

UmbrellaArts EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

PREPARED BY STAFF MEMBERS OF UMBRELLA ARTS



BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

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PHOTO BY JIM SABITUS. FEAT. AMY BARKER*, DEMAR JONES*, AND MICHELLE MORAN

*INDICATES A MEMBER OF ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



AN EDUCATION NOTE:

June 23, 1992, the Weekly World News published its iconic headline: "Bat Boy Found in West Virginia Cave!" introducing a half-boy, half-bat creature who rapidly evolved into the paper's unofficial mascot.

Conceived by Keythe Farley & Brian Flemming in 1996 and scored by Laurence O'Keefe, *Bat Boy: The Musical* fuses horror, comedy, tragedy, and satire, as well as musical styles like gospel, rock, and traditional musical theatre. It is a Greek tragedy dressed up as a 1950s American B-movie.

The performance style *Bat Boy's* creators discovered with their company, The Actors' Gang, was built on "the height of expression, the depth of sincerity." Creators found the show works best when its absurd world is played with complete truthfulness and enormous emotional stakes: "take-it-so-seriously-it's-funny-but-it-also-hurts."

"Keythe and Brian set out to build a darkly comic world around deadly serious themes, primarily the notion of scapegoating – how societies will blame their fears and failures on the unusual, the weak, and the gifted. We decided to make *Bat Boy* all three." - Laurence O'Keefe

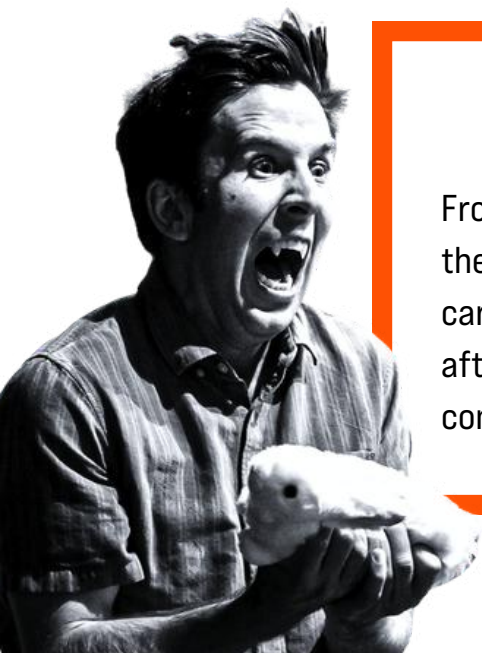
Bat Boy has a campy, over-the-top tone, but it is intentional and intelligent about using that style to both entertain and comment on persistent human themes of belonging, prejudice, scapegoating, fate, and what it means to be "human" versus what it means to be "civilized".

Bat Boy is also full of too many allusions and influences to catalogue here, but we hope this guide is a rich starting point to the many worthwhile discussions this musical can inspire!



PRE-SHOW QUESTIONS

- What communities do you belong to?
 - What does this community value or require to be a part of it?
 - How does this community confront problems?
- Do you have or seek out friendships with people who are different than you?
 - How do you bridge or appreciate those differences?
 - How do you make someone is different from you feel welcome?
- What monsters, myths, and urban legends do you find scary? Why? Is there anything scarier to you than such stories and characters?
- The town in this musical is set in is called “Hope Falls”. What do you predict will happen in this town, based on the name?
- In stories, do you sometimes relate to or sympathize with characters who are “monsters” or “villains”? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to be “normal”? Can you identify things that all humans, or even all creatures, have in common?
- Have you ever been in a situation where it was easier to blame someone else than own up to your role in creating a problem?
- Can being different be a superpower? What kind of differences benefit a community and how have you seen this in your own life?



SPOILER ALERT

From here onward in the Education Guide, the content may quote the characters, reveal plot points, and more. If you like spoilers, carry on, but if you want to be totally surprised, save the rest for after you’ve seen *Bat Boy: The Musical*. (For production-specific content warnings, flip to this guide’s final spread.)

