Resource Guide

Marin Theatre Company
Performance Resource Guides are intended to enrich your theatre experience by offering insight to the play and inspiring intellectual discovery through key background information. The guide offers notes on historical or cultural context as well as information on the artists. We hope this guide enhances your enjoyment of the performance!
Student Matinees at Marin Theatre Company

At MTC, we believe that theatre offers our community the chance to share in the act of imaginative storytelling – live, in person, in the moment. For audiences and performers alike, theatre is a creative act, and we believe that sharing in a creative act inspires personal growth and brings people together. MTC’s Expanded Programs open up opportunities for people of all ages and all communities to participate in the joyous, challenging, and inspiring process of theatre.

The Student Matinee series is a key component of MTC’s Expanded Programs and a fantastic opportunity for young people in Marin and the Bay Area. MTC’s Student Matinees are special weekday morning performances of plays we’re presenting in our regular season – the same plays that are delighting audiences, earning rave reviews, and contributing to the cultural fabric of our community. This is a unique opportunity for students to experience accomplished artists telling compelling stories in an intimate professional theatre.

Student matinee performances for Thomas and Sally begin at 11:00 AM at our theater in Mill Valley. Each performance is followed by a lively question-and-answer session with the cast and often the director. MTC can send a teaching artist into the school to prepare the students for the production with a series of participatory workshops. These workshops might include acting exercises, group games designed to immerse the students in a particular historical period, and discussions of challenging issues raised in the play.

To bring a group to a student matinee performance, contact Haley Bertelsen at (415) 388-5208. Our discounted ticket pricing for student matinee performances is never more than $15 per ticket.

This guide is intended to give a brief preview of Thomas and Sally including a summary of the play and a bit of dramaturgy. We’ve also included a selection of suggestions for classroom exercises designed to deepen the students’ experience of the productions. Additional materials for this play as well as for upcoming student matinees are available on the MTC website.
When you are in the audience for a play, you’re not just watching and listening – you are an important part of the show! This may seem obvious, but the actors on stage are right there in the same room as you. They can hear every noise the audience makes: laughter, whispers, gasps, coughs, and candy wrappers. Actors can sense whether the audience is caught up in the play, whether they’re bored, and even what kind of sense of humor this particular audience has. And here’s the exciting part – the actors change their performances from day to day to fit what kind of audience is in the theatre. Here are a few tips on how to be a good audience, and how to get a great performance from the actors.

**Respond honestly** to what happens onstage. It’s always okay to laugh if something is funny – it lets the actors know that the audience gets the joke!

**Be absolutely sure that your cell phone is turned off.** A ringing cell phone distracts the audience as well as the actors. Also, the light from your cell phone screen is almost as distracting as the sound of the ringer – no texting, no checking the time on your phone.

If a play is longer than about an hour and a half, there will usually be an **intermission** – a ten-minute break for you to use the restroom and get a snack or drink of water before the play begins again. If you use your cell phone during intermission, remember to turn it off when you return to the theatre.

Wait until intermission or the end of the show to talk with your friends. **Talking** during a performance, even in whispers, is very distracting.

**It’s not okay to take photos or video** inside the theatre.

**Be respectful of the space:** keep your feet off the seats and the edge of the stage.

The **program** (sometimes called the playbill) contains lots of information about the production. It will always list the names of the actors and the characters they are playing, as well as the playwright, director, the stage manager, the designers, and everyone else who worked on the play – sometimes this can be a whole lot of people! Most programs will also include biographies of all these people, as well as information about the play and the world in which it takes place. Look at the program before the play and during intermission; it can be distracting for the people around you if you read the program while the play is being performed.

At the end of the play, the actors will return to the stage to take a bow (this is called the **curtain call**). This is your chance to thank them for their performance with your applause. If you particularly liked a certain actor, it is appropriate to cheer. If you loved the show, you can let everyone know by giving the actors a standing ovation!

It’s worth repeating: **please be sure your cell phone is turned off and stays off.** The actors and everyone in the audience will appreciate it.
Synopsis

_Thomas and Sally_ starts in the present day, with two university students debating whether or not statues of American founders who owned slaves should be pulled down. One of them, Simone, has a story to tell—she’s descended directly from Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, a woman whom he held as a slave.

