



Study Guide 2023-2024



Ain't Misbehavin'

Conceived by Murray Horwitz and Richard Maltby, Jr.

Florida Standards

TH.912.S.2.8
TH.912.C.1.6
TH.912.H.2.8
TH.912.S.1.1
TH.912.S.2

LA.1112.1.7.2
LA.91112.1.7.3
LA.1112.2.1.2
LA.1112.2.1.5
LA.1112.2.1.7

DA.912.C.2.1
DA.912.C.2.4
MU.912.C.1.1
MU.912.C.2.2
MU.912.C.3.1
MU.912.H.2.3

PG-13

Mild Language, Sexual Innuendo, Alcohol and Smoking References

Most appropriate for Grade 8 and up. Children under 5 will not be admitted to the theater.

Ain't Misbehavin'

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AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'
(As played by Fats Waller, 1943. From the movie "Stormy Weather")

Music by
THOMAS "FATS" WALLER

♩ = 105



Ain't Misbehavin'

An Introduction

Educators:

Thank you for taking the time out of your very busy schedule to bring the joy of theatre arts to your classroom. We are well aware of the demands on your time and it is our goal to offer you supplemental information to compliment your curriculum with ease and expediency.

We hope this Study Guide and the companion Spotlight Guide will help you prepare your students to experience live theatre at Orlando Shakes! Additionally, we would love to come to your classroom to introduce your students to the Shakespeare play of your choosing and teach them how to unlock the meaning of our favorite playwright. With a few simple tools, they will realize that Shakespeare isn't scary, rather can be quite contemporary!

Please take a moment to explore our website at orlandoshakes.org/education for the following ways to add to your curriculum.

- Our Virtual Workshop *Spotlight: Theatre Careers*, which introduces students to the many professions in Theatre Arts.
- Classroom Activities to energize students to explore character status and motivation
- Shortened Shakespeare scripts that range from 60 – 120 minutes long that are perfect for school productions

We look forward to hosting you at the Lowndes Shakespeare Center. Feel free to contact us at Orlando Shakes should you have any questions or suggestions on how we can better serve you. We are always learning from you.

Thank you for your tremendous work in nurturing our audiences of tomorrow.

Anne Hering
Director of Education

Jennifer Paxton
Education Coordinator



Ain't Misbehavin'

Enjoying Live Theater

Theatre is a Team Sport

The **Playwright** writes the script. Sometimes it is from an original idea and sometimes it is adapted from a book or story. The Playwright decides what the characters say, and gives the Designers guidelines on how the play should look.

The **Director** creates the vision for the production and works closely with the actors, costume, set and lighting designers to make sure everyone tells the same story.

The **Actors** use their bodies and voices to bring the author's words and the director's ideas to life on the stage.

The **Designers** imagine and create the lights, scenery, props, costumes and sound that will compliment and complete the director's vision.

The **Stage Manager** assists the director during rehearsals by recording their instructions and making sure the actors and designers understand these ideas. The Stage Manager then runs the show during each performance by calling cues for lights and sound, as well as entrances and exits.

The **Shop and Stage Crew** builds the set, props and costumes according to the designer's plans. The Stage Crew sets the stage with props and furniture, assists the actors with costume changes and operates sound, lighting and stage machinery during each performance.

The **Front of House Staff** welcomes you to the theater, takes your tickets, helps you find your seat and answers any question you may have on the day of performance.

The Theater is where it all takes place. Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF is the only professional, classical theater company in Central Florida, reaching students and audiences in the surrounding eight counties.

Mission:

To enrich our community with engaging professional theater, inspiring educational experiences, and thought-provoking new plays.



Ain't Misbehavin'

Enjoying Live Theater

The Actor/Audience Relationship

The Audience is the reason Live Theater exists. At Orlando Shakes, we cherish the Actor/Audience relationship, the unique give and take that exists during a performance which makes the audience an ACTIVE participant in the event. The actors see the audience just as the audience sees the actors, and every, laugh, snuffle, chuckle and gasp the audience makes effects the way the actor plays his next moment. We want you to be engaged, and to live the story with us!



There are certain Conventions of the Theatrical Event, like, when the lights go down you know that the show is about to start, and that the audience isn't encouraged to come and go during a performance. Here are some other tips to help you and your classmates be top notch audience members:

- Please make sure to turn off your cell phones. And NO TEXTING!
- Please stay in your seat. Try to use the restroom before you take your seat and stay in your seat unless there is an emergency.
- Please do not eat or drink in the theater.

Talkback

After the performance, the actors will stay on stage for about 10 minutes to hear your comments and answer any questions you have about the play, the production and what it means to be a professional actor. We'd love to hear what you felt about the play, what things were clear or unclear to you, and hear your opinions about what the play means. This last portion of the Actor/ Audience Relationship is so important to help us better serve you!

Here are some things to think about while watching the show. You might be asked these questions in the talkback!

1. What is the effect of actors playing multiple characters in the play? Is it confusing? Why or why not? How does it change the impact of the scenes?
2. How did the director and designers let you know the location had changed on stage?
3. How did you know time had passed?
4. Note when the actors directly address the audience. Why do you think they do this at some times and not others? How does it make you feel?

