

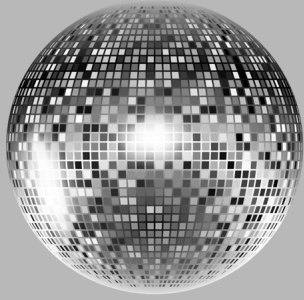


WALNUT STREET THEATRE

# SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER



Study Guide



## SHOW SYNOPSIS

The show focuses on Tony Manero, a Brooklyn youth whose weekends are spent at the local discotheque. There he luxuriates in the admiration of the crowd and a growing relationship with Stephanie Mangano, and can temporarily forget the realities of his life, including a dead-end job in a paint store and his gang of deadbeat friends.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### BEFORE THE SHOW

- Has anyone ever been to a live play before? How was it different from television or a movie?
- What is the difference between a play and a musical?
- What are some hobbies that you have? What is your favorite thing to do when you have free time?
- If you have a hobby like dancing, sports, etc. Do you hope to turn these hobbies into a career?
- Do your hobbies make you forget about other stresses, like school?

### AFTER THE SHOW

- Did you enjoy this performance? What was your favorite part?
- Who was your favorite character? Why?
- Did any aspect of the show make you sad?
- Throughout the story, Tony feels pressured by multiple people in his life, have you ever felt pressured to be someone you weren't?
- What advice would you have given Tony toward the end of the show?



## THEATRE 101



### Ever wondered how to put on a play?

There are many different elements that go into putting a show up on its feet. Please review the following with your students:

**PLAYWRIGHT** The playwright writes the script.

**DIRECTOR** The director is in charge of orchestrating the entirety of the production. They lead the actors, designers, and production crew to put the show on its feet.

**COSTUME** What the actors wear during the show.

**SCENERY** Everything on stage (*except props*) used to represent the place at which action is occurring.

**PROPS** All physical items on stage with the exception of the scenery. This includes lamps, chairs, pens, paper, books, and more!

**LIGHTS** Stage lights illuminate the actors so that they look their best. The colors used, focus of the light, and amount of lighting can really set the mood and environment of a scene.

**SOUND** Everything that you hear during a performance that does not come from the actors.

**ACTORS** The actors are the people that perform the show onstage.

**AUDIENCE** The lucky people that get to watch the show. New to being an audience member? Follow these rules and you will be a natural!

### AUDIENCE RULES

- ◆ Unlike a movie, the actors are performing in front of you. They can see everything that you do. Talking, sleeping, poking your neighbor, or making noise during the performance distracts the actors and others around you.
- ◆ Don't bring electronics to the performance. The use of cell phones, cameras, computers, tablets, and video game devices are **not allowed**.
- ◆ Use your better judgment on when to laugh, clap, and/or cry during the performance. But don't forget to clap at the end of the show!
- ◆ Stay in your seat during the performance.
- ◆ Make sure you go to the bathroom *before* the show starts.

## START WITH A WARM-UP: FLOCK DANCE



### DIRECTIONS

- This is a physical warm-up. The group forms a pyramid: one player becomes the top, two players behind them, three players on the third line, and so on.
- The top player moves about the room (perhaps use music to guide the players). The second line follows the first player, and mimics their movements, and the third line follows the second line. The top player can alternate however they want (and can be guided with a change in the music).
- The object of the game is to see how well the group can follow the people in front of them through movement. The top player changes when they take a place in the last row and someone moves to the front. You know the game is successful if it starts getting a bit chaotic for the players!

## TRY IT YOURSELF!

### DIRECTIONS

Give students a chance to act out a scene from *Saturday Night Fever*. Before jumping into the performance, think about all of the elements that go into a play. Are there any props that we can use to help improve the scene? Where are the characters when this scene is taking place? What might the scenery look like?



## SAMPLE SCENE

**TONY:** See what I got for you? It was way in the back, but I found it. Carnival Gold--just what your mother asked for.

**PAULINE:** Awww...thanks Tony. She's been after my father to repaint the statue of the Blessed Mother in the driveway for months now. How's your brother doin'?

**TONY:** Good. I got a letter from him the other day. He's doin' good.

**PAULINE:** That's good. Hey Tony, if you see Bobby tonight, will you tell him to call me. I've been tryin' to get him the last few days, but you know Bobby.

**TONY:** Yeah--sure thing, Pauline.

**PAULINE:** Thanks. Well I better get this home. See ya around.

**TONY:** Hey--Mr. Fusco, Mr. Fusco? I meant to ask ya'...can I get an advance? See there's this shirt I gotta—

**FUSCO:** Payday's Monday. No exceptions.

**TONY:** Well yeah, I know payday's Monday. But, every place else it's Friday and--

**FUSCO:** (*cutting him off*) And they're broke on Monday--throwing away their money all weekend. This way, you're paid *on* a Monday, you got money all week. You can save a little. Build a future.

**TONY:** Oh, forget the future!

**FUSCO:** No, Tony, you can't forget the future--or it'll forget about you!

## CLASS DISCUSSION: WHAT MUSIC EMPOWERS YOU?

In *Saturday Night Fever*, Tony and his friends feel empowered and driven by the Disco music genre. Music from the 70's focused heavily on upbeat, dance-oriented, instrumental tunes. What music makes the students in your class feel empowered?