As Simone’s tale leaps to life, we find ourselves in the Virginia Colony in 1735, where an English sea captain, Captain John Hemings, is trying to buy his own daughter out of slavery. This daughter is the child of past a liaison he’d had with an African enslaved woman; because slavery was inherited from the mother, the child was born enslaved. Hemings’ plan fails, leaving his daughter, Betty, in bondage to slave-holding plantation owner John Wayles.

Betty grows up enslaved to this man, doing housework and minding his children. Twenty-six years pass, and Wayles, now grieving his third dead wife, turns to Betty for comfort…and sex. Betty’s children, including Robert, James, and Sally, are all born into slavery—and on Wayles’ death, they and their mother are inherited as property by Martha Wayles Jefferson (Wayles’ daughter), and her new husband, a lawyer named Thomas Jefferson.

When the Hemingses arrive at Monticello, the Jefferson plantation, they are set apart; their half-white ancestry and descent from their owner’s father-in-law securing them stations and privileges far above the others enslaved there, leading to conflict.

Jefferson, meanwhile, has his hands full: drafting the _Declaration of Independence_, founding the United States, and fielding offers of diplomatic posts abroad. He finally agrees to serve as the U.S. minister to France, and departs for Paris, taking one daughter (Patsy) and one enslaved person (James Hemings) with him.

When he calls for his other daughter (Polly) to come join them in France, she arrives with a surprising chaperone: 14-year-old Sally Hemings, an enslaved girl, James’ sister. As Jefferson hosts dinners and talks revolution with notables like the Marquis de Lafayette, the two Hemingses discover that slaves are legally free in France; they are planning their next move when Sally discovers something that will change her mind—and the course of history.

The play closes with the debate that rages all around Thomas and Sally’s relationship: Sally’s consent and agency. She was slave—could she give or withhold consent? How does today’s concept of consent apply to lives lived 300 years ago? She was also a teenager—was she exploited, when the legal marriage age in Virginia during her lifetime was 10 years old? Or were there other factors at play in the relationship between Thomas and Sally?
Karen/Abigail Adams/Patsy (Rosie Hallett*)

Karen - an 18-year-old student at a liberal arts college in Vermont.

Abigail Adams - The wife of John Adams, an early feminist and skilled writer. When we first meet her, she and her husband have moved to London, where John is serving as the first American minister to England. They were close friends with Thomas Jefferson, but were against slavery, and never owned slaves. Abigail’s actual attitude toward race was complicated, however; once, she paid for the education of a free Black teenager, over the protests of the neighbors; but in London, after seeing a production of Shakespeare’s Othello, she reported in a letter being horrified at the apparition of sexual race-mixing when Othello (played by a white actor in blackface) embraced his white wife, Desdemona.

Patsy Jefferson - The eldest surviving daughter of Thomas and Martha Jefferson. When we first meet her, she is 15 years old, and a student at Panthemont Abbey. Historians describe her as lively and intelligent, resembling her father.

Simone/Martha/Polly (Ella Dershowitz)

Simone - 18, Karen's college roommate.

Martha Wayles (Jefferson) - The beloved daughter of John Wayles with his first wife. As a child, she was cared for by Betty Hemings, a young enslaved woman. As Martha grew up, her father had six more children with Betty Hemings; all of her younger mixed-race half-brothers and half-sisters were born into lifelong slavery. As an adult, Martha married Thomas Jefferson; they were together for 10 years, during which her health declined – some historians believe she had diabetes. She died four months after bearing Thomas’ youngest child.

Polly Jefferson - The youngest surviving daughter of Thomas and Martha Jefferson. When we first meet her, she is eight years old, has been separated from the family she has lived with since she was three, and forced to make a dangerous, five-week-long voyage by ship across the Atlantic Ocean with 14-year-old Sally Hemings. Once in Paris, Polly attended school with her older sister Patsy at Panthemont Abbey (a Catholic school near the Jefferson’s Paris house that accepted non-Catholic students). Historians describe her as beautiful and quiet – very different from the play!

John Wayles/Benjamin Franklin/French Cook/Man (Robert Sicular*)

John Wayles - A plantation owner, slave trader, lawyer, and debt collector. Wayles was born in England to a low-income family, and came to the Virginia colony as a servant to a wealthy man. His patron saw promise in Wayles and educated him; Wayles’ intelligence, hard work, and forceful personality made him successful, if not trusted. He had 10 children, lost three wives, and died in staggering debt.

Benjamin Franklin - Immensely clever publisher, inventor, and diplomat. The tenth son of a Boston soap-maker, Benjamin apprenticed to his brother, a print-maker, before beginning his publishing career. He served on the “Committee of Five” to draft the Declaration of Independence, along with Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and two others (though Thomas did almost all of the writing). That same year, Benjamin sailed for France to serve as America’s ambassador, and fell in love with Paris’ sophisticated culture and glittering social life. He stayed there until 1783, then was replaced by Thomas Jefferson.
**Cook** - In the play, a fictional working-class white Frenchman apprenticed, with James Hemings, to a fictional Chef Francois. Historically, these apprenticeships served the same purpose that college or trade school does today; they prepared a young man or woman for a professional career. Apprenticeships were also expensive, and could take three years to complete - if the apprentice were not fired before finishing.

**Man** - A fictional French Revolutionary, ready to spill blood to get his way.

**Captain Hemings/Overseer/John Adams/Lafayette/Jacques (Scott K. Coopwood*)**

**Captain John Hemings**
Historically, an English sea captain who impregnated an enslaved African woman in Virginia. Her owners called her "Parthenia," but her original name is not known. She gave birth to Betty Hemings, who, like her, was enslaved. In the play, Captain Hemings is the slave trader who brought Parthenia from Angola to Virginia, and impregnated her while on the ship.

**Overseer** - In the play, the Overseer is a character modeled on several historical overseers that Thomas Jefferson employed at Monticello. Historically, Thomas saw himself as a kind owner, paying bonuses to efficient workers and educating promising youngsters. However, the overseers - generally lower-class white men - were ordered to maximize the productivity of Monticello's fields and shops, which they did by enforcing the rules of slavery with violence.

**John Adams** - Harvard-educated lawyer and political philosopher. John Adams was brilliant, opinionated, and blunt; he protested British taxes as oppression and aggressively opposed slavery. When we meet him, he is part of the "Committee of Five" (see Benjamin Franklin's bio above); the next time we see him, he is with his wife Abigail in London, serving as the first American minister to England.

**Lafayette** - A French aristocrat and soldier who fought on the Americans' side in the Revolutionary War. Close friends with Thomas Jefferson (though definitely opposed to slavery), Lafayette returned to France after the American war ended and fought for democracy in his home country; with Jefferson's help, he wrote the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which articulated the values of the French Revolution. Full name: Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier. Title: the Marquis de Lafayette.

**Jacques** - In the play, a fictional French cook, son of a wealthy fur trader, apprenticed to now-chef James Hemings (as James was once apprenticed to other French chefs).

**Elizabeth (Betty) Hemings/Renee (Charlette Speigner*)**

**Betty Hemings** - The daughter of an enslaved woman and Captain Hemings, half Black and half white. Her owners often gave her as property to their daughters or wives, so she grew up working inside the house instead of in the fields. Betty was known for being strikingly beautiful, and was clearly a strong center for her family. When we first meet her, she has been enslaved to John Wayles for over two decades, and has already had four children with another man: Mary, Martin, Betsy, and Nancy. Wayles will father six more children with her: Robert, James, Thenia, Critta, Peter, and Sally.

**Renee** - In the play, a fictional free French woman of mixed race (the child of a white French aristocrat and an enslaved woman in the French colony of Senegal). Renee plans to have her own career and is apprenticed to a doctor near Paris.

**Thomas Jefferson (Mark Anderson Phillips*)**

**Thomas Jefferson** - An intelligent, analytical politician from a wealthy Virginia family. As a young man, Thomas studied law at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, then opened a law practice and entered local government. From there, his passion for America's liberty - and his ability to express it in writing - carried him to national prominence. In 1776, Thomas served on the "Committee of Five" charged with drafting the Declaration of Independence, along with John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert R.
Livingston, and Roger Sherman, but ended up writing the document pretty much on his own. Thomas' behavior reveals a deep conflict between his ideals of liberty and his reliance on forced slave labor for the money to support his family and pursue his career in government. He wrote the words "All men are created equal" into the Declaration, and worked ceaselessly for democracy in both America and France, but personally owned up to 600 enslaved people, including children.

