

(To BIELKE and SHEPRINTZE)

Call your father. (They exit.)

YENTE

(To the boys)

Go home. Tell your parents I'll talk to them. (They exit.)

GOLDE

What is it? Why are you all gathered together like a bunch of goats? What's—

(TEVYE enters.)

AVRAM

Reb Tevye, have you seen the constable today?
No. Why?

There are some rumors in town. We thought because you knew him so well, maybe he told you what is true and what is not.

What rumors?

Someone from Zolodin told me that there was an edict issued in St. Petersburg that all—Shh, shh.

(He stops as the constable enters with two men.)

Welcome, your Honor. What's the good news in the world?

I see you have company.

They are my friends.

It's just as well. What I have to say is for their ears also. Tevye, how much time do you need to sell your house and all your household goods? (There is a gasp from the villagers. They are stunned. They look to Tevye.)
TEVYE
Why should I sell my house? Is it in anybody's way?

CONSTABLE
I came here to tell you that you are going to have to leave Anatevka.

TEVYE
And how did I come to deserve such an honor?

CONSTABLE
Not just you, of course, but all of you. At first I thought you might be spared, Tevye, because of your daughter Chava, who married—

TEVYE
My daughter is dead!

CONSTABLE
I understand. At any rate, it affects all of you. You have to leave.

TEVYE
But this corner of the world has always been our home. Why should we leave?

CONSTABLE
(Irritated)

I don't know why. There's trouble in the world. Trouble-makers.
TEVYE
(Ironically)

Like us!

CONSTABLE

You aren't the only ones. Your people must leave all the villages—Zolodin, Rabalevka. The whole district must be emptied. (Horrified and amazed exclamations from the villagers.) I have an order here, and it says that you must sell your homes and be out of here in three days.

VILLAGERS

Three days! . . . Out in three days!

TEVYE

And you who have known us all your life, you'd carry out this order?

CONSTABLE

I have nothing to do with it, don't you understand?

TEVYE

(Bitterly)

We understand.

FIRST MAN

And what if we refuse to go?

CONSTABLE

You will be forced out.
LAZAR
We will defend ourselves.

VILLAGERS
Stay in our homes... Refuse to leave... Keep our land.

SECOND MAN
Fight!

CONSTABLE
Against our army? I wouldn't advise it!

TEVYE
I have some advice for you. Get off my land! (The villagers crowd toward the constable and his men.) This is still my home, my land. Get off my land! (The constable and his men start to go. The constable turns.)

CONSTABLE
You have three days! (Exits.)

FIRST MAN
After a lifetime, a piece of paper and get thee out.

MORIDCHA
We should get together with the people of Zolodin. Maybe they have a plan.

FIRST MAN
We should defend ourselves. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.
TEVYE

Very good. And that way, the whole world will be blind and toothless.

MENDEL

Rabbi, we've been waiting for the Messiah all our lives. Wouldn't this be a good time for him to come?

RABBI

We'll have to wait for him someplace else. Meanwhile, let's start packing. (The villagers start to go, talking together.)

VILLAGERS

He's right. . . I'll see you before I go.

FIRST MAN

Three days!

MORECHA

How will I be able to sell my shop? My merchandise?

THIRD MAN

Where can I go with a wife, her parents, and three children?

(Exit all but YENTE, GOLDE, AYRAM, LAZAR, MENDEL, and TEVYE.)

YENTE

Well, Anatevka hasn't been exactly the Garden of Eden.

AYRAM

That's true.
GOLDE

After all, what've we got here? (Sings.)

["Anatevka”]

A little bit of this,
A little bit of that,

YENTE
A pot,

LAZAR
A pan,

MENDEL
A broom,

AVRAM
A hat.

TEVYE
Someone should have set a match to this place long ago.

MENDEL
A bench,

AVRAM
A tree,

GOLDE
So what's a stove?
LAZAR
Or a house?

MENDEL
(Speaks.)

People who pass through Anatevka don't even know they've been here.

GOLDE
A stick of wood,

YENTL
A piece of cloth.

ALL
What do we leave?
Nothing much,
Only Anatevka...

Anatevka, Anatevka,
Underfed, overworked Anatevka,
Where else could Sabbath be so sweet?

Anatevka, Anatevka
Intimate, obstinate Anatevka,
Where I know everyone I meet.

Soon I'll be a stranger in a strange new place,
Searching for an old familiar face
From Anatevka.
I belong in Anatevka,
Tumbledown, workaday Anatevka,
Dear little village, little town of mine.

GOLDE

Eh, it’s just a place.

MENDEL

And our forefathers have been forced out of many, many places at a moment’s notice.

TEVYE

(Shrugs.)

Maybe that’s why we always wear our hats.

SCENE EIGHT

Outside TEVYE’s house. MOTEL and TZETIEL are packing baggage into a cart and a wagon. SHPRINTZE and BIELE enter with bundles.

SHPRINTZE

Where will we live in America?

MOTEL

With Uncle Abram, but he doesn’t know it yet.

SHPRINTZE

I wish you and the baby were coming with us.

TZETIEL

We’ll be staying in Warsaw until we have enough money to join you.
GOLDE

(Entering, with goblets)

Motel, be careful with these. My mother and father, may they rest in peace, gave them to us on our wedding day.

Tzeitel

(To Shelex and Shprintze)

Come, children, help me pack the rest of the clothes. (They exit into house.)

Yente

(Enters)

Golde darling, I had to see you before I left because I have such news for you. Golde darling, you remember I told you yesterday I didn't know where to go, what to do with these old bones? Now I know! You want to hear? I'll tell you. Golde darling, all my life I've dreamed of going to one place and now I'll walk, I'll crawl, I'll get there. Guess where. You'll never guess. Every year at Passover, what do we say? "Next year in Jerusalem, next year in the Holy Land."

Golde

You're going to the Holy Land!

Yente

You guessed! And you know why? In my sleep, my husband, my Aaron, came to me and said, "Yente, go to the Holy Land." Usually, of course, I wouldn't listen to him,
because, good as he was, too much brains he wasn't blessed with. But in my sleep it's a sign. Right? So, somehow or other, I'll walk, I'll crawl, I'll get to the Holy Land. And there I'll spend my last weary days till I go to my final rest, to lie side by side with our beloved ancestors, Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel... if there's room... So goodbye, Golde.

**GOLDE**

Goodbye, Yente. Be well and go in peace. (*They embrace.*)

**YENTE**

(*Exiting)*

Who knows? Maybe some day we'll meet on happier occasions. Meanwhile, we suffer, we suffer, we suffer in silence! (*She exits. GOLDE sits on a large straw trunk, sadly wrapping a pair of silver goblets. TEVYE enters, carrying a bundle of books, and puts them on the wagon.*)

**TEVYE**

We'll have to hurry, Golde. (*She is looking at the goblets.*) Come, Golde, we have to leave soon.

**GOLDE**

Leave. It sounds so easy.

**TEVYE**

We'll all be together soon. Motel, Tzeitel and the baby, they'll come too, you'll see. That Motel is a person.

**GOLDE**

And Hodel and Perchik? When will we ever see them?
TEVYE

Do they come visiting us from Siberia every Sabbath? You know what she writes. He sits in prison, and she works, and soon he will be set free and together they will turn the world upside down. She couldn't be happier. And the other children will be with us.

GOLDE

(Quietly)

Not all.

TEVYE

(Sharply)

All. Come, Golde, we have to get finished.

GOLDE

I still have to sweep the floor.

TEVYE

Sweep the floor?

GOLDE

I don't want to leave a dirty house. (She exits behind the house as LAZAR enters, carrying a large suitcase.)

LAZAR

Well, Tevye, I'm on my way.

TEVYE

Where are you going?
LAZAR
Chicago. In America. My wife, Fruma-Sarah, may she rest in peace, has a brother there.

TEVYE
That's nice.

LAZAR
I hate him, but a relative is a relative! (They embrace.)
Goodbye, Tevye. (LAZAR exits. TEVYE enters the house, passing TZEITEL, who enters with a blanket and a small bundle.)

TEVYE
Tzeitel, are they finished inside?

TZEITEL
Almost, Papa. (TZEITEL puts the blanket on MOTEL's wagon, kneels down, and begins rummaging in the bundle. CHAVA and FRIEDA enter. TZEITEL turns to enter the house, and sees them.) Chaval (CHAVA runs to her. They embrace. TZEITEL looks toward the house.) Papa will see you.

CHAVA
I want him to. I want to say goodbye to him.

TZEITEL
He will not listen.

CHAVA
But at least he will hear.
Maybe it would be better if I went inside and told Mama that—

(GOLDE comes round the side of the house.)

GOLDE

Chaval

(She starts toward her as TEVYE enters from the house with a length of rope. He sees them, turns, re-enters house, returns, and bends down to tie up the straw trunk, his back to CHAVA and FYEDEKA.)

CHAVA

Papa, we came to say goodbye. (TEVYE does not respond, but goes on working.) We are also leaving this place. We are going to Cracow.

FYEDEKA

We cannot stay among people who can do such things to others.

CHAVA

We wanted you to know that. Goodbye, Papa, Mama. (She waits for an answer, gets none, and turns to go.)

FYEDEKA

Yes, we are also moving. Some are driven away by edicts, others by silence. Come, Chava.

TZETEL

Goodbye, Chava, Fyedka.
TEVYE

(To TZEITEL, prompting her under his breath as he turns to another box)

God be with you!

TZEITEL

(Looks at him, then speaks to Chava, gently.)

God be with you!

CHAVA

We will write to you in America. If you like.

GOLDE

We will be staying with Uncle Abram.

CHAVA

Yes, Mama. (Chava and FYEDEK exit. Tevye turns and watches them leave. There is a moment of silence; then he turns on Golde.)

TEVYE

(With mock irritation)

We will be staying with Uncle Abram! We will be staying with Uncle Abram! The whole world has to know our business!

GOLDE

Stop yelling and finish packing. We have a train to catch.

(Motel, SPRINTZE, and BIELKE enter from the house.)
I don't need your advice, Golde. Tzeitel, don't forget the baby. We have to catch a train, and a boat. Bielke, Shprintze, put the bundles on the wagon.

(Tevye moves the wagon to the center of the stage, and Motel puts the trunk on it. Tzeitel brings the baby out of the house. They turn to one another for goodbyes.)

Tzeitel

Goodbye, Papa. (They embrace.)

Tevye

Goodbye, Motel.

Motel

Goodbye, Mama.

(Motel and Golde embrace.)

Tevye

I will, Reb Tevye. I'll work hard. (Tevye takes one last look at the baby, then Tzeitel and Motel exit with their cart. When they are gone, Tevye turns to the wagon.)

Tevye

(Picking up pots)

Come, children. Golde, we can leave these pots.
GOLDE

No, we can't.

TEVYE

All right, we'll take them. (Puts them back.)

BIELKE

(Childishly, swinging around with shpuntze)

We're going on a train and a boat. We're going on a--

GOLDE

(Sharply)

Stop that! Behave yourself! We're not in America yet!

TEVYE

Come, children. Let's go.

