

<b>Baskerville Post-Show Activity: Review</b>		
<i>Length</i>	<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>Content Area</i>
1-2 class periods (45 – 90 minutes each)	Middle School & High School	ELA, Theatre
<b>Objective</b>		<b>Materials Needed</b>
Students will analyze and reflect on the performance they viewed by expressing their understanding through a review of the play.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Alley Re-Sourced guide</li> <li>• Paper and pen or laptops for writing</li> <li>• Whiteboard for group discussion</li> <li>• Story Map document (included)</li> <li>• Example review (included)</li> </ul>
<b>Activity Overview</b>		
<p><i>NOTE: This activity has been aligned with TEKS and <a href="#">Universal Design for Learning</a>. TEKS can be found at the end of this document. Check out the “Notes” section for ideas on how to expand activities or provide additional scaffolding.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction   <a href="#">Two Truths and a Lie</a></li> <li>2. Example   <a href="#">What is a Review?</a></li> <li>3. Guided Practice   <a href="#">Group Discussion</a></li> <li>4. Independent Practice   <a href="#">Writing Your Review</a></li> <li>5. Reflection   <a href="#">Headlines</a></li> </ol>		
<b>1. Introduction   Two Truths and a Lie</b>		<b>5 minutes</b>
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <p>a) Engage students with a quick round of “Two Truths and a Lie” about the play (examples below, but feel free to use your own).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The play is set partly on the moors of England (true).</li> <li>- The play is based on a novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (true).</li> <li>- The actor playing Sherlock also plays 5 other characters in the show (lie).</li> </ul>		<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can enhance the discussion by asking:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What was your initial reaction to the play?</li> <li>- What would you rate this play (1 out of 10, 5 stars, certified fresh, etc.)?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>2. Example   What is a Review?</b></p>	<p><b>10 minutes</b></p>
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present a sample play review of a different production, highlighting its structure and key components.</li> <li>Discuss the elements of theater that critics typically analyze (acting, directing, technical aspects).</li> <li>Explain the balance between objective analysis and subjective opinion in a review.</li> <li>Introduce specific theater terminology relevant to reviewing the play.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A review of the Alley's production of <i>The Three Musketeers</i> (another Ken Ludwig melodrama-inspired play) from Houston Press is included in this document. You can see the article online <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>A Story Map is included in this document. Encourage students to utilize this outline to organize their notes during this section and the guided practice.</li> <li>A common misconception to address: A play review is not just a summary of the plot or a list of likes and dislikes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Guided Practice   Group Discussion</b></p>	<p><b>25-30+ minutes</b></p>
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Divide the class into small groups, each focusing on a different aspect of this production.</li> <li>Groups will brainstorm and discuss their assigned element (e.g., acting, set design, comedic timing).</li> <li>Each group will present their observations to the class, encouraging whole-class discussion.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guide students in crafting effective thesis statements for their reviews during the group discussion.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a visible timer while the students are creating and give them verbal warnings during group work.</li> <li>Structure outlines, sentence stems, and potential questions to answer in a review can be found in this <a href="#">resource from Austin Peay State University</a>.</li> </ul>

<b>4. Independent Practice   Writing Your Review</b>	<b>15-20+ minutes</b>
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <p>a) Students will begin drafting their 500-word play reviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Use of any provided templates and incorporation of class discussions.</li><li>- Balance description, analysis, and personal opinion.</li></ul> <p><b>Extension Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Students can create a visual companion piece to their review, such as a poster or digital presentation that highlights key points and incorporates relevant imagery from the production. Production photos can be found at <a href="https://www.alleytheatre.org/plays/ken-ludwigs-baskerville">https://www.alleytheatre.org/plays/ken-ludwigs-baskerville</a>.</li></ul>	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Circulate to provide individual guidance and answer questions.</li><li>• Offer multiple options for drafting: traditional writing, voice recording, or digital mind-mapping.</li></ul>
<b>5. Reflection   Headlines</b>	<b>5-10 minutes</b>
<p><i>Activity Steps</i></p> <p>a) If your review had a headline, what would it be?</p> <p>b) Share with your neighbor.</p> <p>c) Who heard a headline from someone else that they thought was particularly good at getting to the core of things?</p>	<p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This activity is an Artful Thinking routine. You can learn more about this activity <a href="#">here</a> and explore more thinking routines <a href="#">here</a>.</li></ul>

