THE DARTMOUTH DEPARTMENT OF THEATER presents

SPRING AWAKENING

JAMIE HORTON director

book and lyrics by STEVEN SATER

music by DUNCAN SHEIK

based on the play by FRANK WEDEKIND

Spring Awakening is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. 421 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019. Phone: 212-341-4684 Fax: 212-397-4684 www.MTIShows.com
Welcome to the hop
A performance needs an audience, so be prepared to play your part!

Schedule of Events
7:00pm—Pre show talk with creative team
8:00pm—Show
10:30pm (approx.)—Discussion + Snacks
11:00pm—Dismiss

Information for Teachers
Be prepared and arrive early. Allow for travel time, parking, and trips to the restroom.

Photo Policy. The Hopkins Center may take photographs during the performance for use on our website or on promotional materials. If you or your students do not wish to be photographed, please see a Hop staff member.

The Show Must Go On! We do not cancel events due to inclement weather. Schools will be notified by phone if the performance has been cancelled. We do not issue refunds for weather-related cancellations.

Important things to remember: Backpacks, food, drink, and gum are not allowed in the theater. Please turn off all cell phones and note that recording the performance or taking any photos is strictly prohibited. Hats off! It is respectful to remove hats during your time in the theater.

Did You Know?
• The Hopkins Center opened in 1962.
• The Hopkins Center was designed by Wallace Harrison, architect of Lincoln Center and the United Nations Building in New York City.
• The first three rows of The Moore Theater are on an elevator that goes eleven feet below ground to create an orchestra pit and can also be raised to the height of the stage to make it larger.
• In The Moore Theater, the area over the stage, called the “fly loft,” is 63 feet tall.

This resource guide was created for you by the Outreach & Arts Education team. To download copies of this study guide, see additional resources for this event, or view past study guides, please visit: www.hop.dartmouth.edu/outreach.

Enjoy the show!

Hopkins Center Outreach Department:
Stephanie Pacheco, Outreach Manager
Mary Gaetz, Outreach Coordinator
Erin Smith, Outreach Assistant

The Hopkins Center Outreach & Arts Education department embodies the Hop's mission to “ignite and sustain a passion for the arts.” It provides Dartmouth, the community and beyond rare personal contact with artists and a broad context for the performing arts. Unveiling the creative process of extraordinarily diverse artists, six Outreach programs touch more than 22,000 lives each year.
ABOUT THE SHOW

Spring Awakening takes a brusque and non-apologetic approach to the trials and tribulations of emerging adulthood. The characters in the show experience many moments of crisis related to sex and violence, struggling with physical abuse, emerging sexuality, suicide, sexual intercourse, homosexuality, and references to rape, abortion and parental abuse. These experiences, even theatricalized, pose hard questions for audiences, many of which have no ready answer. Spring Awakening uses the platform of musical theater to explore these questions and the show pulls no punches in the way it portrays events. It brings to light the responsibilities we share, regardless of age, in regards to sexuality, self-respect, and what it means to truly love ourselves and others.

STYLE

The source material for the musical version of Spring Awakening is a non-musical play of the same name written in Germany in 1891 by Frank Wedekind. Wedekind wrote the play to criticize the oppressive culture of his time, using children as the main characters to emphasize the damage that can be done by suppressing human nature. The original Spring Awakening is an expressionistic work. Expressionism is a modernist art movement that originated in Germany in the late 19th century. The movement sought to use art and literature to capture an inner emotional experience rather than a physical reality or perceived truth. The 2006 adaptation of Spring Awakening honors the expressionistic roots of the original play in several ways. Unlike traditional musical theater in which the songs move the plot forward, the songs of Spring Awakening serve solely to express the characters’ inner emotions and turmoil. In between the modern songs, the dialogue is written in formal, 19th-century language which, when combined with the contemporary music and lyrics, allows the story to communicate between past and present. The costumes portray demure 19th-century schoolchildren but the choreography reveals the intense energy of 21st-century teenagers. At times it feels like a concert, as performers pull wireless microphones out of their clothing and sing like current pop performers. Instead of attempting to truly represent each physical location in the show, the set is very minimal, relying on lights, text and acting to bring the audience along from location to location. The show also breaks the fourth wall and actors often directly address the audience while singing. The mixture of these style choices tie now to then and underscore the vast similarities between teenagers in 19th-century Germany and 21st-century America.
ABOUT THE SHOW: SYNOPSIS