Ain't Misbehavin'

About the Play Summary



Gargantuan is the word that most precisely describes Fats Waller. He was in every way immense and prodigious. His appetites and his talents were large and inexhaustible. His friend and teacher, James P. Johnson, once said, "Some little people have music in them, but Fats, he was all music, and you know how big he was." He was 5 feet 10½ inches tall and weighed 285 pounds. He was all laughter too – or almost all – and the most persistent image of Fats is the picture of him settled down at the piano with a bottle of gin nearby, his eyebrows raised, his derby askew and a cigarette dangling from his wide, cockeyed smile. He always let you know that there was at least one more joke inside the one he had just told. Thomas Wright Waller grew up in the exciting musical atmosphere of Harlem in the teens and '20s. His parents were deeply religious, and Fats started out playing the organ in the Abyssinian Baptist Church and studying classical piano technique. He also began working with Harlem stride-piano masters like James P. Johnson and Willie "The Lion" Smith, although his father insisted that jazz was "music from the devil's workshop." Soon he was accompanying the silent pictures at the Lincoln Theater on 135th Street and making his reputation at uptown rent parties – those all-night affairs so fondly remembered in "The Joint Is Jumpin'". When he was still in his early 20s Fats began his collaboration with lyricist Andy Razaf; they scored their first success in 1928 with "Keep Shufflin'." The next year was miraculous: Fats – only twenty-five

years old – and Razaf wrote the score for the Broadway hit *Hot Chocolates* (which included "Ain't Misbehavin'" and "Black and Blue") as well as "Honeysuckle Rose," "I've Got a Feeling I'm Falling" (lyric credited to Billy Rose) and a host of other distinguished tunes. It was in that same year that Fats signed a contract with Victor, the company for whom he performed until the recording ban of World War II. Fats's records, which began with "'T Ain't Nobody's Biz-ness If I Do" in 1922, spread his fame across the United States and around the world. It seemed that he could make any tune sound entertaining. The finale of *Ain't Misbehavin'*, in fact, is made up of some of the songs written by others that Fats Waller made hits. Fats also widened his audience by appearing regularly on WLW in Cincinnati, a radio station which at that time could be heard throughout the country. It was there, in 1932 and 1933, that he formed the band known simply as *Rhythm*, with which he achieved his greatest success. With some changes in personnel, the group appeared in three feature films – *Hooray for Love*, *The King of Burlesque* and *Stormy Weather* – and numerous short subjects. Fats' musicianship was highly regarded, especially in Europe, where jazz was probably taken more seriously than in the United States. His overseas tours in 1938 and 1939 were triumphs, and in 1942 he gave a jazz concert at Carnegie Hall. And he never lost his love for the classics – his organ performances of Bach are legendary. The success of Fats Waller's records, movies, radio appearances and tours made him one of the first American superstars. Fats was as generous as he was overindulging, and stories of his bigheartedness and high-living abound. He consumed enormous quantities of food and liquor. He bought instruments for down-and-out musicians, loaned money to friends without being asked and treated himself to a \$10,000 Lincoln

automobile. Often, however, his alimony troubles would leave him broke and in jail, writing songs for Tin Pan Alley publishers in exchange for bail money. The party that was Fats Waller's life ended suddenly, when he died of pneumonia aboard the *Santa Fe Chief* in 1943. As a musician, Fats raised the art of stride piano (cleverly defined in "Handful of Keys") to its highest level and in so doing became one of the originators of swing music. He was probably the greatest combination of musician and comedian that America has ever produced. As a composer, pianist and singer, he wove comedy and music together so well that his songs are as fresh and funny today as they were fifty years ago. In another time and place Fats Waller might never have become a comedian and might have been the classical artist his parents – and perhaps he himself – wanted him to be. Listening to the joy and laughter of *Ain't Misbehavin'*, though, we can revel in his genius and say right along with him, "One never knows, do one?" Many of the songs in *Ain't Misbehavin'* are being heard for the first time in half a century. The saddest fact is that most of Fats's 500 or so compositions have been lost; many were not recorded, and music publishers were unable to provide sheet music to more than a few tunes. In doing the research for this production we compiled perhaps the first comprehensive collection of Waller's music, and we ended up giving some publishers copies of songs they own. Some of Fats's best work is gone forever due to negligence, racial discrimination, the nature of the music business back then and Waller himself, who on more than one occasion sold away the rights to a song for – well, for a song. More of this music – and that of other composers and lyricists – will be lost unless care is used to stop the sad erosion of a precious national resource. – Murray Horwitz
<https://www.masterworksbroadway.com/music/aint-misbehavin/>

Ain't Misbehavin'

About the Play Musical Numbers

ACT I

Ain't Misbehavin'

Lookin' Good but Feelin' Bad

T Ain't Nobody's Biz-ness if I Do

Honeysuckle Rose

Squeeze Me

Handful of Keys

I've Got a Feeling I'm Falling

How Ya Baby

The Jitterbug Waltz

The Ladies Who Sing with the Band

Yacht Club Swing

When the Nylons Bloom Again

Cash for Your Trash

Off-Time

The Joint Is Jumpin'