(The stage begins to revolve, and TEVYE begins to pull the wagon in the opposite direction. The other villagers, including the FIDDLER, join the circle. The revolve stops. There is a last moment together, and the villagers exit, at different times and in opposite directions, leaving the family on stage. TEVYE begins to pull his wagon upstage, revealing the FIDDLER playing his theme! TEVYE stops, turns, beckons to him. The FIDDLER tucks his violin under his arm and follows the family upstage as the curtain falls.)
Character Analysis of Main Characters

Tevye:

- Desire: Tevye’s greatest desire in life is to piously provide for his family and therefore live the life that God expects of him. He sees his heritage, with its cultural traditions, as the direct route to achieve this desire. Of course he wouldn’t mind a small fortune, but in truth, he seeks God’s will even though it is sometimes hidden from him.

- Will: Tevye is a man with great strength of will. He may question on a daily basis, but his queries are meant to decipher God’s purpose in his life. When obstacles to Tevye’s desires appear, he draws from his inner strength; his belief in God, to see him though. The very fiber of Tevye’s strength is his ability to bend with the needs of his family and with what he perceives as his divine purpose. When Tevye is begged by his eldest that she not marry a man she does not love, his faith is supported by what he thinks God may have ordained:

  TEVYE. But we made an agreement. With us an agreement is an agreement.

  Tzeitel. Is that more important than I am, Papa? Papa, don’t force me. I’ll be unhappy all my days.

  TEVYE. All right. I won’t force you.
TZEITEL. Oh, thank you, Papa.

TEVYE. It seems it was not ordained that you should have all the comforts of life, or that we should have a little joy in our old age after all out hard work. (Stein, Bock and Harnick 65)

- Moral stance: Tevye is a man of God. In his heart he has a one-on-one relationship with his Divine Being. His code is that which has been handed down to him, father to son, for generations. He values God and family, a hard day’s work, and small charities to those he can afford to help.

For instance, we always keep our heads covered and always wear a little prayer shawl. This shows our constant devotion to God. You may ask, how did this tradition start? I’ll tell you---I don’t know! But it’s a tradition. Because of our traditions, everyone knows who he is and what God expects him to do. (2-3)

- Decorum: Tevye is a man who presents himself exactly as he is; a working man of faith. His clothes are those of a laborer of humble means. Rough fabrics and worn hues reveal a man who lives a life of hard labor that places him among the many others in Anatevka who do the same. Laborer or not however, Tevye always reveals himself to be a man of God.

- Summary of adjectives: Tevye is open, reverent, dutiful, hard-working, inventive, generous, jovial, impatient, proud, loving and a deeply faithful dreamer.
• Character-mood-intensity at the beginning of the play:

  - Heartbeat: Normal to slightly elevated with building excitement.
  - Breathing: Normal, becoming elevated as he speaks of his village.
  - State of perspiration: His skin is dry in the early hours of the morning.
  - Muscle tension: Muscles are sore from labor and stiff in the early hours of the day.
  - Stomach: Calm and filled with a hearty morning breakfast.

Tzeitel:

• Desire: More than anything else, Tzeitel desires to be Motel’s wife! It is not her purpose to break with family tradition or to disobey her parents. From a young age her heart had been given to this man and her greatest need is to marry him and live her life with him.

• Will: The strength of this young woman is tremendous. When presented with the destiny of marrying someone other than her beloved she shows a force of will that would do anything: “Papa, if it’s a matter of money, I’ll do anything. I’ll hire myself out as a servant. I’ll dig ditches, I’ll haul rocks, only don’t make me marry him, Papa, please.” (Stein 62)
Moral stance: Tzeitel’s moral stance is seemingly different than her father’s. To begin with, she is a woman and therefore inferior in the sight of culture and religion. With that said, it could be perceived that Tzeitel is free from some of the bonds that hold her father in his place. She chooses love over tradition which, in the eyes of a modern audience, is the higher moral ground. We mustn’t however lay all of this at the feet of Tzeitel as some old-world feminist. Throughout the play Tevye and Golde have borne witness to the idea that a marriage filled with love can weather the storm. In no uncertain terms does Tzeitel come to her choices by chance. She has been taught by the very lives of her parents and the family they have made.

Decorum: Tzeitel has a sense of decorum that is severely challenged when she breaks tradition and chooses her own husband. At rise she is seen as the dependable older daughter who is dutiful and sets the standard for her sisters to follow. Quickly we come to see that this dutiful young girl has a really big secret. Showing a strength of will that is based in a strong sense of what is right, this headstrong young woman sets a new standard of decorum for young woman in the village of Anatevka.

Summary of Adjectives: Tzeitel is loving, maternal, obedient, proud, dutiful and ambitious.

Character-mood-intensity at the beginning of the play:

- Heartbeat: Slightly elevated: She knows Yente is coming.
- Breathing: Shallow and short.

- State of perspiration: Tzeitel’s body is perfectly dry but there is a constant bead of perspiration on her upper lip.

- Muscle tension: Muscles are sore, but strong. She is an able-bodied young woman.

- Stomach: Empty and in a knot. Tzeitel will not touch a bite until after she hears what the matchmaker has to say!

Hodel:

- Desire: Hodel is a child that wants for more. From the very beginning we find that she would rather shoot for the stars than settle for less:

  TZELTETL. . . . And you have your eye on the rabbi’s son.

  HODEL. Why not? We have only one rabbi and he has only one son. Why shouldn’t I want the best?

  TZELTETL. Because you’re a girl from a poor family. So whatever Yenta brings, you’ll take. Right? Of course right.

(18)

What we see revealed as the story progresses is that Hodel is really waiting to be awakened. She desires something other than what she has, but does not really know what it is.
• Will: Hodel, being Tevye’s child, also has a tremendous will. She knows that some of the choices she makes may break with the traditions she has been raised on; and yet she makes them anyway. When her choice to marry Perchik becomes the same as choosing to leave her family, possibly forever, she barely hesitates. Her strength of resolve will carry her through whatever trials may come.

• Moral stance: Hodel is a young woman who sets her own standard of morality. In an old-world village like Anatevka, the idea of a girl dancing with a man may have seemed highly immoral. To Hodel, morality is something far different than who someone dances with. In the end she leaves her home to help her soon to be husband do what they consider to be deeds of a higher calling; a higher morality than those small world conventions of Anatevka.

• Decorum: Hodel is a girl of changing decorum. At rise we find a girl who only knows the conventions of her little village. So few times have these standards of decorum been tested that she has no other point of reference. When that sense of behavior is breeched she has no other response than to defend it: “We have an old custom here. A boy acts respectfully to a girl. But, of course, that is too traditional for an advanced thinker like you.” (57) Later however, when asked to dance with a man at her sister’s wedding, her old sense of decorum is nowhere in sight: “It’s only a dance, Mama.” (100) Once again, we cannot invest all the responsibility for this woman’s evolving
ideas in her. Her father has welcomed Perchik into their home and taught his daughters that an educated man is the best match they could make. In Perchik, Hodel finds this educated man who brings to her life the change she so desires.

- Summary of adjectives: Hodel is headstrong, daring, polite, adventurous, passionate and faithful.

- Character-mood-intensity at the beginning of the play:
  
  - Heartbeat: Slow and easy. The matchmaker may be coming, but her older sister is who she is looking for. Hodel has time.
  
  - Breathing: Easy and deep.
  
  - State of perspiration: Hodel is a girl that constantly has a warm glow about her. She is moist and dewy with casual anticipation.
  
  - Muscle tension: Muscles are flexible and soft.
  
  - Stomach: Full and settled from a warm porridge type breakfast.

Chava

- Desire: Chava’s desire is to be opened to the world. An avid reader, Chava finds the larger ideas and places that a book has to offer take her far from the dairy farm and shtetl that are her world: “Since when are you interested in a match Chava? I thought you just had your eye on your
books.” (Stein 18) Chava longs for a world larger than the one in which she lives.

- No one, not even Chava herself knows the strength of will that she possesses until that will is tested. Longing for more, she would never have known that she would risk losing everything to get the new life that is found when she meets, and falls in love with Fyedka. Her strength shakes the earth on which her family lives, and changes everything they have come to believe as family and tradition.

- Moral stance: Chava, like her sisters, has a strong sense of what is right and wrong. Within the village, marrying out of the faith might be the definition of immorality. For Chava however, marrying the man she loves is the essence of who she is and therefore of the highest moral caliber.

- Decorum: Chava is a bookish kind of girl. She isn’t pretty, but isn’t plain either. In her mind these things don’t really matter. Chava is interested in the world. After all, her father befriends the men, like the Constable, who are from outside their circle. He shows them respect and at one point says to the Constable: “You are a good man. If I may say so, it’s too bad you’re not a Jew.” (53) No wonder Chava opens her mind, and her heart, to Fyedka; a man from outside their world.

- Summary of adjectives: Intellectual, timid until tested, dutiful, trail blazing, daring and the bravest character in the story.
Character-mood-intensity at the beginning of the play:

- Heartbeat: Perhaps elevated compared to some, but for Chava, this quickened pulse is a normal, day to day occurrence.

- Breathing: Shallow and short, yet she gives no mind to such things. Deep, slow breathing is for dreamers not thinkers.

- State of perspiration: Dry as a bone.

- Muscle tension: Tight and nimble, like her mind.

- Stomach: Mostly empty and slightly fluttering; Chava is an intellect whose whole body, including her stomach, wrestles with ideas.
Ideas of the Play

There are many thoughts about the important ideas of the play *Fiddler on the Roof*. In Phillip Lambert’s book, *To Broadway, To Life! The Musical Theater of Bock and Harnick*, he quotes a memory of Sheldon Harnick’s about Jerome Robbins (the original director) that sheds some important light on the subject:

(Robbins) asked what I thought was a surprising question. And he kept asking and hammering at us for months: “What is this show about?” If we gave him an answer like, “Well, it’s about this dairy man, and he has three daughters,” he would reply, “No. If that’s what this show is about, then it’s the previous adventures of the Goldberg family, and it’s not enough.” He said, “We have to find out what it is that gives these stories their power.” And he kept asking that same question: “What’s it about? What’s it about?” I don’t know which one of us finally said it... But somebody said: “Do you know what this play is about? It’s about the dissolution of a way of life.” Robbins got very excited. “If that’s what it’s about,” he said, “then we have to show our audience more of the way of life that is about to dissolve. We have to have an opening number about the traditions that are going to change. This number has to be like a tapestry against which the entire show will play.” (Lambert 145)

Of course, classic theatre like this very often has an after-life that contains so much more than what the creators consciously devised. *Fiddler* carries a wealth of
themes ranging from loyalty to God and family to choosing the life that you make instead of the life you were given. Even the name of the play, *Fiddler on the Roof*, brings about new images of a precarious life that could end at any moment. Originally titled *Tevye*, or *The Old Country*, the creators embraced the new title inspired by Marc Chagall’s 1920’s panel, created for the Moscow State Yiddish Theatre, called *The Green Fiddler*. Later incorporated into much of Chagall’s work, this portrait of the sad yet gay fiddler has become the very essence, or heart of the play.

As a director, I fully embrace, in the larger sense, the concept of *Fiddler on the Roof* being a play about the dissolution of a way of life. In a smaller, more specific sense however, this play speaks of a man who, while trying to hold onto his culture and his family during a time of tremendous change, finds he must sacrifice parts of each, in order to hold on to them.
Moods, Tempos, and Tone of the Play

The Moods, Tempos and Tone analysis is based on Act II, Scene 6 of *Fiddler on the Roof*. The scene is printed below, broken down into Units (numerically) and Beats (alphabetically).

