

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

by

Mark Twain

A Youth Musical Adaptation

Book by Mark Jensen

Lyrics by Mark Jensen and Gary Rue

Music by Gary Rue

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First Production

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER was commissioned by Steppingstone Theatre for Youth Development in St. Paul, MN. Steppingstone Theatre for Youth Development produced the play on October 19 – November 4, 2012.

The production had the following cast:

Tom Sawyer – Henry Hitchler
Aunt Polly – Maddie Tonjes
Master Dobbins/Jack Knife Joe – Sam Orfield
Mary – Zoë Wentzel
Sid – Jeremy Skoler
Ben Rogers – Brigham Williams
Becky Thatcher – Thea Meyer-Grimberg
Dr. Robinson/Judge Thatcher – Seamus McKenna
Amy Lawrence – Emily Albert-Stauning
Huckleberry Finn – William Pratt
Potter's Lawyer – Johanna Keller Flores
Muff Potter – Kellan Beck-O'Sullivan
Joe Harper – Dominic Favorito
Jim Tucker – Roland Berg
Mary Austin – Governess Simpson
Greta Miller – Sophia Feller
Sally Rogers – Brenna Skulley
Alfred Temple – Nathan Parshall
Susy Harper – Piper Rolfes

The production had the following staff:

Director/Music Director – Stephen Houtz
Choreographer – Karis Sloss
Set Designer – Dean Holzman
Lighting Designer – Karin Olson
Costume Designer – Alicia C. Vegell
Properties Designer – Brooke Nelson
Technical Director/Sound Designer – Alan Pagel
Stage Manager – Julie Odegard
Assistant Stage Manager – Jamie Macpherson
Costume Construction – Linda Vegell
Student Assistant Stage Manager – A.C. Wilson

The Artistic Director for Steppingstone Theatre for Youth Development is Richard Hitchler. The Managing Director for the theatre is Ross D. Willits.

Cast of Primary Characters

Tom Sawyer – A mischievous, good-hearted boy who gets into a lot of difficult situations, frequently of his own making. He is between 11—14 years old.

Aunt Polly—Aunt Polly is Tom's guardian, often at wit's end. Although older, played by a young woman age 17-18.

Master Dobbins/Jack Knife Joe –Master Dobbins is the frustrated and bored schoolmaster. Jack Knife Joe is a lawless, mean, desperate man. Although older, both played by a young man age 17-18.

Mary –Tom's sympathetic cousin, often his protector from Aunt Polly. Age 15-16.

Sid – Tom's half-brother, a bitter, mean-spirited boy who pretends to be perfect in front of adults. He is between 11--14 years old.

Ben Rogers – One of Tom's best friends, he is the first boy Tom convinces to whitewash the fence. Age 10--14.

Becky Thatcher – A girl that Tom falls in love with at first sight. She is the daughter of Judge Thatcher, a prominent citizen of the town. Age 11--14.

Dr. Robinson/Judge Thatcher – Becky's father and town official. Dr. Robinson is a young medical doctor who hires Muff Potter and Jack Knife Joe to dig up a cadaver for him. Although older, both played by a young man age 17-18.

Amy Lawrence – A girl that, due to Tom's wooing, has fallen in love with Tom. Now that he's fallen for Becky, however, he wants nothing more to do with her. Age 11—14.

Huckleberry Finn – The son of the local drunk, he is a destitute, outcast boy strongly disliked by the adults. He is also Tom's best friend. Age 11—14.

Potter's Lawyer –A lawyer who is in charge of Muff Potter's defense during the murder trial. Although older, played by a young man or woman age 17-18.

Muff Potter – The local, kind-hearted young drunk hired by Dr. Robinson to help dig up the body in the graveyard. Although older, played by a young man age 17-18.

Joe Harper – A close friend of Tom's, he goes with Tom and Huck out to Jackson's Island. Age 11—14.

Jim Tucker – A boy who lives in the town. Age 11-14.

Mary Austin – A girl who goes to Sunday School with Becky Thatcher. Age 10-11.