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



FOLKLORE, LEGENDS, AND CRYPTIDS

"Do you not think that there are things which you cannot understand, and yet which are; that some people see things that others cannot?" - *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, Chapter 14

Folklore and legends have circled communities much longer than we have documentation of. Scotland's Loch Ness Monster, New Jersey's "Jersey Devil" (at right) various forms of Bigfoot, mermaids, and others are considered "cryptids" – reclusive creatures who are not confirmed scientifically to exist, but which persist in stories and eye witness accounts. Often, they are described as hybrids of familiar creatures.



The United States' Appalachian region, which includes a large portion of East Coast states, is home to many of these legends. Many of these folk tales originate from Native American tribes residing on the land, specifically the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokee Nation used folklore to pass down important information from one generation to the next, teach core values to younger members, and promote unity.

Folklore continues to unite communities even today. In Point Pleasant, West Virginia, every third week of September is a festival dedicated to their own legend, Mothman. However, these legends can also be used to explain tragic events that occur within a community.

The cast of *Bat Boy* that plays many different characters can be seen as a chorus that's telling Edgar / Bat Boy's story and perpetuating his legend, especially when they sing their final number less as characters (some of whom have already died in the events of the story) and more as performers compelling the audience to heed the lessons Bat Boy's story offers.

SUGGESTED PODCASTS: [Cryptid Zone](#) | [Cryptid Campfire](#)



KIDCARE ACTIVITY

Umbrella Arts' KidCare Program gives parents an opportunity to attend select performances while their child(ren) ages 5-12 engage in art activities inspired by the film or show in one of The Umbrella's classrooms with an experienced teacher. If you'd like to better understand or complete the activity at home, here is your guide!

Activity Steps: "Exquisite Cryptid"

1. Get a piece of paper and fold it into three or four even sections (to make four sections, fold in half, then fold in half again in the same direction)
2. Unfold the paper and draw the head and neck of a creature in the top panel. Extend the outlines of the neck a little bit into the next panel to give the next artist a starting point.
3. Fold the first panel down out of sight and pass your paper to another artist to complete the second panel.
4. Repeat steps 1-3 again until all panels are completed, down to the creature's feet! Don't peek at the previous panels during the process.
5. Unfold your paper to view the full, collaborative drawing of a strange new creature!

BOOK KIDCARE

Sun, Oct 18, 2 PM for **BAT BOY** and 6 PM for **I AND YOU**

To book KidCare to accompany your tickets to see BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL and/or I AND YOU, simply visit theUmbrellaArts.org/class/kidcare-performances and add the experience to your cart for the appropriate number of young people ages 5-12. Please note that enrollment space is limited and is reserved as first come, first served. For the upcoming productions in our 2026/27 season, KidCare is available March 7 and May 16.

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



RIPPED FROM THE TABLOID HEADLINES

“Heed the tale of a filthy freak, who’s just like you!” - BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

Bat Boy: The Musical is inspired by a *World Weekly News* headline published on June 23rd, 1992. The title, “BAT CHILD ESCAPES! Coast-to-coast manhunt for cave boy captured just weeks ago!” is one of many absurd titles published by *World Weekly News* since 1979, when the publisher began selling these eye-catching newspapers at supermarkets.



WWN Headlines

- AMAZING STORY: Man carries unborn twin 21 years inside his head
- Elvis’ secret grave found
- Dying planet sends Christmas message to Earth
- Baffling chair of death kills 63!
- Space probe finds dinosaur on Mars
- Baby born with tattoo dated 1917

While the standalone print version stopped publication in 2007, *World Weekly News* still exists today as a website. Today their headlines are much more “in on the joke” than in their earlier publications.

Pulp magazines refer to tabloids printed on cheap wood pulp, rather than fancier papers. These papers were printed from 1896 until around 1955. Characters like Doc Savage, The Shadow, Zorro, and Tarzan all came from pulp magazines! These action stories paved the way for comic books, which emerged in the 1930s.

Suggested Reading

- [Bat Boy Lives! An Oral History of Weekly World News](#) by Jake Rossen

AND WHAT ABOUT REAL BATS?

Bats, like many nocturnal creatures, are often feared. But what are these animals truly like, and how does Edgar's character riff on what's real and what's assumed about these creatures? Some bat facts to ponder...

- Massachusetts has nine native species of bats.
- The phrase "blind as a bat" isn't accurate. Bats navigate effectively at night using **echolocation**, plus they have superior sight to humans in darkness or dim lighting, just like Edgar.
- Most bats excel at natural pest control: they are estimated to be able to consume up to 1000 mosquitoes per hour. (Not unlike all Edgar's offers to help in "Let Me Walk Among You," this is a welcome service!)
- The legend of vampires, chupacabras, and other bloodsucking cryptids is inspired by the vampire bat, a small (up to 3.5 inches long) critter that feeds via a process called **hematophagy**: they make a small puncture in the skin of a mammal with their sharp teeth then lapping up the blood while their special saliva prevents the blood from clotting during the feed.
- A third type of bat is typically larger (and is therefore called a "megabat") and feeds on fruits, pollen, nectar, and/or vegetation.
- Bats are not generally aggressive toward humans, but they can carry rabies, which is dangerous and potentially deadly disease if treatment of an infected animal (or human) is not treated in a timely fashion.

SUGGESTED READING

- [Benefits of Bats](#)
- [Why Bats Matter](#)



BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME

“Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition; for often, like him, when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me.” - *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley, Chapter 15

Pan is the Greek god of flocks and fields; however, he does not look like how you may imagine a god to look. Pan is a hybrid, with the torso of a human, but the horns and legs of a goat, also known as a satyr. In Greek, the word “pan” means “all.”

As a hybrid, Pan exists at the boundary of human and animal, civilization and wilderness, repression and desire, sacred and profane. He is a god who asks a disturbing question:



What happens when the animal part of humanity is not conquered, but celebrated? That is why Pan becomes both a symbol of joyful freedom and, later, one of the sources for Western images of the Devil.”

When the god appears in *Bat Boy: The Musical*, Pan invites Shelley and Edgar to explore their unconventional love and lust. This supernatural intervention is a common thing that happens in Greek tragedy and Shakespeare. When a god on stage creates a tidy conclusion, it’s called a “deus ex machina”; however, Pan’s appearance in *Bat Boy* creates more complications in the story.

Ancient themes are littered throughout the production of *Bat Boy*, including excessive violence, incest (when blood relatives become romantically involved, often without realizing it, like Edgar and Shelley), and scapegoating. In ancient Greece, an animal (like a goat) or human might be chosen to represent the impurity within a community. Citizens would then drive the chosen scapegoat out of town to symbolize the city being rid of pollution. How does the town of Hope Falls treat Bat Boy as a scapegoat?



WHAT IS A WEEKEND REVIVAL?

“He will show he’s not what they’re terrified of; he will show them a love they can never destroy.” - BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

In the Christian faith, a weekend revival is an opportunity for Christians to reaffirm their faith and invites newcomers into the religious community. Activities during a weekend revival involve guest preachers, worship, and prayer.

Weekend Revival meetings started as lengthy prayer services to renew religious fever within a congregation. They commonly bring different congregations and church groups together under a common purpose, like the people of Hope Falls deciding whether or not to accept Edgar / Bat Boy. These revivals can create deep bond within communities, giving people a fresh sense of shared identity.

How does faith impact the residents of Hope Falls? Are they willing to open up their circle to new people, like Bat Boy? How does faith play a role in how Bat Bly is treated in the community?

Examples of Weekend Revivals in Film

- Big Fish (2003)
- O Brother, Where Art Thou (2000)
- The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (2008)



BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



THE STYLE OF CAMP

Bat Boy: The Musical is a mash-up of many genres and inspirations, resulting in a camp horror tragicomedy. But what is “camp”?

Camp originated as an artistic style in 19th century England, but even before that, this word was used by gay men and the broader LGBTQ+ community since at least the 1500s, making it a staple in queer culture.

The style of camp serves as a rallying point and refuge for queer communities. Camp has been noted to help those in the queer community find belonging, viability, and joy in a world that has historically been hostile towards them. In this way, camp responds to unspoken societal rules and norms, redefining what beauty, success, and identity look like.

“Camp” indicates an exaggerated, theatrical style, fully, enthusiastically embodied by a performer(s). Through an animated style of acting, outlandish plot points, and big swings in tone (for example, from the sweet and tender to the dark and morbid) in a single song or scene. *Bat Boy: The Musical* is considered “camp” because it fully exercises the capabilities of theatre, and also reminds and makes you aware that you are watching theater.

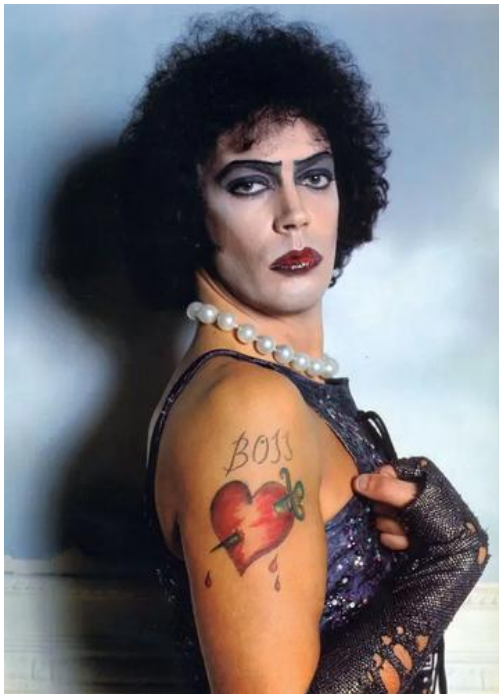
Other examples of “campy” media include *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Death Becomes Her*, and *Hairspray*.

“The hallmark of Camp is the spirit of extravagance.”
- Susan Sontag, *Notes on Camp* (1964)

SUGGESTED READING

- [What is Camp? The History & Evolution of a Queer Aesthetic](#) by Rebecca Nagel

ICONS OF CAMP



▲ MOMMIE DEAREST has over-the-top style and feuds.

◀ Tim Curry as Dr. Frankfurter in THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW. Rickie Lake and Divine as Tracy and Edna in John Waters' film HAIRSPRAY. ▼



▲ Meryl Streep in DEATH BECOMES HER.



BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



B-MOVIE HORROR

In the 1950s, the emergence of American teen culture, fears of advancements in science (especially in studies of nuclear power and genetics), and movie studios' ability to mass produce films with chilling special effects yielded a new cinematic genre: the B-movie.

Taking its name from the B-side, meaning the secondary film at a double feature, these “lesser” films like *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (1957, at right) explored themes of transformation, monstrosity, alienation, uncanny horror, and more. They often by featuring a monster, alien, or otherworldly threat. Films like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) presented a more stylish, elevated take on paranoia and went on to become influential classics.



**"I don't play monsters. I play men besieged by fate and out for revenge."
- Vincent Price**

SUGGESTED VIEWING

- *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956): fear of strangers in the suburbs.
- *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (1957): Adolescence as horrific transformation.
- *House on Haunted Hill* (1959): Vincent Price is both absurd and elegant.
- *The Tingler* (1959): Again, a gleefully unhinged Vincent Price.
- *The Little Shop of Horrors* (1960): a horror comedy with a pathetic protagonist.
- *The Fly* (1958): A twisted science experiment results in hybrid horror.



Above, L to R: Holly B. Faust, Johnny Shea*, Tomas Vice + Michelle Moran, Johnny Shea*, Brian Demar Jones, Amy Barker*. Below, the cast of BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL. Photos by Jim Sabitus. * a member of AEA.



BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



AN INTERVIEW WITH STAR JOHNNY SHEA

INTERVIEW BY KILIAN MELLODY OF THEATER MIRROR



Michelle Moran and Johnny Shea*, photo by Jim Sabitus. *indicates a member of AEA.

TM: You won the Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Performance earlier this year for TICK, TICK... BOOM! Congratulations on that.

JS: Thank you so much.

TM: And now you're back with Umbrella Arts as Bat Boy. Do you see any resonance between the two roles?

JS: Being back at Umbrella Arts is really exciting. I enjoyed working there on TICK, TICK... BOOM!, and in terms of [the main characters'] hunger and passion, I do see a connection. Jon [in tick, tick...BOOM!] is urgently trying to pursue making something meaningful out of his art and his work, and I think Edgar in BAT BOY has that same hunger and passion and desire to belong, and to be accepted into this community. So, in terms of their fire and energy, I think I do see a parallel there.

M: This is a unique play. I don't think I've ever seen a play that said it was "licensed under agreement with Weekly World News."



JS: I know, it's crazy, right? Some of the people in our cast recalled memories from when they were younger and had real fears of this [tabloid] cover. It's amazing that the writers caught wind of the tabloid and decided to let the musical follow.

TM: Edgar starts out as quite feral. Or do you see him more as... raw? Unspoiled by civilization?

JS: I like seeing it both ways. The feral side is probably the biggest challenge of the role. Edgar has been raised by bats, so he's purely animalistic. But I also like how this could mean he's untouched by the world yet — pure and raw. Everything is new to Edgar. Everything is impacting him and changing the way he sees the world. What's interesting about the play is that we see him cultivate seeds of goodness and curiosity but also [we see him] learn darker elements that lead to the play's tragedy.

TM: There's some pretty dark stuff here, for a comedy. How are you finding the funny in the midst of so much mayhem?

JS: It's a real challenge of the show. There could be laughter, or shock, or disgust, or horror. There's a wide range of possible outcomes because it's like a Greek tragedy, but also absurd. I think Jeremy [Johnson], our director, is doing a good job finding the right tone...Lawrence O'Keefe, in the playwright's notes, talks about playing this with real, genuine commitment while in an absurd universe. It's difficult, because it's tricky dealing with things that are really heavy and sad. But I kind of love that it does all of that.

TM: Bat Boy seems like it could be played right now as a metaphor for **xenophobia** and anti-immigrant sentiments.

Xenophobia,

noun:

This term comes from the Greek roots meaning strangers (xenos) and fear (phobia), this term refers to fear of foreigners and outsiders that can lead to violence. The opposite is xenia, or hospitality.

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



AN INTERVIEW WITH STAR JOHNNY SHEA

INTERVIEW BY KILIAN MELLOY OF THEATER MIRROR

JS: There's a lyric from the storytellers — the ensemble characters who play multiple roles and serve like a Greek chorus — where they sing, "He's much like me" about Edgar. I think he can serve as a metaphor for marginalized or oppressed people. The fear of the unknown and the hatred of things we don't understand is something Edgar and the society around him represent. We have a responsibility to create a sense of poignancy amidst this otherwise silly story so audience members can see themselves in this character. It feels important to do right now because of the political climate. Oppressed people are othered, seen as less than or different, and often driven away or pushed out. This show deals with that pretty head on

TM: The writers touch on something that feels obvious now: Persecution is not always just a matter of fear of the unknown. Sometimes, permission is all people need to hate and attack.

JS: Yeah, scapegoating is a big part of the show. The cows are dying, they need someone to blame, and mob mentality kicks in. There's something about our animal side, the primitive side in all of us that lashes out when we're afraid. Edgar learns this; he didn't start with it. He learned it from the society around him. He embraces it. He says, "I'm not a boy, I'm an animal," and he believes what he thinks are truths about him.

TM: The songs seem to drive much of the story, rather than merely accompany it.

JS: Yeah, it's mostly songs. There aren't that many book scenes. The twists and turns in the songs often drive the plot, which is exciting. Characters make big discoveries in each song... And there are curveballs along the way. That's fun to play, because it's not always the case in musical theater.



TM: Is there a song that hits you particularly hard?

JS: “Let Me Walk Among You” is probably my favorite song to sing. The melodies are lovely, but Edgar’s making his case for why he should be accepted. I’ve dealt with my own feelings of wanting to belong and wanting to fit in. He’s singing about what makes the town beautiful — looking at all these people, children, husbands, wives. There’s a real appreciation of the world around him. It feels like a Quasimodo or Evan Hansen thing, and I can relate to being a wallflower and expressing that through song. I also love “Show You a Thing or Two,” where Edgar transforms from being feral to a refined gentleman in minutes. It has a MY FAIR LADY quality. He rattles off cultural references, and it feels like a celebration of knowledge and curiosity. He just wants a normal day, and I think that helps me appreciate a normal day a little more. It doesn’t always need to be spectacular.

TM: Monsters in stories like this tend to be eloquent — like the Elephant Man, or Frankenstein’s monster. Edgar, too, is highly articulate, and he speaks beautifully even if some people are shocked at his appearance.

JS: Edgar’s always been a genius, even when he was in caves. He just didn’t have the access or resources to unlock that potential. He becomes the smartest bat person in Hope Falls. [Laughter] I’m working to find cleanliness and precision even in my physicality when he becomes a gentleman. There’s a scene where they’re sipping tea, and I need to remind myself to fix my posture because it’s so foreign to me. But Edgar’s so determined to get it right and to fit in. His desire to please is so strong that he really gives it his all...Hopefully the audience will grow to like him and be on his side, and hopefully that makes it a big shift when he embraces his inner darkness. The last lyric is, “Don’t deny your beast inside.” That’s the heart of the show: The knowledge that all of us have a shadow side to one degree or another, and we must embrace it rather than repress it.

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



ALLUSIONS IN “I CAN SHOW YOU A THING OR TWO”

Geography & Landmarks

- Champs-Élysées – The famous avenue in Paris lined with shops, cafés, and monuments.
- Parthenon – The iconic ancient Greek temple atop the Acropolis in Athens.
- Great White Way – A nickname for New York City's Broadway theater district.
- Everglades – A vast subtropical wetland ecosystem in southern Florida.
- Berlin Wall – The barrier that divided East and West Berlin from 1961 to 1989 during the Cold War.
- Autobahn – Germany's famous highway system, known for stretches without speed limits.
- Carnegie Hall – One of the world's most prestigious concert halls, located in New York City.
- Ice Capades – A popular touring ice-skating entertainment show that ran for decades.
- Pentagon – Headquarters of the United States Department of Defense.
- Golden Gate – Refers to the Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco's iconic suspension bridge.
- Amazon – Usually referring to the Amazon River and rainforest, the largest tropical rainforest on Earth.
- Rio Grande – A major river forming much of the border between the United States and Mexico.
- Taj Mahal – The famous white marble mausoleum in Agra, India, built by Emperor Shah Jahan.
- Empire State – Refers to the Empire State Building, one of New York City's best-known skyscrapers.
- Wailing Wall – Another name for the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest accessible prayer site in Jerusalem.
- Disneyland – The original Disney theme park, opened in California in 1955.
- Brooklyn Bridge – The historic suspension bridge connecting Manhattan and Brooklyn.
- Lenin's Tomb – The mausoleum in Moscow where Vladimir Lenin's embalmed body is displayed.
- Watergate – The Washington, D.C. complex that became synonymous with the political scandal that led to President Nixon's resignation.
- Rainbow Room – The famous fine-dining restaurant and event space atop Rockefeller Center in New York.
- Ruby Ridge – The site of a deadly 1992 federal law enforcement standoff in Idaho.
- Liberty Bell – The iconic symbol of American independence located in Philadelphia.
- Bering Strait – The narrow body of water separating Alaska from Russia.
- Bates Motel – The fictional motel from Robert Bloch's novel Psycho and Psycho.
- Timbuktu – A historic city in Mali long associated in popular culture with being an impossibly distant place.



