

QUESTIONS AND CRITICAL THINKING ACTIVITIES

(from Diablo Theater Company study guide to *Curtains*)



WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER?

1. What is the name of the show-within-the-show?
2. Who is the first character to die?
3. In what city does Curtains take place?
4. Who takes on the lead female role after the first murder?
5. What is Carmen and Bambi's relationship?
6. What is Lieutenant Cioffi's explanation for why the cast of the show-within-the-show is all working for so little money?
7. How is Sidney Bernstein discovered at the end of Act One? (Be specific)
8. What does Belling discover amongst the percussion instruments in the orchestra pit?
9. Who is discovered as the murderer?
10. Who ultimately plays Rob Hood?

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Characters in movies, plays, books, and stories all have a basic similarity: they all have *OBJECTIVES*. An objective is something a character wants, needs, or desires throughout the story. The character usually spends his/her entire time pursuing this desire. Choose three characters from Curtains. What is the primary desire of each of these three characters? Use one specific detail from the musical to support your claim.

SHAPING INTERPRETATIONS

How is Lieutenant Cioffi similar to the stereotypical detective seen in films and stories? How is he different? Use specific examples from the musical to support your answer.

What parallels can you draw between the relationship Carmen has with Bambi and the relationship Aaron has with Georgia? What similarities exist with these relationships? What differences exist?

In what ways does the show-within-the-show mirror the action of Curtains? Why would a Wild West version of Robin Hood be fitting to help tell the murder mystery? In what other settings could this work?

What statement do you think authors Peter Stone and Rupert Holmes were trying to make with the occupation of the murderer? What is the relationship between the murderer's occupation and the theatre?

BEYOND THE PERFORMANCE

It can be said that Curtains is a love letter to the theater. In many of the songs and in much of the dialogue there are nods and references to other Broadway shows. Some such references include:

The Iceman Cometh
Oklahoma!

No Exit
Gypsy

South Pacific
Waiting for Godot

Lysistrata

Investigate one of the musicals/plays above. Write a report on the performance's significance in American theater history that details the performance's production history, the innovative elements in the performance, and the performance's influence on future musicals/plays.