Greta Miller – A girl who is good friends with Becky Thatcher. Age 11-14.

Sally Rogers – Ben Roger's sister, she is also good friends with Becky Thatcher. Age 10-11.

Alfred Temple – A boy who is in love with both Becky Thatcher and his picture books. Age 11-14.

Susy Harper – Joe Harper's sister, she is also good friends with Becky Thatcher. Age 10-11.

Cast of Group Characters

StorySpinners – Various actors who narrate the story. When the actors are not playing their primary characters, they take on a StorySpinner role.

Boyz ‘N Gurlz – When the actors are not playing their primary characters or StorySpinners, they become part of the onstage chorus.

Time and Place

St. Petersburg, Missouri, a small river settlement situated on the banks of Mississippi River. The time is the mid to late 1840’s.

StorySpinner Concept

The Storyspinners narrate the action of Tom Sawyer through direct address with the audience. However, the StorySpinners should rarely just stand and deliver their lines; they should always be incorporated into the action of the scene. They both describe the scene and are still part of the world of the play.

This script contains some suggested actions the StorySpinners can do. For example, when Tom Sawyer walks around St. Petersburg, the StorySpinners become townspeople walking around the streets with him. Likewise during the murder trial, each StorySpinner becomes a witness called up to the stand. The StorySpinner lines can also be performed by the same characters in the scenes to help highlight the action.

Song List

- “DIP, BRUSHHHHH, SMOOOOOTH” – p. 5
- “A ONE NEEDS A ONE TO BE TWO (AMY’S LAMENT)” – p. 15
- “IN THE GRAVEYARD” – p. 20
- “THE PIRATES OF MISSOURI” – p. 31
- “OH, LOST SPOTTED CALF” – p. 36
- “A ONE NEEDS A ONE TO BE TWO (BECKY’S LAMENT)” – p. 46
- “’PLORIN’ MCDUGAL’S CAVE” – p. 50
- “HUCK FINN DONE GONE CIVILIZED” – p. 61

(SET: A building set piece with a porch; this piece is used as a house, schoolhouse, church, and courthouse. A large rock outcropping is used for a graveyard, island, and cave. The Mississippi River is the front of the stage.)

(PRE-SHOW: A group of STORYSPINNERS enter. Some are sweeping the porch, some fish, some just enjoy the day. They adlib dialogue.)

(AT RISE: The STORYSPINNERS speak.)

STORYSPINNER 1

Most of the adventures you're about to see really occurred.

STORYSPINNER 2

Tom Sawyer is drawn from life; Huck Finn too.

STORYSPINNER 3

It all took place in St. Petersburg, a tiny Missouri town, sitting on the banks of the wide, rolling Mississippi River.

STORYSPINNER 4

That is to say, one hundred and sixty years ago or so.

(AUNT POLLY sweeps the porch, wearing a plain dress with an apron.)

AUNT POLLY

Tom! Tom! What's gone with that boy, I wonder? You, TOM!

MARY

Is Tom missin'?

AUNT POLLY

Missin' or hidin', one or t'other.

AUNT POLLY and MARY

Tom! Hullo, Tom! TOM!

SID

Lookin' fer Tom, Aunt Polly?

AUNT POLLY

Sid! You gave me a turn. Yes, I been looking for yer brother Tom high and low, high and low.

SID

Half-brother, Auntie, he's half! And the bad half, fer certain. Have you swept under the curtains yet?

AUNT POLLY

Why no, I...

(Spies a pair of bare feet sticking out from under a curtain. Sweeps them with the broom. TOM SAWYER jumps out from behind it, hiding his hands.)

TOM

Sid, I'll lick you fer that!

AUNT POLLY

Might've thought of those curtains. What you been doing behind there?

TOM

...Nothing.

AUNT POLLY

Nothing, huh? Why are you hiding yer hands? Show 'em, come on. What is that truck?

TOM

I don't know, Aunt Polly. Just somethin'.

AUNT POLLY

Well, I know. It's jam, that's what it is. Forty times I've said if you didn't leave that jam alone I'd skin you. Sid, hand me my switch!