Historical Figures & Thinkers

- Copernicus – The astronomer who proposed that Earth revolves around the Sun rather than the reverse.
- Charles Darwin – The scientist whose theory of evolution by natural selection transformed biology.
- Sigmund Freud – The neurologist who emphasized the role of the unconscious mind in human behavior.
- Vince van Gogh – One of history's most celebrated painters, famous for works like Starry Night.
- Henry David Thoreau – American transcendentalist best known for Walden and civil disobedience.
- Plato – One of the foundational philosophers of Western thought.
- Cato the Elder – Roman politician remembered for advocating traditional Roman values and ending speeches with calls to destroy Carthage.
- Edgar Allan Poe – Master of Gothic fiction and poetry, including "The Raven."
- Jean Cocteau – A multidisciplinary French poet, playwright, filmmaker, and visual artist.
- Jacques Cousteau – Explorer and filmmaker who brought the underwater world to television audiences.
- Federico Fellini – Influential Italian filmmaker known for imaginative, dreamlike cinema.
- Harry Houdini – Legendary magician famous for spectacular escape acts.
- Michelangelo – Sculptor, painter, and architect who created the Sistine Chapel ceiling and David.
- Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis – American cultural icon admired for her elegance and style.
- Marilyn Monroe – Hollywood star who became one of the defining cultural icons of the 1950s.
- Sandro Botticelli – Renaissance artist best known for The Birth of Venus.
- Niccolò Machiavelli – Author of The Prince, famous for his writings on political power.
- Larry Fine – One-third of the classic slapstick comedy trio.
- Curly Howard – The most recognizable member of the Three Stooges, known for his physical comedy.
- Moe Howard – The leader of the Three Stooges comedy team.

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



ALLUSIONS IN “I CAN SHOW YOU...” (CON’T)

Music, Literature & Performing Arts

- Spartacus – The story of the slave who led a major revolt against Rome, later adapted into a famous film.
- Fargo – The acclaimed crime film by the Coen brothers set in the American Midwest.
- Anchors Aweigh – A classic MGM musical starring Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra.
- Love Story – A hugely successful romantic drama famous for the line "Love means never having to say you're sorry."
- Key Largo – A classic film noir starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall.
- The Remains of the Day – The acclaimed adaptation of Kazuo Ishiguro's novel about duty, regret, and missed opportunities.
- Giacomo Puccini – Composer of beloved operas including La Bohème, Tosca, and Madama Butterfly.
- Otello – Verdi's operatic adaptation of Shakespeare's Othello.
- Vincenzo Bellini – Composer celebrated for elegant bel canto operas such as Norma.
- Wayne Shorter – One of the greatest jazz composers and saxophonists of the twentieth century.
- Elvis Costello – Influential rock musician known for blending punk, pop, and new wave music.
- Masterpiece Theatre – A long-running PBS television series that presents acclaimed British dramas and literary adaptations.
- PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) – America's public television network, known for educational and cultural programming.



Above: the cast of BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL. Photo by Jim Sabitus.



TAKE 5 WITH DIR. JEREMY JOHNSON

1. How would you describe BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL in three words? I would say silly, shocking, and sincere.

2. Tell us about the style of the show? This show has a really interesting personality. It is a mix of sincere tragedy, ridiculous over-the-top comedy, and horror. We've been calling it the three-legged stool, and we bounce back and forth between these three genres throughout the night. Our hope is that the audience is always a little bit on their toes, and not sure what's going to happen next. Just as soon as you feel like you've settled into knowing what the feeling and mood of the production is, we hope to quickly move you somewhere else, so that you're constantly being taken by surprise throughout the evening.

3. This show is unlike any other. What can audience members expect? Audiences can expect blood, thrills, chills, and an exciting evening at the theater! But I hope that when they leave the theater, they take with them a story that is deeper and more thoughtful than they expected when they first walked into the show. I'm excited to explore this show in a really fun and exciting and engaging way, and to have a deeper message that's delivered as they're walking out the door; something they can think and talk about on their walk back to the car or at drinks after the show to process what they've seen.

4. Tell us about the influences you bring to this production? This production is heavily influenced by both the famous Universal monster movies of the 1930s and '40s, like *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*, and also borrowing from the sci-fi and B horror movies of the 1950s and '60s, like *The Fly* and *Invasions of the Body Snatchers*. In a lot of our design meetings, we've talked about how to pull some of the visual language and style from those movies and incorporate that into the design of the show and the overall tone that the actors are taking to approach the material.

5. What themes and human experiences at the heart of BAT BOY most resonate with you? Edgar has a line in the show, "I know you hate me, but if you could only see me the way that I see all of you, you would understand." I think this is an important message for the show. We're living in a time where the national conversation has gotten really complicated, and we're not seeing each other, and we're not hearing each other. We're talking past one another. I think this show does what all good theater does, which is that it asks us to be empathetic and think about the person that's sitting across from us at that moment. Can we identify with them and what they are going through, and possibly find a connection with that person? Theater's always been about connection, and it's always been about empathy, and I think this show does this in a really funny, unique, quirky, and engaging way. The final message of the production is 'don't deny your beast inside,' which I think is a really interesting examination of the animal and the human parts of ourselves. The musical asks if you can find a balance between the two; can you make peace with this sort of darker animal part of yourself – your anger, your fear, and your desires – and not repress them, but also not allow them to take over and potentially cause disaster? Can you find that way to balance both the human and the animal?

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



POST SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Bat Boy can be seen as a “metaphor for the marginalized” per lead actor Johnny Shea – people on the edges of society who are misunderstood, excluded, and/or blamed for societal problems. Do you see Bat Boy as a metaphor for any particular group today?
- Who or what do you consider the villain or antagonist is of BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL? What motivates them? Do they see themselves as the hero, and if so, why?
- Do you believe Edgar’s story could have ended differently, even happily? What would have to change about the characters or community to allow this to happen?
- In the end, Edgar declares “I am not a boy; I am an animal.” What do you believe is the relationship between being human, being animal, being civilized, and being moral?
 - Does “being civilized” mean that one is good?
 - Is it possible to “be civilized” without being in relationship with other people in a community?
 - Is there goodness to animals’ natural, uncivilized state?
- This unique musical has a ton of allusions, styles, and tonal shifts. What references, lyrics, plot twists, and turns resonated with you? Reminded you of other media or stories?



SPECIFIC CONTENT WARNINGS

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL is inspired by Appalachian cryptids, B-movie monsters, tabloid sensationalism, and Greek tragedy. As such, this camp horror-comedy features...

- Discussions of farm animal harm and death
- Depictions of physical and gun violence
- Theatrical blood effects, poisoning, murder, and suicide
- One scene of simulated sexual acts
- Plot points about sexual assault and unwitting incest
- Themes of (and language related to) bigotry, scapegoating, mob mentality, and religious extremism

The production might be staged with the following elements that some audience members may be physically sensitive to:

- Loud noises, including a gun shot
- Theatrical haze
- Strobe-like lighting effects

There is no rating system for live theater. We encourage you to use the resources available from Umbrella Arts and other online resources such as reviews of the previous productions to gauge whether a production is a good fit for any potential audience member. Umbrella Arts generally recommends BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL for mature audiences, teens and up, while acknowledging that maturity levels can vary widely. Teens aged 16+ are most likely to appreciate both the darker content and camp sensibility of this show.

Do you have further questions? Please reach out to our Box Office!



UmbrellaArts

40 Stow St. Concord, MA

theUmbrellaArts.org

@theUmbrellaArts