Two years after Martha's death, Thomas sailed to Paris to replace Benjamin Franklin as America's minister to France, bringing along his eldest daughter, Patsy, and Betty Hemings' enslaved son, James. His youngest daughter, Polly, and James' enslaved younger sister, Sally, joined them a few years later. The family (they were all related by blood or marriage) left Paris just as the French Revolution was erupting.

Jupiter Evans/French Servant (L. Peter Callender*)

Jupiter Evans - The enslaved Black man who attended Thomas Jefferson most of his life. He had been Thomas' playmate when they were children; worked as his servant when Thomas attended college; met his own wife, Sukey, on the same trip when Thomas met Martha; and became Thomas' valet in adulthood. Thomas replaced Jupiter with 12-year-old Robert Hemings in 1774, sending the older man outside to manage the horse stables.

Servant - A fictional French servant.

Robert Hemings/Hugo (Cameron Matthews)

Robert Hemings - The eldest son of Betty Hemings and John Wayles. Although Robert was three-quarters white, he was still born enslaved for life under the law, because his mother was enslaved. When we first meet him, he is 12 years old.

Hugo - A fictional free French man of mixed race, practicing as a lawyer in Paris; Renee's older brother.

James Hemings (William Hodgson*)

James Hemings - The second-eldest son of Betty Hemings and John Wayles. Like his brother Robert and sister Sally, James had three-quarters white ancestry, but was born into lifelong slavery. James could read and write, was trained as a chef, and learned French; as an adult, his relationship with Thomas Jefferson was complicated and troubled. One historian has described James as "perhaps the most talented" in the very talented Hemings family; historians believe that alcohol abuse led to his suicide.

Sally Hemings (Tara Pacheco*)

Sally Hemings - The youngest daughter of Betty Hemings and John Wayles. Like her brothers, Robert and James, she was three-quarters white by ancestry, but enslaved for life under Virginia law. When we first meet her, she is 14 years old, and has weathered a five-week-long voyage by ship from Virginia to Europe, caring for a nervous eight-year-old. No historical portraits of Sally survive, but she was described as very beautiful. Living in Paris with Thomas Jefferson and her brother, James, she learned that slavery was illegal in France, and became pregnant with Thomas' child.

Cast members at the first read-through of the play.
Biography of the Playwright: Thomas Bradshaw

Thomas Bradshaw’s plays have been produced throughout the U.S., as well as in Europe. They include Carlyle (Goodman Theatre in Chicago) Fulfillment (The Flea Theater); Intimacy (off-Broadway at The New Group); JOB (Flea Theater); Burning (off-Broadway at The New Group); Mary (Goodman Theatre in Chicago); The Bereaved (Partial Comfort - Best Plays of 2009 in Time Out NY & New York Times Critic’s Pick); Southern Promises (P.S. 122) and Dawn (Flea Theatre). A German translation of Dawn was presented at Theater Bielefeld in Germany in October 2008 and published by Theater Der Zeit in that same month.

Bradshaw has been featured as one of Time Out New York’s “Ten Playwrights to Watch”, as one of Paper Magazine’s Beautiful People, and Best Provocative Playwright by the Village Voice. He is the recipient of a 2009 Guggenheim Fellowship, the 2010 Prince Charitable Trust Prize, and the 2012 Award from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, as well as Fellowships from The Lark Play Development Center, Soho Rep. (Streslin Fellow), and New York Theater Workshop. He was the Playwright in Residence at The Soho Theatre in London in February 2009, where he wrote THE ASHES. He is currently working on commissions from the Goodman Theater, Manhattan Theater Club, and the Foundry Theater. Bradshaw is currently developing a TV series for HARPO and HBO. He received his M.F.A. from Mac Wellman’s playwriting program and is Professor of Playwriting at Northwestern University.