Set in Germany in the late 19th century, this alt-rock musical explores the tricky and tumultuous transition from teenage years to adulthood. Sharing their experiences through powerful songs, the young characters struggle to understand their emotions and sexuality while the adults in the show are desperate to ignore the facts of life. The action of the musical shifts quickly from one scene to the next. The show begins with Wendla innocently asking her mother where babies come from, but her mother is too embarrassed to tell her. Next, a group of young male students study Latin under their strict headmaster. One of them, Melchior, a self-educated atheist, rails against the idea that all knowledge can be found in a classroom. Moritz, a timid boy struggling with his studies, asks Melchior why he can’t think of anything but women. Melchior, armed with in-depth knowledge gained from reading books, promises to write a concise explanation all about sex. Several of the other students contemplate masturbation as the one way they connect to their sexuality. Melchior runs into Wendla and they rekindle their childhood friendship. Moritz sneaks into the headmaster’s office to confirm that, yes, he will indeed pass to the next level, but the teachers then decide to hold back him back because there are too many students to pass them all. After learning about another girl’s abuse at the hands of her father, Wendla becomes curious about how that kind of pain feels. She asks Melchior to hit her with a switch so she can experience it. He resists, but she eventually convinces him to do it. Moritz tries to find passage to America as a way to escape the shame his failure has brought upon himself and his family, but he cannot find an adult to help him. Wendla finds Melchior in the hayloft and they have sex, unable to resist the strong feelings that have come over them. Moritz falls victim to his despair and commits suicide.

At his funeral, the students all lament that it had to come to this for Moritz. Melchior is brought in by the headmaster, blamed for Mortiz’s death and sent away to reform school. Wendla goes to the doctor and her mother is told that Wendla is pregnant. While Wendla insists she has no idea that what she did would get her pregnant, her mother arranges for a backroom abortion. When Melchior finds out about his child he escapes from school to find Wendla. He finds her in a cemetery near Moritz, dead from abortion complications. As he contemplates ending his life, Wendla and Mortiz appear from beyond the grave to encourage him to continue forward in memory of them.
ABOUT THE SHOW (CONT.)

ABOUT DARTMOUTH THEATER

The Dartmouth Theater Department offers a Bachelor of Arts in Theater. The department presents two main stage productions each academic year as well as a plethora of student-produced works. Participation in Theater productions is open to all Dartmouth undergraduates regardless of major. In addition, the Department hosts summer internships with the New York Theatre Workshop in residence at Dartmouth and is an educational partner with the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Learn more at http://www.dartmouth.edu/~theater/.

The Cast: (subject to change)

Melchior: Max Gottschall ’15
Moritz: Daniel Calano ’15
Hanschen: Chris Gallerani ’15
Ernst: Ryan Schiller ’17
Georg: Doug Phipps ’17
Otto: Chris Yih ’17
Adult Male #1: Evan Curhan ’14
Adult Male #2: Max Samuels ’15
Wendla: Haley Reicher ’17
Ilse: Kira Mikés ’16
Martha: Audrey Djiya ’17
Anna: Emma Orme ’15
Thea: Felicia Wilkins ’15
Adult Female #1: Stephanie Abbott-Grobicki ’15
Adult Female #2: Camille van Putten ’14
Male Ensemble: Eric Waskowicz ’14, Nate Reznicek ’14, Noah Samotin ’17, Bobby Esnard ’14
Female Ensemble: Rachel DeChiaro ’17, Isa Francisco ’14, Katelyn Onufrey ’15, Sarah Peck ’14

Spring Awakening Production Staff:

Director: Jamie Horton
Set Design: Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvili
Costume Design: Laurie Churba Kohn
Lighting Design: Dan Kotlowitz
Choreographer: Keith Coughlin
Stage Manager: Victoria Fox ’15

SONGS


Act Two: The Guilty Ones, Don’t Do Sadness/Blue Wind, Left Behind, Totally F*****, The Word of Your Body (reprise), Whispering, Those You’ve Known, The Song of Purple Summer

CREATIVE TEAM

Duncan Sheik, composer: Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter who composes music for theater, film, and television projects including the 1998 film Great Expectations, Twelfth Night at the Public Theater, and The Nightingale which premiered at La Jolla Playhouse in 2012. He also records music albums and is well-known for his top 20 Billboard hit single in 1996, “Barely Breathing.”

Steven Sator, lyrics: author of numerous plays, Sator has collaborated with Duncan Sheik for TV, film and theater and wrote lyrics for Duncan Sheik’s Phantom Moon album. Other projects include Umbrage, The Nightingale, A Home at the End of the World, and more.

IT’S A WINNER:

Spring Awakening won eight Tonys including Best Musical, Best Director, Best Choreographer; Four Drama Desk Awards and a Grammy for Best Musical Show Album when it debuted on Broadway in 2006.
CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

The original version of Spring Awakening was so controversial in 1891 Germany that it was not performed until 1906 when Max Reinhardt staged it at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin. The first English language production was in New York City in 1917, but the production was threatened with closure when New York City officials claimed the play was pornographic. After an injunction was filed, the play was allowed to proceed but only as a single matinee performance for a limited audience. Work began on the musical version in the late 1990s, including several workshop performances around the United States. However, when airplanes hit the Twin Towers in 2001, attendance at Broadway shows dropped off dramatically and the show was shelved. In 2005, Tom Hulce, star of the 1984 movie Amadeus, came on board as producer and brought the show back for more workshops. It opened off-Broadway in June of 2006 and moved to Broadway in December 2006, sweeping the Tony awards for the year. The production starred Lea Michele and Jonathan Groff, both now known for their roles on the television show Glee.

