

A laboratory scene with various glassware, a skull, and a lightning bolt through a window. The scene is set in a dark, stone-walled room. A window in the background shows a dark night sky with a bright, jagged lightning bolt striking down. In the foreground, there is a collection of laboratory equipment: a round-bottom flask on a stand containing a yellow liquid, a beaker with a red liquid, a test tube in a rack, and a skull. The overall atmosphere is dark and mysterious.

prime
stage

THEATRE CO

RESOURCE GUIDE

FRANKENSTEIN

Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre's 2022-2023 Season Suspense, Hope, and Wonder

Bringing Literature to Life!

Dear Educator or Parent,

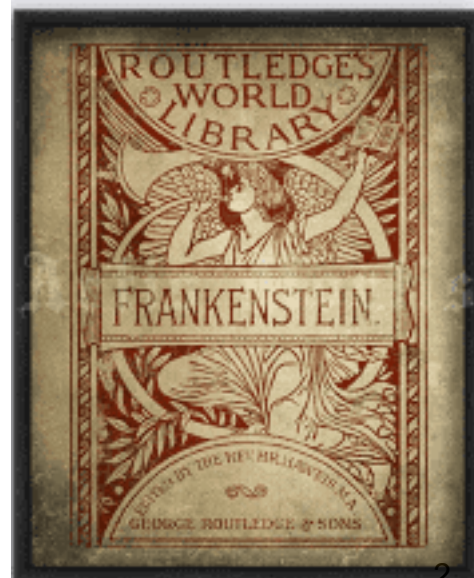
We are pleased to bring you *Frankenstein*, based on the novel by Mary Shelley and adapted by Lawrence C. Connolly. This world-famous story, directed by Liam Macik, is much more than a traditional tale of horror: it is also a commentary on the ethics of scientific discovery, an exploration of grief, and a showcase of the creative writing process within Mary Shelley's brilliant teenage mind.

All literature produced by Prime Stage is always drawn from middle and secondary reading lists, and themes are in the current Pennsylvania curriculum.

This resource guide is designed to provide historical background and context, classroom activities, and curricular content to help you enliven your students' experience with both the literature and with live theatre itself. We encourage you to use the theatrical games and creative thinking activities to enrich understanding of the plot themes, and hope that the Theatre Etiquette section helps encourage deeper personal connections between the performers and audience in a live theatre setting.

If you have any questions about the information in this resource guide, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions!

Ponny Conomos Jahn, Education Coordinator
Prime Stage Theatre
pconomos@primestage.com



OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

Literacy in ACTion (LACT)
Student Matinees Field Trips
Act 48 Workshops
Educational Resource Guides
Global Classroom Program
High School Drama Awards
Technical Theatre Internships
Students Together Organizing Prevention (STOP) Program

OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMMING IS FUNDED IN PART BY THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS

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Featured National Standards

English/Language Arts

Standards Developed by the International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English

1. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic) of human experience.
2. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context and graphics).
3. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
4. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Theatre

NA 5-8.3 Designing by developing environments for improvised and scripted scenes

Students analyze improvised and scripted scenes for technical requirements.

NA5-8.7 Analyzing, evaluating, and constructing meanings from improvised and scripted scenes and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

Students articulate and support the meanings constructed from their and others' dramatic Performances Students use articulated criteria to describe, analyze, and constructively evaluate the perceived effectiveness of artistic choices found in dramatic performances.

NA 9-12.2 Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisations and informal or formal productions

Students analyze the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of characters found in dramatic texts from various genres and media.

NA9-12.5 Researching by evaluating and synthesizing cultural and historical information to support artistic choices

Students identify and research cultural, historical, and symbolic clues in dramatic texts, and evaluate the validity and practicality of the information to assist in making artistic choices for informal and formal productions.

NA9-12.7 Analyzing, critiquing, and constructing meanings from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

Students articulate and justify personal aesthetic criteria for critiquing dramatic texts and events that compare perceived artistic intent with the final aesthetic achievement.

Students analyze and critique the whole and the parts of dramatic performances, taking into account the context, and constructively suggest alternative artistic choices.

All Prime Stage productions and resource guides address the following:

Pennsylvania Common Core Standards for *Frankenstein*

Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking

CC.1.3.9-10.A: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CC.1.3.9-10.C: Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CC.1.3.9-10.D: Determine the point of view of the text and analyze the impact the point of view has on the meaning of the text.

CC.1.3.9-10.E: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it and manipulate time create an effect.

CC.1.3.9-10.F: Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.

CC.1.3.9-10.H: Analyze how an author draws on and transforms themes, topics, character types, and/or other text elements from source material in a specific work.

CC.1.3.9-10.K: Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently. CC.1.5.9-10.A: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade level

topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. CC.1.5.9-10.G: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English when speaking based on

grade 9-10 level and content.

CC.1.6.11.A: Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations. Respond with grade level appropriate questions, ideas, information or opinions.

CC.1.6.11.C: Demonstrate awareness of audience using appropriate volume and clarity in formal speaking presentations.

CC.1.6.11.D: Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of other students while introducing ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion.



Frankenstein Summary



While a storm rages outside, five literary friends (Mary Shelley, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John William Polidori, and Claire Clairmont) take shelter in a country house outside of Geneva. To pass the time, they decide to challenge each other to a horror writing competition. Mary Shelley, interested in the work of Dr. Erasmus Darwin, decides to create her tale of horror inspired by Darwin's scientific experiment which "coaxed a piece of vermicelli to move with voluntary motion". She also calls upon the lesser known Greek myth of Prometheus, a man who "shapes a creature out of clay, and brings it to life with fire stolen from the heavens" for further inspiration. The competition begins and our story then moves forward - now framed and narrated from the creative imagination of Mary Shelley to Claire Clairmont - as the tale of Frankenstein.