MARY

Mother!

SID

That'll teach 'im real good!

MARY

(Wiping TOM's hands off with her apron.)

You can't hit our Tom, mother! You just simply can't! Poor orphan kin, he can't help it.

AUNT POLLY

Oh fiddlesticks... hold Sid, hold, and stand awhile.

SID

But!

AUNT POLLY

Sid, mind me, you hear! Thomas Sawyer... you're full of the Old Mischief, but laws-a-me! I can't do it! I just can't do it. When I see yer face, I see the face of my poor dead sister, and I ain't got the heart to lash you. I'm a-laying up sin and suffering fer us both, I know. Spare the rod and spile the child, as the Good Book says. If I hit you though, Tom, my old heart will break.

SID

But Aunt Polly! He stole jam out of the cupboard! Again!

(TOM threatens SID with his fist behind AUNT POLLY's back. When AUNT POLLY turns to TOM, SID sticks out his tongue.)

AUNT POLLY

Don't I know it. And I must do my duty. A punishment of some kind. Poor Tom, poor, poor Tom...

(A fence appears; it needs paint.)

By gosh and golly, I got just the thing! Sid, fetch the whitewash. And don't fergit the brushes!

SID

The whitewash? Oo, yes'm!

TOM

Aunt Polly, what yer plannin'?

AUNT POLLY

Yer eternal salvation. But in the meantime, the fence will havta do. Paint the whole thing fresh and clean. And while yer at it, may yer soul become fresh and clean too. Besides, I'm sure you had other uses fer yer Saturday, 'specially swimming, warm as it is now.

TOM

Aunt Polly, no!

(SID runs joyously onstage, holding a wooden paint bucket and brushes. He hands all to TOM.)

AUNT POLLY

Whitewash this fence, the whole durn thing, and then you can go 'bout yer business. And there better not be a single spot missed when I look upon it again, ya hear?

TOM

Yes'm...

(AUNT POLLY, MARY, and SID exit. SID silently laughs. When AUNT POLLY looks back at him, SID stops and becomes very sober.)

(TOM approaches the fence. He paints feebly, making little progress. STORYSPINNERS enter, skipping happily, playing, and narrating the scene.)

STORYSPINNER 5

All the spring world was bright and fresh. Brimming with life!

STORYSPINNER 6

The locust trees were in bloom and the fragrance of the blossoms filled the air!

STORYSPINNER 7

But for Tom, he had thirty yards of board fence nine feet high.

STORYSPINNER 8

Then at this dark and hopeless moment, an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration.

BEN

(Enters singing, holding an apple.)

Buffalo gals won't you come out tonight, come out tonight, come out tonight. Buffalo gals won't you come out... Hi ay there Tom. You're shore up a stump, ain't you!

TOM

(Ignoring him, he paints, using the exaggerated flourish of an artist working on a masterpiece.)

Oh... it's you, Ben! I warn't noticing.

BEN

Well, I'm going a-swimming. Don't you wish you could? But of course, you'd druther work.
(Laughs.)

TOM

Well, maybe it is, and maybe it isn't. All I know is, it suits Tom Sawyer.

BEN

Oh come now, you don't mean to let on you like it?

TOM

I don't see why I oughn't to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?
(TOM paints artistically back and forth. Hums.)

BEN

Ah.. well, no not every day...

TOM

That fresh white shore looks grand, don't it! It just shines!

BEN

Yeah... By jings, that it does...

TOM

I'm making this fence brand new! Me! Me and nobody else! Once I'm done, I'll be able to walk past this here fence, proud as a gold button on Sunday! Yup, Ben, this here suits Tom Sawyer just fine.

(TOM paints, exaggerating back and forth. Hums.)

BEN

Huh. Say there Tom. Let me whitewash a little.

TOM

No, I reckon it wouldn't hardly do, Ben. Aunt Polly's awful particular about this fence. It's got to be done very careful. I reckon there ain't one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it's got to be done.

BEN

Lemme just try. Only just a little. If you let me, I'll give you this apple?

TOM

Oh... well... all right. But it has to be done just so. Just so now, ya hear?

(BEN paints for a bit.)

TOM

Hey there Ben, that's awfully great. You really can brush on that paint!

BEN

Yup, it shore is a whole lotta fun, painting each board one by one.

(TOM sits on a nearby barrel, huge grin, eating an apple.
All the BOYZ N' GIRLZ enter. SONG: "DIP,
BRUSHHHHH, SMOOOOOTH")

BOYZ N' GIRLZ

DIP. BRUSH. SMOOTH. DIP. BRUSH. SMOOTH. DIP. BRUSH. SMOOTH.

(JIM, SUSY, and GRETA enter, laughing.)

JIM

BOY, YOU TWO GOT FIXED AND STUCK!

TOM

I DUNNO. BEATS STUCK IN MUCK.

SUSY

WELL I THINK YOU BOTH COO-COO.

TOM

NOT OUR FAULT, YOU A LAZY FOOL.
AIN'T NO WAY YOU PAINT LIKE BEN.

GRETA

I COULD PAINT LIKE HIM, I KIN!

TOM

NO WAY YOU KIN, I GOT MY PRIDE
COAT'S GOTTA BE TRUE ON THIS HERE SIDE.

BEN

YUP! IT SHORE IS A WHOLE LOTTA FUN,
PAINTING EACH BOARD ONE BY ONE.
DIP. BRUSH. SMOOTH. DIP. BRUSH. SMOOTH. DIP. BRUSH. SMOOTH. (Continues)

SUSY

I CAN PAINT GOOD! I'LL SHOW YOU!

GRETA

I CAN PAINT MUCH BETTER TOO!

JIM

GIVE YOU THESE MARBLES. I'LL DO THE JOB.

SUSY

NO ME! TAKE THIS SHINY DOOR KNOB!

GRETA

I GOT THIS HERE HUNK O' CHALK!
I PAINT THE BEST, THEY'RE JUST TALK.

TOM

WELL THEN YOU EACH CAN HAVE YER TURN.
BUT DO IT RIGHT, AIN'T GOT TIME TO LEARN.

BEN, JIM, SUSY, and GRETA

YUP! IT SHORE IS A WHOLE LOTTA FUN,

BEN, JIM, SUSY, and GRETA (CONT.)

PAINTING EACH BOARD ONE BY ONE.

DIP. BRUSH. SMOOTH. DIP. BRUSH. SMOOTH. DIP. BRUSH. SMOOTH. (Continues)

(As TOM checks out his new riches, JIM, SUSY, and
GRETA paint the fence.)

(MARY AUSTIN, SALLY, ALFRED, and the rest of
the BOYZ 'N GURLZ laugh and point.)

BOYZ 'N GURLZ

LOOKIT THOSE POOR CLOUDS, OH MY GOSH!

PAINTING ON THAT THERE WHITEWASH!

(They laugh.)

GRETA

YA'LL GO ON, YOU AIN'T SO SMART!

SUSY

YEAH! WHAT WE'RE DOIN' IS CALLED ART.

JIM

NO WAY YOU CAN DO IT, NO WAY NO HOW.

BEN

YOU CAN'T PAINT NO BETTER THAN A COW!

MARY AUSTIN

A COW! THAT MAKES ME FIGHTIN' MAD!

ALFRED

GIVE ME THAT BRUSH! I'LL SHOW YOU'RE BAD!

TOM

HOLD ON, HOLD ON, YOU STOP RIGHT THERE,
PICK UP THAT WOOD BRUSH IF YOU DARE.

ALFRED

YOU NEED TO GIVE ME HERE A CHANCE!

MARY AUSTIN

AND ME TOO! TAKE THIS JAR OF ANTS!

TOM

SHORE YOU CAN? YOU GOTTA BE GOOD!

ALFRED

YES I CAN, I KNOWED I COULD!

BOYZ 'N GURLZ

GIVE US A TURN, YOU'LL SEE US SHINE.

THIS HERE FENCE'LL BE MIGHTY FINE!