GERMANY IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY

The events of Spring Awakening parallel the turbulent times of Germany in the late 19th century. In 1871, having won both the Austrian-Prussian War and the Franco-Prussian War, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and the newly anointed Kaiser Wilhelm I of Prussia unified 25 German-speaking duchies, states, and city-states to create the Germany we know today. In addition to a Kaiser and chancellor, Germany also had a Parliament but it had very limited powers. As chancellor, Bismarck controlled the majority of the government and came to favor the left leaning liberals in his policy making. He built up the military, especially the Navy, utilizing the phrase “iron and blood” as the key philosophy for achieving greatness as a country. Economics took off, with Germany rapidly expanding agricultural techniques, chemical and pharmaceutical production and heavy industries such as coal, iron and steel. Bismarck was careful to squash any uprising of political groups, even going so far as to enact laws that prevented some political parties from meeting. To counter these restrictive laws he also enacted many welfare programs such as accident insurance and disability payments for workers. Despite this, a desire grew to shift Germany away from Bismarck’s imperial rule and towards a more democratic government. In 1890 when Wilhelm I died, his son, Frederick, a liberal, took over, much to the relief of the public. Unfortunately he died 99 days after taking office and his son, Wilhelm II, a conservative, took over. Bismarck was fired. The Social Democratic Party had gained momentum with its anti-bourgeois platform but Wilhelm II went to work to amass strong conservative support that would keep them in check. Wilhelm II also made sure that the military in Germany, though small, was the best equipped and most disciplined in Europe. All of these factors contributed to Germany emerging as one of the most significant world powers in the early 20th century.

LISTEN UP:

Listen to NPR’s story about the Broadway production of Spring Awakening:
LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

CENSORSHIP—PAST AND PRESENT

Though the First Amendment grants the right to free speech, censorship is still alive and well today. There are still many mixed feelings about what we should and should not look at or listen to in our day-to-day lives. Research the Comstock Act and report on how it has been used throughout history, including changes made to the law throughout the years. Do you feel this law protects people? Should it be changed further? How has the passage of time changed the way we might or might not censor certain things? Who gets to make that decision? Show findings in a presentation or essay, offering your personal commentary alongside the facts.

PRE PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Discuss the ways in which society fails to acknowledge the complexity of the human condition and creates “taboo” topics. In what ways does it succeed?
- Discuss the difference between talking about emotional issues with friends and peers versus with adults and family. Is one better or worse? Why or why not?
- Unlike today, sex education was not taught in the 19th century. How do you imagine people learned about sex? How have sex education classes changed the way we talk about sex? What else do you think has changed with regard to sex education from the late 19th century to today? What is the same? If you were telling your children or students about sexuality what would you say? What would you not say?
- Spring Awakening often “breaks the fourth wall,” meaning the songs are addressed directly to the audience. How might being directly addressed by the performers alter your experience? How might it alter the meaning of a particular song?
- Read the lyrics below. What might this song be about? What kind of music do you imagine accompanies it? What kind of character(s) might sing it?

“The Mirror Blue Night”

Flip on a switch, and everything’s fine—
No more lips, no more tongue, no more ears, no more eyes.
The naked blue angel, who peers through the blinds,
Disappears in the gloom of the mirror blue night.
But there’s nowhere to hide from these bones, from my mind.
It’s broken inside—I’m a man and a child.
I’m at home with a ghost who got left in the cold.
I’m locked out of peace, with no keys to my soul.
And the whispers of fear, the chill up the spine,
Will steal away too, with a flick of the light.
The minute you do, with fingers so blind,
You remove every bit of the blue from your mind.
But there’s nowhere to hide, from the ghost in my mind,
It’s old in these bones—of a man and a child.
And there’s no one who knows, and there’s nowhere to go.
There’s no one to see who can see to my soul.
POST PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

• What parts of the show reflected the politics and culture of late 19th-century Germany? How did the characters go against the accepted practices of their time period? Which of their actions have come to be accepted by society? Which are still considered to be against the norm?

• Discuss the language of the play, the formal language of the dialogue and the more casual language and contemporary idioms in the song lyrics. Did it work to go back and forth between the two? Why or why not?

• Talk about which issues in the play are still present in today’s society. Are there issues you feel are improving? Getting worse? How can we have helpful conversations around these often delicate subjects?

• The original version of this play was censored when it first came out in the late 1800s. Do you think there was good reason for it being censored at that time? What if it were censored today? How can society protect free speech and not offend people’s sensibilities?

• Moritz felt he had no choices left in life, to dire results. In what ways are we able or unable to control what happens to us, especially when others are responsible for making decisions? Is there a way to gain control over out-of-control situations in a way that is mutually beneficial to both teens and parents (or other adults)? How can a young person gain perspective on the variety of choices open to him or her?

• What is too taboo to talk about by today’s standards? What would be controversial if you made a musical about it?

OTHER RESOURCES

Comstock Act:
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/pill/peoplevents/e_comstock.html

Reviews of Spring Awakening’s Broadway production:

Spring Awakening Study Guide created by Camp Broadway: