



7 KEYS TO BALDPATE TEACHER GUIDE

Welcome to Taproot Theatre Company and our Student Matinee Program. We are so excited that you have decided to join us in educating students through theatre. In this guide you will find useful materials to help prepare your students to see *Seven Keys to Baldpate*. Thank you for choosing Taproot and we look forward to seeing you at the performance.

Seven Keys to Baldpate Student Study Guide

A student study guide for *Seven Keys to Baldpate* is available on Taproot Theatre's website. Go to www.taproottheatre.org/StudentMatinees.htm to download your copy. The study guide includes historical information surrounding the play, production information, as well as playwright and casting information.

Taproot encourages making copies and distributing the study guides to your class.

Preview *Seven Keys to Baldpate* at Taproot Theatre

If you are interested in previewing *Seven Keys to Baldpate* before the student matinee performance you are welcome to do so. Please contact Darrell Olson, (206) 529-3668, or darrell@taproottheatre.org for a pair of complimentary preview tickets.

Preview Opportunities

May 16 & 17	7:30pm, Preview Performance
May 19	8:00pm, Friday Performance
May 20	8:00pm, Saturday Performance

Driving Directions to Taproot Theatre Company

From I-5 Take the N. 85th St. exit. Go west on N. 85th for about 2 miles, crossing Aurora Ave. N. and Greenwood Ave. N. The theatre is ½ block west of Greenwood Ave. N. at **204 N. 85th St.**

Bus Parking

Heading west on 85th, take a right on 1st Ave. W. (past Taproot Theatre **204 N. 85th St.**) Take a right into the parking lot of Thriftko. **The NW corner of the parking lot is reserved and authorized for school busses.** Taproot is not responsible for busses parked in an unauthorized area.

About the Play

Play Synopsis: Writer Billy Magee accepts an outrageous bet – 24 hours to complete a novel. With his typewriter and the only key to the remote Baldpate Inn, he is ready for the challenge. When unexpected visitors, stolen money, and six more keys to Baldpate interrupt his work, it's a mystery if he will finish on time!

Cast

By order of appearance

Barbara Callander
Nolan Palmer
Bob Borwick
Darrell Olson
Anne Kennedy
Kim Morris
Don Brady
Marianne Savell
Patrick Allcorn
Bob Gallaher
Nolan Palmer
Marquam Krantz
Rob Martin

Mrs. Quimby
Mr. Quimby
Hallowell Magee
John Bland
Mary Norton
Mrs. Rhodes
Peters
Myra Thornhill
Lou Max
Jim Cargan
Thomas Hayden
Jiggs Kennedy
Mr. Bently



7 KEYS TO BALDPATE. DON BRADY, BOB BORWICK, ANNE KENNEDY

Setting:

Baldpate Inn, Asquewan Falls. 1955



HUMPHREY BOGART

www.lib.berkeley.edu

Production Team

Director
Sound/Scenic Designer
Costume Design
Production Stage Manager
Lighting Designer
Stage Manager
Props Master
Dramaturg
Assistant Director
ASM
Dresser
Sound Board Operator
Light Board Operator

Karen Lund
Mark Lund
Sarah Gordon
Rebecca Patterson
Andy Duff
Sarah Dale Rice
Jodi A. Sauerbier
Ian Klein
Heather Botts
Liz Cocco
Amy Maly

George M. Cohan

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_M._Cohan

Cohan was the pioneer of the musical theater libretto. He is mostly remembered for his songs, later interpolated into musicals such as *Anything Goes*, *Guys and Dolls*, *The Producers*, and *Hello Dolly!* However, he invented the "book musical," becoming the first showman to bridge the gaps between drama and music, operetta and extravaganza.



More than three decades before Agnes De Mille choreographed *Oklahoma!*, Cohan used dance not merely as razzle-dazzle but to advance the plot. The engaging books of his musicals supported the scores that yielded so many popular songs. As a storyteller, Cohan's main characters were "average Joes and Janes".

Cohan wrote numerous other Broadway musicals and straight plays, in addition to contributing material to shows written by others — more than 50 in all. Cohan shows included *Forty-five Minutes from Broadway* (1905), *George Washington, Jr.* (1906), *The Talk of New York* and *The Honeymooners* (1907), *Fifty Miles from Boston* and *The Yankee Prince* (1908), *Broadway Jones* (1912), *Seven Keys to Baldpate* (1913), *The Cohan Revue of 1918*, *The Tavern* (1920), *The Rise of Rosie O'Reilly* (1923), *The Song and Dance Man* (1923), *American Born* (1925), *The Baby Cyclone* (1927), *Elmer the Great* (1928), and *Pigeons and People* (1933).

Cohan is arguably the most honored American entertainer. On June 29, 1936, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt presented him with a Congressional Gold Medal in honor of his contributions to World War I morale, in particular the songs "You're a Grand Old Flag" and "Over There". This award is sometimes wrongly characterized as a Medal of Honor, but only combat veterans are given that medal.



In 1959, at the behest of composer Oscar Hammerstein II, a \$100,000 bronze statue of Cohan was dedicated in Times Square, at Broadway and 46th Street in Manhattan. The 8-foot bronze remains the only statue of an actor in New York City. He was inducted into the Songwriters' Hall of Fame in 1970, and into the American Folklore Hall of Fame in 2003.

Taproot Theatre Company

Taproot Theatre Company is a professional, nonprofit theatre company with a multi-faceted production program. Founded in 1976, they serve the Pacific Northwest with Mainstage Productions, Touring Productions and Acting Studio. Taproot exists to create theatre that explores the beauty and questions of life while bringing hope to our search for meaning.

Themes

The Artistic Vision is the overall mood, theme and message of a play that a director enhances through their design team and by their own direction of the actors. For instance, if a director wants to convey a mood and message of fear they might ask their design team to create areas on the stage that are dimly lit, with dark costume pieces and a set that has dark tones with a cold, unsettling feel. For Taproot Theatre's production of 7 Keys to Baldpate, the director, Karen Lund, has decided to move the play from 1913, when it was originally written, to 1955. The main reason for this is to set the play in the style of Film Noir which was popular between 1940-1958. Film Noir is a style/genere of film that's typically shot in black and white and uses an extreme range of lighting, usually very bright vs. very dark. In fact "noir" is French for

black. Think of those old detective and gangster movies with the dark, long shadows and the classic damsel in distress. Those are usually Noir films, especially if they have a sense of fatalism, a key ingredient in Film Noir. This changing of the time period works well for 7 Keys to Baldpate since it's full of thugs, backstabbing villains and even a few damsels in distress! Karen is really pushing for two elements with this production. The first is the comedy. The show is a well written comedy and she wants to make sure the audiences are enjoying the jokes. The second element she wants to push for is the thrill of the story arc! The show is a fast paced crime spree comedy, and Karen wants to make sure that the audiences enjoy the thrill of riding the story.

FILM NOIR: EXPLORING THE GENRE

http://www.bighousefilm.com/noir_intro.htm

The word 'noir' is literally French for 'black', giving us the concept of 'dark film'. French film critics coined the term soon after the end of WWII when by war's end there was a half-decade of backlogged American movies which hit French viewers. The French noticed that a gloomy and pessimistic worldview had replaced the formerly sunny optimism of can-do U.S.A.

Being fundamentally an action genre, and often low budget thrillers, *noir* used a strong, punchy filmmaking style for maximum impact. Besides its thematic elements which could include fatalism, alienation and transgression, its look was the other half of the *noir* equation. These films' long, sharply-defined shadows, frames bathed in inky blackness, tilted camera angles and claustrophobic compositions created an overall aesthetic of nocturnal, subterranean unreality that is easily recognized (and imitated).



By attending Taproot Theatre's production of *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, having a pre-performance classroom visit, using the study guide and actively engaging in the pre and post show activities your students can begin to fulfill the following EALR's.

Arts

1. The student understands and applies arts knowledge and skills
 - 1.1 Understand arts concepts and vocabulary
 - 1.2 Develop arts skills and techniques
 - 1.3 Apply audience skills in a variety of arts settings and performances
 - 1.4 Apply audience skills in a variety of arts settings and performances.
2. The student demonstrates thinking skills using artistic processes.
 - 2.1 Apply a creative process in the arts: **Reflect** for the purpose of elaboration and self evaluation.
 - 2.3 Apply a responding process to an arts presentation
 - Engage** actively and purposefully
 - Describe** what is seen and/or heard
 - Analyze** how the elements are arranged and organized
 - Interpret** based on descriptive properties
 - Evaluate** using supportive evidence and criteria
4. The student makes connections within and across the arts to other disciplines, life, cultures, and work.
 - 4.1 Demonstrate and analyze connections among the arts disciplines
 - 4.3 Understand how arts impact lifelong choices
 - 4.4 Understand that the arts shape and reflect culture and history.
 - 4.5 Demonstrate the knowledge of arts careers and the knowledge of arts skills in the world of work.