TEKS			
TEKS – MS ELA	TEKS – HS ELA	TEKS – MS Theatre	TEKS – HS Theatre
<p>Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama (TEKS 110.5(b)(8)): Analyze and interpret the elements of drama, including character and plot.</p> <p>Writing/Writing Process (TEKS 110.5(b)(10)): Engage in the writing process to develop essays, storyboards, or scripts that articulate analyses of the play.</p> <p>Writing/Expository and Procedural Texts (TEKS 110.5(b)(11)): Write reflections focusing on themes, character dynamics, and personal responses to the performance.</p> <p>Speaking/Listening (TEKS 110.5(b)(12)): Participate in discussions and presentations, sharing work with peers.</p>	<p>Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama (TEKS 110.5(b)(8)): Analyze and interpret complex elements of drama, including character motivations and thematic depth.</p> <p>Writing/Writing Process (TEKS 110.5(b)(10)): Develop sophisticated written reflections through essays, storyboards, or scripts that demonstrate a deep understanding of the play.</p> <p>Writing/Expository and Procedural Texts (TEKS 110.5(b)(11)): Compose clear and coherent reflections that analyze themes, character dynamics, and personal insights regarding the performance.</p> <p>Speaking/Listening (TEKS 110.5(b)(12)): Engage in meaningful discussions and presentations, practicing advanced com. skills while providing peer feedback.</p>	<p>Theatre Arts I (TEKS 117.202(b)(1)): Analyze and interpret various forms of theatre, including the structure and elements of a play.</p> <p>Theatre Arts I (TEKS 117.202(b)(3)): Evaluate the roles of actors, directors, and playwrights, understanding their contributions to the theatrical experience.</p> <p>Theatre Arts I (TEKS 117.202(b)(4)): Demonstrate skills in performance and presentation through group activities and reflections on the play.</p> <p>Theatre Arts I (TEKS 117.202(b)(5)): Engage in collaborative projects, contributing to group discussions and providing feedback to peers.</p>	<p>Theatre Arts II, III, and IV (TEKS 117.202(b)(1)): Analyze and interpret complex forms of theatre.</p> <p>Theatre Arts II, III, and IV (TEKS 117.202(b)(3)): Evaluate the roles of actors, directors, and playwrights, understanding their contributions to the theatrical experience.</p> <p>Theatre Arts II, III, and IV (TEKS 117.202(b)(4)): Develop advanced skills in performance and presentation.</p> <p>Theatre Arts II, III, and IV (TEKS 117.202(b)(5)): Engage in collaborative projects, contributing to group discussions and providing feedback to peers.</p>

## Ken Ludwig's *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery*

### Characters - Key Players in the Story

- Sherlock Holmes
  - Brilliant detective, logical, eccentric.
- Dr. John Watson
  - Loyal friend, practical, compassionate.
- Sir Henry Baskerville
  - American heir, targeted by a deadly curse.
- Dr. Mortimer
  - Brings the case, believes in supernatural elements.
- The Villain
  - Secretly orchestrating events, revealed at the climax.

### Setting - Where the Action Takes Place

- Victorian England
  - London
  - Baskerville Hall
  - Grimpen Mire.

### Plot - What Happens in the Play

- Exposition
  - We learn about the Baskerville curse; the investigation begins
- Rising Action
  - We see eerie moors and hidden figures as Holmes gathers clues
- Climax
  - The villain is revealed, the Hound attacks
- Falling Action
  - Holmes explains the truth of the case
- Conclusion
  - The mystery is solved, order is restored

| STAGE |

## *The Three Musketeers* is a Merry Adventure at the Alley Theatre

D. L. GROOVER | JUNE 6, 2019 | 6:49AM



Photo by Lynn Lane The fight scenes in *The Three Musketeers* are choreographed to the second.

Spoiler alert: Ken Ludwig is my least favorite playwright.

I squirm during his comedies. He strives for the lowest common denominator and always hits it squarely. Easy laughs and low-rent stage business are mother's milk to him. Logic and truth, in character and plot, are impediments. *Moon Over Buffalo* (1995), a backstage sitcom and vehicle for the Broadway return of Carol Burnett, is Ludwig's most consistently even comedy. And his first play, *Lend Me a Tenor* (1986), a knockabout farce, is his most successful work. As you read this, *Tenor* is being performed somewhere in the world. His stylish Gershwin catalog musical *Crazy for You* (1992), with choreography by Susan Stroman, won a deserved Tony for Best Musical.