Interview with Thomas Bradshaw on his new play 'Thomas and Sally'

To open our 51st season, Marin Theatre Company is thrilled to welcome 2017 PEN Award winner Thomas Bradshaw, whose world-premiere play about Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, Thomas and Sally, originated as an MTC commission through our New Play Program. In this conversation with MTC literary manager/dramaturg Laura A. Brueckner, Bradshaw sets the stage for his radical exploration of a little-known chapter of American history.

LB: Thomas, you’ve been described by the New York Times as “American theater’s most distinctively provocative playwright”; your work has been called “button-pushing,” featuring “a deadpan style that has prompted both big laughs and angry walkouts.” That’s pretty intense! How do you feel your work departs from what audiences expect?

TB: I can tell you how my work departs from typical psychological realism, which is the framework within which much of our drama is written. I find that psychological realism is more concerned with how people should act, rather than how they actually do act in the real world. I’m much more concerned with how people actually do behave without smoothing over any of their hypocrisies. Many plays are concerned with consistency of character, so everything a character does is shown to make sense one way or another. I find that people can be remarkably inconsistent, and I make no attempt to reconcile these inconsistencies within my characters. Hypocrisy is a part of human nature. We all have a set
of ideals. Every day, we try to live up to those ideals, and often fall short. Some days we might make it to 90 percent, and some days 20 percent, but that doesn’t stop us from waking up the next day and striving to meet our ideals 100 percent.

There are a few other ways that my work departs from traditional drama. Often, when you’re watching a play, you can feel the hand of the playwright making moral judgments and telling you who the good guys are and who the bad guys are. My plays are devoid of this obvious moralizing. No character is good or bad. Each character is presented along the spectrum of gray.

My plays are also open-ended. I don’t send the audience away with a clear message that they’re supposed to have learned from the play. Instead, I place it in the lap of the audience to decide what they want to derive from the play. Art must leave room for audience interpretation. Otherwise, it’s propaganda.

What originally got you interested in the Sally Hemings story?

I became fascinated once I realized that Sally Hemings was the half-sister of Thomas Jefferson’s wife, Martha. And I became even more fascinated when I learned that Sally Hemings was only a quarter African-American, because her mother and grandmother were also impregnated by white men.

What are some things you found about the Jefferson/Hemings family that surprised you?

I was very intrigued when I learned about the special status the Hemings family enjoyed within the Jefferson household. Thomas Randolph Jefferson, the white grandson of Thomas Jefferson, wrote that the Hemings’ special treatment was a source of “bitter jealousy” among the other slaves at Monticello.

I also recently listened to some recollections by Robert H. Cooley III on the Jefferson Foundation’s Monticello website. Robert is a direct descendant of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, and asserts that, according to his family lore, Thomas and Sally had a loving relationship, like that of man and wife. I found that to be an extremely interesting piece of information.

How has the development process at MTC so far influenced the trajectory of your play?

My development process at MTC has deeply influenced the trajectory of the play. The play wouldn’t be what it is without the two extensive workshop periods, and the feedback from you and Jasson. It’s impossible to see what a play actually is until you have actors breathing life into the characters. It’s a privilege to have had so much time to work on the play before going into production.

What role do MTC’s audiences play in the development of this world-premiere play—what do you hope to learn from them?

Whether they’re engaged for the whole time. It’s a big play, and my nightmare would be to bore people!
Disappearing Women

If you’re like the character Karen in the play, *Thomas and Sally*, you’ve never heard of Sally Hemings - or her mother, Betty. That’s really no surprise. In the 1700s, the vast majority of women were prevented from doing the kinds of things that would make them known to anyone past their lifetimes. Most never published any writing, or had careers to make them famous; they were required to stay at home, doing or overseeing housework and raising numerous children (there was no birth control, so women were pregnant much of their adult lives). Also, thanks to a law called coverture, a woman’s right to do any legal or financial business for herself vanished one she was married; there would be no official record of what she had worked for and wanted economically. Finally, since hiring a painter to have a portrait done was very expensive (and there were no cameras), only the wealthy could afford to have images of themselves made that would survive their deaths.

