



PRIME STAGE THEATRE CO. IS GENEROUSLY FUNDED BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS:



The Heinz Endowments  
Howard Heinz Endowment and Vira I. Heinz Endowment



## FOR TEACHERS & STUDENTS

### **POST-SHOW CHAT SESSIONS**

Stay after the school matinees to ask questions of both the actors and the production crew! During the 15-minute post-show chat sessions, delve into the story and then ask questions of the actors about the rehearsal process, theater performance, and their experiences working on that particular production. No registration required.

### **THE LITERACY IN ACTION PROGRAM**

Prime Stage Theatre's flagship education program strives to increase adolescent literacy through theater in underserved and underperforming school districts in the Western Pennsylvania area. In this FREE program, schools receive tickets and books for each Prime Stage production, 10 in-school workshops, and professional development opportunities for teachers. To see if your school is eligible to participate in our program, please download an application at our website, <http://www.primestage.com/education/index.html>

### **EVERYTHING IS FINE**

Prime Stage Theatre is proud to offer the award-winning, touring production of *Everything is Fine*, a 1-hour program designed to identify the warning signs of teen dating violence that can help save the life of a friend, loved one, or even you. Written and performed by Pittsburgh area teens, this show will make an impact at your school or community center. If you would like *Everything is Fine* to come to your school or community center, go to [http://www.primestage.com/education/teen\\_dating\\_awareness.html](http://www.primestage.com/education/teen_dating_awareness.html).

### **OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEENS, FAMILIES AND ADULTS**

Prime Stage Theatre offers opportunities for people of all ages to get involved with the theater. Check out our website to learn about the Teen Board, Mentorships, Volunteering, Book Readings and many other exciting events. There is something for everyone at Prime Stage! <http://primestage.com>.

# THE GREAT GATSBY RESOURCE GUIDE

## Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre: *Bringing Literature to Life!*



*Fahrenheit 451*, 2012-2013



*The Elephant Man*, 2011-2012



*A Wrinkle in Time*, 2011-2012

Dear Educator,

Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre's 2012-2013 Season! We had a very successful season last year with acclaimed productions of *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Elephant Man* and *A Wrinkle in Time*. This year, we inspire you to imagine and discover the alarming future in *Fahrenheit 451*, the roaring twenties in *The Great Gatsby*, and an incredible journey in *Walk Two Moons*.

This Resource Guide is designed to provide historical background and context, classroom activities, and curricular content to help you enliven your students' experience with the literature. We hope it will inspire you to use theatrical games and creative thinking in your classroom in order to spark personal connections with the theme and characters in the stories.

If you have any questions about the information or activities in this guide, please don't hesitate to contact me. I'm happy to help and welcome your suggestions!

Monica Stephenson  
Education Director  
mstephenson@primestage.com

### Did you know...

\***Prime Stage Theatre** has been in existence for 16 years.

\***Prime Stage Theatre's** very first production was *A Woman Called Truth* about Sojourner Truth.

\***Prime Stage Theatre** first performed at the Station Square Playhouse – now the Hard Rock Cafe!

### Check out what's inside!

<i>The Great Gatsby</i> in 30 secs...or less	4
<i>F. Scott Fitzgerald and Zelda Fitzgerald</i>	5-6
<i>Meet the Playwright</i>	7
<i>Simon Levy Interview</i>	8-9
<i>Characters</i>	10
<i>Putting It In Context: The Roaring Twenties</i>	11-14
<i>Reaction to Gatsby</i>	15-16
<i>Symbols &amp; Themes</i>	17
<i>The American Dream</i>	18
<i>What is...What?</i>	19
<i>Class Activities</i>	20-22
<i>Putting it on Stage</i>	23
<i>Attending the Show</i>	24
<i>Resources &amp; Discussion Questions</i>	25
<i>PST &amp; The Common Core Standards!</i>	26

## Curriculum Connections Corner

Prime Stage Theatre is committed to directly correlating our programs to the PDE Academic Standards. *The Great Gatsby* and this Resource Guide may be used to address the following curriculum content standards:

**Arts and Humanities:** 9.1-9.4

**Reading, Writing, Speaking, & Listening:** 1.1-1.9

**History:** 8.1, 8.3, 8.4



# SUMMARY – THE GREAT GATSBY

“One of the greatest works of American literature...a timeless evocation of the allure, corruption and carelessness of wealth.”-The Times

## The book, *The Great Gatsby*, in 30 seconds...

The novel takes place in the summer of 1922 and is narrated by Nick Carraway, a Yale graduate and World War 1 veteran who takes a job in New York. He rents a small house on Long Island, next door to the mansion of Jay Gatsby, a mysterious millionaire who holds extravagant parties.

Across the bay lives Nick's attractive second cousin Daisy with her rich husband Tom Buchanan, who was at Yale with Nick. They ask him to lunch, where he meets a girl named Jordan Baker, but the atmosphere is spoiled when Tom answers a telephone call from his mistress, Myrtle.

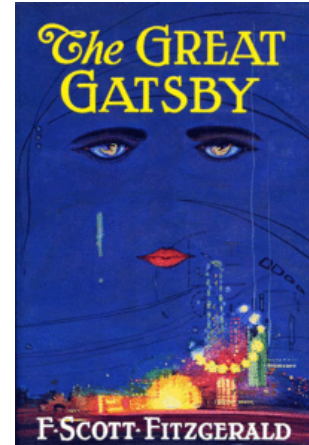
Myrtle is the unhappy wife of George Wilson, who owns an unsuccessful garage in Queens, then known as the Valley of Ashes, on the outskirts of the city. Tom takes Nick to the flat where he meets Myrtle and holds parties. Soon, Tom ruins the occasion by hitting Myrtle and breaking her nose following a fight surrounding whether Myrtle should be allowed to say Daisy's name.

Nick gets an invitation to one of Gatsby's parties, which he attends and reunites with Jordan Baker. Many of the guests at the party seem to have come uninvited and do not even know Gatsby. However, Gatsby befriends Nick and takes him to lunch in New York to meet a business associate, Meyer Wolfsheim. Gatsby then asks Nick, through Jordan, to arrange a meeting with Daisy. In 1917, though from a modest family and penniless, Gatsby had hoped to marry Daisy but was sent to Europe to fight, briefly studying at Oxford University after World War 1. Now he is rich, has bought a house near her and throws enormous parties in hopes she will attend.

Nick agrees to Gatsby's request and asks both Daisy and Gatsby to tea, after which Gatsby shows Daisy his opulent mansion. Daisy, unhappy with the unpleasant Tom, is ready to revive her relationship with Gatsby. Daisy and Gatsby begin seeing each other regularly. Daisy asks Gatsby to lunch at her house, together with Nick and Jordan. She then suggests that they all go into New York City. Tom, Jordan and Nick get into Gatsby's car while Daisy and Gatsby follow in Tom's car. At Wilson's garage, Tom stops to fill up and is told by an unhappy Wilson that Myrtle has a lover.

The group goes to the Plaza Hotel, where Tom angrily confronts Gatsby over his relationship with Daisy and his criminal activities. Gatsby challenges Daisy to choose him, her first love, and to deny she ever loved Tom. She avoids both and, overwrought, begs to go home. Daisy sets off with Gatsby, driving Gatsby's car, followed by the rest, who travel in another car.

As Daisy passes Wilson's garage, Myrtle runs into the road, where the car strikes her and she is killed. Daisy panics, Gatsby takes the wheel and quickly drives on. Tom and the others stop and find Myrtle has been killed. Back home, Tom and Daisy appear to reconcile, pack up and hastily leave. Gatsby later tells Nick that Daisy was the driver responsible for Myrtle's death, but he is prepared to take the blame on her behalf. Tom later tells Wilson that Gatsby was behind the wheel, leading him to believe it was Gatsby with whom Myrtle was having an affair. Wilson goes to Gatsby's mansion to find him lying on a mattress in his pool. He shoots him before going down into the woods and turning the gun on himself.



1925 first edition cover by artist Francis Cugat

Nick is the only one left. He arranges Gatsby's funeral, which the majority of his former friends avoid. Only his father and a single former party guest attend. The guest tells Nick that Gatsby was once a poor boy from North Dakota, whose real name was James Gatz. Disgusted by the whole set-up and no longer interested in the unreliable Jordan, Nick gives up his job and his house to return to the Midwest, acknowledging that the five main characters – Gatsby, Tom, Daisy, Jordan and himself – were all Westerners who, in some fundamental way, failed to adapt to the standards of the East.

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/the\\_great\\_gatsby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/the_great_gatsby)

## ...or less.

In the summer of 1922, Nick Carraway meets Jay Gatsby, a self-made man famed for his decadent, champagne-drenched parties. Despite being surrounded by Long Island's bright and beautiful, Gatsby only longs for Daisy Buchanan. He pursues his American Dream and love for Daisy to a tragic conclusion.

## Did you know...

*The Great Gatsby* is known today as one of the greatest works of American Literature. But, did you know that F. Scott Fitzgerald's masterpiece almost had a different title? He changed his mind many times between various titles; among them were *Gatsby*; *Among Ash-Heaps and Millionaires*; *Trimalchio in West Egg*; *On the Road to West Egg*; *Gold-Hatted Gatsby* and *The High Bouncing Lover*. Finally, his wife Zelda convinced him to use the title *The Great Gatsby*. He even tried to change the title at the last minute before the novel was published in 1925!

## Get The Great Gatsby!

Download your very own PDF of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

Go to:

[http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/f/fitzgerald/f\\_scott/gatsby/](http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/f/fitzgerald/f_scott/gatsby/)



## F. SCOTT FITZGERALD, AUTHOR OF *THE GREAT GATSBY*

“That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you're not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.” – F. Scott Fitzgerald

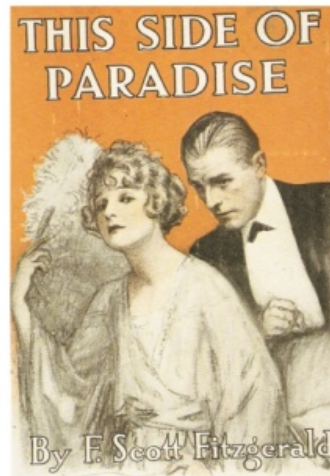
F. Scott Fitzgerald's (1896-1940) life is an example of both sides of the American Dream - the joys of young love, wealth and success, and the tragedies associated with excess and failure. Named for another famous American, a distant cousin who authored the Star Spangled Banner, Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, Minnesota on September 24, 1896. The son of a failed wicker furniture salesman (Edward Fitzgerald) and an Irish immigrant with a large inheritance (Mary "Mollie" McQuillan), Fitzgerald grew up in a solidly Catholic and upper middle class environment.