The story within the story begins in Victor Frankenstein's laboratory, located in a medieval castle in Bavaria. He is alone and it becomes clear that he is suffering from psychological trauma in result of the death of Caroline Frankenstein, his beloved mother. The Creature - yet to be animated - lies on a table, surrounded by various pieces of scientific equipment. Caroline "visits" Victor, reminding him of his responsibilities to their living family and points out that Victor seems unable to cope with the reality of her death. He argues that he is coping with it through his study of scientific reanimation and human decomposition, and thinks that by animating his Creature, he will eventually be able to overcome death itself. Caroline leaves as Victor successfully animates the Creature, who staggers wildly around the laboratory. The Creature clutches at a coat rack where Victor's lab coat and research journal are kept and bursts out of the castle, still holding the coat and journal. Victor runs for a weapon, but is too late to stop the escape of the Creature who is both powerful and fast.

Victor's dear friend Henry Clerval arrives to implore Victor to return with him to Geneva and care for Victor's grieving father and young brother, William. Henry reminds him that his love Elizabeth is worried about him, as well. Victor refuses but tells Henry to relay the message to his family that he will be home soon. Henry leaves.

We now see the Creature secretly observing a family living in exile in a forest cabin, and witness that the Creature is learning to speak and read while remaining hidden from them. The Creature is curious about the family and shows them kindness in secret. One day the Creature decides to reveal himself to the father of the family, who is blind, while he is home alone. All is well until the son and daughter of the blind man arrive home and are horrified by the appearance of the Creature. After knocking the son unconscious, the Creature flees for Geneva.

At the Frankenstein home in Geneva, young William has disappeared under the watch of his nursemaid, Justine, who had fallen asleep while William played by a lake. His body is discovered nearby, and Justine is accused of his murder because William's locket was discovered in her coat pocket. Justine affirms her innocence, but is sent to jail. The Creature visits her at the prison and confesses without remorse to the crime and that he planted the locket in Justine's pocket. Justine is hung for murder a few hours later. Victor has finally arrived home and confronts the Creature, who - in return for his disappearance forever - asks Victor to create a mate for him. Victor privately realizes that he must destroy his creation, but agrees. Consumed with guilt over the death of William, Victor refuses to see his father but sets a wedding date for himself and Elizabeth. Papa Frankenstein dies of grief before seeing Victor.

Victor returns to his laboratory in Bavaria only to discover that the Creature has beaten him there, on foot. The Creature, ever growing in cognitive ability, has already assembled his mate, based on the directions in Victor's journal, and is waiting for Victor to animate her. Victor convinces the Creature to go rest for a while, as the process will take some time. The Creature goes and Caroline Frankenstein returns to Victor, chastising him for lying to his creation and pointing out Victor's responsibility to the Creature. Victor ignores her and uses acid to kill the mate. The Creature returns and instead of killing Victor, threatens him and disappears.

Back in Geneva, Victor and Elizabeth are wed, with Henry acting as Best Man. Later in the evening, the Creature arrives in the shadows and murders both Henry and Elizabeth. The Creature taunts Victor, telling him to come find him further North, and disappears. Victor vows revenge on the Creature and is determined to destroy him at any cost.

Victor tracks the Creature through Germany, Poland, and Russia -- then on to the Barents Sea where he procures a sledge to continue the chase through the frozen north. Sometime after that, starving and dying from exposure, he finds himself adrift on a massive ice floe. He is rescued by Arctic explorer Robert Walton, also a fellow scientist. While the Captain and crew leave Victor to rest, the Creature enters the ship's cabin and suffocates Victor with his hand, then kisses him on the forehead. Walton enters and is startled to see the Creature. He questions the Creature and asks him to stay, although the Creature refuses. The Creature names himself Frankenstein and disappears.

In the final scene, we return once again to the country house outside of Geneva where Mary - having explored her storyline with Claire - and the others are about to begin the competition of horror.

Cast of Characters in *Frankenstein*



****Special Note:** Below you will see that most of the actors play multiple roles, noted by slash marks

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: *Why would a playwright want an actor to play more than one role in a production? Are the characters connected in some way? How could this choice enhance the story?*

- **MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN SHELLEY** (age 18) Author of *Frankenstein*/ **ELIZABETH LAVENZA**, Adopted Sister and Fiancé of Victor Frankenstein
- **PERCY SHELLEY** (age 24) Poet and Husband of Mary/ **VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN**, The Creature's Creator
- **LORD BYRON** (age 28) Poet and Adventurer/ **ROBERT WALTON**, Arctic Explorer
- **JOHN POLIDORI** (age 20) Private Physician of Byron/ **HENRY CLERVAL**, Victor's Closest Friend
- **CLAIRE CLAIRMONT** (age 18) Stepsister of Mary/ **JUSTINE MORITZ**, Au Pair for WILLIAM FRANKENSTEIN
- **THE CREATURE**, The Artificial Man Created By Victor Frankenstein
- **GHOST OF CAROLINE FRANKENSTEIN** (age 50) / **ANNA, HEAD SERVANT** at the Frankenstein Estate and Villa Diodati
- **M. DELACEY** (age 60), Blind Frenchman Living in Exile in Bavaria/ **CONSTABLE/ LIAM**, Servant and Groundskeeper, Frankenstein Estate/ **OLD SAILOR/ SERVANT** at Villa Diodati
- **FELIX DELACEY** (age 25), M. Delacey's Son/ **YOUNG SAILOR/ SERVANT** at the Frankenstein Estate and Villa Diodati
- **SAFIE** (age 25), Beautiful Turkish Exile Adopted by M. Delacey/ **SERVANT** at the Frankenstein Estate and Villa Diodati

About The Author

“If pain can purify the heart, mine will be pure.”

– Mary Shelley, *Mathilda*



Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley was born in London on August 30th, 1797. Her personal life was characterized by many personal losses and challenges. Her mother, the philosopher and feminist activist Mary Wollstonecraft, died less than two weeks after Mary's birth. Her father, William Godwin, a noted political anarchist of the day, subsequently married their neighbor, Mary Jane Clairmont, mother of Claire Clairmont. Mary and Mary Jane had a very difficult relationship, and in 1814, Mary and Claire left England for France and traveled throughout Europe with the married poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, who was a political follower of William Godwin. When the trio returned to England, Mary was pregnant out of wedlock with

Percy's child, and the couple was debt-ridden and ostracized by society. In 1816, having buried their premature daughter, Mary married Shelley. The wedding took place after the suicide of Shelley's first wife, Harriet. The literary summer in Geneva referenced in *Frankenstein* also took place in 1816, where Mary first developed the idea for the Gothic novel. Notably, Mary was 18 years old at the time.

Mary Shelley gave birth to three more children, but only one - Percy Florence Shelley - survived to adulthood. She died of a presumed brain tumor on February 1st, 1851 at the age of 53.

Aside from *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, Mary Shelley is also remembered for the novella *Mathilda* and the travel essays: *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* (written with Percy Bysshe Shelley) and *Rambles in Germany and Italy*.

Looking for More About Mary?

+ <https://web.archive.org/web/20120722084039/http://www.empmuseum.org/exhibitions/index.asp?articleID=953> (Entry in Science Fiction & Fantasy Hall of Fame)

+ <http://www.rc.umd.edu/reference/chronologies/mschronology/mws.html> (Mary Shelley chronology & bibliography)

+ <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/61> (works by Mary Shelley)



Art In Real Life: Summer of 1816 Villa Diodati



There are several characters in *Frankenstein* based on actual people, while others are purely fictional from the imagination of Mary Shelley.

The following characters in *Frankenstein* spent the summer of 1816 at Villa Diodati, outside of Geneva, Switzerland.

The Villa was where Mary Shelley was said to develop the story of *Frankenstein* in result of a horror writing competition which included herself, Percy Shelley, Lord Byron, and John Polidori.

LOOK for how these characters are portrayed in *Frankenstein*:



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822): English Poet, Political Activist, Philosopher - best know for his poems: "Ode To the West Wind" and "To A Skylark". Husband to Mary Shelley.

LORD BYRON (1788-1824): Poet and Soldier, regarded as one of greatest English poets all time. Joined the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire and lost his life on the battlefield.



JOHN POLIDORI (1795-1821): British Writer and Personal Physician to Lord Byron, best known for his story: "The Vampyre". He is credited by some as the original author of vampire fantasy fiction.

CLAIRE CLAIRMONT (1798-1879): Stepsister to Mary Shelley and Romantic Partner to Lord Byron. Occupation: Governess. Credited with fluency in five languages.



Meet the Playwright

Lawrence C. Connolly is a noted novelist in the horror world. Some of Lawrence C. Connolly's books include the Veins Cycle novels: *Veins*, *Vipers*, and *Vortex*. He has also been featured in top magazines and anthologies of fantasy, horror, and science fiction. His screenplay "This Way to Egress," co-authored with director David Slade (executive producer of *American Gods*) is featured in the anthology film *Nightmare Cinema*, currently streaming on AMC and Shudder. He also writes and produces the podcast *Prime Stage Mystery Theatre*.

The Grave Misconception: The Textual Origins of Mary Shelley's Creature

By Lawrence C. Connolly

In 2012, a monster came to Pittsburgh.

It started as a small disturbance south of Jamaica and grew as it headed north, picking up speeds and moisture, and finally developing into a hurricane as it ascended the eastern seaboard of the United States. Along the way, it earned the name Sandy, but that changed when it veered inward and merged with another storm blowing from the west. After that, the monster earned a new name: *Frankenstorm*.

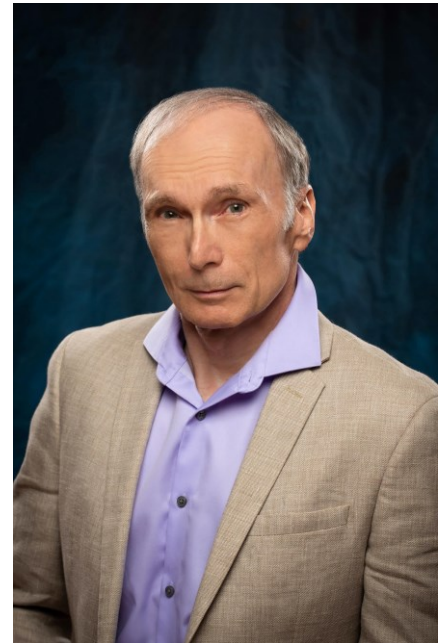
Why? Because it was no longer just *one* storm. It was a collection of storms that had combined to form one raging entity—sort of like the Frankenstein monster, right?

Actually, no.

Not if we're talking about the creature as presented in Mary Shelley's novel. That creature, as a close investigation of the text will show, is not a combination of parts. It is an organic whole created through a mysterious process that is never fully explained in Victor Frankenstein's story. And so, with that in mind, it might be time to return to the text and take note of the true nature of Shelley's creature.

The roots of the misconception apparently lie in Victor Frankenstein's early accounts of the creature's creation. Relating his tale to Robert Walton, he explains how he "was led to examine the cause and progress of [. . .] decay and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel-houses." So it's clear he does spend time among the dead, but his primary reason for doing so is to examine the process of decomposition, the inevitable decay that he wants to reverse. To cure death, he must first understand it.

As he puts it: "I collected bones from charnel-houses and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame." Note the actions. He is *probing* and *examining*, not *assembling*, and we should keep these actions in mind when he later claims that "the dissecting room and slaughter-house furnished many of my materials." Even here, I contend, he means materials for study, not assembly.



Yet the most compelling indication that Frankenstein is not assembling his creation from scavenged materials comes after he has spent some time studying his collected specimens. It is here that he reaches the conclusion that “as the minuteness of the parts formed a great hindrance to my speed, I resolved, contrary to my first intention, to make the being of gigantic stature, that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionably large.” Thus, since human-size parts are too small, he must “make” ones that are larger, and although the means of this making is never revealed, the text suggests that whatever he is doing, it is not creating a patchwork of dead limbs and organs.

One must also wonder why Frankenstein would bother building his monster out of pieces in the first place. Why do all that stitching when he could simply animate an already intact corpse? Logic, as well as the text, suggests he is up to something more.

It is also worth considering the novel’s subtitle: *A Modern Prometheus*. The Prometheus here is the lesser known Prometheus *plasticator*, who created and animated mankind out of lifeless clay.

Finally, we should note that the earliest visual representations of what has come to be called the Frankenstein *monster* show an organically formed creature. Consider, for example, pictures of actor T. P. Cooke as he appeared in the novel’s first stage adaptations, or the frontispiece illustration by Theodor Von Holst in the novel’s 1831 edition. In both representations, the creature appears much as described in Shelley’s text, with skin scarcely covering “the work of muscles and arteries beneath,” and “his hair [...] a lustrous black and flowing.”

Nowhere in any of those images do we see indications of a patchwork monster. The creature is a single, organic whole, with an outsized physique and intellect far exceeding that of a natural man. As such, I think Victor Frankenstein’s original creation poses a much more frightening adversary than the one most people think of when they hear the name *Frankenstein*.

And so Prime Stage Theater, the company known for “bringing literature to life,” tonight gives new life to the creature of Shelley’s vision, an entity abandoned by his creator and left to make his way in a world he does not understand ... a world which too often fails to recognize him for what he is.

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Q: What Should the Audience Know Before Seeing Frankenstein?

Frankenstein is as much the story of a writer who met with unexpected success as it is about a scientist who experiences tragic failure. What sets the two apart is that Mary Shelley stood by her creation while Victor disowned his. The upshot: It’s good to dream big, but we must be willing to own the results of those dreams once they take on lives of their own.

Mary Shelley’s novel is about creation and how the fruits of our ambitions can take on lives of their own. In the novel, Victor is surprised when his artificial man turns out different than expected. Something similar happens with Mary and her novel. In both instances, the creation moves beyond the creator’s control. In Mary’s case, she is surprised by the reception her novel receives. Indeed, she concludes the introduction of *Frankenstein*’s second edition by writing, “And now, once again, I bid my hideous progeny go forth and prosper.” In my adaptation, we

present Shelley's story alongside Victor's. The result, I hope, shows how one is an apt metaphor for the other.

What are some of the unique challenges that you've encountered in adapting Mary Shelley's novel for the stage?

Frankenstein is a sprawling novel. It begins with Victor's birth and follows him as he moves from Geneva to Bavaria and then onward through Scotland, the Orkney Islands, and finally the frozen north. The book also has three protagonists, each presenting his own first-person narrative. By contrast, Mary's autobiographical account of the novel's genesis centers on a single night. So early on, I figured the best approach would be to find a way to use her introduction as a framing device for relating key events depicted in the novel. And so, our Frankenstein is the story that Mary might have told to her friends. Once I settled on that format, the writing pretty much flowed from there.

The story of Frankenstein has become well-known over the years through a variety of films and plays. What's something new you learned from the story working on this adaptation?

Despite its expansiveness, the novel reveals almost nothing about Victor's experiments, and so everyone who has ever adapted the novel to stage or screen has had free reign to envision a creation scene. That said, there are two details that suggest an element of Victor's work that is passed over in most adaptations. The first is the novel's subtitle—"A Modern Prometheus," which references the story of Prometheus plasticator, who created and animated mankind out of lifeless matter. The second occurs in Chapter 4 of the novel, when Victor—after having spent years gathering body parts from graves and charnel houses—decides that "as the minuteness of the parts formed a great hindrance to my speed, I resolved, contrary to my first intention, to make the being of a gigantic stature, that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionably large." Thus, like Prometheus plasticator, he makes the creature from scratch. The result is not a lumbering brute with a reanimated brain, but a whole new species that has the potential to replace mankind. With that in mind, the resulting conflict is ever more relevant in light of recent scientific advancements.



JOURNAL PROMPT:

What If YOU Wrote A Novel?

Mary Shelley was a teenager when she wrote FRANKENSTEIN. If you wrote a novel, what would it be about? What genre? Horror? Romance? Science Fiction? A little bit of everything? Write out an outline of your novel idea.

Meet the Director

Liam Macik (Director) Liam is a Pittsburgh native and graduate of Mount Lebanon High School. He received his B.A. in Theatre Arts from Catawba College in Salisbury, NC. Liam served as the founding Artistic Director of Throughline Theatre Company for seven years, where his directing credits include productions of *Judgement at Nuremberg*, *Oedipus Rex*, and *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*. In 2005 Liam received the Peterson Award for Emerging Playwrights for his play, *Bastards and Fools*, and in 2019 Liam wrote and directed a new adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* for Prime Stage. Earlier this year, Liam directed Prime Stage's production of *Arsenic and Old Lace*. In addition to playwriting and directing, Liam is an established stage actor, most recently appearing as Lenny in *Of Mice and Men* at Prime Stage, and previously as David Sarnoff in *The Farnsworth Invention* and Beverly Weston in *August: Osage County*, both at Throughline Theatre.



Quick Q & A

Q: There are literally thousands of modern pop culture references taken from *Frankenstein*. Any used in this production as inspiration?

A: *Actually, I took no inspiration at all from pop culture because any secondary references would not be a true reflection of Mary Shelley's work. Tried to keep a tight focus on the source material (the novel Frankenstein itself, which the play remains very true to) and not confuse or water down the real story with the many interpretations of it.*

Q: What do you hope audiences will take away from this production?

A: *I hope they find the performances gripping and engaging. The performers have created some genuinely scary moments that I hope remind the audience that this is partly a tale of horror!*

Q: Any advice to any budding teenage directors out there?

A: *Always stick with the script and look to it for any unanswered questions in the script. Make sure that there is textual support for your choices and respect your source material.*

Meet the Designers

TRANSFORMING A SPACE

For scenic designers, a big artistic challenge can be to establish different physical settings in a play using one common set.

Here is what **FRANKENSTEIN** Scenic Designer **Tucker Topel** had to say:



“The goal for the set was to create this classic look of Frankenstein's castle that everyone knows but with the flexibility to transition the audience to many different locations. The common ground of the locations are these windows that get whisked around the stage with the addition and subtraction of furniture/props to help set time and place. It has lots of nods to Mary Shelley's world and the Villa she originally created the story in. We also are playing with the idea of this electricity and lightning that brings the creature to life. Scenically we support that with some fun practicals and a large marble grain floor that mimics a lightning storm.”



Tucker Topel (Scenic Designer) is currently based out of Pittsburgh, PA after growing up in the Southern Wisconsin area. He is an alum of Point Park University in Pittsburgh, PA. Currently working in and around the Greater Pittsburgh area with several companies such as Prime Stage Theatre, Point Park

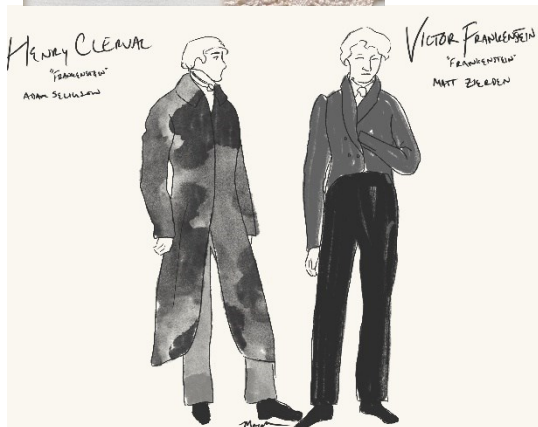
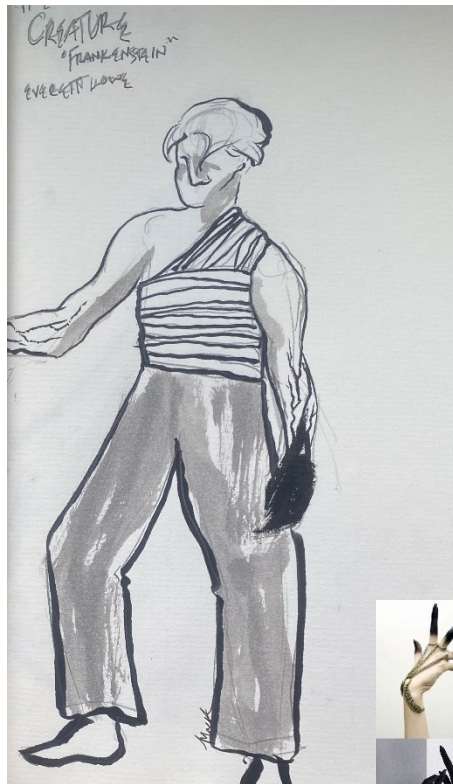
University, Mercyhurst University, Robert Morris University, Pittsburgh Musical Theater, off the WALL, and more. Tucker's most recent design credits include: *Not My Revolution* (off the WALL), *Spring Awakening* (Point Park University), *Meanwhile* (CSA @ New Hazlett Theater), *Saturday Night* (Mercyhurst University), and *Hoard* (off the WALL).

Madeline Macek (Costume Designer) Madeline is a Costume Designer specializing in historical works. A born-and-raised Pittsburgher, she has previously designed at the Pittsburgh Playhouse. Previously she worked as Costume Designer on *Spring Awakening* and *Everybody*. Madeline graduated from Point Park University in 2022.

Thoughts from FRANKENSTEIN Costume Designer Madeline Macek:

“It was important to me to stick as close to historical examples as possible. Mary Shelley’s legacy continues to echo in modern horror and suspense, and it felt important to honor her in her time while bringing her legacy forward. The rest of my concept was inspired by the color scheme and visual texture of ink on paper, plus some modern-green and blood-red. I wanted the he’d been sketched out in ink or Victor while still keeping an element of research into decomposition, necrosis, figures, the kinds of burns left behind The Creature needed to be unsettling

horror touches of Creature to look as if sculpted in clay by horror. I also did and Lichtenberg by lightning strikes. while still human.”



Hope Debelius (Lighting Designer) Hope is a Pittsburgh based lighting designer and recent graduate of Point Park University's Conservatory of Performing Arts. Recent design credits include: *A View From the Bridge* with Throughline Theatre Company, *Cowboy Vs. Samurai* at Bristol Valley Theater, *The Amazing Lemonade Girl* at Prime Stage Theatre, The Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Preprofessional Showcase, The Fall Dance Concert and *Spring Awakening* at the Pittsburgh Playhouse.



Mark Whitehead (Sound Designer/Composer) Mark is the founder of Saints & Poets Theater, for which he most recently produced and directed the European premiere of August Wilson's *How I Learned What I Learned* at the 2022 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Mark is Resident Sound Designer for PPTCO, The Unseam'd Shakespeare Company and The Jewish Theater of Pittsburgh, and has designed for Short North Stage in Columbus, OH, The Ensemble Theatre in Houston, TX, The St. Louis Black Repertory, and numerous Pittsburgh theaters. He was named best sound designer and listed among the best directors in Pittsburgh City Paper's 2001 theater roundup, and was named best sound designer of 2000 by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Mark was a founding producer of *The Dark Night Cabaret* performance series, and has produced and directed music videos for several Pittsburgh bands.

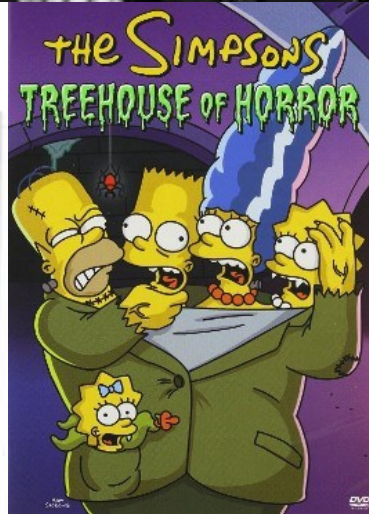
Michael R. Petyak (Fight Director/Intimacy Coordinator) Holding a B.F.A. in Musical Theater from Shenandoah University, Michael has performed, directed and choreographed nationally for stage, television and film. Some of his most notable credits include sword-fighting at the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire & Powel Crosley Estate (Sarasota, FL), doubling "Across the Universe" star Joe Anderson in the locally filmed television series, *Outsiders*, as well as doubling Disney star Calum Worthy in *Replicate* on Netflix. He also has done fight direction locally for Pittsburgh CLO, Quantum Theater, Pittsburgh City Theater, Kinetic Theater, Prime Stage, Little Lake Theater and numerous high schools in the Greater Pittsburgh Area. Michael has taught master classes in stage combat/stunts at the University of Pittsburgh, Point Park University, Carnegie Mellon University, Westminster College, & Steeltown Entertainment Project (WQED). He has also stunt coordinated films such as *Juniper & Lamplight*, *Secret Santa*, and *Child Warfare* and has assisted numerous fight masters in the entertainment industry.

Carly Trimble-Long (Props Designer) Carly is a Pittsburgh based theater artist and Technical Director. Her notable credits include Technical Director for Off The Wall for past productions such as *Hoard & What Kind of Woman*, which is premiering in New York City on Off-Broadway this fall. Other past roles besides properties work are Technical Director at Pittsburgh Irish Classical Theater, a Scenic Technician at Carnegie Mellon University, and Staff Carpenter at Utah Shakespeare Festival. Carly is an Alumni of the Conservatory of Performing Arts at Point Park University and holds a BFA in Technical Direction and Management.

Frankenstein in Pop Culture



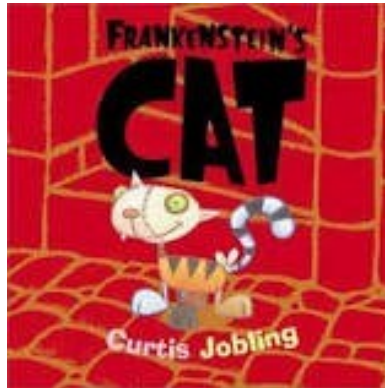
Even if you haven't read the novel *Frankenstein*, chances are excellent that you still have an opinion about it and a personal definition of the characters and story. *Frankenstein* is one of the most referenced stories in the history of pop culture. Thousands of references (and sub-references) to the Creature and Victor are found in everything from magazine covers to television series to breakfast cereals.



At the top: Film "The Bride of Frankenstein" with Boris Karloff as The Creature and Elsa Lancaster as The Bride

Middle Row: Artist rendering of Pinball Machine Art based on Kenneth Branagh's "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein"; Halloween Episode of "The Simpsons"; Sponge Bob Square Pants "Frankendoodle"

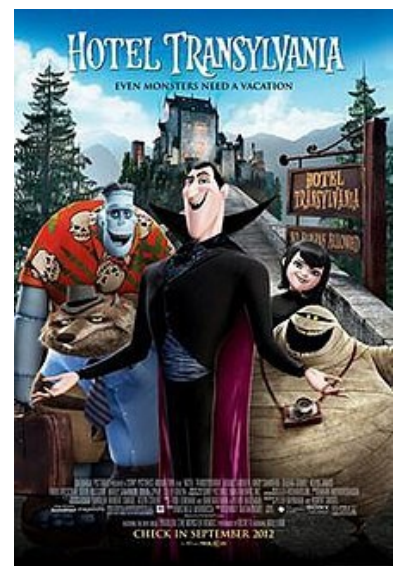
Bottom: Strawberry Flavored Breakfast Cereal from General Mills



At the Top: Film Actor Peter Cushing as Victor Frankenstein
Middle Row: Magazine Cover Art - New Yorker Magazine; Children's Book "Frankenstein's Cat" by Curtis Jobling; Movie Poster of Mel Brooks' comic parody "Young Frankenstein" starring Gene Wilder as

Victor and Peter Boyle as The Creature

Bottom: Television Actor Fred Gwynne as Herman Munster in "The Munsters"; Promotional Film Poster for "Hotel Transylvania" featuring 'Frank'



Frankenstein and Science (Fiction)

“In other studies you go as far as other have gone before you, and there is nothing more to know; but in a scientific pursuit there is continual food for discovery and wonder.”

— Mary Shelley, Frankenstein



“*Frankenstein* can help students reflect on the personal and social limits of science, the connection between curiosity and scientific progress, and scientists’ responsibilities. Its potential usefulness in teaching derives from the interconnectedness of science, ethics, and compassion. *Frankenstein* can be a useful tool for analysing bioethical issues related to scientific and technological advances, such as artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, and cloning”.

—2021 BMC Medical Ethics Report, *Springer Nature*

What did Mary Shelley know about “modern” science in 1816?

The science that inspired Mary Shelley to write “Frankenstein” is nearly as strange as the novel itself. Electricity had captured the imaginations of many of Europe’s top scientists, and at that time

very little was understood about the nature of electricity. At the University of Bologna in Italy, noted surgeon Luigi Galvani was investigating the effects of electricity on animals. On January 26, 1781, while dissecting a frog near a static electricity machine, Galvani’s assistant touched a scalpel to a nerve in its leg, and the frog’s leg jumped. Galvani repeated this and several other experiments, observing the same violent muscle spasms. He also noticed that frog legs occasionally twitched when they were hung from a brass hook and allowed to touch an iron trellis, so Galvani joined a length of each metal together to form a brass and iron arc that made the leg muscles contract when touched. But where did the electricity come from? Galvani, who called it “animal electricity,” believed it resided in the frog itself. He thought that the bimetallic arc merely conducted the electricity from one part of the frog to the nerve, causing the leg to jump. He published his findings in 1791. One of Galvani’s earliest readers was Italian physicist Alessandro Volta. He replicated Galvani’s experiments and helped popularize his work. Yet Volta reached very different conclusions. He believed the electricity came from the two metals used in the arc, and that the frog was acting as the conductor. ***So how did this influence a young Mary Shelly and lead her to compose one of the most widely read novels of all time, “Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus”?*** Galvani’s nephew, Giovanni Aldini, was a fierce partisan of animal electricity, yet he did not ignore Volta’s pile. Aldini used it to tour the capitals of Europe and demonstrate the medical benefits of electricity -- or not. His demonstrations involved jolting corpses with electricity and making decapitated criminals sit upright. Aldini’s most famous exhibition took place in 1803 at the Newgate Prison in London, U.K. He inserted metal rods into the mouth and ear of the recently executed corpse of murderer George Foster. “The Newgate Calendar,” a book about the criminals of Newgate Prison, described what happened next: “On the first application of the process to the face, the jaws of the deceased criminal began to quiver, and the adjoining muscles were horribly contorted, and one eye was actually opened. In the subsequent part of the process the right hand was raised and clenched, and the legs and thighs were set in motion.” ***Not surprisingly, some observers thought Aldini was bringing Foster back to life. Mary Shelley knew all about Galvani, Volta and Aldini. Humphry Davy and William***

Nicholson -- the era's leading electrical researchers -- were friends of her father. In 1816, at age 18, she spent the summer in Geneva, Switzerland with Lord Byron and her future husband, Percy Shelley. The season was cold and rainy, and they spent many evenings around the fire, reading German ghost stories and discussing electricity's potential to reanimate corpses. It must have seemed like she was merely peering into the near future to imagine that one day, a Victor Frankenstein might succeed in reanimating an assembly of body parts.
ARTICLE SOURCE: Alan S. Brown for www.insidescience.org (October 27, 2010)

WHO WAS ERASMUS DARWIN?



Mentioned by name in the FRANKENSTEIN script, Erasmus Darwin was the grandfather of naturalist Charles Darwin and a physician/writer - like John Polidori.

Mary Shelley on Erasmus Darwin: “Many and long were the conversations between Lord Byron and [Percy Bysshe] Shelley, to which I was a devout but nearly silent listener. During one of these, various philosophical doctrines were discussed, and among others the nature of the principle of life, and whether

there was any probability of its ever being discovered and communicated. They talked of the experiments of Dr. Darwin, (I speak not of what the Doctor really did, or said that he did, but, as more to my purpose, of what was then spoken of as having been done by him,) who preserved a piece of vermicelli in a glass case, till by some extraordinary means it began to move with voluntary motion. Not thus, after all, would life be given. Perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things: perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth.”

Think About It....

CONCEPT: Our world today is full of examples of biological science experimenting with living matter to create other living matter. For example, Dolly the cloned sheep, stem cell research, In-vitro Fertilization, to name a few.



JOURNAL PROMPT:

Mary Shelley believed that: “...in a scientific pursuit, there is continual food for discovery and wonder.” However, she also states (through the character of Victor Frankenstein): “You seek for knowledge and wisdom as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been.”

In other words: discovery is wonderful but be cautious when pursuing it. Right? Or not? What do YOU believe? State your case based on details both from the play and also from current science practices.

“FRANKENFOOD”: *Creating the Conditions for Vegetable Regeneration*

“IT’S (STILL) ALIVE!!!”

In this project, we will be regrowing vegetables from plants that we already harvested food from. There are many vegetables that can actually grow back over and over and over and like a fruit plant gives you good stuff to eat multiple times instead of just once. In this project, we will not be making new plants. Instead, we will be allowing the plant to stay alive even after it has already been eaten using the same principle to regrow the roots and then the plant.



For this project, you will need a collection of vegetables and/or herbs that will regrow. In addition to a variety of vegetable scraps, you will also need: containers and/or pots to put each food item in (like dollar store containers and plastic cups), small amount of potting soil, water, a warm location with good lighting, a little patience and at least a few weeks to observe (and enjoy) the results!

The following vegetables work well:

- **Potatoes** (any variety include sweet, golden, Russet, etc): Place your potatoes in a darker area. You can make a cave for yours out of tinfoil. Once the potatoes begin growing ‘eyes’ you can cut the potato into several chunks and plant each chunk in soil individually. Alternatively, you can just plant the whole potato in soil from the very beginning.
- **Garlic:** Take one clove of garlic and place it in soil. Water gently.
- **Carrots** (make sure there is some green left on top of the carrot or this won’t work): Bear in mind the orange or root part of the carrot will not regrow. Cut the top off of your carrot about a half an inch from the greens. Then place in a cup or bowl of water.
- **Ginger Root:** Cut off a section of the ginger root and plant in soil. Water gently.
- **Romaine Lettuce:** Cut the lettuce about 3 inches from the base. Place in a cup or bowl of water. Be sure to only put in an inch or so of water so the lettuce doesn’t rot.

After planting the vegetable scraps, remember the following rules for success:

- 1) No matter what vegetables or herbs you are regrowing, you must allow time to grow and you must water as needed. Make sure your cups and bowls of water never dry out and keep your soil moist but not too wet.
- 2) Each of these plants will have specific needs so if you want to grow them for longer than a week or two, be sure to research what each plant needs so you can have a bigger harvest.
- 3) Don’t put too much water in things like lettuce, celery, onions, etc. They will rot out as quickly as a pot of soil with too much water. You don’t need to cover the whole plant in water, just the very base. So about an inch or two of water is all you need.
- 4) If you cut the plant too far down, it might be too injured to regrow. It is better to cut off too little than it is to cut off too much. It is okay to be conservative to the plant that you want to regrow.
- 5) Having a warm place is critical for the success of all these plants.

After the Show: Exercises

Talk About It

“Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change.”

– Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Frankenstein

- 1) Grief and fear of death are two psychological states that play a big role in *Frankenstein*. What are some examples of these strong emotions being expressed in the play? What other powerful emotions did you witness?
- 2) Whose actions are more horrifying/monstrous in *Frankenstein*? The Creature himself or Victor? Divide group up into Team Creature and Team Victor - debate it!

Act It Out

“You are my creator, but I am your master; Obey!”

– Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Frankenstein

Mirror Exercise: Who’s Really In Charge? *Explore the power shift in Frankenstein from Victor to the Creature and back again.*

Traditional theatre mirror game. Split larger group up into one additional person is the group leader. Each pair sits other, cross-legged and not touching. One person is “Victor” and the other is named “The Creature”. While eye contact, the person named “Victor” begins the charge, and “The Creature” must follow “Victor’s” a mirror image. After a minute or so, the group leader Shift!” and “The Creature” takes over as “Victor” follows. After another minute or so, the group leader says: “Power Shift!” again. The game continues with the group leader adding key words periodically: MONSTER, LOVE, CREATOR, EVIL, CONTROL, FEAR, GRIEF. As the group leader says each word, each pair must decide (silently, with their movements) who takes control, based on their understanding of who “dominates” each word.



pairs, while opposite each named maintaining exercise in movements as says: “Power

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: *In the struggle for power, can anyone really win?*

Write It Down

3-Minute Timed Response

There is a famous quote from the film “*Jurassic Park*” where Pittsburgh actor Jeff Goldblum comments: “YEAH, BUT YOUR SCIENTISTS WERE SO PREOCCUPIED WITH WHETHER OR NOT THEY COULD (recreate dinosaurs) THAT THEY DIDN’T STOP TO THINK IF THEY SHOULD.”

Was it ethical of Victor Frankenstein to create his Creature? Why or why not? In three minutes, write it down. Share answers with the group. Defend your position using examples from the play.

SUGGESTED READING LIST FOR FRANKENSTEIN

If this play has piqued your interest, why not check out a book and explore more? Your public libraries have many online resources you can access from home. Check your library's website for help in getting started or use this handy link: [Your Library From Home](#).

For Younger Kids

Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich/Frankenstein Takes the Cake by Adam Rex
Author Rex entertains with poems and stories about Frankenstein (the monster) and his pals—Dracula, the Headless Horseman—and others. Full of jokes and puns.

Frankenstein Doesn't Wear Earmuffs by John Loren
A young trick-or-treater has the best Frankenstein costume ever...if he can make it out the front door! Every time he tries to set foot into the dark and stormy night, his overly concerned parents interrupt with yet another warm and cozy addition to his costume.

The Mixed-Up Monster by Ximena Hastings
An early reader where Hank, a Frankenstein monster, is tired of being a monster and wishes he was normal.

Frankenstein: A Monstrous Parody by Rick Walton
Do you remember the Madeline books? Then you won't want to miss this fun send-up of those classics, illustrations and all! Frankenstein is the scariest of all the monsters in Miss Devel's castle. He can frighten anything—animals, parents, even rocks. Until one night, Miss Devel wakes up and runs downstairs to find that Frankenstein has lost his head!

Learn More!

What is the Story of Frankenstein? by Sheila Keenan
Part of Who Was/What series, the author explores the origin of the Frankenstein story and the history of the movie versions.

The Woman Who Created Frankenstein: a Portrait of Mary Shelley
This is a biography of Mary Shelley, considered by many to be the woman who created the first 'science fiction' story!

Young Adult Fiction

This Monstrous Thing by Mackenzi Lee
A critically acclaimed retelling of the Frankenstein story. In an alternative fantasy world where some men are made from clockwork parts and carriages are steam powered, Alasdair Finch, a young mechanic, does the unthinkable after his brother dies: he uses clockwork pieces to bring Oliver back from the dead.

Jackaby by William Ritter
First in a series and with rave reviews, this tells the tale of Abigail Rook, the new assistant to investigator Jackaby. On her first day, Abigail finds herself in the midst of a thrilling case: A serial killer on the loose...and Jackaby is certain the foul deeds are the work of the kind of creature whose very existence is questioned.

Cadaver & Queen by Alisa Kwitney

Frankenstein meets Marissa Meyer's *Cinder* in this tightly paced historical thriller packed with secrets, betrayal, and steamy romance.

Young Adult Biography

Mary's Monster: Love, Madness, and How Mary Shelley created Frankenstein by Lita Judge

Legend is correct that Mary Shelley began penning Frankenstein in answer to a dare to write a ghost story. What most people don't know, however, is that the seeds of her novel had been planted long before that night. By age nineteen, she had been disowned by her family, was living in scandal with a married man, and had lost her baby daughter just days after her birth.

Adult Fiction

Frankenstein in Baghdad by Ahmed Saadawi

From the rubble-strewn streets of U.S.-occupied Baghdad, Hadi--a scavenger and an oddball fixture at a local café--collects human body parts and stitches them together to create a corpse. His goal, he claims, is for the government to recognize the parts as people and to give them proper burial.

Oryx & Crake by Margaret Atwood

From the acclaimed author of *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood takes us on a journey through a world now devastated by powerful corporations involved in genetic manipulation.

Doctor Faustus by Christopher Marlowe

Try a return to a 'classic' with one of the lasting myths in Western culture. The story of Faust tells of a learned German doctor who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge and power.

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Phillip K. Dick

Considered the source material for the movie *Bladerunner*, author Dick asks us to consider whether the creatures that man has created – in this case, androids – are capable of feeling empathy.

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Before You Go Prep

An Important Message About Theatre Etiquette

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

But live theater is just that: it’s LIVE with LIVE HUMANS who react and respond to the audience. 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 a very important component of this production of *Frankenstein!*



House Rules

Please review the following “House Rules” with your students prior to attending:

- 1) Please stay with your group and wait for an usher to help you find your seat.**
- 2) Please turn all cell phones 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!)**
- 3) No photography or videotaping.**
- 4) Please stay in your seat until the intermission or the end of the play.**
- 5) No eating, drinking, or chewing gum during the performance.**
- 6) We encourage active listening and appropriate responses such as laughing or clapping. Please do not talk during the performance!**
- 7) 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)

THINKING LIKE A CRITIC



Critics play an important role in theatre because they share their opinions about a production which they are often the first to see (called a “preview”) with the world to discuss and debate.

Prepare your students to attend the show by thinking like a critic:

(PDE Academic Standards 9.1-9.4, 1.4- 1.5)

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.? 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 of the elements of the production?

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

****Ask your students to write a review of FRANKENSTEIN!****

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?

BEFORE & AFTER Ask students to complete the Anticipation Guide above before attending Prime Stage’s production of *Frankenstein*. Have them review it again after the performance and compare possible changes in their perspectives.

ANTICIPATION GUIDE POST PERFORMANCE CLASSROOM QUESTIONS:

- 1) What did you think you knew about the story of *Frankenstein* before you saw Prime Stage’s production?
- 2) Where did you get your information? Have you changed your impressions? What remained the same?

Frankenstein Anticipation Guide

Name:-----

"Science fiction is purely for entertainment. You cannot learn or think about anything important through reading science fiction."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"The most important thing in life is to be an important person. Achieving greatness is even more important than enjoying life, having friends, or acting morally."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"People are shaped by their experiences. The way a person thinks and acts is mainly a result of how life has treated them."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"Science and industry lead to disaster. Humankind would be happier if we lived simpler lives in harmony with nature."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"It is important to feel emotions powerfully. Whether you are feeling guilt, love, sadness, horror, or joy, you should go big."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"The way someone looks is not really important."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"I enjoy spending time in nature. Spending time in nature is good for my mental health."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"Revenge is completely pointless. Nothing can be gained through it."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"Parents have a duty to love their children no matter what."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"I enjoy stories that include mystery, suspense, tension, and surprise."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"I can already describe the monster of Mary Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> ."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	