Some women simply didn’t ever sit for a portrait - there is no existing portrait of Martha Jefferson, Thomas’ wife, although they probably could have afforded one. Women who were enslaved, like Betty and Sally Hemings, had even fewer options. They were generally prevented from reading and writing at all, their daily tasks almost never took them outside the walls of the plantation where they lived (until they were sold or deeded away). And their white owners almost certainly didn’t think it worth the cost to have their portraits painted. In this century, most enslaved women’s faces, names, and voices simply disappeared into history.

Then how do we know anything at all about the female characters in this play? In the case of white women who married famous men, such as Martha Jefferson and Abigail Adams, we have their private letters - tons of them - to their husbands, friends, mothers, sisters, and people they admired. Historians started collecting and examining their letters because of their relationships to their husbands. From letters, we learn that Abigail Adams and Thomas Jefferson were more or less best friends, wrote letters constantly and even went shopping for each other; we also learn that Abigail Adams was agitating for the legal rights of women over 140 years before the 19th Amendment ensured they could vote.

As enslaved women, though, information about Betty and Sally Hemings is much rarer, and it comes from more sobering sources: what others wrote and said about them, and the infernal record-keeping of slavery.

For example, their reputation as having been strikingly beautiful derives only from brief descriptions of men who either worked at or visited Monticello, and saw them there - Betty was called a “bright mulatto” (when any comparison to being bright or white was thought a compliment); enslaved Monticello blacksmith Isaac Granger Jefferson recalled that Sally was “mighty near white . . . very handsome, long straight hair down her back.” There were white men who emphasized Sally’s Blackness when describing her, including the notorious James Callender who tried to demolish Thomas Jefferson’s reputation in 1802 by outing Jefferson’s sexual involvement with Sally in the newspapers. Even then, when he was actively trying to do damage, he called Sally an “African Venus,” confirming her beauty.

Information about Betty’s and Sally’s interpersonal relationships is even less available - we have to draw inferences from very small pieces of information. One letter from a Paris schoolmate of Patsy and Polly gives us a glimpse at the kind of relationship the girls had with Sally, when the girl asks them to say hello to “Mlle.” Sally for her. The title “Mlle.” (short for “Mademoiselle”) was only used among the upper classes for each other, so the fact that this girl attached it to Sally’s name indicates that she thought of the beautiful half-sister of her school chums as part of her own social class; her saying “hello” at all indicates she thought of Sally as a friend.

Before beginning to consider these women privileged, however, we need to balance their beauty and access to upper-class white life with the stark, ugly realities of slavery, as reflected in the legal and financial documents concerning them. For example, legal documents show
that Betty Hemings was given as property to a man’s daughter when she got married, for the daughter to take to her new home forty miles away; Betty was 11 years old. Letters tell us that when Sally was 14, her owner’s family took her away from her home in Virginia (and her mother and four brothers and sisters), and ordered her sent on a ship to Europe as a nanny to her owner’s eight-year-old daughter. As far as she knew, she would never see her family again. She had no say in the matter.

We also know from household records that both Betty and Sally worked in the houses of their respective owners, not in the fields or factories. Historian Annette Gordon-Reed mentions, however, that working in the house may not have been preferable to working outside - field work is harder physically, but being inside the house subjected enslaved people to far more scrutiny, criticism, and control every waking moment of their lives - not to mention, for some women, the sexual attention of their male masters. No form of slavery was “easier” or “better.”

Of course, some of what we know about Betty and Sally derives from information that was discovered much later. Sally Hemings’ son Madison was interviewed for his memoirs in 1873, almost 40 years after Sally had died; in them, he asserts plainly that Sally became pregnant by Thomas while they were in Paris, that he made her “a solemn pledge that her children should be freed at the age of twenty-one years,” and that it was because of this promise that she agreed to return with him to Virginia. Further, a study of the DNA of Hemings descendants published in 1998 convinced most modern historians that Jefferson did indeed father Sally’s children. And as recently as this February, archaeologists uncovered the room they believe Sally Hemings lived in at Monticello - only steps away from Thomas Jefferson’s bedroom, when no other enslaved person had quarters even remotely that close to him.

Finally, we sometimes must examine what’s not there. Thomas Jefferson’s Farm Book, where he kept his obsessively comprehensive records of all economic activity at Monticello, contains detailed lists of the the purchase prices, food and clothing rations, and births for all of the over 600 enslaved people he owned over time. Jefferson noted every single time an enslaved woman gave birth on the plantation, along with the children’s names, and the name of children’s father - except for Sally Hemings. In her case, the name of the children’s father is left blank. Why? There are numerous entries in Jefferson’s Farm Book and mentions in his in letters about Sally’s siblings, Robert, James, Critta, Peter, and Thenia - what they were doing and where they were going. But virtually no similar mentions of Sally exist. For some historians, these gaps in the records of a man who apparently wrote down anything and everything else point to an intentional silence.

Ultimately, the play Thomas and Sally is an exploration of what these women’s lives, and the lives of those around them, might have been like - taking into account what we do know, and attempting to imagine the rest. We hope this show gets you thinking!

—Laura A. Brueckner, Ph.D.
Literary Manager & Resident Dramaturg
Marin Theatre Company
Suggestions for Classroom Activities

*History is often told from the point of view of the people in power, but *Thomas and Sally* gives us a different perspective, from the point of view of servants and minorities. How does a story change when you tell it from someone else’s perspective?*

**Different Point of View**

- In pairs, students think of a story they both know, such as a movie or a famous fairy tale, then choose a character who is not the main character.
- Students work together in their pairs to write (and then perform) a short scene showing the “real story,” from that side character’s point of view.
- Discuss afterward. How did seeing that story from a different character’s point of view change the story? Do we feel differently about the main characters now?

*The characters in this play have a lot of big goals and a lot of obstacles to achieving those goals. Play this quick-thinking improv game to brainstorm ways to get past obstacles!*

**Fortunately, Unfortunately**

- Divide students into two groups - “Fortunately” and “Unfortunately.” Choose one person from each group to be the leader.
- Begin a story with a totally neutral first sentence, such as, “Lucy decided to go to the grocery store.”
- Starting with “Unfortunately,” the team leaders take turns continuing the story. The “Unfortunately” side always tries to make things go wrong for the main characters, while the “Fortunately” side always tries to make it go well for them.
- If either team leader gets stuck or just repeats the same thing over and over, they’re out and a new person from their team replaces them until the story is finished.

*Use these writing prompts before or after seeing the show to help students connect to the characters!*

**Writing Prompts**

- What is a story about your family that has been passed down to you? Will you pass it on too? Why or why not?
- What one thing would you say is most important to you? What would you do if is was threatened?
- What is one thing you would like to see changed about the world today? What can you do, either now or in the future, to change it?
Play Review Worksheet

The Story
What is this play about? ____________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
How does the story begin? _________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
How does the story end? __________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Who do you think is the main character? __________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
What does this character want most? _____________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
What gets in the way of this character getting what he or she wants? __________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
How does this character change over the course of the play? What lessons does this character learn?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

The Production
Describe one aspect of the design of the production – the set, the lighting, the costumes, or the sound. How did this design element help tell the story? How did it make you feel? ___________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Pick one actor and critique his or her performance. What choices did this actor make that you agreed with? What choices did you disagree with? Move beyond “It was good” & “I liked it” – talk about choices.
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
2017/18 Season Student Matinees

Reserve your seats at next season’s Student Matinees now!

Shakespeare in Love
Dates: 11/30, 12/5, 12/12, 12/14 at 11am
Enchantment abounds in Tom Stoppard’s effervescent romance, Shakespeare in Love, where a young William Shakespeare attempts to write his crowd-pleasing comedy, Romeo and Ethel the Pirate’s Daughter. A twist on the stories found in history books, any class studying Literature, Elizabethan history, or Theatre is sure to love this adaptation. Recommended for grades 9-12.

Skeleton Crew
Dates: 2/1, 2/6, 2/13, 2/15 at 11am
A makeshift family of workers at the last American auto plant navigate the possibility of closure. Power dynamics shift, and they are pushed to the limits of survival. Skeleton Crew was listed by the NY Times as one of six plays they believe are crucial to understanding the divisiveness of our nation’s socio-political construct. History, Civics, and English classes will be interested in the social dynamics and workplace hierarchy in this gripping show. Recommended for grades 8-12.