Communication

1. The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.
 - 1.1 Focus attention
 - 1.2 Listen and observe to gain and interpret information.
 - 1.3 Check for understanding by asking questions and paraphrasing
3. The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.
 - 3.1 Use language to interact effectively and responsibly with others
 - 3.2 Work cooperatively as a member of a group
 - 3.3 Seek agreement and solutions through discussion

Writing

1. The student writes clearly and effectively
 - 1.1 Develop concept and design. Develop a topic or theme; organize written thoughts with a clear beginning, middle, and end; use transitional sentences and phrases to connect related ideas; write coherently and effectively
 - 1.2 Use style appropriate to the audience and purpose. Use voice, word choice, and sentence fluency for intended style and audience
 - 1.3 Apply writing conventions. Know and apply correct spelling, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, and capitalization

Pre-show Activities

- 1) Have students think about their expectations for seeing a live performance. Ask them to write down three of their expectations and share it with two or three other people. Ask the groups to talk about why they have those expectations and why it is important to them.
- 2) Give students time in the library to research Film Noir. Ask them to find some of the aspects and elements that create the style/genre of Film Noir, i.e. lighting effects, story arc, language, etc. and discuss the impact of each item.
- 3) Have them research George M. Cohan. Has there been another artist as great as Cohan? What artists do they know of now who write, perform, produce and direct their own works and are super popular? Here's a couple of artists who do at least three out of the four listed above: Woody Allen, Clint Eastwood, Will Farrell, and Adam Sandler.

Post-show Activities

- 1) Class Discussion Topics
 - a. What impressions were created by your first view of the set? What expectations did you form about the play's tone as you listened to the music before the performance started?
 - b. What about the production surprised or impressed you?
 - c. Were the actors believable in their roles?
 - d. What do you think would happen next if the play were to continue?
 - e. Magee was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Tell a story of when you were caught in an embarrassing situation.
 - f. Has anything ever happened to you where you felt like you were in a bad dream?
 - g. What was the purpose of doing a production like this? Did you learn anything from the production?
- 2) Have the students think back to the expectations they wrote down before they came to see the production. With the same groups ask them to share those again and then talk about whether or not their expectations were met when they saw the production. Ask them to think about why they were or were not met and if that influenced whether or not they liked the production.
- 3) Have students write a critique of the production. Encourage them to be specific about their likes and dislikes, and their reasons for each. Help them to understand the differences between critiquing the play (text, storyline, character development) and the production (acting, lighting, directing, sound, set, costumes).
- 4) Have students read a newspaper review of the production. Ask them to write two paragraphs explaining why they agree or disagree with the newspaper review. Encourage them to use specific examples from the play and quotes from the newspaper article to support their argument.
- 5) Frames are frozen pictures that students make with their bodies. Divide students into groups of four or five and give them 15 minutes to come up with five frames from the play and a title for each one. There should be no talking or movement.
 - a. They should pick the five most important points of the story so if someone who had not seen the play saw their frames, they would be able to understand what happens.
 - b. Ask students to assign one person in their group to say the title of each frame as they work on their interpretation.
 - c. When time is up have students show their frames to the whole class.
 - d. Allow the students that are watching to ask questions of the performing group at the end of their frames. Encourage them to ask a question about something that wasn't clear.
 - e. Groups can then redo a frame to clarify the picture.

Theatre Games

- 1. And because** (*Purpose: Communication and working together in creating story*)
Break the class into groups of 5-10 and have them stand in a circle facing each other. Designate one student within the group to start the first line of a story. The only rule is that the first line should contain a name, and it should only be one sentence long. i.e. William walked around the lake. The next person in the circle, and everyone following must start their line with, "And because (repeat last line) William walked around the lake (add on to story) he got thirsty. (third person) And because William got thirsty he walked into Starbucks to get a drink. (fourth person) And because William walked into Starbucks he met Josie. You get the pattern, expect the story to get very surreal and out of control.
- 2. Boris** (*Purpose: To accept each others offers/suggestions in creating and performing a story*)
This is a game for two performers, in which one performer is interrogated by another and worked over by a third invisible thug of gigantic proportions (named Boris). Whenever the actor interrogating does not get a satisfactory answer, Boris thrashes the prisoner. The person who is being interrogated is responsible for physically carrying out the orders to Boris. So if the interrogator tells Boris to slap the prisoner, the actor being interrogated must react as if slapped. Remember - the prisoner does not want to be hurt, but the Interrogator is a cruel one. Really try to tell a story.
- 3. Changing the pattern** (*Purpose: To recognize and report*)
Have the class break into groups of 8-12. Have one person from each group leave the room. Select one person from each group to lead the rest of their group in following a pattern. They may be standing or sitting for this game. The leader needs to start a pattern that the rest of the circle will mimic, this could be clapping their hands together, whistling, blinking their eyes, rubbing their legs. Whatever they want to do, everyone else must mimic and continue to do repeat it until the leader decides to change the pattern/movement. The leader should change the pattern when the student who is trying to guess who the leader is, is not looking at them. Try to be subtle. The people who were selected to go outside must try to guess who the leader is by watching the patterns change. When they think they know who it is they must tell the teacher. There should be no talking by anyone in the circle unless they are using their voice to make a pattern. Once the leader is found, select a new person to guess and a new leader.