ACT II

Spreadin' Rhythm Around

Lounging at the Waldorf

The Viper's Drag

The Reefer Song

Mean to Me

Your Feet's Too Big

That Ain't Right

Keepin' Out of Mischief Now

Find Out What They Like

Fat and Greasy

*Black and Blue**

Finale

I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and

Write Myself a Letter

Two Sleepy People

I've Got My Fingers Crossed

I Can't Give You Anything But Love

It's a Sin to Tell a Lie

Honeysuckle Rose (REPRISE)

Ain't Misbehavin'

About the Play Meet the Creators



Thomas Wright "Fats" Waller was born on May 21, 1904, in New York City. He learned to play piano at the age of 6, and within a few years was also learning the reed organ, string bass and violin. After dropping out of school at around age 15, he became an organist at the Lincoln Theatre in Harlem.

Waller's father, Edward, a baptist minister, was hopeful that his son would follow a religious calling instead of a career in jazz. However, the path to music became inevitable following the death of Waller's mother, Adeline, in 1920. Waller moved in with the family of pianist Russell B.T. Brooks, who introduced the youngster to James P. Johnson, founder of the stride school of jazz piano.

Waller made his recording debut in 1922 for Okeh Records with the solo efforts "Muscle Shoals Blues" and "Birmingham Blues." Shortly afterward, he released "Squeeze Me," an important early work that established his bona fides as a songwriter.

Waller continued to play organ at the Lincoln Theatre while also taking engagements at theaters in Philadelphia and Chicago. In addition, he often starred at Harlem's famous "rent parties," where he and his fellow musicians would essentially stage concerts in friends' homes. Larger than life with his sheer size and magnetic personality, Waller was known to enjoy alcohol and female attention in abundance.

Waller became more involved with writing and performing for revues in the late 1920s, starting with *Keep Shufflin'* in 1927. He forged a strong collaborative partnership with Andy Razaf, with whom he wrote two of his most famous stage songs, "Honeysuckle Rose" and "Ain't Misbehavin'." During this time, Waller also recorded such standards as "Handful of Keys" and "Valentine Stomp" as a soloist, and "The Minor Drag" and "Harlem Fuss" as leader of Fats Waller and His Buddies.

<https://www.biography.com/musicians/fats-waller>



Richard Maltby, Jr. (b. Ripon, WI, 6 October 1937) is a lyricist, director, book and screenplay writer, producer, creative consultant, and all-round theatrical ideaman. He is also a formidable award-winner: he conceived and directed the only two musical revues ever to win the Tony Award® for Best Musical: *Ain't Misbehavin'* (1978) and *Fosse* (1999).

<https://www.masterworksbroadway.com/artist/richard-maltby-jr/>



Murray Horwitz is a Tony Award-winning playwright and lyricist who has enjoyed remarkable success in both artistry and administration in the performing arts and broadcasting. His accomplishments include originating the phenomenally successful NPR comedy news quiz, *WAIT, WAIT...DON'T TELL ME*, and originating and co-writing *AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'*, the hit Broadway musical based on the music of Fats Waller. He was the Director and COO of the American Film Institute's Silver Theatre and Cultural Center from 2002 to 2009. Prior to his work at AFI, Horwitz was Vice President of Cultural Programming for National Public Radio. He still appears as a commentator on NPR, where he won three Peabody Awards, as well as the National Medal of Arts for NPR. Earlier, Horwitz was Acting Director of the NEA Opera-Musical Theater Program, and a deputy press secretary for the New York State Assembly Speaker's office. He currently divides his time among his own writing, hosting WAMU's *THE BIG BROADCAST*, and serving as Artist In Residence at Washington Performing Arts.

Ain't Misbehavin'

Activities

Write a Review

Explain to students that the director's job is to take the words on the script from the printed page to the stage and bring them to life. Explain that theater critics review shows and publish their opinions. For AmericanTheatreCritics.org, critic Sherry Eaker wrote, "My point of view was that it wasn't the theatre critic's place to tell the playwright what he or she should be doing; instead, the critic should focus on what is already there and explain either why it works or why it doesn't work."

After seeing the production, have each student write a review of Orlando Shakes' production of *Ain't Misbehavin'*. The review should include one paragraph each for:

Introduction – What did you watch, where and when, and maybe, why?

The script – Did you like the writing, the story, the characters? Why or why not?

The score – Did you like the music? Why or why not?

The acting – Did you believe and care about the characters as portrayed? Why or why not?

The design – Did you like the set, costume and light designs? Why or why not?

The staging – How did the director stage the violence? Was it effective?

The audience – What ways did the audience respond to particular moments?

Conclusion – What will you remember about this performance?

If you wish, send your reviews to us at: jenniferp@orlandoshakes.org

We'd love to hear your opinions of our show!

Read more: How to Become a Theater Critic | [eHow.com](http://www.ehow.com/how_2079002_become-theater-critic.html#ixzz1v9tEyMnc)

http://www.ehow.com/how_2079002_become-theater-critic.html#ixzz1v9tEyMnc