The Wolves
Dates: 3/22, 3/27, 4/3, 4/5 at 11am
In an indoor Astroturf soccer field in suburban Middle America, the Wolves soccer team prepares for the upcoming College Showcase, and every point counts. Between the sprints and drills, however, these young women navigate even trickier terrain: the emotional path to adulthood. English and theatre classes will enjoy discussing the relationships and conflicts between characters. Recommended for grades 7-12.

Marjorie Prime
Dates: 5/10, 5/15, 5/22, 5/24 at 11am
85-year-old Marjorie lives with her daughter, Tess, and son-in-law, Jon; she also has a new confidant: an artificial intelligence programmed to learn her memories. The family soon realizes that this companion offers more than mere palliation, including the chance to rewrite Marjorie’s life for her - without its most painful events. What is the difference between identity, memory, and story? English and Theatre classes will be enjoy seeing what happens when science fictions becomes a reality and discussing the complex relationships between the characters. Recommended for grades 6-12.

For more information or to purchase tickets, please contact Haley Bertelsen, Box Office Manager, at haleyb@marintheatre.org or (415) 322-6041.
MTC Education Programs

Artists in Residency Program
Bring a professional teaching artist from Marin Theatre Company into your school! We will create a customized drama program that fits your community – a one-time workshop, weekly drama classes, or as an addition to the classroom curriculum. Previous focuses have included leadership, public speaking, play analysis, and much more. Contact us for pricing options and more information.

Marin Young Playwrights Festival
The Marin Young Playwrights Festival (MYPF) celebrates the work of teen playwrights and encourages a focus on playwriting in Bay Area high schools. Eight finalist plays are performed by teens in an event at MTC each winter.

Project 24.7
Project 24.7 is a 24-hour playwriting celebration where students experience the creative power of pressure while working within limits to create art. Students write, cast, rehearse, and perform original pieces all within twenty-four hours.

Conservatory Classes
MTC offers fall and spring theater classes from ages 4 through adult (as well as family classes) in acting, musical theatre, improv, and more. Our mission is to introduce students to a professional quality theatrical experience in a friendly, comfortable educational setting.

Summer Camp
MTC Summer Camps offer 7 weeks of camps for grades K-12! We also provide internships and counselor opportunities for interested high school and college students.

Internships
MTC’s internship program is designed to provide experience and preparation for beginning a career in the professional theatre. Interns work closely with members of MTC’s artistic and administrative staff, attending departmental meetings, interacting with patrons, and taking on real responsibilities in connection with MTC’s programs and productions. In addition, interns participate in special workshops and seminars and attend theatrical performances around the Bay Area.
Want to join the fun? Visit www.marintheatre.org or email us at education@marintheatre.org to find out more!
MTC Mission Statement and History

Mission
Marin Theatre Company produces world-class theater for the Marin County and Bay Area communities.

We strive to set a national standard for intimate theater experiences of the highest quality, featuring provocative plays by passionate playwrights.

We pursue a dialogue with our community that addresses our national and local concerns and interests and assists us in finding a new understanding of our lives.

We create future artists and arts patrons through innovative programs for youth.

History
Marin Theatre Company had modest grassroots beginnings. In 1966, 35 Mill Valley residents came together under the leadership of Sali Lieberman to create the Mill Valley Center for the Performing Arts [MVCPA]. The non-profit organization brought arts as diverse as film, theater, poetry, dance and concerts of classical, jazz and folk music to Marin County for a decade. After a number of successful community theater productions, MVCPA began to exclusively produce and present theater performances in 1977.

The small group overcame many challenges to put on critically-acclaimed, award-winning plays in a golf clubhouse, a veterans’ auditorium and several schools and parks. To acknowledge the organization’s specialization in theater arts and expanded regional focus, MVCPA changed its name to Marin Theatre Company in 1984. This marked the beginning of a period of extraordinary growth.

By 1987, MTC had become a professional theater company, opening its own theater complex with onsite administrative offices and joining with other local theaters to negotiate the first regional equity contract in the Bay Area. Since then, MTC began a new play program to support emerging American playwrights, launching a New Works developmental workshop and public reading series in 2004 and establishing two new play prizes in 2007. MTC joined both the League of Resident Theatres and National New Play Network in 2008. MTC is now the leading professional theater in the North Bay and premier mid-sized theater in the Bay Area.