Objectionable Material

Please remember that you're the best judge of what's appropriate for your students. On this page you'll find a thorough account of everything in the script which might be found to be objectionable to students and adults. If you have questions about the content of the script please read it, don't rely 100% on this page or what you've been told about the show. If you would like a perusal script (copy of the play) just call Darrell at 206-529-3668, or email him at darrell@taproottheatre.org.

- *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, is a very funny, very high energy show with lots of characters involved in a big scheme to steal money. Throughout the show many of the characters reveal they were intending to backstab other characters whom they were originally partnered with.
- There is minor swearing throughout the show, as in, "None of your damn business.", "God!" and "Say, what the hell are you people trying to pull on me."
- A few of the characters carry guns and they do get pointed at other characters throughout the show.
- Towards the end of the show a character gets shot.
- The show was written in 1913, so expect the rough and tough language and characters of that time period. There's nothing in this show that couldn't easily be shown on network T.V. today.

Additional Resources

Notable Film Noir Movies From the Golden Noir Years 1940–1958

• <u><i>Stranger on the Third Floor</i></u> (1940)	• <u><i>The Set-Up</i></u> (1949)
• <u><i>High Sierra</i></u> (1941)	• <u><i>White Heat</i></u> (1949)
• <u><i>The Maltese Falcon</i></u> (1941)	• <u><i>The Asphalt Jungle</i></u> (1950)
• <u><i>Shadow of a Doubt</i></u> (1943)	• <u><i>D.O.A.</i></u> (1950)
• <u><i>Laura</i></u> (1944)	• <u><i>In a Lonely Place</i></u> (1950)
• <u><i>Double Indemnity</i></u> (1944)	• <u><i>Night and the City</i></u> (1950)
• <u><i>The Lost Weekend</i></u> (1945)	• <u><i>Sunset Boulevard</i></u> (1950)
• <u><i>Mildred Pierce</i></u> (1945)	• <u><i>Ace in the Hole</i></u> (1951)
• <u><i>The Big Sleep</i></u> (1946)	• <u><i>Strangers on a Train</i></u> (1951)
• <u><i>Gilda</i></u> (1946)	• <u><i>Pickup on South Street</i></u> (1953)
• <u><i>The Killers</i></u> (1946)	• <u><i>The Big Heat</i></u> (1953)
• <u><i>Notorious</i></u> (1946)	• <u><i>Kiss Me Deadly</i></u> (1955)
• <u><i>The Postman Always Rings Twice</i></u> (1946)	• <u><i>The Night of the Hunter</i></u> (1955)
• <u><i>The Stranger</i></u> (1946)	• <u><i>The Killing</i></u> (1956)
• <u><i>Dark Passage</i></u> (1947)	• <u><i>The Wrong Man</i></u> (1956)
• <u><i>The Lady from Shanghai</i></u> (1947)	• <u><i>Sweet Smell of Success</i></u> (1957)
• <u><i>Out of the Past</i></u> (1947)	• <u><i>Touch of Evil</i></u> (1958)
• <u><i>Key Largo</i></u> (1948)	•

Books

Dashiell Hammett: Red Harvest, The Dain Curse, The Maltese Falcon, The Glass Key and The Thin Man

James M. Cain: The Postman Always Rings Twice, Double Indemnity and Mildred Pierce

Raymond Chandler: The Big Sleep, Farewell My Lovely, and The Long Goodbye

Cornell Woolrich: It had to be Murder, The Bride Wore Black, Black Alibi, Deadline at Dawn, Night Has a Thousand Eyes, and Waltz into Darkness

Erle Stanley Gardner: Created the character Perry Mason, and wrote many pulp novels.

Mickey Spillane: Kiss me Deadly and The Girl Hunters



Seven Keys to Baldpate