Princeton University Press, Fitzgerald

Fitzgerald started writing at an early age. His high school newspaper published his detective stories, encouraging him to pursue writing more enthusiastically than academics. He dropped out of Princeton University to join the army and continued to pursue his obsession, writing magazine articles and even musical lyrics.

At 21 years of age, he submitted his first novel for publication and Charles Scribner's Sons rejected it, but with words of encouragement. Beginning a pattern of constant revising that would characterize his writing style for the rest of his career, Fitzgerald decided to rewrite *The Romantic Egoist* and resubmit it for publication. Meanwhile, fate, in the form of the U.S. army, stationed him near Montgomery, Alabama, in 1918, where he met and fell in love with an 18-year-old Southern belle - Zelda Sayre. Scribners rejected his novel for a second time, and so Fitzgerald turned to advertising as a steady source of income. Unfortunately, his small salary was not enough to convince Zelda to marry him and, tired of waiting for him to make his fortune, she broke their engagement in 1919. Happily, Scribners finally accepted the novel after Fitzgerald rewrote it for the third time as *This Side of Paradise*, and published it a year later. Fitzgerald, suddenly a rich and famous author, married Zelda a week after its publication.



Check out an awesome F. Scott Fitzgerald mini-biography video at



[www.biography.com/people/f-scott-fitzgerald-9296261](http://www.biography.com/people/f-scott-fitzgerald-9296261)

In between writing novels, Fitzgerald was quite prolific as a magazine storywriter. *The Saturday Evening Post* in particular served as a showcase for his short works of fiction, most of which revolved around a new breed of American woman - the young, free-thinking, independent "flapper" of the Roaring Twenties.

The Fitzgeralds enjoyed fame and fortune, and his novels reflected their lifestyle, describing in semi-autobiographical fiction the privileged lives of wealthy, aspiring socialites. Fitzgerald wrote his second novel, *The Beautiful and the Damned*, a year after they were married. Three years later, after the birth of their first and only child, Scottie, Fitzgerald completed his best-known work: *The Great Gatsby*.

The extravagant living made possible by such success, however, took its toll. Constantly globe-trotting (living at various times in several different cities in Italy, France, Switzerland, and eight cities in the United States), the Fitzgeralds tried in vain to escape or at least seek respite from Scott's alcoholism and Zelda's mental illness.

Cont. on pg 6

## F. SCOTT FITZGERALD, CONT

Zelda suffered several breakdowns in both her physical and mental health, and sought treatment in and out of clinics from 1930 until her death (due to a fire at Highland Hospital in North Carolina in 1948). Zelda's mental illness, the subject of Fitzgerald's fourth novel, *Tender is the Night*, had a debilitating effect on Scott's writing.

He described his own "crack-up" in an essay that he wrote in 1936,

hopelessly in debt, unable to write, nearly estranged from his wife and daughter, and incapacitated by excessive drinking and poor physical health.

Things were looking up for Fitzgerald near the end of his life - he won a contract in 1937 to write for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in Hollywood and fell in love with Sheilah Graham, a movie columnist.

He had started writing again - scripts, short stories, and the first draft of a new novel about Hollywood - when he suffered a heart attack and died in 1940 at the age of 44, a failure in his own mind. Most commonly recognized only as an extravagant drunk, who epitomized the excesses of the Jazz Age, Fitzgerald's work did not earn the credibility and recognition it holds today until years after his death.



The Fitzgeralds on a street in Paris, 1924. (Harold Ober Associates Inc./Princeton University Library)

**"I fell in love with her courage, her sincerity, and her flaming self respect. And these things I'd believe in, even if the whole world indulged in wild suspicions that she wasn't all she should be. I love her and that that's the beginning and the end of everything."**

**– F. Scott Fitzgerald on Zelda Fitzgerald**

Known as the golden couple, F. Scott and Zelda were famous during the 1920s. Like today's celebrities, their exploits were often printed in the paper!

## ZELDA FITZGERALD, ARTIST, WRITER, DANCER AND WIFE

*"By the time a person has achieved years adequate for choosing a direction, the die is cast and the moment has long since passed which determined the future."*

-Zelda Fitzgerald

Born in 1900 in Montgomery, Alabama, Zelda entered a world that was just starting to consider the possibility that women might have the right to be independent citizens capable of making their own decisions. The youngest of six children, her parents raised Zelda as an imaginative and thoroughly spoiled little girl. By the age of eighteen, when she met F. Scott Fitzgerald at one of the many parties she attended, she embodied the quintessential southern belle.

After the success of his first novel, Zelda married F. Scott. She was a huge influence on his writing,

providing much of the material for his novels and short stories throughout their engagement and marriage. Scott frequently quoted her and her letters directly, using her words as the voice for several of his female characters.

In 1928, she decided to pursue her life long dream of becoming a ballerina; but three long years of intense ballet work damaged her health and prompted her first mental breakdown. Zelda was eventually diagnosed with schizophrenia and would reside in and out of hospitals for the rest of her life.

While at Johns Hopkins hospital in 1932, she wrote her first and only novel: *Save Me the Waltz*. A prolific writer, Zelda wrote eleven short stories and twelve published articles.

Writing was not Zelda's only form of expression. She was a painter of brilliantly colored, whimsical works of

Photo  
taken  
in  
1918.



art. Much of her work still exists today.

Zelda passed away in 1948. She was an icon of the Jazz Age having struggled against her traditional upbringing and its societal constraints to create a new, independent identity not just for herself, but for all American women.

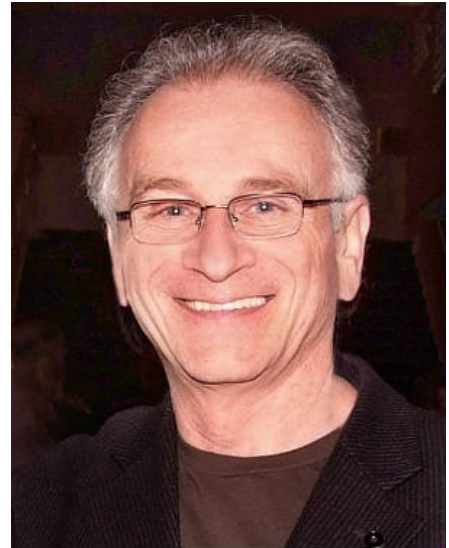
## SIMON LEVY, PLAYWRIGHT!

Simon Levy was born on May 12, 1949, in Surrey, England. Levy is a director and playwright, and is currently is the Producer Director with the Fountain Theatre in Los Angeles.

Levy grew up in San Francisco where he graduated from City College of San Francisco and San Francisco State University with an M.A. in Theatre. After University he went on to become an actor before his first directorial debut at the One Act Theatre Company in San Francisco.

In 1990, Levy moved to L.A. and in 1993 he began working at The Fountain Theatre. He teaches playwriting at UCLA and is a member of many boards including the California Arts Council and the Society for Directors and Choreographers.

Levy has won over 150 awards for his writing and directing including the Los Angeles Times Critics Choice Award, three Ovation awards, many Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards, PEN West Literary Award in Drama as well as multiple Drama-Logue Awards.



*The Great Gatsby* was first performed at The Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, MN in 2006!



The Guthrie Theater, *The Great Gatsby* 2006 © Michael Daniel

Levy's stage adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*, published by Dramatists Play Service, is the first authorized and granted exclusive rights by the Fitzgerald Estate. It was a Finalist for the PEN Literary Award in Drama, and has been produced across America. It completes his Fitzgerald Trilogy of stage plays, which includes *Tender is the Night* (winner of the PEN Literary Award in Drama, 7 Drama-Logue awards including Best Production and Direction, as well as numerous other awards, and has been published in the *Modern American Literature Series*, Prestige Books), and *The Last*

*Tycoon* (winner of 5 Back Stage West/Drama-Logue awards including Best Adaptation and Best Direction, and was nominated for the prestigious Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Ted Schmitt Award for Original Play).

"By the end of the evening, THERE WAS A LONGING TO SEE IT AGAIN. AND THEN AGAIN... This adaptation by Simon Levy clearly understood that Fitzgerald's words are sacred and can't be improved upon. What was added, deleted or changed to adapt the story to the stage was so faithful to Fitzgerald that it became seamless. .... There's a purity to this story and its characters... This is "The Great Gatsby," faithful to Fitzgerald and to the spirit of the novel. EXPECTATIONS WERE FAR EXCEEDED." –stage review from the *Arizona Daily Star*



## SIMON LEVY & *THE GREAT GATSBY*

**PST's Education Director, Monica Stephenson, recently had the opportunity to discuss *The Great Gatsby* with Simon Levy. Read on to discover how Simon adapted this great American story.**

First, I just have to say how proud Prime Stage is to have the opportunity to bring your adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* to The New Hazlett Theater. You've had rave reviews and successful runs at The Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, Arizona Theatre Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre and The Grand Theatre in Ontario, Canada. There are productions being mounted across the country. Audiences are getting to experience *The Great Gatsby* in a new and exciting way. Your play is the only adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* authorized by the Fitzgerald Estate. I understand that there is a story behind securing the right. Can you share it with us?

**Simon Levy:** There's a very, very long answer to that question, but I doubt there's enough room here to give you all the delicious details, but let me try and encapsulate it: 20 years ago I approached the Fitzgerald Estate about adapting *Gatsby* because I had this dream of creating the American Literature Theatre Project (which grew out of a life-changing theatre trip I took to the Soviet Union) that would bring to theatrical life great American literature. What better story to launch that dream than *The Great Gatsby*? So, full of passion and pride, I approached the Fitzgerald Estate, who listened with great interest to my impassioned plea. When I had finished, they said, "Absolutely not, you can't have *Gatsby*." I was crushed. But then they, surprisingly said, "But pick another book." Ironically, I had just re-read *Tender is the Night*, so I said, "Okay, how about *Tender*?" So they said, "Okay."

In my naivete (and arrogance), I thought I could whip off the adaptation in six months. How hard could it be? Two-and-a-half years later, I finally had a draft to present to the Trustees of the Estate. The Estate approved my adaptation of *Tender*, we produced it at the Fountain Theatre in Los Angeles (my theatrical home), and it went on to be a great success, winning a bunch of awards, including the PEN Literary Award in Drama. I was asked to do a scene from it at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Society Conference at Princeton where it created quite a sensation and I had the good fortune to meet most of the important people who teach and write about Fitzgerald, including the Trustees. I went back to the Estate and said, "Look how wonderful my *Tender* is, now I would like to do *Gatsby*." Again they said, "No. But why don't you try *The Last Tycoon*?" And I said, "It's an unfinished novel!" And they said, "So finish it." And I thought, There's a challenge! That adaptation only took a year-and-a-half, was also produced at the Fountain Theatre, and was also a great success and won awards. This time when I went back to the Estate to ask for *Gatsby*, they said, "Yes." But with a whole lot of restrictions. A little over two years later, I presented them with a draft, which they approved. And now all three plays are being published by Dramatists Play Service. It's been an amazing 20-year journey!



First Edition cover of *Tender is The Night*

**What is it that most inspires or draws you to F. Scott Fitzgerald's work, particularly *The Great Gatsby*?**

**SL:** I had fallen in love with Fitzgerald's writing in my early 20s and he was always a go-to writer when I needed him. I was re-reading *Tender*, I felt like I really got Fitzgerald, that I really understood who he was. That his problems were Dick Diver's problems (the protagonist in the book), and that these problems were also mine: Particularly the way Fitzgerald explores and addresses what it means to be a man in American society, the expectations and pressures, the mythology attached to that; and also what it means to be an artistic man trying to be successful in this culture. How does one balance obligations and dreams? I think Fitzgerald really got what it meant to struggle with the *anima* that fed his creativity and how that clashes against the left brain hardness of materialism and success that's expected of men (especially) in our society. Also, when you look at his writings, you always see this dichotomy, this clash, between illusion and reality, especially in *Gatsby*. This was not an intellectual exercise for Fitzgerald, a detached idea, but came from a place of real feelings, real encounters in his life. What is illusion? reality? How do you hold two conflicting ideas in your mind at the same time? You see, what he's struggling with is this: What happens if you're a failure?; what happens if you abrogate the American Dream?; what happens if you're not any good at what you do?; and what do you do with failure if there's a part of you that really believes in yourself? That is, what happens if you don't live up to the American mythology of success?



*The Great Gatsby* scenic model by Johnmichael Bohach, PST 2013



## SIMON LEVY & *THE GREAT GATSBY* CONT.

***The Great Gatsby* is full of descriptive prose, symbolism and history. How did you make choices regarding what to use and not use in your adaptation?**

**SL:** I think the greatest challenge for any production of this play - and the thing that excites me the most - is finding, in the language of theatre, an equivalent to or substitute for Fitzgerald's prose. After all, the book lives on for a lot of reasons - not the least of which is the way Fitzgerald writes. An adaptation has got to capture that somehow while still illuminating the plot and the various themes. What everybody talks about when they talk about *Gatsby* the novel is the beauty of Fitzgerald's prose, his lyricism, the way he expresses, the poetic maturity of his descriptive prose, his astonishing use of metaphor and symbolism. Well, one of the great advantages of theatre is how we are able to give life to symbolism and metaphor on stage. As an art form we excel at being suggestive rather than literal. It's what we do best. You don't need to put a whole mansion on stage. You can do it iconographically so that the audience uses their own imagination to fill out the rest. So, as I was working on the adaptation, it became really important to find ways - through set, sound, music, choreography, and especially lighting - to suggest to future directors and designers the kinds of ways to emulate Fitzgerald's prose. But first and foremost my task was to tell the story, to bring the characters to life, and to trust that the rest - metaphor, symbolism, theme - would be inherent in the play. The rest is up to the creative team. The larger task of what to keep or dispense with in the adaptation has been a long, long journey of immersing myself as deeply as possible into Fitzgerald and the novel while still remaining true to the task of creating an exciting piece of theatre.



Seattle Theater Company, *The Great Gatsby*

**What were some of the theatrical opportunities and what were some of the challenges that you discovered while adapting this play?**

**SL:** First of all, I came to this project with tremendous respect. After all, *Gatsby* is the Everest of American literature. Fortunately, I already had the advantage, because I had spent so much time with Fitzgerald on the other two adaptations, of feeling I really understood him. Before I can express myself in a work, I need to look for the nexus between it and myself. Everything I do is ultimately biographical in some way - the things I'm passionate about, struggle with, understand within myself. So there are parts in the adaptation where I can't remember now if the voice is Fitzgerald, if I adapted and shaped it from another source, or if I made it up. Of course, most of the text is directly from the book. But one of the primary challenges was figuring out how to create dialogue out of Fitzgerald's poetically descriptive prose. Where could I find language in the narrative that would translate into dialogue? How do I bend it, shape it, massage it, change it, add to or subtract from it? Secondly, there was the question of Nick. How do I make him *active*? This is Nick's memory... and imagination... and it's highly selective, even porous. The emotional thread that connects the scenes of the play is Nick. He may be observer, but he's deeply affected by all these people he encounters that fateful summer. He's the one who changes. To make him active took a long, long time to figure out. Every adaptation is a humbling experience because you know you can never have it all, so then it becomes about choice. And where does choice come from? Some of it's obvious, of course, but much of it is in that nebulous realm of intuition, imagination, and one's personal relationship to the source material.

**I'm just curious, is there a character from *The Great Gatsby* with whom you most identify?**

**SL:** As a writer, one of the challenges is to get inside your characters so you identify and empathize with them, and, most importantly, speak from their point of view. Ultimately, you fall in love with all of them. But, if I take a step back and look at the question objectively, the character I have the deepest affection for is Nick. It's ultimately his journey, his eyes through which we see this world he enters, his pain and disappointment we come to identify with at the end. He comes to East Egg full of youthful hope and expectation, full of illusion; and leaves, more mature, wounded, full of reality.

To read more interview questions with Simon Levy go to PST's Website:  
[http://www.primestage.com/shows\\_and\\_tickets/2012\\_2013.2.html](http://www.primestage.com/shows_and_tickets/2012_2013.2.html)

### DISCUSS WITH YOUR STUDENTS!

**Be The Playwright!** How would you adapt *The Great Gatsby* as a play?

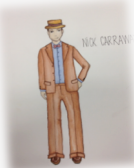
*\*What is the most important message to you? How could you bring that message to the forefront for the audience?*

*\*What questions remain unanswered in the novel? How could you add scenes or dialogue to add to the story? Consider the events that happened before or after the events in the novel, or during the passage of time.*

*\*Theater uses sight and sound! How could you use lighting, costumes, props, sound effects or movement to tell the story?*

# CHARACTERS

**The Cast** in Simon Levy's stage adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* includes only nine actors. Look at the descriptions on the page and think about how you might choose a cast to portray these characters. *\*What physical characteristics would you look for in the actor playing each character? Why? \*What vocal quality would you expect each character to have? Would they speak slowly, quickly, gravelly, squeaky? \*Which roles might be shared by one actor? How would you make each character unique?*



**Nick Carraway:** a true Midwesterner, having come East to attend Yale and then work in bonds and explore New York. Nick is the play's narrator and it is through his eyes that we experience the other characters and the events of the story. He is the cousin and former classmate of Daisy and Tom Buchanan, respectively.

and Tom Buchanan, respectively.

**"Everyone suspects himself of at least one of the cardinal virtues, and this is mine: I [Nick] am one of the few honest people that I have ever known."**



**Jay Gatsby:** A Midwesterner by birth, Gatsby's past is shrouded in mystery, while his present persona exhibits an incredibly rich man with a strong emotional attachment to a woman from his past.

**"I wouldn't ask too much of her,' [Nick] ventured. 'You can't repeat the past.' 'Can't repeat the past?' [Gatsby] cried incredulously. 'Why of course you can!'"**



**Daisy Buchanan:** Born to a wealthy family in Louisville, Daisy is a debutante and socialite whose past with Gatsby collides with her present life with her husband, Tom.

**"Her voice is full of money,' [Gatsby] said suddenly. That was it. I'd [Nick] never understood before. It was full of money — that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it ... high in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl."**



**Tom Buchanan:** A Yale-educated man from a wealthy and respected family, Tom has never had to play by the rules because the rules don't apply to someone of his social standing.

**"Now, don't think my opinion on these matters is final,' [Tom] seemed to say, 'just because I'm stronger and more of a man than you are.'"**



**Jordan Baker:** A professional female golf player, Jordan has little family but money to spare. A friend of Daisy and Tom, Jordan is a knowledgeable source of gossip regarding the social circles in which the characters move.

**"She was incurably dishonest. She wasn't able to endure being at a disadvantage and, given this unwillingness, I (Nick) suppose she had begun dealing in subterfuges when she was very young in order to keep that cool, insolent smile turned to the world and yet satisfy the demands of her hard, jaunty body."**



**Myrtle Wilson:** A fiery woman of a lower social class than many of the other characters in the play, Myrtle and her husband George live in the valley of ashes near New York City.

**"Her laughter, her gestures, her assertions became more violently affected moment by moment, and as she expanded the room grew smaller around her, until she seemed to be revolving on a noisy, creaking pivot through the smoky air."**



**Meyer Wolfshiem:** An associate of Gatsby's who appears to have ties to various criminal organizations.

Gatsby said, **"He's the man who fixed the World's Series back in 1919."**

**George Wilson:** The owner of a garage in the valley of ashes, George is a layman in this world of the excessively wealthy.

**"I know," [George] said definitely, 'I'm one of those trusting fellas and I don't think any harm to nobody, but when I get to know a thing I know it.'"**

**Mr. McKee:** Myrtle's friend.

**Mrs. McKee:** Myrtle's friend.

**Mrs. Michaelis:** A witness to a crime.

Prime Stage Theatre's Production of *The Great Gatsby* showcases an ensemble of four actors as Party Guest/Dancers/Cops/Etc.

Sketches by costume designer Lindsay Tejan  
*The Great Gatsby* PST 2013

# PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT The Roaring Twenties

The story of *The Great Gatsby* takes place in 1922, a time of great prosperity in the United States. It is a novel of triumph and tragedy, noted for the remarkable way Fitzgerald holds a mirror up to a cross section of American society known as the upper class and captures the mood of the period's frenzied, post-war society. While the book was not popular at its initial release, it received critical acclaim and is known as one of the greatest works of American Literature. *The Great Gatsby* provides today's readers with a portal through which to observe life in the 1920s.

To understand Fitzgerald's genius more fully, one must be aware of the history, culture and politics that underlie the story.

**Pre-1920s** Before World War 1, the United States faced many challenges similar to today. There were many immigrants entering the country, cities were filling up and poverty was on the rise. Business monopolies and trusts kept economic growth in the hands of the few very rich while average Americans worked long hours in factories, farms and shops. Although labor unions were forming, middle-class Americans were growing unhappy.

When the United States entered WW1 in 1917, the life of every American changed drastically. World War 1 was, at the time, the most devastating war the world had ever seen. Countless young men's lives were sacrificed in the name of freedom and democracy, and countless more deployed into the war and experienced the horrors first hand. The United States became a nation of strong-working women and African Americans. They produce goods needed for the war in factories; they cared for sick and battle wounded men, and supported the war by purchasing Liberty Bonds and even conserved food to give to the troops. The support of all the hard working people on the home front during World War 1 enabled America and the Allied forces to win the "Great War."



### Did you know...

F. Scott Fitzgerald dropped out of Princeton University to join the Army in 1917. In June of 1918, he was assigned to Camp Sheridan in Alabama. There, he met and fell in love with Zelda Sayre. The war ended, just before Fitzgerald was to leave for combat in Europe.

*"If we ever get back (from the war) and I don't particularly care, we'll be rather aged - in the worst way. After all life hasn't much to offer except youth and I suppose for older people the love of youth in others."*

-F. Scott Fitzgerald, from a letter to his cousin, Ceci

### The 1920s: A Brief Timeline

#### 1919

-Congress ratifies the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, prohibiting the sale of alcohol in the U.S.

#### 1920

-The Harlem Renaissance begins  
-League of Nations is established  
-The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment is passed granting women the right to vote

#### 1921

-Congress passes immigration restrictions for the first time  
-KDKA in Pittsburgh airs the 1<sup>st</sup> commercial radio broadcast

#### 1922

-Tomb of King Tut is discovered  
-Mussolini marches on Rome

#### 1923

-The Charleston dance becomes popular  
-Time Magazine is founded  
-President Harding dies of a stroke. V.P. Calvin Coolidge ascends to Presidency.

#### 1924

-J. Edgar Hoover appointed FBI Director  
-The First Winter Olympic Games

#### 1925

-Flapper dresses are in style  
-*The Great Gatsby* is published  
-Hitler published *Main Kampf*

#### 1926

Walt Disney Studios is formed

#### 1927

- Babe Ruth earns home-run record  
-The first talking movie, *The Jazz Singer*  
-Lindbergh flies solo across the Atlantic

#### 1928

- The first Mickey Mouse cartoon *Steamboat Willie* premieres  
-Penicillin discovered  
-Amelia Earhart becomes the 1<sup>st</sup> woman to fly over the Atlantic  
-Herbert Hoover became President

#### 1929

-The Valentine's Day Massacre, between rival Chicago gang members occurs  
- The Stock Market Crashes  
-The Great Depression Begins



## PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT The Roaring Twenties cont.

At the conclusion of World War 1 in 1919, America found itself on the brink of an unparalleled era of wealth and affluence. This era provided a welcome and much needed contrast to the horrible atrocities of the war. The post war economy boosted industry and put paychecks in the hands of millions of soldiers; the concept of consumer goods erupted in the American market and rampant materialism resulted, such as that chronicled in *The Great Gatsby*. As people began to have more money, they began to buy more. In turn, profits grew, more goods were manufactured, and people earned even more money, thereby enabling the economic growth cycle. People spent their money on consumer goods — cars, radios, telephones, refrigerators — at a rate never before seen. People also began to spend time and money on recreation and leisure. Professional sports began to grow in popularity, and movies and tabloid newspapers gained a foothold on America.



Iconic baseball player, Babe Ruth. Time Magazine



Chanel No. 5 is introduced in 1921 and quickly become the world's leading perfume.



In 1927 Al Jolson lights up the screen in, *The Jazz Singer*, the first talking picture.



Cover of *Life*, 2/18/1926 illustration by John Held.

This infusion of new money brought with it a new morality for the young social set, one less concerned with the traditional values of past generations and more interested in individualism and modernism. Policy changes in the U.S. unwittingly encouraged this new culture. Prohibition drove America's drinking population into speakeasies, underground clubs where people could enjoy their booze and the newly popular jazz music. A youth-centric culture flourished. Women bobbed their hair and traded floor-length skirts for the flapper dresses. The Nineteenth Amendment guaranteed women the right to vote.

### The Start of Mass Markets

The early '20s saw the development of the American mass market. Mass production created products efficiently enough for the average man to afford them and, now, mass broadcasting on the radio made it possible to inform the average man of these products. Electrical recording in 1925 sparked the music industry to branch into home entertainment systems. Advances in film and aviation allowed for communication across great distances. Soon, society adapted to this new mass market. Roads were constructed so that people could drive their new cars. Electrification progressed so that everybody could use their refrigerators and listen to their phonographs. The government and major companies like General Electric invested deeply in these aspects.

### The 1%: Something to Think About and Discuss in Class

While the increase in wealth experienced in the U.S. after WW1 did generally raise the per capita income across the board, the making of spectacular fortunes that we see in *The Great Gatsby* is not representative of the collective whole. There was an unequal distribution of wealth that polarized the classes — a small handful of the upper class rich kept getting richer while a majority of people remained in the middle class. With the modern world in conversations about the 99% and the 1%, *The Great Gatsby* reminds us that this concept may not be entirely new!

What is the 1%?

Do Daisy, Tom, Jordan and even Gatsby parallel the Occupy Wall Street's 1%?



THERE'S  
SO MUCH  
MORE!

## PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT The Roaring Twenties cont.

### Prohibition

Another aspect of *The Great Gatsby* that has historical roots centers on the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution: prohibition. Enacted in 1919 (and ultimately repealed in 1933), this amendment made it illegal for anyone to manufacture, sell, or transport liquor of any sort.

Millions of Americans hailed this amendment as a moral advance. Despite the millions who supported prohibition, millions also broke the law and drank the outlawed liquor. Prohibition drove America's drinking population into speakeasies, underground clubs where people could enjoy their booze and the newly popular jazz music.

Not surprisingly, when the illegal liquor business became lucrative, organized crime stepped in to meet the demand. Manufacturing and distributing alcohol were big businesses during the years of prohibition and helped make the fortunes of the *nouveaux riches* (newly rich) found within Fitzgerald's novel, including Meyer Wolfshiem and Gatsby himself.

The Eighteenth Amendment turned out to be ineffective. Instead of crime rate reduction, homicide had a 78 percent increase and also the other major crimes could not be repressed. Only minor crime rates, like swearing, decreased. All in all Prohibition did not serve its purpose and was doomed to fail.



Prohibition Poster from the 1920s



Al Capone was one of the American gangsters who made his fortune during the Prohibition Era



Detroit police inspecting equipment found in a brewery during the Prohibition Era

### The Jazz Age

In the 1920s, jazz spread rapidly all across America. The rise of jazz was part of a new, post-World War I optimism, a prevailing sense that something new was happening, that America was finally breaking from European culture and coming into its own.

Jazz was born around 1895 in New Orleans. Originally it was a mixture of Blues and marching band music played on old U.S Army instruments. It is played through the use of improvisation, because most of the former jazz musicians weren't able to read music at all. Soon the general population noticed jazz and started to play it, too. The European and African music culture melted together and a new style of jazz was born.

During WW1, many African Americans migrated to large cities, bringing with them their new musical styles. Harlem in New York City became the world's largest African American urban community. Harlem produced a burst of African-American cultural activity known as the Harlem Renaissance and jazz was its anthem. The nightclubs of Harlem and speakeasies featured popular jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, and singers such as the jazz and blues great Bessie Smith. Harlem's most famous nightclub was the Cotton Club. It made stars of many African-American performers but, sadly, only white customers were allowed in the club.

With the help of national radio, the barely known new jazz sound spread quickly over America, and found many supporters!

It was Fitzgerald who coined the 1920s as *The Jazz Age*! "It was an age of miracles," Fitzgerald wrote of the Jazz Age. "It was an age of art, it was an age of excess, and it was an age of satire."

### STUDENT ACTIVITY

#### Music of *The Great Gatsby*

In groups, have students listen and research songs from '20s.

As a class, review the plot and list key scenes in *The Great Gatsby*. Discuss the mood for each scene and assign one scene per group.

Each group will find a song that fits the mood and events in their scene and will present it to the class.

Voila! Now you have your very own *The Great Gatsby* soundtrack!

#### LISTEN TO SOME OF THE MOST FAMOUS SONGS FROM THE JAZZ AGE!

THE MOOCHE, DUKE ELLINGTON

STARDUST, HOAGY CARMICHAEL

JAILHOUSE BLUES, BESSIE SMITH

YOU'RE THE CREAM IN MY COFFEE, JACK HYLTON

THE CHARLESTON, JAMES P. JOHNSON

SWANEE, AL JOLSON

WANT MORE? GO HERE - [HTTP://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/PLAYLIST?LIST=PL377FE71367966FC8](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL377FE71367966FC8)

THERE'S  
EVEN  
MORE!

## PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT The Roaring Twenties cont.

## Women in 1920



"Where there's smoke there's fire" by Russell Patterson, showing a fashionably dressed flapper in the 1920s.



A women's suffrage propoganda postcard countering the rhetoric that voting will make a woman masculine by taking on masculine roles. 1915.

The passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1920 gave women the right to vote. Now, women finally attained the political equality that they had so long been fighting for. World War I had allowed women to enter into industries such as chemical, automobile, and iron and steel manufacturing, which were once deemed inappropriate work for women. Now, many young girls from working-class backgrounds did not need to help support their families as past generations had done and were often encouraged to seek work or receive training which would result in their own social mobility

Socially, the 1920s marked an era of great change, particularly for women. In a symbolic show of emancipation, women bobbed their hair, that one great indicator of traditional femininity. To complement their more "masculine" look, women also began to give up wearing corsets, the restrictive undergarments intended to accentuate a woman's hips, waist, and breasts, as if to reinvent themselves, according to their own rules. Other things women did that were previously unheard of included smoking and drinking openly, as well as relaxing formerly rigid attitudes toward sex. Fitzgerald picks up on the social rebellion of his peers particularly well in *The Great Gatsby*. He shows women of all classes who are breaking out of the molds that society had placed them into. Myrtle, for instance, wishes to climb the social ladder, and so she is determined to do so at all costs. Daisy attempts to break away from the restrictive society in which she was raised, yet she cannot make the break entirely and so she falls back into the only thing she knows: money. Jordan Baker, too, is an emancipated woman. She passes time as a professional golfer, a profession made possible largely because of the social and economic progress of the 1920s.

Get 'down' with *Gatsby* in the awesome clip featuring the young people of the 1920s!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3svvCj4yhYc>

Great footage of 1920 flappers, entertainer, music and parties!



## Black Tuesday: The End of an Era

In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald exposed the excesses of the 1920s—a prosperous age in which many Americans came to enjoy the blessings of consumerism and excess, only to see it all crash around them with the Great Depression that arrived in 1929.

The Roaring Twenties came to a stumbling halt on Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929. Black Tuesday remains the most catastrophic stock market crash in the history of the United States. This means that the prices for stock were too high, far higher than they were really worth. Then they fell sharply. People who had borrowed money to buy high-priced stocks (intending to sell the stocks at a profit and repay lenders) went bankrupt.

The stock market was not the only cause of the Great Depression. Unequal income was another problem. While businesses showed great profits during the 1920s, workers got only a small portion of this wealth in their low wages. Therefore, people who had small incomes bought merchandise on credit. Advertisers pushed them to do so with the slogan "Buy now, pay later." Many consumers accumulated so much debt that they could no longer purchase products.

American farmers in the Midwest had been suffering from drought conditions. Due to this, they found that the international market was overstocked and prices fell so low that they could not make a profit on their crops.

The banking industry also made mistakes in too freely lending money, especially to foreign countries trying to rebuild after the war. These countries had trouble repaying their debts.

Information about The Roaring '20s - [http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study\\_guide/literature/great-gatsby/about.html](http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study_guide/literature/great-gatsby/about.html)

<http://www.inforefuge.com/demise-of-american-dream-the-great-gatsby>

[http://www.ovtg.de/3\\_arbeit/englisch/gatsby/dream.html](http://www.ovtg.de/3_arbeit/englisch/gatsby/dream.html)

# REACTION TO *THE GREAT GATSBY*

This great novel has captured the imaginations of many artists, writers and thinkers such as Ernest Hemingway, T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, John Harbison & Francis Ford Coppola.

“It has interested and excited me more than any new novel I have seen, either English or American, for a number of years.”  
-T.S. Eliot about *The Great Gatsby*

“When I had finished the book, I knew that no matter what Scott did, nor how he behaved, I must know it was like a sickness and be of any help I could to him and try to be a good friend. He had many good, good friends, more than anyone I knew. But I enlisted as one more, whether I could be of use to him or not. If he could write a book as fine as *The Great Gatsby*, I was sure he could write an even better one.”  
-Ernest Hemingway

The New York Times *The Great Gatsby* Book Review, April 19, 1925

**The New York Times**  
ON THE WEB

## Scott Fitzgerald Looks Into Middle Age

By EDWIN CLARK

Of the many new writers that sprang into notice with the advent of the post-war period, Scott Fitzgerald has remained the steadiest performer and the most entertaining. Short stories, novels and a play have followed with consistent regularity since he became the philosopher of the flapper with "This Side of Paradise." With shrewd observation and humor he reflected the Jazz Age...

...With sensitive insight and keen psychological observation, Fitzgerald discloses in these people a meanness of spirit, carelessness and absence of loyalties. He cannot hate them, for they are dumb in their insensate selfishness, and only to be pitied. The philosopher of the flapper has escaped the mordant, but he has turned grave. A curious book, a mystical, glamorous story of today. It takes a deeper cut at life than hitherto has been enjoyed by Mr. Fitzgerald. He writes well—he always has—for he writes naturally, and his sense of form is becoming perfected.

<http://www.nytimes.com/books/00/12/24/specials/fitzgerald-gatsby.html>

## It's not just a play!

*The Great Gatsby* has been adapted for Film, Opera, Ballet and even Video Games!

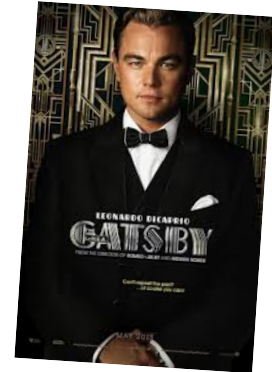
### Film

*The Great Gatsby*, a 1926 silent movie by Herbert Brenon

*The Great Gatsby*, a 1974 film by Francis Ford Coppola starring Robert Redford and Mia Farrow

*G*, a 2002 modernized version of the story starring Blair Underwood

*The Great Gatsby*, newest adaptation directed by Baz Luhrmann and starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Carey Mulligan and Tobey Maguire. It is to be released on May 10, 2013. \*Watch the trailer!: <http://thegreatgatsby.warnerbros.com>



### Opera

*The Great Gatsby*, the opera was commissioned from John Harbison by the New York Metropolitan Opera. It premiered on December 20, 1999.

### Ballet

The Washington Ballet, The Pittsburgh Ballet, The Sacramento Ballet and The Northern Ballet in The United Kingdom have produced dance interpretations of *The Great Gatsby*.



### Computer Games

In 2010 a game called *Classic Adventures: The Great Gatsby* was release by Oberon Media and in 2012 the same game was release for the iPad!



Original Character design

### Did You know...

Princess Zelda from *The Legend of Zelda* video game was named after Zelda Fitzgerald! Zelda's life inspired the creator, Shigeru Miyamoto.



# REACTION TO *THE GREAT GATSBY*

## AND MORE ON FITZGERALD

### Fitzgerald's Novels

- \**This Side of Paradise* (1920)
- \**The Beautiful and The Damned* (1922)
- \**The Great Gatsby* (1925)
- \**Tender is the Night* (1934)
- \**The Last Tycoon* (Originally *The Love of the Last Tycoon* published after his death in 1941)

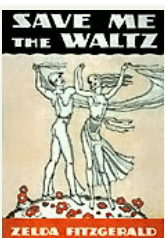
### Short Stories and Novelettes

- \**Bernice Bobs Her Hair* (1920)
- \**Head and Shoulders* (1920)
- \**The Ice Palace* (1920)
- \**May Day* (1920)
- \**The Offshore Pirate* (1920)
- \**The Four Fists* (1921)
- \**The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (1921)
- \**The Diamond as Big as the Ritz* (1922)
- \**Winter Dreams* (1922)
- \**Dice, Brassnuckles & Guitar* (1923)
- \**The Rich Boy* (1926)
- \**He Thinks He's Wonderful* (1928)
- \**The Freshest Boy* (1928)
- \**Magnetism* (1928)
- \**A New Leaf* (1931)
- \**Babylon Revisited* (1931)
- \**Crazy Sunday* (1932)
- \**The Fiend* (1935)
- \**The Lost Decade* (1938)

### Short Story Collections

- Flappers and Philosophers* (1920)
- Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922)
- All the Sad Young Men* (1926)
- Taps at the Reveille* (1935)
- Afternoon of an Author: A Selection of Uncollected Stories and Essays* (1957)
- Babylon Revisited and Other Stories* (1960)
- The Pat Hobby Stories* (1962)
- The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (1989)

### If you like the 1920s you might also enjoy:



The first-edition cover of *Save Me the Waltz*

Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926)

If you are curious about the Fitzgeralds, you might enjoy **Zelda's only novel:**

Zelda Fitzgerald's *Save Me the Waltz* (1932)

"Nobody ever became a writer just by wanting to be one. If you have anything to say, anything you feel nobody has ever said before, you have got to feel it so desperately that you will find some way to say it that nobody has ever found before, so that the thing you have to say and the way of saying it blend as one matter – as indissolubly as if they were conceived together... All good writing is swimming under water and holding your breath."

-Fitzgerald in a letter to his daughter

"Gertrude Stein and Fitzgerald are very peculiar in their relationship to each other. She thinks Fitzgerald will be read when many of his well-known contemporaries are forgotten. Fitzgerald says that he thinks that Gertrude Stein says these things just to annoy him by making him think she means them."

-Gertrude Stein

### Did You know...

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" which was later adapted in a movie starring Brad Pitt & Cate Blanchett in 2008.



The opening lines of *The Great Gatsby* are some of the most famous in all of American Literature.

"In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since. 'Whenever you feel like criticizing any one,' he told me, 'just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had.'"

The closing lines are just as famous.

"Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter – tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther... And one fine morning – So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."

### CRITICAL THINKING: What does it mean?

Have your students re-write the above famous Fitzgerald quotes in their own words and read them out loud to a partner or to the class.



# SYMBOLS & THEMES

“Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall.” –Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

**Symbols** are objects or references used by the author to add deeper meaning to a story. Identifying the many symbols in *The Great Gatsby* will bring a deeper meaning to the novel.

**The Green Light** is situated at the end of Daisy’s East Egg dock and barely visible from Gatsby’s West Egg lawn. The green light represents Gatsby’s hopes and dreams for the future. Because Gatsby’s quest for Daisy is broadly associated with the American dream, the green light also symbolizes that more generalized ideal.



**The Eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg** are a pair of fading, bespectacled eyes painted on

an old advertising board over the valley of ashes. They may represent God staring down upon and judging American society. Fitzgerald also suggests that symbols only have meaning because characters instill them with meaning. The connection between the eyes and God exists in George Wilson’s grief-stricken mind. This lack of concrete significance contributes to the unsettling nature of the image. Thus, the eyes also come to represent the essential meaninglessness of the world and the arbitrariness of the mental process by which people invest objects with meaning.

**The Valley of Ashes** between West Egg and New York City consists of a long stretch of desolate land created by the dumping of industrial ashes. It represents the moral and social decay that results from the uninhibited pursuit of wealth, as the rich indulge themselves with regard for nothing but their own pleasure. The valley of ashes also symbolizes the plight of the poor, like Myrtle and George Wilson, who live among the dirty ashes.

**Gatsby’s Books** sit in his beautiful library. An owl-eyed man at a Gatsby party sits in awe, murmuring with amazement that all the books on Gatsby’s shelves are “real books.” But does Gatsby even read them? The image works to suggest that much of what Gatsby presents to the world is a façade.

**There are even more symbols in *The Great Gatsby*! Can your class identify them?**

**Themes** are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work. *The Great Gatsby* contains many rich themes for exploration and discussion. Below are listed some prominent themes from the novel with supporting statements. Use the statements to spark discussion or debate with your class.

**Society and Class:** *The Great Gatsby* is set among wealthy, educated people, who have leisure time and little concern about people who are not in their social class. Nobody is concerned about politics or spiritual matters but everybody cares about how they are perceived socially. Those who do come from other classes seek and envy the glamour and lifestyle that they see in the elite. Jay Gatsby, the protagonist, is able to attain a certain amount of wealth, but he cannot fake education or social behaviors that only come with “old money.” West Egg and East Egg are also distinguished by class.

**Love:** *The Great Gatsby* does not offer a definition of love, or a contrast between love and romance – but it does suggest that what people believe to be love may only be a dream. Gatsby thinks he loves Daisy when, in fact, he loves a memory of her. Daisy, too, thinks she loves Gatsby, but she really loves being adored. Our narrator is “half” in love with Jordan at the end of the novel, but recognizes the impossibility of being with her anyway. Love is a source of conflict in *The Great Gatsby* as well, driving men to fight and ultimately causing three deaths. This text seems to argue that there is a violence and destruction inherent in love.

# THEMES & THE AMERICAN DREAM

**Dissatisfaction** *The Great Gatsby* presents an array of characters dissatisfied with life. No one is happy with marriage, with love, with life in general, and they all destroy the lives of others in seeking to fix it. Tom destroys his wife's love for him by committing adultery, Daisy nearly destroys her marriage by seeking another life with Gatsby, and Gatsby destroys himself in seeking Daisy. We see the results of such a jaded ennui in Jordan, who has everything, needs nothing, yet is still dissatisfied.

**Mortality:** *The Great Gatsby* culminates in death; one accidental death, one murder, and one suicide. Death takes all forms in *Gatsby*, including the metaphorical. By creating a new name and life for himself, Gatsby kills his old self. When his love fails to live up to his standards, so dies his idealized conception of her. Our narrator is constantly addressing the idea of mortality as he feels himself getting older and older while the text progresses.

## The American Dream

“There are only the pursued, the pursuing, the busy and the tired.”  
–Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

The American Dream is a central theme in Fitzgerald's *The Great*

*Gatsby*. The 1920s were a decade of rebirth characterized by the founding of the "American Dream" - that an individual can achieve success in life regardless of family history or social status if they only work hard enough.

The American Dream originated in the early days of the American settlement, with the mostly poor immigrants searching for opportunities. It was first manifested in the Declaration of Independence, which describes an attitude of hope. The Declaration of Independence states that “all men are created equal and that they are endowed with certain unalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

Soon, the values associated with the American Dream were shifted from desiring equality, unity and freedom to dreams of getting rich. With budding consumerism and advertisements, the public became convinced that everyone in America can and should achieve individual material success. They should have a happy and healthy family, a beautiful house, the latest technology and a cool car!

In Fitzgerald's novel you can see what happened to the American Dream during the 1920s. The character of Jay Gatsby has risen from a poor childhood to being a millionaire with servants, a huge house, and dozens of friends. Gatsby is a self-made success. He essentially created an entirely new persona for himself from his underprivileged past. All of the wealth and status which Gatsby acquired, that while on the surface made his life appear to be the precise definition of the American Dream, were actually elements which led to his demise.



The Associated Press, The 25-room mansion that scholars believe inspired F. Scott Fitzgerald's 'The Great Gatsby'

### COOL CLASSROOM DISCUSSION: Does the American Dream still exist today?

Also, discuss how each character in *The Great Gatsby* failed or achieved their dream.

\*Nick Carraway comes from the Midwest to make it as a bonds man. Does he achieve his dream?

\*Daisy lives her American Dream with Tom her husband, who has a lot of money. She does not seem to have any long-term aims in her life. Is she happy?

\*Tom was born into his American Dream. He never had to work in his life. Losing Daisy would be a major change in his dream because he sees her as one of his possessions.

\*Wilson's dream is to earn enough money to move away with his wife and to start a new life some place beautiful.

\*Wilson's wife, Myrtle, wants to become a girl of the upper class. Having an affair with Tom brings her as close as she can get to achieving her dream of status and wealth.

## WHAT IS... WHAT?

Fitzgerald creates beautifully ornate sentences full of vivid imagery that tell of characters and places.

Listed below are some of the challenging vocabulary words that you will find in *The Great Gatsby*. Have students record and look up unfamiliar words as they encounter them while reading the book! Vocabulary activities can include a word wall or making a new sentence.

**PDE Academic Standards 1.7-1.8**

### GLOSSARY

**anemic:** having anemia, an illness of the blood resulting in paleness and weakness

**Argonne Forest:** a wooded region in northeast France

**dilatory:** inclined to decay, slow in doing things

**El Greco:** a painter in Italy and Spain (1541-1614)

**The Follies:** a popular revue started by Florenz Ziegfeld in 1907

**fortnight:** a period of two weeks

**hauteur:** disdainful pride; haughtiness

**meretricious:** attractive in a flashy way

**Midas and Morgan and Maecenas:** Midas, in Greek Myth, was granted the power of turning everything he touched into gold; J.P. Morgan, was a U.S. financier; Maecenas was a Roman statesman

**1919 World Series:** notorious championship baseball series plagued by scandal for being fixed

**pasquinade:** a satirical piece of writing that holds its object up to ridicule

**pneumatic:** filled with compressed air

**prodigality:** wastefulness or extreme lavishness

**Sauterne:** a sweet white wine from southwest France

**Trimalchio:** wealthy character who lavishly feasts guests at a banquet in Petronius' *Satyricon*, a satire on Roman wealth in the first century A.D.

**Victoria:** an early touring automobile with a folding top over the rear seat

**sunken gardens:** a garden set below the ground surrounding it

**Learning to be a Bonds Man!** Nick moves to New York to pursue a career as an investment banker, selling stocks and bonds. Shortly after WW1, many Americans began investing in the stock market. In the summer of 1923, the stock market was booming, and Nick would have every reason to believe that working as a bonds man in the East might make him a fortune!

**“The Rise of the Coloured Empire’ by this man Goddard.... We’re Nordice.”** Tom mentions this in Chapter 1 while speaking to Nick, Daisy and Jordan. Scholars agree that this is an allusion to *The Rising Tide of Color* by Lothrop Stoddard, published in 1920. The book was one of many during the time that described a rivalry against the “white” race.

### COOL SLANG FROM THE 1920S!

Learn some of the words that were in fashion during the time of *The Great Gatsby*.

**And How** – I strongly agree!

**Bank’s Closed** – no kissing or making out

**Beat it** – scam or get lost

**Bee’s Knees** – an extraordinary person, thing or idea

**Bootleg** – illegal liquor

**Ciggy** – cigarette

**Clam** – a dollar

**Dame** – a female

**Don’t Take Any Wooden Nickels** – don’t do anything stupid

**Egg** – a person who likes the big life

**Fall Guy** – victim of a frame

**Flapper** – a stylish, brash young woman with short skirts and short hair

**Fly Boy** – A glamorous term for an aviator

**Fried** – drunk

**Gams** – a woman’s legs

**Giggle Water** – booze

**Gigolo** – a dancing partner

**Hit on All Sixes** – to perform 100%; as in “hitting on all six cylinders”

**Joint** – a club selling alcohol

**On the Lam** – fleeing the police

**Pinch** – to arrest

**Sheik** – an attractive man

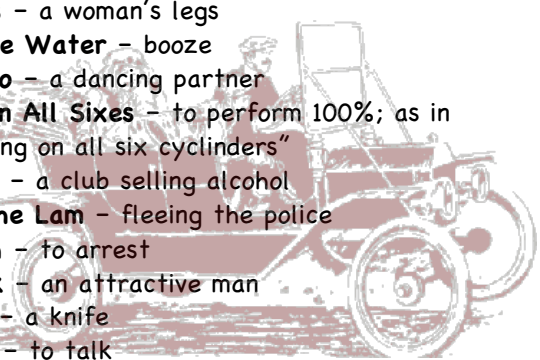
**Shiv** – a knife

**Spill** – to talk

**White Lightning** – bootleg liquor

**What’s Eatin’ You** – what’s wrong?

**You Slay Me** – that’s funny



# CLASS ACTIVITIES

Prime Stage's mission, *bridging literature, life and learning*, encourages students to approach literature with curiosity and personal relevance. The activities below are intended to spark enthusiasm, interest and inquiry into the story before they have read the text or attended the performance.



## Telephone!

Gatsby's life was the subject of much gossip. The more characters gossiped, the more his story became embellished and mysterious. Have the class play Telephone to illustrate how easily gossip can be misunderstood and embellished.

Start with one sentence about Gatsby. Students will whisper this sentence from one person to the other. The last person will report what they have heard to the class. How has it changed? Alternately, write a short piece of news about Gatsby on a piece of paper and have each student who receives it rewrite the news on another piece of paper with a slight embellishment. (Keeping the piece of paper they have received) Share and compare.

## Passing a note in class...

Research Slang from the 1920s from pg. 19 of this guide.

Have students write notes to one another in class using the vernacular. These notes can be written about characters in *The Great Gatsby* or come be about the students themselves.

The teacher may 'catch' the note-passing and read them aloud!



## Dance the Charleston!

The Charleston became a dance craze in 1923 and quickly swept across the nation. The Charleston dance became popular after appearing along with the song "The Charleston" by James P. Johnson in the Broadway musical *Runnin' Wild*.

This dance is mostly associated with the flappers and the speakeasies. Here, these young women would dance alone or together as a way of mocking the 'drys' or citizens who supported the Prohibition amendment. **Ready, Set, Get into Charleston position, (knees bent and body leaning forward) Go!**

Take the following steps, one beat per step (for a total of eight beats):

- Step back with your left foot.
- Replace your weight onto your right foot.
- Kick your left foot forward, heel first, like you're squishing an orange. Do not step onto the foot.
- Step onto your left foot.
- Kick your right foot forward, heel first, like you're squishing an orange. Do not step onto the foot.
- Bring your right knee up, like you're on a StairMaster.
- Kick your right foot back. Do not step onto the foot.
- Step back onto your right foot.

Or just watch this instruction video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPW1bBlzBb0>

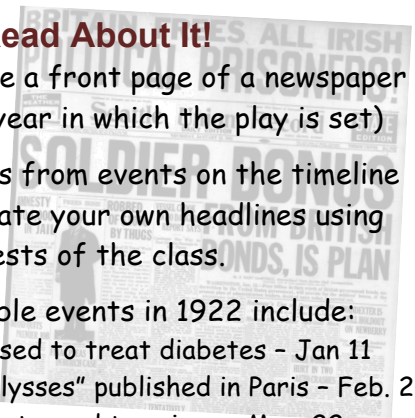
## Extra, Extra Read About It!

As a class, create a front page of a newspaper from 1922 (the year in which the play is set)

Include headlines from events on the timeline on pg. 11 and create your own headlines using names and interests of the class.

Other notable events in 1922 include:

- Insulin first used to treat diabetes - Jan 11
- James Joyce's "Ulysses" published in Paris - Feb. 2
- Ghandi is sentenced to prison - Mar. 22
- Harding is the first President to use radio - Jun. 14





# CLASS ACTIVITIES

Prime Stage's mission, *bridging literature, life and learning*, encourages students to make personal connections to literature through meaningful, interactive exploration of the text and themes. The activities below are intended to enliven, clarify and enrich text as they read the novel.

## Cool Writing Activities

**Change the point of view:** *The Great Gatsby* is narrated by Nick Carraway. The novel begins from the point of view of an older Nick, reminiscing on the events of one summer.

Have students list the things they learned about Nick based on the first two chapters. As a class discuss, how Nick's experience or background may affect how he tells this story.

How may the story have changed if it was written from Daisy, Jordan or Tom's point of view? Have each student choose a character and write a new narration for a paragraph in the novel.

**Symbolism:** Fitzgerald uses symbolism in *The Great Gatsby*. You can too! Think of an important event in your life and choose a symbol that could represent it. Create a piece of artwork that contains your symbol and write a story about the event that incorporates your symbol.

## Make a Character Collage

You will need: magazines, pictures, scissors & glue sticks

Have students break into groups. Each group will be given a character and character description from *The Great Gatsby*. Without speaking, each group will read the character description and create a collage that represents the character they are assigned.

Once the collages are complete, have each student group present their work. Instead of having each group comment and explain their own collage have the rest of the students describe what they see about the character based on the collage in front of them. Display the artwork when you are finished!

## Turn your classroom into a Gatsby Party!

Students may choose a character from *The Great Gatsby*. Have them create a character fact sheet or profile for the character they have chosen. \*Students may choose to create their own 1920s character based on someone who may have attended one of Gatsby's swanky mansion parties.

Have each character make an entrance and come to the party ready to interact. Each character must meet three other characters. At the end of the party, ask the characters to introduce one another.

Try adding props and costumes!

## The Great Gatsby silent movie scenes

Create a scene from the silent movie era.

\*Watch a clip from the 1928 film, *Speedy*. Notice the heightened drama, physicality and facial expressions!

Clip can be found here

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCxHT139opM>

\*Choose a short scene from *The Great Gatsby*. Scene options include Nick visiting Tom and Daisy and meeting Jordan Baker in West Egg; Nick, Tom and others at Myrtle's apartment in New York City; Nick meets Jay Gatsby; Wilson talking to Tom at the garage; etc.

\*Create an outline of your chosen scene, including movement. This should be no more than a page in length but needs to be clear enough that another actor could read it and act out the movement. (Try adding 1920s music)

\*Write the script! What do the character say? This will need to be written down in subtitles to be added to the screen or shown on stage.

\*Assign various roles

\*Rehearse and Perform



1926 Theatrical Poster

# CLASS ACTIVITIES

Prime Stage's mission, *bridging literature, life and learning*, encourages students to reflect on their learning. The activities below are intended to provide opportunities to synthesize the learning and make personal meaning after they have read the text or attending the performance.

**Agree or Disagree!** Here's a fun approach to sparking a classroom discussion.

Move the chairs to either side of the classroom. Use masking tape to mark off a line on the floor, across the center of the room. Make a statement based on the novel or production of *The Great Gatsby*. Students who AGREE with the statement will stand on the Right of the Line. Students who DISAGREE will stand on the left. Students who are ON THE LINE will stand directly on the tape. Ask individual students to share why they feel that way.



Try the following statements or make up your own!

\*Daisy was right when she said this about her infant daughter,  
"I hope she'll be a fool – that is the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool."

\*The American Dream is alive and well today.

\*Gatsby believes that you can repeat the past. He is 100% wrong. You cannot repeat the past.

## Surprising Choices

What surprised you about this production by Prime Stage Theatre? Consider the costumes, set design, the live music, lighting, the acting and directing choices. What do you think motivated the production team or actors to make the choice that surprised you? Were they trying to solve a unique problem, create a strong response from the audience, make a creative statement or address some other need? Write a statement describing the surprising choice. Explain why you think it was a part of the production and whether or not you thought it was a good choice. You may also create a visual representation of this surprising moment.

## Meaningful Moments Bubble Mural

Students may choose 1 or 2 moments from the performance (or the novel) that made a lasting impression on them.

Using pictures and words, create a Thought Bubble, illustrating each moment. Students should try to capture the emotion as they experienced it. Try to use the same colors, light quality and textures each observed in the performance. Students may hang their Thought Bubbles on the wall to create a mural. The mural should give the viewer an authentic understanding of what it felt like to be an audience member.

## Shoebbox of Dreams!

Students are to think of an example of someone who has achieved the American Dream. It can be someone from pop culture, politics, business, or someone you know.

Using a shoebox, create a visual display of that person's life. Research your individual.

If it's someone you know, you may interview him or her.

On the outside of the shoebox, use pictures, words, paragraphs and materials to portray the individual's public appearance. (What others see) On the inside of the box, decorate it to display what you think that person feels on the inside. (What they see about themselves)

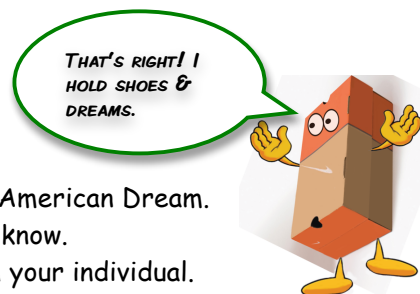
\*Similarly, this can be done with Characters in *The Great Gatsby*.

## A Sequel to *The Great Gatsby*

Outline a sequel to Fitzgerald's novel. How would this plot unfold? How might students map the beginning, middle, and end? Have them write the opening paragraphs to the sequel.

**Or...**

Rewrite the novel's ending as if Gatsby and Daisy reunite. Would the novel be as powerful? Why or why not? What might make this new plot successful?



# PUTTING IT ON STAGE

## CAST LIST

**Sean Patrick Sears**  
(Jay Gatsby)

**Andrew Swackhamer**  
(Nick Carraway)

**Julia Warner**  
(Daisy Buchanan)

**Ryan Kearney**  
(Tom Buchanan)

**Katie Oxman**  
(Jordan Baker)

**Alexis Cash**  
(Myrtle Wilson)

**Jud Stewart**  
(George Wilson)

**Everette Lowe**  
(Meyer Wolfsheim &  
Assorted Roles)

**Catherine Kay**  
(Mrs. McKee & Mrs.  
Michaelis)

**Elizabeth Page**  
(Ensemble)

**Conner Bahr**  
(Ensemble)

**Margaret Anne Towne**  
(Ensemble)

**Michelle Sayah**  
(Ensemble)

**Tom Roberts**  
(Featured Pianist)

Learn more about the  
actors on PST's Website  
[www.primestage.com](http://www.primestage.com)



The cast  
of PST's  
*The  
Great  
Gatsby*,  
2013

**What does it take to bring Simon Levy's *The Great Gatsby* to the stage? PST's Director Rich Keitel lets us in on his creative process!**

**How do you define your role as the director in a production?** Theatre is a collaborative art. The director is the ringleader. Bob Haskins had a great quote, he said, "Directing is like getting pecked to death by a million questions." The designer will say "What do you think of this?" and the actors will say "What do you think of that?" It's leading a synthesis of ideas that will bring out the playwright's intent.

**What were some of the qualities you look for in the actors when you were casting *TGG*?** I look for every actor's unique personality. I try to find the spark in them and bring the individual out in the character.