Scene 6/Unit 22 “The Priest”

*A Road. Later Afternoon. TEVYE is pushing his cart.*

TEVYE. How long can that miserable horse of mine complain about his leg? *(Looks up.)* (Beat A) Dear God, if I can walk on two legs, why can’t he walk on three? (Beat B) I know I shouldn’t be too upset with him. He is one of your creatures and has the same rights as I have: the right to be sick, the right to be hungry, the right to work like a horse. And, dear God, I’m sick and tired of pulling this cart. I know, I know, I should push it for a while. *(He starts pushing the cart.)* (Beat C)

Goldie. *(Offstage Tevye! (She enters upset.)* Tevye! (Beat D)

TEVYE. What? What is it? (Beat E)

GOLDE. It’s CHAVA. She left home this morning. (Beat F) With Fyedka.

TEVYE. What?
GOLDE. I looked all over. (Beat G) I even went to the priest.

(Beat H) He told me—they were married.

TEVYE. Married! (Beat I) (She nods.) Go home, GOLDE.

We have other children at home. Go home, GOLDE. You have work to do. I have work to do.

GOLDE. But, Chava---

TEVYE. (Beat J) Chava is dead to us! We will forget her.

Go home. (Golde exits. Tevye sings.)

Scene 6/Unit 23 “I don’t understand”

TEVYE. (Beat K) Little bird, little Chavaleh,

(Beat L) I don’t understand what’s happening today.

Everything is all a blur.

All I can see is a happy child, The sweet little bird you were,

Chavaleh, Chavalah.

Little bird, little Chavaleh,

You were always such a pretty little thing.

Everybody’s favorite child,

Gentle and kind and affectionate,
What a sweet little bird you were, Chavaleh, Chavaleh.

Scene 6/Unit 24 “The Breaking”

CHAVA. (Beat M) Papa, I want to talk with you. (Beat N) Papa, stop. At least listen to me. Papa, I beg you to accept us.

TEVYE. (Beat O) Accept them? How can I accept them. Can I deny everything I believe in? (Beat P) On the other hand, can I deny my own child? (Beat Q) On the other hand, how can I turn my back on my faith, my people? If I try to bend that far, I will break. (Beat R) On the other hand... (Beat S) there is no other hand.

No, CHAVA. No---no---no!

CHAVA. Papa. Papa.

VILLAGERS. (Seen behind a transparent curtain, sing as Chava exits, slowly.) (Beat T) Tradition. Tradition. Tradition. (Stein, Bock, and Harnick 133-136)

Moods

Scene 6/Unit 22: “The Priest”, At rise:
- Sight: Miles of open country, a horse, a cart, soft grey skies, trees bidding the end to autumn, grasses, brown and gold, cans of milk and cheese.

- Sound: The stomping, snorting and breathing of the horse, the whisper of God, the soft and chilly breeze, the rattle of milk cans, silence.

- Touch: The scratchiness of wool, calloused palms, shoulders sore and aching, well worn boots, autumn.

- Taste: A dry bitterness from not stopping to drink, the last remnants of bread and cheese.

- Smell: The soft moldiness of autumn, the beginning of winter, the horse.

Scene 6/Unit 22: “The Priest”, After Golde enters:

- Sight: Golde, a tunnel, Chavaleh.

- Sound: Golde’s voice, white noise, ears stuffed with white noise.

- Touch: Heart racing, muscles sore to the bone, goose flesh from head to toe, perspiration, cold.

- Taste: Bitter, acidic stomach.

- Smell: None.
Scene 6/Unit 23: “I don’t understand”:

- Sight: Chavaleh, youth, a man standing alone
- Sound: The passing of time.
- Touch: Cold, fingers numb, fear.
- Taste: Paste.
- Smell: None.

Scene 6/Unit 24: “The Breaking”:

- Sight: Darkness, Chava, a little girl, God is nowhere to be found.
- Sound: Chava’s voice, the voices of his father and mother, white noise is everywhere has become a wail, duty, intuition, voice of God?
- Touch: Heat, anger, pressure inside the head, fear, hearts falling to pieces.
- Taste: Bitter saliva.
- Smell: None.
Tone

- Knowing the beauty and richness of your life before having to tear yourself from it.
Previous reviews

*Fiddler on the Roof* opened on September 22, 1964 at the Imperial Theatre in the heart of New York City’s theatre district to rave reviews. One of those reviews coming from then New York Times theatre critic Howard Taubman:

> It has been prophesied that the Broadway musical theater would take up the mantle of meaningfulness worn so carelessly by the American drama in recent years. *Fiddler on the Roof* does its bit to make good on this prophecy... The new musical, which opened last night at the Imperial Theater, is filled with laughter and tenderness. It catches the essence of a moment in history with sentiment and radiance. Compounded of the familiar materials of the musical theater-popular song, vivid dance movement, comedy and emotion—it combines and transcends them to arrive at an integrated achievement of uncommon quality. (Taubman)

Also that year, John Chapman of the New York Daily News wrote: “One of the great works of American musical theatre. It is darling, touching, beautiful, warm, funny and inspiring. It is a work of art...” (Stein, Bock, and Harnick -Back Jacket)

In the time to follow, *Fiddler* would run for 3, 242 performances and set a record as the longest running Broadway show to date. In 1965 it won Tony Awards in the following categories:

- Best Musical: Joseph Stein, Sheldon Harnick & Jerry Bock
• Best Composer and Lyricist: Sheldon Harnick & Jerry Bock
• Best Actor: Zero Mostel
• Best featured Actress in a Musical: Maria Karnilova
• Best Costume Design: Patricia Zipprodt
• Best Choreographer: Jerome Robbins
• Best Producer of a Musical: Harold Prince
• Best Direction of a Musical: Jerome Robbins
• Best Book of a Musical: Joseph Stein (Fiddler)

Since that time there have been numerous Broadway revivals of the piece. In 1981, The New York Times critic Richard F. Shepard had these glowing remarks to make:

What with so many intervening "Fiddlers" on television, in the movies, obtruding on memory, it is hard to recall whether this production is exactly the same as the one that scored on Broadway. If it is, it explains why it was a hit then. If it's not, it shows that this is a most appealing musical that can sparkle in almost any circumstances, something we already knew by virtue of its success in 75 countries and on 50 foreign-language record albums. But, really, this incarnation has all of the same touches that one remembers from that first time around. (Shepard)

Unfortunately, the 2004 New York revival did not fare as well as many of its predecessors. To start with, many thought the casting of Alfred Molina to be much too unconventional. Some, myself included, felt that Molina lacked the charisma needed to move the epic piece along. Others felt it was the directing style of David Leveaux, known
for his 2003 production of *Nine*, that hindered the work. *Talkin' Broadway*'s theatre writer Matthew Murray had this to say:

Leveaux's demanding that one mediocre song be replaced by an equally mediocre one, and his choice to steep the production so fully in darkness and sadness, strongly suggest he doesn't understand or respect the material that has proven a cherished classic for almost 40 years. While that may be standard revival policy these days, *Fiddler on the Roof* should never - as Leveaux's production does - impress the eyes and ears while leaving the heart utterly cold. (Murray)
Biographies

Sheldon Harnick and Jerry Bock worked together in a partnership that lasted fourteen years and produced seven pieces of musical theatre. Their names are forever linked with mid-century American theatre and the wealth of dramatically based work they produced:

They made an impact on the American stage at a time when the theatre was changing along with, and in response to, the world around it. Their most successful opus, *Fiddler on the Roof*, ran on Broadway for almost eight years, while raising issues of cultural identity and Jewish oppression that had never before been addresses in a Broadway musical. (Lambert xi)

Joseph Stein, along with Will Glickman, had first worked with Jerry Bock in 1956 on a project called *Mr. Wonderful*. Later, in 1958, they were joined by Sheldon Harnick on the first project that the three would create together: *The Body Beautiful*. The trio would not reunite again until their 1964 production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Lyricist Biography: Sheldon Harnick

Sheldon Harnick is the famed lyricist for the beloved musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. Although he has had the greatest reward for his work as a man of words, Harnick actually got his start as a musician. Graduating from Northwestern University in 1949, he majored in music and specifically, in playing the violin. (Songwriters Hall of Fame) Some of the details of his life are these:

- Full name: Sheldon Mayer Harnick
- Born: April 30, 1924, in Chicago, IL
Parents: Harry M. and Esther Harnick

Married: Mary Boatner, August 29, 1950 (marriage annulled, May, 1957)

Married: Elaine May, 1962 (divorced, 1963)

Married: Margery Gray (an actress), October 8, 1965

Children: Beth, Matthew  (Sheldon Harnick Biography)

Harnick began his work as a composer during the early 1950’s and had his first success with songs interpolated into Off-Broadway musical revues. It was not until his partnership with Jerry Bock however, that Harnick began his now famous musical theatre career. “While the first Bock & Harnick musical, The Body Beautiful in 1958 showed promise, it was their second musical, FIORELLO! in 1959, that put the team on the map. Their musical biography of New York City's legendary mayor earned the Tony Award, Pulitzer Prize and New York Drama Critics' Circle Award.” (Songwriters Hall of Fame)

Harnick and Bock followed up with their early 1960’s musicals, Tenderloin, 1960, and She Loves Me in 1963.

In early 1960 Harnick shared with Bock a copy of Sholem Aleichem’s novel, A Wandering Star. This story about Yiddish life and a wandering Russian theatrical company, was the beginning of Bock and Harnick’s interest in the Yiddish stories of their youth. Both had been exposed to stories by the famed old country author and playwright, but neither had seriously considered a musical based on them. After collaborating with Harold Prince, Joseph Stein and Jerome Robins, Harnick and Bock produced the 1964 classic musical Fiddler on the Roof.
Post *Fiddler on the Roof*, Harnick’s work was to include original librettos, translations, interpolated songs and additions to television and movie scores. Among them were:

- *The Rothschilds* (His last work with Jerry Bock) in 1970
- *The Heartbreak Kid* in 1972
- *Pinocchio* in 1973
- *Free to Be...You and Me* in 1974
- *Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines* in 1975
- *Rex* in 1976
- *The Merry Widow* (1977)
- *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* in 1979
- *A Christmas Carol* in 1981
- His translation of Georges Bizet's *Carmen* in 1981
- *Dragons* in 1984
- *Ghetto* in 1986
- *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* in 1991
• *Love in Two Countries* (1991)

• Collaborated on the English libretto for the Broadway production of *Cyrano* in 1993

• *Blame it On Rio* in 1984 (Sheldon Harnick)

Sheldon Harnick is the last surviving member of the trio who were the original creators of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

**Composer Biography: Jerry Bock**

Jerry Bock was the famed composer of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Over the span of his career he worked with many lyricists, but it was his fourteen year partnership with Sheldon Harnick that brought him his greatest fame. Some details of his life and career are these:

• Born: Jerrold Lewis Bock

• Place of birth & year: New Haven, Connecticut on November 23, 1928.

• During his early childhood his family moved to Flushing, NY.

• Studied piano from an early age.