But his world premieres for the Alley have been fairly dismal. Remember *Leading Ladies* (2004), a very dreary take on a *Some Like It Hot* premise? How about *Be My Baby* (2005)? Written for Hal Holbrook and Dixie Carter, a bickering odd couple find love when they're asked to travel to Scotland to pick up an adopted baby. Or what about his soggy adaptation of *Treasure Island* (2007)? And then there was *An American in Paris* (2008), an egregious musical mishmash of Gershwin via Republic Pictures. What a dud. So you can understand why I was a bit anxious to see another Ludwig work.

But, lo and behold, what do I find at the Alley but a merry adventure, an old-fashioned romp, a well-told tale about loyalty, courage, and bromance. This is Alexandre Dumas' stirring *The Three Musketeers*, the ultimate summer read for anyone who likes hearty historical fiction. And Ludwig doesn't mess it up. He barely touches it, keeping Dumas' serpentine plotlines secure and taut. The Alley actors, directed with sprightly hand by Mark Shanahan, deliciously munch on all the scenery at hand. Playing to the far rows, the whole affair is breezy and relaxed while also theatrically broad and grand. There are plenty of nudges at us not to take everything so serious, and the mustiness of this 19th-century novel about palace intrigues during 17th-century France is newly and neatly refurbished.

There's almost an impromptu feeling as the play gallops along. A royal bed is rolled through a low door. When it's in place, the feather ornaments on the headboard are flicked up with comic timing. For a speedy entrance, Cardinal Richelieu (Todd Waite, having a magnificent go – all a swirl in voluminous blood-red robes) is quickly wheeled in on his heavy ceremonial chair. It's on casters, so the scene can begin immediately. There's no down time anywhere. During one scene, David Rainey lost half his pasted-on mustache. He caught it in his hand and threw it on the nearby bed. For a nano-second it stopped his rhythm. What's he going to do? Like the pro he is, he ripped off the other half and threw it on the bed, too. In the spirit of this accidental moment, it was a gallant gesture. The audience applauded as if he were Cyrano.

Who wouldn't have fun play-acting in such a grand tale? There are sword fights to rival an Errol Flynn swashbuckler, poisonings, evil machinations, adultery, puppy love, greed, lust for power, midnight trysts, leather doublets and plumed hats. What's not to love?

Except for our four heroes (Athos -- Jay Sullivan; Porthos -- Seth Andrew Bridges; Aramis -- David Matranga; D'Artagnan -- Stanley Andrew Jackson III), along with Richelieu (Waite) and D'Artagnan's sister Sabine (Victoria Valentine), all other actors play multiple roles, and there must be plenty of action backstage to match what's on stage as wigs are switched, dresses put on, cloaks unfurled before the next entrance.

Dylan Godwin makes quite a meal out of Louis XIII, all mince and lace. I think his garters have garters. Julia Krohn, as evil Milady de Winter, relishes the hellion she portrays, and Melissa Pritchett, as faithless Queen Anne, looks royal indeed in that splendid crown by costumer Alejo Vietti. His costumes are glorious to watch in action.

Though played in a unit set, designer Hugh Landwehr supplies a great looking one, a child's pop-up book, a cut-out facade of arches and geegaws, ringed by two staircases. For staging a sword fight, two is always better. And honorable mention must be paid to H. Russ Brown for his exhilarating fight direction. The duels look dangerous, which is exactly how they're supposed to look. Choreographed to the second, they are exciting to watch, and each workout gets a burst of grateful applause.

John Gromada's original music isn't as lush as it should be. Dumas' bold derring-do demands Korngold's cinematic trumpet riffs and swelling strings, not timid harpsichord noodling. The fight scenes are better scored, thumping drums and creepy bass, but they have the sound of sci-fi, not classic golden age Hollywood.

But the question remains: why is Sabine in this play? I can't figure out what's she's doing here. OK, she's good with a foil. A dubious premise at best for a rural maid in antique France, but I can put that aside. She tags along with D'Artagnan so she can attend school in Paris, but she wants adventure, like her brother, and runs off for a great deal of the play. She falls for Aramis, who doesn't want anything to do with a tomboy, so that minor comic plot goes nowhere. Ludwig has morphed D'Artagnan's trusty servant Planchet into Sabine. It's a clunky device and doesn't work for Dumas. It smells of pandering, or desperation.

But all in all, with its epic sweep and grand values of brotherhood, justice, and honor, *The Three Musketeers* is a royal theater treat for children of all ages. Ludwig, you did good. You, too, Alley.

*The Three Musketeers continues through June 30 at 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays and Sundays; 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; and 2:30 p.m. Saturdays and Sunday at The Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. For information, call 713-220-5700 or visit [alleytheatre.org](http://alleytheatre.org). \$28-\$100.*