I think what is very interesting about our play is casting African American actress, Alexis Cash, as Myrtle. Fitzgerald wrote this in the 1920s and there is implied racism in the script. We hear the character of Tom Buchanan sprouting an ignorant philosophy about race, yet in our production his mistress is from a different race. It's interesting. I hope it will put new thought into the mind of the audience.

**How does music play a part in your production?** Music speaks to the soul and past the intellectual. It speaks directly to the emotions of the audience and sets a mood. I work with Angela, our sound designer, to set this mood as soon as the audience enters the theatre. Also, we are working with pianist Tom Roberts. He will be playing live during each performance. Again, theatre is such a collaborative art. Our pianist is arranging and creating his own score. He'll play a Daisy theme, a Gatsby theme. We will explore this in the rehearsals

**Ever wonder who is calling the shots backstage? Or, who gets to cue the sounds and lights on stage? It's the Stage Manager!**

In the world of professional theatre, the stage manager is one of the most important players. PST's resident Stage Manager, Rebecca Leone, shares more about her role and what she would like her audience to see in *The Great Gatsby*!

"The stage manager's job actually starts before auditions even happen! I meet with the director and designers and we discuss the concept of the show. After the show has been cast, I attend every rehearsal to make sure they run smoothly. I also communicate the needs of the director to the designers and staff. Tech week (the days before opening night) we add all the design elements: costumes, sound, lights, set. Once the show opens, I sit in a booth overlooking the stage and communicate via headset to the light/sound operators and crew backstage."

"In our performances of *The Great Gatsby*, I hope the audience will be able to see how all the different elements of the production, all the details, come together into one grand, roaring '20s performance."



PST Stage Manager,  
Rebecca Leone

Read more interview questions with Director Rich Keitel and Stage Manager Rebecca Leone at <http://primestage.com/wordpress/>



# ATTENDING THE PERFORMANCE

## House rules (and we don't mean your mama's house!)

It goes without saying that when most children today hear the word “theatre” they think “Oh, MOVIE theatre.” And with that thought comes all of those things that we do at movie theatres: eat popcorn, drink noisily from soda cups, put feet on the seat, text message—and the list goes on from there.

But live theatre is just that: it's LIVE with LIVE HUMANS who react and respond to the audience, something that we at Prime Stage think is the beauty of the theatre experience. Because of this, live theatre requires a higher level of respect between the audience and performer in order for the experience to be a positive one. As an audience member, **you** are the final and most important component of this production of *The Great Gatsby*!

### Thinking Like a Critic

Critics play an important role in theatre. They are often the first to see the show and can write a wonderful - or horrendous - review for all the world to see. Prepare your students to attend the show by “thinking like a critic.”

**Read** the following questions before the show.

**Think** about the questions as you're watching the show and write your answers in a notebook or journal during intermission or on the bus ride home.

**Write** a critique of the show based on your responses.

PDE Academic Standards 9.1-9.4, 1.4-1.5

Please review the following “house rules” with your students prior to attending our production:

- Please stay together with your group and wait for an usher to help you find your seat.
- Please turn all cell phones & pager **completely off** before the performance. If you are texting during the performance, you will be asked to leave. (FYI, the theater will be dark, and light from your phone shines up on your face when you text. Everybody, including the actors on stage, can see you!)
- No photography or videotaping.
- Please stay in your seat until the intermission or the end of the play.
- No eating, drinking, or chewing gum during the performance.
- We encourage active listening and appropriate responses such as laughing or clapping. Please do not talk during the performance!
- Be polite and attentive. Show your appreciation by clapping. (FYI – the actors really love to see how much you enjoyed the show!)

PDE Academic Standards 1.6, 9.1

**Actor choices**—How did they move and speak? Did they seem like people we know? How did they relate to other characters?

**Designer choices**—What design element captured your attention the most -the set, costumes, lights, or sound -and why? How did the design elements work together to support the entire production? What choices did the designers make in materials, colors, intensity, detail, etc.? Were the design elements more descriptive or suggestive? What symbols were in the design elements?

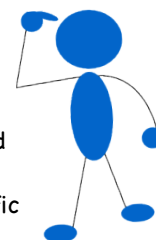
**Director choices**—What was the style, pace, and rhythm of the play? What stage pictures helped to tell the story? How did the director unify all the elements of the production?

**Interpretation**—Did the director make a statement about life now? How did the characters, design, and play make you feel? What did the play mean to you? What might it mean to others?

**Evaluation**—Why do you suppose the playwright wrote the play? Why was the play produced now? When were moments where the storytelling was very clear? When were moments you were confused about the story? Who would enjoy the play and why?

**Remember—it's all about choices!**

Whether you loved the play or not, identify the specific choices that made you feel that way!





Prime Stage Theatre performs all of its shows at The New Hazlett Theater in Pittsburgh's Historic North Side.

**New Hazlett Theater**  
6 Allegheny Square East  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212



### BOOKED YOUR TICKETS YET???

Prime Stage Theatre's student matinees for *Walk Two Moons* will be held May 14- 17, 2013. All performances begin at 10 AM at the New Hazlett Theater and are followed by a brief post-show chat session.

Tickets are \$10 per student.

Book tickets by emailing  
[studentmat@primestage.com](mailto:studentmat@primestage.com)  
or calling 412-841-7353

Matinees fill up quickly so BOOK EARLY!

### PST Education Box Office

Phone: 412-841-7353

E-mail: [studentmat@primestage.com](mailto:studentmat@primestage.com)

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION OF *THE GREAT GATSBY* AND GO BEHIND THE SCENES WITH PST'S NEW EDUCATION BLOG!  
<http://primestage.com/wordpress/>

Plus, awesome updates straight from our classrooms!

### The Great Gatsby Discussion or Essay Questions

1. You hear about Gatsby at the beginning of the play and the novel but do not see him until much later. Why do you think Fitzgerald choose to do this? What were your expectations of this Character? Where your expectations similar or different from the actual man?
2. Daisy says of her daughter "I hope she'll be a fool – that's the best thing a girl can be in the world, a beautiful little fool." Why do you think Daisy made this remark? Do you think she would have made the statement if *The Great Gatsby* were set in 2013?
3. In the play and in the novel, Tom makes some very bigoted remarks about race. In the 1920s what was happening in America regarding racial equality? How does Tom's attitude about race reflect 1920's America?
4. Nick and Gatsby both fought in the war. How did this change their opinion of the world? Are they different from the others characters that did not fight? If so, how?
5. In the famous quote at the end of the novel Nick says, "it eludes us then, but that's no matter – tomorrow we run faster, stretch out our arms farther...And one fine morning...So we beat on. Boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." What does Nick mean by this? How is this line representative of a major theme of this story?

## CLASSROOM RESOURCES

### INTERNET RESOURCES

Playwright, Simon Levy's Website.  
<http://www.thegreatgatsbyplay.com>

The F. Scott Fitzgerald Society Website offers a detailed biography and photos.  
<http://www.fscottfitzgeraldsociety.org>

The Big Read offers a teacher's guide with lesson plans, handouts and a radio show version of *The Great Gatsby*.  
<http://www.neabigread.org/books/greatgatsby/>

There is information on Zelda Fitzgerald including personal photos and pictures of her paintings.  
<http://www.flapperjane.com/July%20August/zelda.htm>

### BOOKS

*Hemingway vs. Fitzgerald: The Rise and Fall of a Literary Friendship* by Scott Donaldson. Overlook Press.

*F. Scott Fitzgerald A to Z: The Essential Reference to His Life* by Mary J. Tate and Matthew J. Bruccoli. Facts on File.



## COMPREHENSION, CREATIVITY, AND COMMON CORE

Prime Stage Theatre aligns with the Common Core State Standards

### English Language Arts College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards

Students attend theater performances of adaptations of Literature on the High School and Middle School reading lists.

**Reading** *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas* (7) **Speaking & Listening** *Comprehension and Collaboration* (2 & 3) **Language** *Knowledge of Language* (3)



Students participate in active discussions and Q&A sessions with actors, directors and designers after each performance.

**Speaking & Listening** *Comprehension and Collaboration* (1 2 & 3) *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas* (4 & 6) **Language** *Conventions of Standard English* (1) *Knowledge of Language* (3) *Vocabulary Acquisition and Use* (4 5 & 6)



Students warm-up and improvise during in-school workshops led by specialized arts education teachers.

**Speaking & Listening** *Comprehension and Collaboration* (1 2 & 3) *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas* (4 & 6) **Language** *Knowledge of Language* (3) *Vocabulary Acquisition and Use* (4 5 & 6)

Writing is an essential part of each workshop! Students create narratives, defend a claim, and convey experiences. They even collaborate on original plays, stories and poems.

**Writing** *Text Types and Purposes* (1 2 & 3) *Production and Distribution of Writing* (4 & 5) *Research to Build and Present Knowledge* (7 8 & 9) *Range of Writing* (10) **Language** *Conventions of Standard English* (1 & 2) *Knowledge of Language* (3) *Vocabulary Acquisition and Use* (6)



Our students read & analyze literature. They study and perform scenes! They examine characters and relate them to personal experiences.

**Reading** *Key Ideas and Details* (1 2 & 3) *Craft and Structure* (4 5 & 6) *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas* (7 8 & 9) *Range or Reading and Level of Text Complexity* (10) **Writing** *Text Types and Purposes* (3) *Research to Build and Present Knowledge* (7 & 9) **Speaking & Listening** *Comprehension and Collaboration* (1 2 & 3) *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas* (4 & 6) **Language** *Conventions of Standard English* (1) *Knowledge of Language* (3) *Vocabulary Acquisition and Use* (4 5 & 6)



Students present their own original ideas and observations in our workshops.

**Speaking & Listening** *Comprehension and Collaboration* (1 2 & 3) *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas* (4 5 & 6) **Language** *Conventions of Standard English* (1) *Knowledge of Language* (3) *Vocabulary Acquisition and Use* (5 & 6)

Students use technology, including the Internet, to communicate with other students from schools in Washington and Allegheny Counties!

**Reading** *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas* (7 8 & 9) **Writing** *Production and Distribution of Writing* (6) **Speaking & Listening** *Comprehension and Collaboration* (1 & 2) *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas* (4 5 & 6)