• His first musical comedy, *My Dream*, was written in high school.

• Attended University of Wisconsin

• Scored the musical comedy *Big as Life* while attending University.

• Song writer for *Your Show of Shows* starring Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca.
- Early 1950's Broadway debut with the score of: *Catch a Star*, followed by songs written for the *Ziegfeld Follies*.

- In 1956, Bock composed *Mr. Wonderful*, which opened on Broadway and was the first time Bock worked with book writer Joseph Stein.

By the early 1950's, Jerry Bock had already made his debut on the Broadway stage. It wasn't until his partnership with Sheldon Harnick, however, that he made his greatest mark on the American musical. "While the first Bock & Harnick musical, *The Body Beautiful* in 1958 showed promise, it was their second musical, *FIORELLO!* in 1959, that put the team on the map. Their musical biography of New York City's legendary mayor earned the Tony Award, Pulitzer Prize and New York Drama Critics' Circle Award." (Songwriters Hall of Fame) Additional collaborations with Harnick include:

- *Tenderloin* in 1960

- *Man in the Moon* in 1963

- *She Loves Me* in 1963

- *The Apple Tree* in 1966

- *The Rothschilds* in 1970

Post Fiddler on the Roof credits include:

- *Baker Street* in 1965

- *Her First Roman* in 1968
- *The Madwoman of Central Park West* in 1979
- *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* in 1989
- *Barbara Cook's Broadway* in 2004
- *Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life* in 2005 (IBDB)

“Mr. Bock's last major project was *1040*, a musical about the tax code written with Jerry Sterner. It had a read-through in November 1997 at the Musical Theatre Lab at the University of Houston School of Theatre. Sterner ended up presenting *1040* the following year as a play.” (Jerry Bock) Jerry Bock lived to be 81 years old. Ten days before his death he spoke at a memorial for the late Joseph Stein who had died two weeks earlier at the age of 98.

**Librettist Biography: Joseph Stein**

Joseph Stein was educated as a social worker, earned a master’s degree in that field from Columbia University and spent six years working as a psychiatric social worker before beginning his career as a writer. “Then he met actor Zero Mostel through a mutual friend. Mostel said he needed comic material for a radio show, and Stein had an off-the-cuff idea. Mostel paid him $15 for it, and his writing career was underway.” (Joseph Stein) Some details of his early life and career were:

- Parents: Charles and Emma Stein.
• Married: Sadie Singer until her death in 1974.

• Remarried: Elisa Loti in 1976.

• Radio writer for *Lower Basin Street* in 1944.

• Radio writer for *Raleigh Room*, NBC, 1944-47.

• Radio writer for *The Henry Morgan Show*, ABC, 1946-49.

• Wrote *Lend an Ear* in 1948.

• *Mrs. Gibbons' Boys* in 1949.

• *Alive and Kicking* in 1950.

• All Star Revue, NBC, 1950-51.

• Your Show of Shows, NBC, 1952-53.

• The Sid Caesar Show, ABC, 1953-54.

• Also writer for Phil Silvers, Debbie Reynolds, and others, 1955-62.

• The Book for Plain and Fancy in 1955.

• The book for *Mr. Wonderful* in 1956.

• The book for *The Body Beautiful* in 1958.

• The book for *Juno* in 1959.

• The book (along with Robert Russell) for *Take Me Along* in 1959.

• Wrote *Enter Laughing* in 1963. (Joseph Stein Biography)
In 1960, Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick had already begun talk about making a piece based on Sholem Aleichem's tales of *Tevye, the Dairyman*. At this time they began a dialogue with Joseph Stein, who had been familiar with the work since childhood. Although Stein's work on *Fiddler* is considered original, at that time there had already been a lease made on the stories. Even though Arnold Perl had a prior claim to Aleichem's stories, Stein claims he was not influenced by them. Stein went on to write the book for *Fiddler on the Roof*, even though Perl still was still able to collect his share of the royalties "and is acknowledged in the show's official credit listing with the phrase 'by special permission of Arnold Perl.'" (Lambert 140)

Post *Fiddler on the Roof* work from Joseph Stein would include:

- The book (With Alan Jay Lerner) for *Carmelina* in 1979.
- The Screenplay for *Enter Laughing* 1967.
- The Screenplay for *Fiddler on the Roof* in 1971. (Joseph Stein Biography)
Learning Goals for *Fiddler on the Roof*

At Savannah Country Day School, drama, whether in the classroom or on the stage, is taught from the two basic points of view:

- The theatre is a direct reflection of humanity; past, present and future. It is the place we come to see who we are.
- Acting is doing.

Through the use of these ideas, the learning goals for *Fiddler on the Roof* align in this way:

- The story of *Fiddler on the Roof* is the story of all of us. Through telling this tale students will see how the preservation of our cultural traditions carries with it the story of our families and what has made us who we are.
- Through the familial bonds written into *Fiddler*, students can see why we forge those bonds and how important they can be as life becomes more challenging.
- The story of Tevye and his daughters presents strong ethical questions to teenagers. Through use of critical thinking students can learn how choices affect their lives and those around them.
- Within the play’s journey students will see the importance of knowing when to stay within the safety of what they know, and when it is right to move forward in a new direction. Taking action toward what you believe may be the most difficult yet the most important action they can take.
• By being a part of *Fiddler on the Roof* students may tap into the rich heritage that artists such as Jerry Bock, Sheldon Harnick and Joseph Stein have created for them. They may also have a window seat to some of the wonders of Yiddish theatre and the important role it has played in the development of American theatre.

• Through the dramatic action of the play, young actors will come to see the importance of doing.

• Through the actions of Tevye and his daughters young actors can easily see that characters are not what they say, but what they do.

• In this play that utilizes a strong sense of community and ensemble, students can learn to work together as a unit to accomplish the action of the play. Whether it be through the staging of ensemble scenes, the learning of part harmonies, or the intricacies of learning the dance at Tzeitel’s wedding, students will have the chance to come together to tell the tale of Tevye and his daughters.
Production Journal

Sunday, November 27th, 2011: Production meeting.

- In attendance: Renee McMahon (Costumer), Chann Givens (Costumer), Warren Heilman (Musical Director), Rhonda Martinez (Props Mistress), DJ Queenan (Director).

Comments: This meeting was a scene by scene review of the script for costume, prop and musical analysis.

Monday, November 28th, 2011: 6:00-8:00.

- Called: ALL

- 1st rehearsal: Students were welcomed and introduced to Fiddler on the Roof!

- Introduction included:
  - Specific rules of rehearsal (Be on time, bring a pencil, be attentive, etc...)
  - Dates and times of Tech week and performances.
    - Tech week begins Friday, February 3rd.
    - Performances are Thursday, Friday & Saturday, February 9, 10 & 11.
  - How we rehearse:
    - First we learn the music.
    - Then we begin choreography and blocking.
    - Finally we begin to assemble the Acts.
  - What are the actor's responsibilities?
    - Work on your music and lines while you are away from rehearsals.
• To create good communications please use theatrical call back (Say: Thank you!)
• Bring something new to rehearsals.
• Be prompt.
• Promote safe space for other actors.
• Treat all others with respect.

• Also at first rehearsal students began learning the music to Tradition!

Comments: The first rehearsal went off pretty smoothly. We are excited to get started. It is always great to have the kids sing on the first night. The plan is to learn all the music and then have “sit & sings” of the acts immediately following. Good rehearsal!

Tuesday, November 29th, 2011: 6:30-8:30

• Called: Tevye (Rehearsal at our home)

• Rehearsal for Tevye:
  o Songs covered:
    • If I were a rich Man
    • Tevye’s Monologue
    • Tevye’s rebuttal
    • Chava sequence

Comments: Great first rehearsal with Galen Schneider who is playing Tevye. Musically Galen is challenged in many ways. He hears the pitch, but can get side tracked from it easily. He is a wonderful actor and my hopes are that he will surmount the musical challenges by bringing a warmth and charisma to Tevye.
Wednesday, November 30th, 2011: 6:00-8:00

- Called: Motel, Lazar, Tevye, Yussel, Mendel, Mordcha, Avram, Fyedka, Sasha & Russian Dancers.
  - Musical rehearsal for Songs:
    - Miracle of Miracles
    - To Life

Comments: This was a great rehearsal for the guys who are singing To Life, and the girls who are playing the Russian Dancers. It was good for them to work together in a small group; they have better focus with less fooling around. Galen is making small strides with his pitch issues but really struggles with harmony. It is good to start working the smaller songs of the show.

Thursday, December 1st, 2011: 6:00-8:30

- Called: ALL (at various times)
  - Musical rehearsal for:
    - Matchmaker
    - Tradition (Review)
    - Sabbath Prayer

Comments: Great rehearsal! It is always great to see how well SCDS kids sing. Our strong choral program has taught them a lot about reading music and singing in parts. This is always a strong point for us. The girls that have been cast as Tevye’s eldest daughters are delightful and each a strong musicians. Their number will be wonderful! The review of Tradition went beautifully and the teaching of Sabbath Prayer went equally as well.
There is an underlying drama going on with the kids that is putting a bit of pressure on everything. When I cast the show, my choices for Tevye came down to 2 actors. One was a better singer (Blake) and the other a better actor (Galen). I chose Galen, the actor, and Blake (who was cast as Lazar) was devastated! Other members of the cast were upset about it too because Blake sang the audition so well. With that said, Blake has problems getting to rehearsal on time and, even on his best days, likes to fool around and distract the other cast members. Although this has been his history during his four years in the drama department, it is exaggerated since the casting of Tevye. He is a good kid, but I worry if he will be able to sustain until Opening Night.

Friday, December 2nd, 2011: 5:30-8:30

- Called: Perchik & Hodel followed by Tevye & Golde.
- Musical rehearsal for:
  - “Now I Have Everything”
  - “Far from the Home I Love”
  - Solos in “Sunrise, Sunset”
  - “Do You Love Me?”

Comments: Solon who is playing Perchik was out sick from school today so his rehearsal had to be rescheduled. Grace, who is playing Hodel, came in and knocked our socks off with her amazing soprano. Galen and Rachel (Golde) worked on “Sunrise, Sunset” and “Do You Love Me”. Both are eager to do well and did a nice job with the music. Galen still struggling with harmonies, but he really works hard. He promises to start taping his rehearsals. Galen has also arranged to begin working with a voice teacher to help him with the music.

Monday, December 5th, 2011: 6:00-8:30

- Called: All
• Musical rehearsal for:
  o The Dream
  o Sunrise Sunset

Comments: Another great choral rehearsal! The cast seems to be undertaking the music wonderfully.

The major concern at this point is the break that is coming up. Once all the music is taught, the school goes into Exams and rehearsals stop for the week. This is followed by a two week holiday break. It is always fearful whether or not any of the music taught will be retained. We'll see.

Tuesday, December 6th, 2011: 6:30-8:30
• Called: Tevye (Rehearsal at our home)
• Musical rehearsal for Tevye
  o Music covered: All solo music sung by Tevye in the show

Comments: Galen worked diligently to improve all the music he sings. He has incorporated a recorder into his rehearsals and is improving with each session. This private work with him is really paying off!

Wednesday, December 7th, 2011: 6:00-8:00
• Called: Villagers, Yente, Mendel, Avram, followed by All.
• Musical rehearsal for:
  o The Rumor
  o Anatevka
  o Wedding Dance #1
• Review:
  o Tradition
  o Sunrise, Sunset
Comments: This was a great rehearsal! It is always nice to get the actors with smaller parts their chance to shine. The Rumor is not one of the better songs in the show, but with a little creativity and a lot of humor, it can be a nice, light moment. The review work was good too. They are beginning to retain some of the work. That big break coming up continues to ominouslyloom. Three weeks with no rehearsal! Oy! I am very excited however, about Thursday and Friday’s rehearsals. We will be reading and singing through the show an Act at a time. Should be fun!

Thursday, December 8th, 2011: 6:00-8:30
- Called: All
- Rehearsal to read and sing through Act I
- Also included was a review of any Act I songs that needed extra vocal work and all choral numbers.

Comments: This was an excellent rehearsal. Students were able to read through the script as a group and sing all the music they have been working on. It was very exciting and lots of fun for all involved. This will be the last time the cast will sing this music for the three weeks that comprise exams and the holiday break. Tomorrow’s rehearsal will be the same for Act II.

Friday, December 9th, 2011: 6:00-8:30
- Called: All
- Rehearsal to read and sing through Act II
- Also included was a review of any Act II songs that needed extra vocal work and all choral numbers.
Comments: This was another great rehearsal. Students once again gathered in Pape Hall and read and sang through the entire second act of the show. Being shorter and with less group numbers, it went by pretty quickly. With any left over time we went back and sang through the ensemble pieces. This is the last rehearsal until the New Year. It pains me to take the time off, but with exams next week and two weeks of holiday break following, it is just the way it has to be!

Tuesday, January 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 2012: 6:30 - 8:00
- Called: Tevye
- Rehearsal for Tevye's music

Comments: This rehearsal was specifically set to have Galen review all his music. During the holiday break he continued with his new voice teacher and is improving all the time. I was a little disappointed that he did not know his music as well as he assured me he would. There are times when the words just don't come to him. I do not know how to help him. He loves musical theatre and plans to major in acting in college, but he just doesn't know how to do the work. He has been involved in theatre all his life and therefore tends to take it for granted. It is going to be a struggle!

Wednesday, January 4\textsuperscript{th}, 2012: 5:30 - 8:00
- Called: All (With Exceptions: w/e, Those few that may not be needed in this particular night of work.)
- Block Opening
- Dance: Tradition

Comments: We have finally begun the staging of the show! Hooray! I spent the first half hour just having the actors enter the stage. My aim is to create an organic type of setting in which to begin the show. Too many times I have directors have the cast appear from nowhere. I want them to be there when the show starts.
The choreographer began today as well. Although I love working with her, I am not sure we are both on the same track. The beginning movements have nothing to do with the staging I have done for the opening. We had a very good talk at the end of rehearsal and have decided to rework her first movements to better wed them to my ideas. Although we had met and spoken of all this, I must not have really communicated. We will see what the next rehearsal for this piece brings.

Thursday, January 5th, 2012: 6:00-8:30

- Called (at various times: AVT) Shprintze, Golde, Tzeitel, Hodel, Chava, Bielke, Yente, Motel, Tevye, Perchik, Mendel, Mordcha, Avram, Yussel, Boys, String Players
- Meeting with String Players
- Block: I-1, I-2, I-3
- Run: I-1, 2, 3
- Stage: If I Were a Rich Man

Comments: Tonight was very exciting for me. I love to block and to work on musical staging. Teenagers are always better behaved in small groups so the work moved along just as it should. It is pretty clear that these kids have not even glanced at their lines since before our long break. It is up to me to get them up and running again. Work, DJ, work!

Also tonight, we had our first meeting with the string players. In my time at SCDS there has never been any involvement of the student musicians in the drama program. This year, for good or bad, we are attempting to get a few of our orchestra kids to play in the pit. Keep your fingers crossed!

Friday, January 6th, 2012: 4:30-6:00

- Called: Tevye, Lazar, Avram, Mendel, Mordcha, Fyedka, Sasha, Yussel, Russian Dancers, Boys, Constable, Fiddler
- Block: I-4 & I-5
Comments: Let it be said that I am dealing with two of the most immature high school seniors I have ever met! The drama of Blake (Lazar) continues. He continues to walk all over me and distract other members. He is best friends with Galen (Tevye) and the two clown around at every given opportunity. I hope this works its way out soon.

Saturday, January 7th, 2012: 1:00-4:00

- Called: All (w/e, AVT)
- Stage: Sabbath Prayer
- Review: Tradition
- Dance: To Life

Comments: Our choreographer, Karen Burns, came back to day with adjustments to the opening of the show that blew me away! They were completely in line with what I asked for and made a mediocre piece into something with real life. Her task is difficult due to the fact that WE DON'T DANCE. Really. Our students are the largest collection of non-dancers I have ever seen assembled in one place. Thus, I charge Karen with giving them movement that helps tell the story while not emphasizing that we can’t dance. It is a difficult task indeed.

I also began the staging of “Sabbath Prayer” today. With this piece I have the opportunity to begin incorporating the mid-audience platforms into the show. As the song begins on stage, small grouping of families work their way onto the platforms in the audience. I hope it will be a warm moment in the show.

Added to that we have begun the choreography for “To Life”, and the poor attention and clowning around continues. A little yelling seems to have gotten them back in place. As one 7th grader once said to me: “What we need Mr. Queenan, is a little more screaming and guilt!” He was right.

Tuesday, January 10th, 2012: 5:30-8:15
• Called: Perchik, Hodel, Shprintze, Bielke, Tevye, Golde, Tzeitel, Chava, Motel

• Block I-6

• Stage: Tevye’s Monologue

• Stage: Miracles of Miracles

Comments: This was one of those completely rewarding rehearsals! The kids playing Perchik and Hodel are two of the sweetest and hugely talented kids in my program. They work beautifully with me and with each other. When I directed *Into the Woods, Jr* for the Middle School, they were my Baker and Baker’s Wife. Putting together their scene was wonderful. Tevye’s monologue went pretty well too. When Galen is not around Blake, he is focused and delightful. He really is a great kid, but the maturity level is questionable. Another delightful actor in the cast is Mitch. He plays Motel, and has come from being a shy teenager to being a confident young man. His first play was Grease where I had him play the teen angel. Since then he has been completely bitten by the theatre bug. Gotta love it! Mitch’s rehearsal for Motel’s song was delightful.

*Wednesday, January 11th, 2012: 5:30-8:30*

• Called: All (w/e)

• Stage: Sunrise, Sunset

• Dance: Wedding dance #1

Comments: Working on “Sunrise, Sunset” is a pure joy. Once again incorporating the mid-audience platforms seems to work. The big difficulty is getting the set changed from Motel’s tailor shop to the wedding ceremony. The music is fairly continuous. My hope is that while the audience is looking one way, we can slip the furniture for the wedding on stage. Once again... fingers crossed!

*Thursday, January 12th, 2012: 5:30-8:30*

• Called: All (w/e, AVT)
• Block I-8

• Stage: The Dream

Comments: Scene 8 of Act I is one of my least favorite and most favorite of the show. The second half is the charming first conversation of Chava and Fyedka. It is also the moment that Motel dons his wedding hat for the first time. I love those moments. The beginning of the scene however is just clumsy, old-styled, musical theatre. People out of nowhere, crossing the stage and running into each other while gossiping. Although it could be cute, I find it completely unnecessary in a 3 hour show. I would gladly cut it, but some of the characters have so few lines. Removing lines from kids who already have miniscule parts is not in my constitution. In theatre at SCDS, everyone gets a chance to play. I work my butt off getting each kid his or her moment in the sun. It’s what school theatre is about. So, the clunky scene goes on and I make the best of it.

“The Dream” sequence on the other hand is one of the best moments in the show. In my production it is one of the few moments of camp I am allowing myself. Coming up with the idea of the mammoth skirt for Fruma Sarah was one thing. Making the kids work with it was something else completely. This was a night were the kids cooperation was at its best and they worked their butts off for me. I am not sure if this is going to work. The magic of lighting is going to have to make this Fruma Sarah take flight!

Saturday, January 14th, 2012: 2:00-5:00

• Called: All (w/e)

• Review staging: Sunrise, Sunset

• Review Dance: Wedding Dance #1

• Dance: Wedding Dance #2

Comments: This was a great rehearsal. Although it continues to be true; we can’t dance, our choreographer seems to have taken that into consideration. The nice thing about this piece is that the
dancing is born of the folk traditions of the time. It is not sudden dance, for no reason. Not that sudden isn’t wonderful. Personally, I like breaking into dance at any given time. This dance however is more about celebrating something. It is natural and therefore the actors that dance it can be natural as well. Of course we have been stressing over the bottle dance. From the start I thought we should cut it. The production crew on the other hand, insisted that we could do it. When it finally came time to set the piece, everyone was talking Velcro and magnets! Oy! I simply stated that either we do the bottle dance or we do not do the bottle dance. No smoke and mirrors. So, as we all held our breaths, those girls, who will be dressed as boys, put those bottles on their heads and danced!!! Hooray! It was terribly exciting and very rewarding for those four girls.

On a side note, the student cast as Tevye was absent to attend a college audition. The student playing Lazar Wolf was only in a small part of the rehearsal. Therefore, behavior was excellent and the entire cast had a great rehearsal! Those two, although nice boys individually, are the crux of the behavior problem.

Sunday, January 15th, 2012: 6:30-8:00
- Called: Hodel, Tzeitel & Chava
- Stage: Matchmaker

Comments: This is what rehearsing a school musical should be like! Three girls, all talented and all focused. It is a pleasure to see these young women take on this exciting work!

Monday, January 16th, 2012: 1:00-5:00 (MLK Day)
Called: All (w/e, AVT)
- Dance: To Life
- Review/Finish: Tradition
- Review: Wedding Dance #1
Block: I-10: “The Wedding”

Comments: It was great to see the choreographer finish the staging for “Tradition”. The opening is exciting and cohesive. It was also great to work on “To Life”. The boys are not strong on the number because the two main characters like to fool around much too much! Although the piece is finished, it has a long way to go. Work on the wedding continues to go well. It is a terribly long scene and the kids seem to be moving in the right direction.

Tuesday, January 17th, 2012: 6:00-8:00

- Called: All cast members in this scene.
- Review: “The Wedding”

Comments: This was another strong rehearsal. The wedding scene continues to grow stronger and the bottle dancers are nailing it. I am challenged by the amount of kids on the stage along with the amount of furniture. I am glad to have designed the rake, but that means that all furniture must be placed down stage of it. It also means that all the dancing must take place downstage of that. It seems to be working out... slowly!

Wednesday, January 18th, 2012: 6:00-8:30

- Called: All
- Crash Through Act I

Comments: Tonight was an exciting rehearsal! It was the first time we put together Act I! Until now the cast has only seen the show in pieces. Tonight, good or bad, bloody or not, we got through the entire first act of the play! Hooray! We did it! Yes, there are a few pieces that have not been completed yet (Perchik & Hodel’s first dance and the Russians breaking up the wedding), but all in all, it is complete! It is very rewarding to see it all come together for the first time. I call it a “Crash Through” because I want to get it all done. It does not have to be pretty... it just has to be complete.
Thursday, January 19th, 2012: 6:00-8:30

- Called: All
- Work Act I

Comments: Tonight we took a more serious look at the problem spots from last night. I am always amazed at our musical director (who just happens to be my partner Warren) who seems to be able to figure out exactly where the music has to go. He is completely on top of it. Hearing me say “Oh, there’s music in this scene?” is not an uncommon thing. He always knows just how to approach it and slip the music into just the right places.

Tonight we started the rehearsal by working on the breaking up of the wedding. It went so well. The props mistress has managed to have all the plates and cups on stage be metal or wooden. This will make the dumping of the tables so much easier. The students paid close attention and I think they really got into it. Fingers crossed! We also ran all the large dance numbers as well as the first few scenes. It was a really good rehearsal.

Saturday, January 21st, 2012: 1:00-2:45

- Called: Hodel, Perchik and Tevye
- Block II-1
- Stage: Now I have Everything
- Stage: Tevye’s Rebuttal
- Stage: Far From the Home I Love

Comments: Today’s rehearsal was very small and held in the green room instead of Jelks Theatre. The reason being: The RAKE was being built! Hooray! How exciting to have that part of the set be put up. The rehearsal went beautifully although we did not get it all done. These small rehearsals give the opportunity to really work the words. We tabled the first scene and ran it over and over.
Sadly, we ran over time with it and the staging of Hodel's song did not happen. No worries... I have it all done on paper and will take a few moments with them later in the week.

Sunday, January 22nd, 2012: 3:00-6:15

- Called: The Villagers, Yente, Avram, Mendel, Mordcha, Shaindel, 1st & 2nd Woman, Tzeitel, Motel, Rabbi, Fyedka, Golde, Shprintze, Bielke, Chava
- Block II-2
- Stage: The Rumor
- Block II-4 & 5
- Block II-6
- Dance: Chava Sequence

Comments: This was the first rehearsal we could actually work on the raked stage. It was a blast! The cast did a great job learning The Rumor. Although I think the song is the weakest in the show, I did not feel I could cut it. In school theatre you must give as many kids the opportunity to sing and act as possible. This song has solo verses for Yente, Avram, Mendel and two other women. The piece is really a throw-back to the time when theatre songs did not necessarily progress the story. It's fluff. With that in mind I decided to have as much fun with it as possible. With tongue planted firmly in cheek, The Rumor should work out pretty well.

The Chava sequence on the other hand, is one of the most beautiful moments in the show. Our Choreographer has done a lovely job with such a short and sensitive piece.

Monday, January 23rd, 2012: 6:00-8:30

- Called: All (w/e, AVT)
- Block II-7
- Stage: Anatevka
- Stage: Do You Love Me?

Comments: Rehearsal was pretty rough tonight. Staging Anatevka and the scene leading up to it was very rewarding. Once again, the number of people and the large amount of furniture has made the stage quite crowded. Placing a large section of the cast on the platforms in the audience has helped quite a bit. It is a beautiful piece of music and Warren has taught it beautifully. I guess the rough part was the kid’s behavior. Constantly talking may not be the worst thing a group of kids can do, but at a working rehearsal it is very disrespectful. I know they care for me, but as a group, they care about themselves and the silly things they have to gossip about, more.

Do You Love Me, on the other hand, was only marginally successful. I continue to try and pare down the show. Keeping the set changes to as few as possible will help it seem simple. The actors playing Golde and Tevye don’t quite get along. She (Rachel) is not happy that the other boy (Blake, who is playing Lazar) was not cast as Tevye. She is also unhappy the Galen (Tevye) has pitch problems. Although her voice is adequate for Golde, she is no Beverly Sills herself. She is just kind of mean to him. Seniors... ugh.

PS... Working with the raked stage is working out beautifully!

Tuesday, January 24th, 2012: 6:00-8:30

- Called: Tevye, Yente, Golde, Lazar, Tzeitel, Motel, Bielke, Schprintze, Chava, Fyedka, Perchik, Hodel
- Block: II/8
- Review: Chava Sequence

Comments: Rehearsal went pretty smoothly tonight. Blocking was for the last scene of the show. Although some of the scenes in the show are written quite well, this is not one of them. As is true in a lot of musical theatre, somehow, in the last minutes of the play, all the loose ends must be tied together. The very last moments are nice though. The kids are struggling a little over the lack of
props, but other than that it was fine. The “Chava Sequence” is coming along beautifully. Galen seems to be getting the notes pretty well and the images in the dance are lovely. Once again, the rake is working out so well!

Thursday, January 26th, 2012: 5:30-7:30

- Called: Yente, Avram, Mendel, Mordcha, Shaindel, 1st & 2nd Woman, Village Boys, Tzeitel, Tevye, Golde, Lazar, Motel, Bielke, Shprintze, Chava, Fyedka
- Review: “The Rumor”
- Review: II/8

Comments: “The Rumor” is turning out to be one of the cutest numbers in the show. The kids in it are eager to please and having a great time putting it together. It is really fun. Review of II/8 went quite well. We had a few more props and the kids seem to be understanding what is happening to their characters.

Friday, January 27th, 2012: 4:30-6:30

- Called: (All)
- Work through: Act II

Comments: Rehearsal went pretty well tonight. Unfortunately, we did not have Yente at this rehearsal. Frustrating. Otherwise, Act II is much shorter then Act I, so we were able to get through it once and then go back and rework the moments that aren’t working. “Do You Love” me is starting to show some progress, but Galen is having lots of trouble with pitch and Rachel has no patience for it. I will let them go on for a while longer before I make any executive decisions about who sings what. I am very excited about tomorrow’s rehearsal when we crash through the whole show!

Saturday, January 28th, 2012: 1:00-5:00
Comments: What a crazy day! Happily, there were far more things that went right then went wrong! Sadly, we did not make it through the whole show. We started the day with a parade of costumes thus far. I hate to give up so much time but frankly, the costumers really need it. Making a solid list of what we have versus what needs to be made is truly beneficial. It just takes time.

The set, on the other hand, needs to start showing up. The builder has been out of town. His plan is come back on Monday and hit it hard. I hope so. I really won’t know if all the platforming in the audience is going to work if I don’t have them built. Frustrating. Keeping my fingers crossed and holding my breath.

All in all, it was a great rehearsal. The kids are mostly off book for Act I and are asked to be off book for Act II on Monday. Props are beginning to show up and the mystery of all of that is being resolved for the kids. Who knew these kids did not know how to peel potatoes?

**Sunday, January 29th, 2012: 3:00-6:00**

Comments: Awesome rehearsal! Today we finally had the time to really examine the first act. These are some of my favorite rehearsals; putting the pieces together in a meaningful way. It is difficult not to have a stage crew as yet. My two stage managers are nice kids but after weeks of working on the show they still have no idea of what is going on! When you rehearse the show in such a fragmented way, one of the things you lose is an early knowledge of its continuity. Frankly, I am often unsure of what comes next. Invariably, I am the one charging up onto the stage to move the set. It would help them if we could spike, but I am waiting until the stage is painted to do that. Re-spiking would be a
nightmare! Sadly, we did not get completely through Act I, but close enough and a lot of good work was done. Galen is not completely off book, but he is getting pretty darn close. I am pleased with his work even though I am pulling it out of him.

The builder shows up again in the morning. I hope he can really make up for last time.

Monday, January 30th, 2012: 5:30-8:30

- Called: All
- Work Act II
- Off Book Act II

Comments: Although today was slated to work Act II, we started where we had left off in Act I. The first act is just so much longer then the second, it is important that we finish it. The end of Act I is the long sequence that is the wedding. Thankfully, we have rehearsed it so much (because of the dance) that it is really coming together. We have finally added the Russians coming in at the end and I think it will be quite effective. Using a teacher to play the constable is working out beautifully. He is very low maintenance and is doing a great job. Following the completion of Act I we were able to launch right into Act II and get it completed! Hooray! For the most part the cast was off book for both acts. Galen is not 100% yet, but he is definitely getting there.

The builder returned today but only worked a few hours. I feel he is going to put us all behind schedule, but only time will tell. He was able to get the front extensions framed but not finished. It is very exciting to see the beginnings of the stage!

Wednesday, February 1st, 2012: 5:30-8:30

- Called: All
- Work Act I
Comments: Truly terrific rehearsal today! We are finally getting a run time on Act I. As we begin to add set pieces we are starting to understand what the scene changes will be like. Between the bar scene and the scene in Tevye's house, this show is becoming: Fiddler and his Chairs! Oh, and the wedding scene as well! So many chairs! Also, I am having a bit of trouble getting what I need out of the actor playing Grandma Tzeitel. The bed for that scene will be made tomorrow (I hope) and perhaps that will give her more to work with. She is a good little performer in class but somehow working with the more experienced actors has thrown her for a loop. I will keep encouraging her. The builder came in and worked for a bit today. He is really getting backed up. He was able to finish the front extensions on the stage. The one on stage right is not quite as deep as I had hoped, but I think it will still work. He has not connected the stairs to them yet, but we can at least work on them. The list of things still needing to be built is a mile long! Deep breath, DJ.

Thursday, February 2nd, 2012: 5:30-8:30
- Called: All
- Run Show

Comments: For running the entire show, this was an amazing rehearsal! We did not quite finish it, but that seemed unimportant compared to the amount we accomplished. At this point we are ready to add the run crew (Could not happen too soon), and start working the tech. The costumer has begun to add some costume pieces, and we have reserved the first hour of Saturday's rehearsal for another costume preview. The bed for the dream sequence arrived today and although it is a heavy, clumsy piece, I believe it is going to work! Attaching the huge skirt behind it is presenting problems of its own, but I still think it is doable. Fruma Sarah is coming along, but needs to really commit to the character. Grandma Tzeitel is still not where she needs to be! Perhaps adding the tech will bring her along.
The builder arrived today and moved us further along. I could go on complaining about how far behind he is, but it only helps me relive the stress of it all. The bed is made, but will need better wheels. Painting is set to commence tomorrow. Two good friends and I will spend the day and evening getting it together. I am still waiting on the platforms in the audience to be built. Hard to say if that is going to work until they are actually there!

The cast today decided to inform me that I had scheduled Sunday’s rehearsal to conflict with the kickoff of the Super Bowl. Jeez! If no one wrote it on their conflict sheet, how was I supposed to schedule around it? The chorus kids have Sunday class until 1:30 so 3:00-7:00 seemed like a great time. I agreed to change the times to 1:30-6:00 (still groans were heard) as long as everyone came on time and we began exactly at 1:30. We shall see.

Saturday, February 4th, 2012: 1:00-6:00

- Called: All
- 1st Tech Rehearsal

Comments: Today was outrageous! I had spent yesterday painting the stage and some of the finished set pieces. Exhaustion is the norm. We came in again around 10 AM and painted a bit more and began getting the rehearsal together. As the morning progressed the builder began placing the platforms in the audience, filling buckets with cement to weight the trees, and adding stairs to everything! When it finally came time for rehearsal, we began with a preview of costumes. As it turns out, that went really well. The local Children’s Theatre is a gift when it comes to lending costumes. Although our budget for costuming is pretty generous, it looks like a huge amount will be borrowed. Great!