(One by one, each member of the BOYZ 'N GURLZ trades TOM an item so they can get the privilege of whitewashing the fence. The items include a broken kite, a piece of blue bottle glass, a spool with string, firecrackers, a dog collar, pieces of orange peel, a knife handle. The last item should be a dead rat on a string.)

TOM

HA! LOOKING OVER ALL THIS STUFF I GOT,
SHORE BEATS BEIN' ALL STICKY AND HOT,
SOME ORANGE PEEL, MARBLES, SAY, A KNIFE!
A DOG COLLAR! GOLLY, THIS SHORE IS THE LIFE!
A BRASS KNOB, BROKEN GLASS, AND SOME STRINGS
A KITE, FIRECRACKERS, AND OTHER THINGS.
BUT WHAT IS BEST OF ALL THAT,
IS THIS THING HERE, A SPINNING RAT!

BOYZ 'N GURLZ

YUP! IT SHORE IS A WHOLE LOTTA FUN,
PAINTING EACH BOARD ONE BY ONE.
DIP. BRUSH. SMOOTH. DIP. BRUSH. SMOOTH. DIP. BRUSH. SMOOTH. (Continues)

STORYSPINNER 9

(Spoken.)

And so Tom learned that Work is something you're obliged to do, while Play is something you really want to do.

BOYZ 'N GURLZ

IT'S A LOTTA... IT'S A LOTTA... LOTTA, FUN! (DIP, BRUSH, SMOOTH... DIP, BRUSH, SMOOTH...)

(SONG ends. The fence is completely whitewashed.
The BOYZ 'N GURLZ exit.)

BOYZ 'N GURLZ

Thank you, Tom! See you at the swimmin' hole! Yee-haw that wus durn fun! You take care now, Tom.

MARY AUSTIN

I was the best painter.

GRETA

Stop yer lyin'. It was me!

TOM

(Calling back to the house.)

Mayn't I go and play now, Aunt Polly? It's all done.

(Enter AUNT POLLY and SID.)

AUNT POLLY

What, a'ready? You ain't done. Tom, don't lie to me – I can't bear it!

SID

She gonna switch you hard fer lyin'!

(AUNT POLLY glares at him.)

And I'll feel terrible awful 'bout that too.

TOM

I ain't lyin'. It is all done!

AUNT POLLY

Well... I never! There's no getting round it, you can work when you're a mind to. But it's a powerful seldom you're a mind to, I'm bound to report. Well, go 'long and play.

TOM

(Hands the whitewash bucket and brush back to SID.
He then grabs SID's nose and pulls it hard.)

That's fer tellin' on me.

SID

Ow! Aunt Polly!

AUNT POLLY

Tom Sawyer! You git back here! Oh Lord above, what am I to do with that chile! Are you hurt bad, Sid?

(TOM is gone. AUNT POLLY helps SID exit.)

STORYSPINNER 10

Tom skirted the block, and came round into a muddy alley that led by the back of Aunt Polly's cow stable.

STORYSPINNER 11

He presently got safely beyond the reach of capture and punishment.

(TOM pretends to fly the broken kite he received during the whitewashing.)

STORYSPINNER 12

And as he was passing by the house where the new judge now lived...

(BECKY and JUDGE THATCHER enter. The JUDGE says some of the STORYSPINNER lines. BECKY picks flowers in a garden.)

(TOM sticks his hands in his pockets; whistling, he walks slowly by the fence.)

STORYSPINNER 13

He worshipped this new angel with furtive eye...

(BECKY coyly looks at TOM.)

STORYSPINNER 14

...till he saw that she had discovered him.

TOM

(Takes out a firecracker, pretends it's lit.)

It's on fire, help, help! Argh!

(Throws it; plugs his ears.)

BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM!

(BECKY, bored, returns to her garden.)

TOM

(Takes out the dog collar and pretends to pull around a big stubborn dog.)

C'mon Petey, ain't nothin', ya coward. Only a possum. C'mon boy, ya coward!!!

(BECKY surreptitiously looks at him. When TOM turns to see if she's looking, BECKY laughs and quickly turns away, working on the flowers.)