We added body mics for the first time and began to run with lights. Our sound operator is a stressed out employee of the school who always brings added stress to our projects. I steer clear and hope for the best. Our lighting designer works his butt off and always delivers his best. I can count on him to
listen and produce! The run crew arrives and is a bunch of very nice, but very naïve lower classmen. I am glad to have them but it seems I will need to walk them through every moment of the show. My stage managers still do not know what comes next and have no idea what needs to be on stage. Yikes! We spike the stage and begin a scene to scene rehearsal while actors are trying on costumes and getting their mics on.

The tech run itself goes amazingly well. I made an executive decision and added a blackout and change of scene for the wedding. Although I thought we could change the scene from Motel’s tailor shop to the wedding as the cast was entering from the back of the house, it proved so difficult for these kids that we had to make the change. From today forward, Motel will exit, the scene will change, a load of incidental music will play, and the set will be changed. When it is done, Motel will enter, the guest will come down the aisles and the scene will ensue. Hated to do it, but the writing was on the wall.

Another executive decision today had to do with “Do You Love Me”. The song is not hitting the mark, and the harmony at the end is disastrous! I took away all the harmony and asked Tevye to talk a few lines at the end. It is an important part of the show, I can’t let it be undermined by bad singing.

The band also arrived today. We have three students playing strings in the pit. They have been coming, off and on, to a few of the previous week’s rehearsals. They are great kids who have never played a show before. What an education they are getting! The remainder of the pit is experienced, professional adults who have all worked for me before. The cast is wildly excited to have them join in. It always sets the bar a bit higher when the adults arrive and get to work!

The builders are finishing up as the rehearsal continues and it seems they will complete the work today. I should be able to complete the decoration in the next few days, but it would have been so much better had the finished earlier in the week.

Sunday, February 5th, 2012: 1:30-6:00
- Called: ALL
- Run Show with Tech

Comments: I arrived early again this morning and continued with the painting and decorating of the set. The platforms got painted and I began masking the areas under them as well as the front of the stage that will be behind the orchestra. I recently stopped along the roadside in my neighborhood and rescued a few old tree stumps and logs. They will look awesome on my set. I plan on cutting a ton of dried marsh grass to decorate with as well.

The cast arrived, for the most part, on time. Galen, who complained the most about missing the Super Bowl, was late. After I sufficiently embarrassed him, he apologized to the cast and we began. In truth, Galen is more and more embodying the character of Tevye on stage. Sometimes I have to stop and remember that he is a 17 year old high school senior. I am very pleased with the direction in which he is moving. I think he will be wonderful. On the flip side, he is doing an awful lot of yelling. I tell the kids that anger is much too easy play and is only interesting in small measure. Try choosing other verbs then ones that are expressed through yelling. I think the yelling really began when I took some of his music away. I would rather he passionately speak the words than miss the pitches. His response has been to yell even more! With that said, I reworked the music in Sabbath Prayer today. Galen was missing the pitch and Rachel (Golde) was having trouble with the key. Now, the entire family joins in after a few measures. It changes the story telling slightly, but saves the song.

All in all, we had a great rehearsal. The play always takes a few steps backward when the tech is added. It was nice to see us start to march forward again today!

Monday, February 6th, 2012: 4:30-9:00

- Called: ALL
- Run Show
Comments: Although today is not an official Dress Rehearsal, we are continuing to add costume pieces. Most importantly, we are starting to add the beards! I have worked with facial hair before with casts, but never on this scale. Not only do all the male characters playing Jews have to have beards, but the girls that are playing the bottle dancers have to have them too! Added to that is that they must start the show as girls, add the beards for the wedding scene and then lose them for the second act! It is a lot of spirit gum and spirit gum remover. The good news is that the cast, girls included, is totally psyched to wear the beards. Once they have them on they begin to inhabit the people of Anatevka! It really works.

We had school today, but I was able to spend a few hours continuing the set decoration. I brought in marsh grass and a bunch of small evergreens that have grown in a construction site near the house. They are all in place and the set, simple as it is, is beginning to look the way I had hoped. We are adding our new hazer today, so the tech elements are all in place.

Once again, we had a great rehearsal. The kids have really taken on the challenge of the show. It must be noted that all behavior problems have melted away. I had a long overdue chat with a few parents (one of whom ripped me a new one for not casting her baby as the lead) and that seems to have done the trick. The students are completely on board with the task at hand and doing a wonderful job! Tomorrow night is 1st Dress.

Tuesday, February 7\textsuperscript{th}, 2012: 4:30-9:00

- Called: All
- First Dress Rehearsal/Run Show

Comments: Oy! Complete costuming began tonight! It is obvious that we are not quite there yet! We still need the masks for the Dream Sequence and almost none of the Russians have pants! Beards are on, but obviously there is quite a learning curve on how to get them to stay on. We are having
some crazy issues with mics, but there is still enough time to iron that out. The photographer was here today and, as usual, she took a load of pictures. Too bad the Russians won’t have pants in them. On the bright side, we have a beautiful show on our hands. The lighting designer, Dave Elliott, has taken my ideas for the show and worked his magic. A band teacher by trade, Dave has been doing lights for quite a few years. He always doubts that he can give me what I want, and then he delivers; every time. Oh, I almost forgot! Our new cyclorama arrived and was hung! It looks wonderful. The last one was over 10 years old and besides having multiple tears and paint smears, it had a big seam in it. This new cyc is all one piece; no seams! It is beautiful!

Notes tonight took longer than usual. Although we are in the home stretch, it feels great to do all the fine tuning. Scheduled to be out at 9:00, students were not dismissed until 9:40!

Wednesday, February 8th, 2012: 4:30-9:00

- Called: All
- Final Dress rehearsal/Run Show

Comments: Despite the fact that the video camera given to me by a student’s family drove me to the brink, this evening’s final dress rehearsal went beautifully! Yes, some of the set changes are epically long, and the dancing is not what I would like it to be (we really don’t dance), and there are a few moments when the mics are miscued, but overall, we have a beautiful show! Galen has stepped up to the plate and has given us a funny, warm hearted and faithful Tevye. The girls playing Tzeitel, Chava and Hodel are a thing of beauty and Motel will melt your heart. The four girls doing the bottle dance have only dropped one bottle, one time! They are pretty darn solid. Grandma Tzeitel and Fruma Sarah have come into their own and the wedding scene is beautiful and heartbreaking all at once. Even the set, finished a little later than I would have liked, is doing its job of bringing the audience to the various locations of Anatevka. In short, we are ready. Bring on the audience and let’s see what their reaction will be. Fingers crossed.
On a final note, the video camera, whose battery refused to recharge, ran out of juice somewhere in the middle of the first act. I was able to get it going a bit later on, but my Dress Rehearsal Videotaping is sadly incomplete. Of course this was extremely stressful and took way too much of my attention during the rehearsal's run. Live and learn.
On February 11, 2012, I attended the final performance of *Fiddler on the Roof*, which was performed at Savannah Country Day School in Savannah, Georgia. This production was presented as partial fulfillment of DJ Queenan's Masters in Theatre Production. The second part of Mr. Queenan's thesis assignment is the written documentation relating to *Fiddler on the Roof*, and the third element will be the oral defense, which has yet to be scheduled.

As I entered the auditorium at 6:40 p.m., I observed the well-appointed 399-seat auditorium and the ten-piece pit orchestra (all dressed as Russian peasants). The orchestra was on the floor below the stage at the audience level (as there was no pit), and required the removal of the first two rows of the audience. I was also intrigued about platforms that were affixed over seats on the far left and right sides of the house. The first platforms were about halfway back and the second set were approximately three-quarters of the way back.

After a charming, compelling, live introduction by the director, the play began. There was a lovely, lyrical, three-to-four minute pantomime at the top of the show where the
audience was introduced to the denizens of Anatevka. This transitioned nicely into the first number, “Tradition”, and featured some smoking/hazing of the set as well as body mic’s on a number of the fifty-or-so actor/singers in the cast.

There was a great mix between the small pit orchestra and the singers. Rarely did I feel that the balance was out-of-whack, and the orchestra itself was pitch-perfect, professional and accomplished. Warren Heilman also deserves special praise as musical director. He kept everyone on the same page, and also played a mean piano for the production.

The set, designed by DJ Queenan, was simple, workable, and effective, offering multiple acting areas, destinations, levels, and diagonals to help frame the action. I particularly liked the kitchen/family room of Tevye and Golde. It was merely a suggestion of the environment, but offered a simple and evocative visual manifestation that clearly reflected the resiliency and pride of its occupants. The platforms in the audience were utilized sparingly but effectively, and seemed to offer the audience the feeling that they too were an integral part of Anatevka.

Costumes (by Chann Givens and Renee McMahon) were quite good; they were simple, colorful, and accurately reflected the characters, the environment, and the time period. The makeup on the older characters was not overdone, and the fake beards (of which there were many) were quite effective. The scene changes were mostly nicely done, but several (going into the bar scene in particular) seemed to last for an extended period and
featured a bit of confusion amongst the run crew. The lighting was quite good. It was
difficult to light the platforms in the audience, but the lighting designer (David Elliot)
managed to do so without blinding audience members seated behind, beside, and if front of
the platforms.

Tevye was the only one in the production who had a dialect, and I wondered why no
one else seemed to even attempt one. Perhaps I was the only one who observed this, but it
bothered me nonetheless. He also yelled a lot, which concerned me as a teacher of both voice
and acting. There were also times that I wasn’t sure whether Tevye was talking to God or to
the audience. That said, the actor (Galen Schneider) was a fine choice to play Tevye. He was
a tall lad with a strong voice and a commanding presence, and moved like a middle-aged
man with the weight of the world on his shoulders. He also seemed to have an intrinsic
understanding of both the gravity and levity of the character, and had excellent timing to
boot. The voices in the cast were quite tuneful, particularly the daughters in “Matchmaker.”
The staging for that number was also stunningly simple, which allowed the story to unfold
naturally. I was also impressed with the spirited, passionate number “L’chaim”, which made
me want to get up on stage and join in.

This was a well-conceived, well-executed production. DJ took a large group of high
school students and adroitly molded them into Jewish villagers and Russian soldiers. He
utilized all parts of the stage and several parts of the house, deftly weaving together script,
song, and dance (choreography by Karen Burns) into a tasty musical pastiche.
Finally, I was so wrapped up in the production that I took a scant few notes. The pace of the production was mostly snappy, and the production as a whole was presented with energy and conviction. Kudos to DJ and all of those involved with this production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Michael J. Smith  
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Department of Theatre Arts  
Central Washington University  
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Ellensburg, WA 98926-7460
Final Self-Evaluation

To stand back from this production of *Fiddler on the Roof* and evaluate it seems a daunting task. Being so close to a piece of work for such a long period of time can make your perception of it become a many-faceted thing. Choosing this piece two and a half years before it was actually performed had given me a huge amount of time to dream and a shorter, much more intense, yet incredibly satisfying period of time to implement those dreams. In short, this production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, though filled with personal struggles and artistic compromise, has reached past my expectations and will continue to reward those involved for a long time to come.

Although *Fiddler* was onstage in New York during the 1960’s, and had a faithful screen adaptation in the early 1970’s, the afterlife of the show seemed to take on a different feel than the original. With every pop singer covering “If I Were a Rich Man”, and the “101 Strings” version of “Matchmaker”, *Fiddler on the Roof* had slowly inched its way into the realm of the clichéd and overplayed mid-twentieth century “Broadway” theatre piece. A long look at the conceptual ideas presented earlier in this document easily brought me back to what I felt I needed to accomplish with this production. By paring down much of what seemed to have attached itself to the show, I felt I could expose my students to a way of life they could learn from. *Fiddler on the Roof*, at its very heart, is the story of us all as we make the choices and sacrifices that shape our lives.

Although I do not consider myself a designer, the set for our production really spoke to the main concept. Mostly bare, except for a few indigenous white birch trees, the stage helped reveal the characters and their lives. I specifically chose not to have a rooftop for a
fiddler to sit upon. Since the original creators of this piece had used this fiddler atop his roof as a metaphor, I chose to do so as well. This fiddler was an idea, not an actual man that sat on top of your house. I am not sure I was completely successful in this creative choice, but it definitely was a conversation starter!

Also included in the set was the use of a shattered proscenium. Erecting platforms in and around the audience, I attempted to bring that audience into Anatevka. I wanted the viewers to feel as they could reach out and touch the villagers, relate to them, see themselves as one of them. I think I was mildly successful. I do think that the students in the audience felt the excitement of their classmates performing so closely to them.

I chose to stage many of the musical numbers as simply as possible. Placing Tevye on a short stool in front of his milk cart while he sang “If I Were a Rich Man” was done in hopes of putting the emphasis on the words of the song and the actions of the actor. To my eye it was the right choice. I would be lying if I did not say that there were a few audience members that did not appreciate the choice. Of course they were theatre people who were very accustomed to a certain way of presenting that song (Aha, the afterlife of the show!). I feel sure that if they had been viewing it for the first time they would have enjoyed they way this staging focused on the story telling and not the showmanship!

The simple costuming of the show seemed to work as well. Using the plainest of clothes with well worn fabrics and soft colors seemed to highlight the simplicity of life while still revealing information about the life of the characters. We were able to borrow much of it which helped it look well worn; because it was!
The amount of facial hair needed for this production was quite challenging to the entire cast. We had to be sure they were not allergic to spirit gum and that they would be able to get the beards to stay on for the duration of the show. In spite of these challenges, the beards were transformative. They may have been a little too neat and uniform; nevertheless they changed these young actors into the folk of Anatevka.

I was very pleased with the musical direction and the pit orchestra for *Fiddler*. Handled beautifully by Warren Heilman, the score helped evoke the richness of the people’s heritage and the sound of Eastern Russia.

I was also pleased with the young man who played Tevye (Galen Schneider) and the young women who played his daughters (Elizabeth Owens, Grace Eckmann and Nicole Pearlman). Their talent and dedication to this project were unwavering. Galen Schneider, a seventeen-year-old senior at SCDS, was able to embody much of who Tevye was. Of course he was still a boy playing a man, but his work on action and objective helped bring him through.

There were also a number of elements of this production that I felt were less successful. The one real moment of spectacle I allowed myself was the “Dream Sequence” and the character of Fruma Sarah. Being that the entire scene is a fabricated tale, I believed that Tevye could dream as big and loud as his imagination would permit. We staged the bedroom scene with Fruma Sarah hiding behind the headboard of the bed with an enormous skirt behind her. When she arrived, amidst a large amount of smoke, the remainder of the cast used her skirt like a giant parachute behind her. The idea was to have this gigantic
apparition, funeral gown trailing behind, rising up from behind Tevye and Golde's bed. Fun and campy as it was, it still kind of looked like a giant parachute.

Other less successful moments include the song “To Life”. As has been stated, we are not a school full of dancers. Even walking can be challenging. Add to that the fact that most of the Russian cast was composed of the least experienced performers. They have no lines and very little singing. Their story is greatly told through dance. Eventually, upon the threat of cutting the number, the actors sort of got it together. It never became what it could have been.

While I was pleased with the effort, and much of the result from the actors, I was greatly disappointed with the character of Golde. The actor, Rachel Land, never quite got on board with who I saw Golde to be. For a high school student she has a lot of experience playing characters that are bigger than life. Playing Golde without all the bigness she was comfortable with lead to a confused and unfocused performance. In truth, she should have played Yente. With Yente it is difficult to take it too far. Live and learn.

Last, but certainly not least of unsuccessful moments were the set changes. Most of these changes were minimal due to the fact that the set was fairly minimal. The changes for the Pub and the Wedding however, were a long and confused melee of people dressed in black roaming the stage. No matter how often we rehearsed it, it never got any better. In retrospect, less is definitely more.

Most importantly for this production of Fiddler on the Roof, I feel it was highly successful in accomplishing the learning goals I had established for it. Always working from
the point of view that the theatre is a reflection of human life and culture, students readily made connections to their families, their religious ethnicities and their everyday lives. They eagerly asked questions and shared family stories that put the play into perspective. One student, Nicole Pearlman, was actually a descendant of a Russian Jew who emigrated during the great expulsion of the Jews from Russia during the early twentieth century.

In the end, the Savannah Country Day School production of *Fiddler on the Roof* was an exceptional experience. Aside from the aforementioned stumbles, the piece held fairly true to its concept. A certain austerity of trappings and spectacle seemed to highlight the storytelling and the journey of the main characters. The ability to take that storytelling and relate it to the lives of the people around them helped the students enter into the struggle of the times and the role that faith played for the people involved. Being a part of *Fiddler* was a wonderful experience for all involved and will continue to resonate in the lives of the students at SCDS.
Works Cited


## Appendix A

### Budget: *Fiddler on the Roof*

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Special thanks
Marcia Thompson
Roseann Randolf
Moe Martinez
Starr Pearlman
Nate Wilson
Mary Hunter
Marci Karp
Starr Pearlman
Carol Melton
The SCDS Arts Alliance
Patty Paul
Lawrence Carson
Pam Nesbit Ferris
David Hoopes
Dave Elliott
Donna Elliott

An extra special thank you to Mark & Kim Tate, and Jamie & Heather Downs for special gifts made to the Theatre Department at SCDS. We are all truly grateful for your generosity!

Directors Notes
Welcome to the Upper School production of Fiddler on the Roof! Although written in the early 1960’s, this time honored piece continues to resonate for us today. Based on the original Yiddish stories of Sholom Aleichem, this tale of the segregation and exile of the Jewish people from Western Russia has a familiar ring. From the earliest times to the present day, fear and hate have succeeded in keeping us apart from each other. My hope is that with this cast and crew of more than 50 Country Day students, from every walk of life, we may see the sorrow of this separation and come together with joy.

DJ Queenan

Dedication
This production of Fiddler on the Roof is dedicated to our very own Raul Buelvas, III. This talented and unique young man brought us together, and we shall carry him with us for a very long time.
Savannah Country Day School Presents

Fiddler on the Roof

Cast List

Jack Auer...Mordcha
Bayne Brannen...Mendel
Solon Carter...Perchik
Katie Davis...Bielke
Mitch Davis...Motel the Tailor
Grace Downs...1st Woman
Chloe Dunston...Frume Sarah
Grace Eckmann...Hodel
Joshua Hoffman...Yussell
David Hoopes...The Constable
Elliott Hornsby...Yente the Matchmaker
Emma Huennekens...2nd Women
Carrie Hungerpiller...Fiddler
Marissa Karp...Shaindel
Rachel Land...Golde
Andrew Lee...Nachum the Beggar
Wills Nowicki...Sasha
Elizabeth Owens...Tzeitel
Nicole Pearlman...Chava
Lindsay Pindar...Avram
Collin Richards...Fyedka
Galen Schneider...Tevye the Dairyman
Blake Skinner...Lazar Wolf the Butcher
Christine Soukiassian...Grandma Tzeitel
Davis Tate...The Rabbi
Amelia Taylor...Shprintze

Villagers
The Villagers: Abbie Black, Dorothy Collins, Grace Downs,
Chloe Dunston, Maya Hardrick, Marcus Hardrick,
Emma Huennekens, Hannah Kovensky, Kianna Maynard,
Andy Paul, Maya Patterson, Robert Ross, Wells Ross,
Christine Soukiassian, Rachael Tao, Sandy Tran

The Russians
Abbie Black, Marcus Hardrick, Hannah Kovensky,
Andrew Lee, Maya Patterson, Christine Soukiassian, Rachael Tao

The Bottle Dancers
Abby Black, Dorothy Collins, Wells Ross, Sandy Tran

The Band
Warren Heilman, Carol Melton, Brian Walker, Tom Hoffman,
Ann Marie Struble, Matt Graham, Sarah Mac Bowman,
Rachel Usher, Stephen Crouch, Patty Paul

The Run Crew
Sarah Boland, Maylis Dupleix, Skylar Lanier, Ashley Lee, Alexa
Levine, Olivia Parker, Kruti Patel, Katy VonKuhn, Emily Waller

Production Crew

Director
DJ Queenan
Musical Director
Warren Heilman
Choreographer
Karen Burns
Stage Managers
Ruben Ramos
Parker McNair
Props Mistress
Rhonda Martinez
Props Assistant
Ann Flowers

Lighting Design
David Elliott
Costume
Chann Givens
Renee McMahon
Scenic Designer
DJ Queenan
Paint Crew
Lawrence Carson
Pam Nesbit-Ferri
Chloe Dunston
DJ Queenan

Sound Technician
Donna Elliott
Master Carpenter
Ken Perry
Volunteer
Coordinator
Starr Pearlman
Graphic Design
Stacy Claywell
Production Photos
Deborah Glenn
Savannah Country Day School Presents

Fiddler on the Roof

Based on Sholem Aleichem's stories by special permission of Arnold Perl. Book by JOSEPH STEIN. Music by JERRY ROSS. Lyrics by SHELTER MARICK. Produced on the New York Stage by ARNOLD PINTER. Original New York City Production Directed and Choreographed by JEROME ROBBINS.

STARRING THE AMAZING STUDENTS OF THE SCDs DRAMA DEPARTMENT! DIRECTED BY DJ QUEENAN
MUSICAL DIRECTION BY WARREN HEILMAN ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHY REPRODUCED BY KAREN BURNS

Fiddler on the Roof is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. 421 West 54th St, New York, NY 10019. Phone: 212-541-4684 Fax: 212-397-4684 www.MTIShows.com

Thursday February 9th  7:00pm  Tickets: $15 Adults / $10 Students
(Cash/Check/Student Charge at the Door Only)

Friday February 10th

Saturday February 11th
FIRST SKETCH
FIRST OVERVIEW

- Pit
- Trees
- Trees
Teuy's Bed

Scale:
1' = 1/2"
"Dream Sequence"
First Sketch

D.P.
OVERVIEW

TEVYE'S BED

FOOT BOARD

HEAD BOARD

PLATFORM

SIDE VIEW

LADDER

FACIA

4X4

FABRIC FACIA ON SIDES

SCALE 1' = 1/2''
Fiddler
On the Roof
Performance
Part 1

Part 2
Fiddler
On the Roof
Fiddler on the Roof

Student DVD
Pt 1
2/2012

Fiddler

Student DVD
Pt 2