**DIRECTIONS:** In the lines below, have students list three songs that make them feel empowered or driven. This could be songs that they listen to while exercising, or maybe just their favorite song in general. Discuss the elements of that particular song as a class and why the song has the ability to make that student feel a certain way.



SONG #1 \_\_\_\_\_

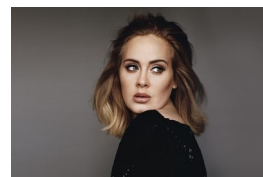
SONG #2 \_\_\_\_\_

SONG #3 \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDENT ACTIVITY: A LETTER TO MY FAVORITE SINGER

*Saturday Night Fever* is a musical with music from the famous 70's group The Bee Gee's. Their music influenced the Disco genre, but it also influenced their many, many fans.

**DIRECTIONS:** In the space below, have students write a letter to their favorite singer/band explaining how their music influenced them. The artist may be from any time period. Then, encourage students to share answers and discuss how music can influence thoughts, feelings, and ideas.



**Dear** \_\_\_\_\_,

---

---

---

---

---

---

# THE RISE OF DISCO & THE 70'S

*The rise of Disco in the 1970s* had an enormous cultural impact on the American audience. It was the music they heard on the radio, the music they danced to. It affected fashion. It affected club culture. It even affected film.

Disco's roots were multiple. It had connections to R&B and Funk, but it was also born out of the urban gay culture in New York City. But no matter its roots, it quickly moved into the mainstream with a string of best-selling hits by artists from Donna Summer to the Village People. The phenomenally successful 1977 film *Saturday Night Fever* took Disco's commercial popularity to surprising heights. The film's soundtrack produced numerous Top 10 hits and the album sold over 15 million copies.



The vibrant sound and energetic dance moves of Disco provided young people with an escape from what film critic Roger Ebert called “the general depression and drabness of the political and musical atmosphere of the seventies.” The economic prosperity and countercultural exuberance of the 1960s had faded. By the mid-1970s, crime rates soared and the combined “Misery Index” of unemployment and inflation reached new highs.

With that as the backdrop, the lure of Disco proved particularly powerful for working-class youth. As *The New Yorker's* Pauline Kael noted in her 1977 review of *Saturday Night Fever*, the film and Disco itself centered on “something deeply romantic: the need to move, to dance, and the need to be who you'd like to be. Nirvana is the dance; when the music stops, you return to being ordinary.”

But almost as powerful as the embrace of Disco was the backlash against it. For those who grew up with three-minute songs, bands playing instruments, and the raw aesthetic of early Rock and Roll, Disco was part of a new problem. *Ultimately, Disco's rise helped to foster the fragmentation of the 1970s and changed the shape of popular music culture.*

<http://teachrock.org/lesson/the-rise-of-disco/>



# WALNUT STREET THEATRE

## BIOGRAPHY



Walnut Street Theatre has the unique distinction of being the oldest, continuously operating theatre in the English-speaking world, having served Philadelphia audiences for over 200 years!

Today, under the direction of Producing Artistic Director Bernard Havard, Walnut Street Theatre is in its 34th season as a self-producing, non-profit theatre company. Walnut Street Theatre continues to entertain and enlighten diverse audiences with high quality theatrical programming. With more than 50,000 subscribers, the Walnut is also the most subscribed theatre company in the world!

Last season, **172,000** children and adults were impacted by the Walnut's Education Programs: including our theatre school with classes for kids and adults, Camp Walnut, Our Touring Outreach Program to local schools and our artist in residency programs.

### WALNUT STREET THEATRE EDUCATION STAFF

<b>DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION</b>	Thomas Quinn
<b>ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION</b>	Ashley Kerns
<b>EDUCATION PROGRAMS ASSOCIATE</b>	Patrick Shane
<b>EDUCATION PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE</b>	Angie Confredo
<b>RESIDENT TEACHING ARTIST</b>	Jasmine Hammond
<b>EDUCATION APPRENTICE</b>	Amanda Pasquini
<b>ACTING APPRENTICES</b>	Anne Bragg
	Alexa Cepeda
	Dana Orange
	Austin Turner

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### WEB

- **Walnut Street Theatre Touring Outreach Company**  
<https://walnutstreettheatre.org/education/outreach.php>
- **Creative Drama Lesson Plans**  
<http://www.childdrama.com/lessons.html>
- **Drama Games**  
<http://dramaresource.com/drama-games/>

### SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER

#### CREATIVE TEAM

<b>DIRECTOR &amp; CHOREOGRAPHER</b>	Richard Stafford
<b>MUSIC BY</b>	The Bee Gees
<b>STORY BY</b>	Nik Cohn
<b>ADAPTED BY</b>	Robert Stigwood

#### ABOUT THE BEE GEES

The Bee Gees were a pop music group formed in 1958. Their line-up consisted of brothers Barry, Robin and Maurice Gibb. The trio were successful for most of their decades of recording music, but they had two distinct periods of exceptional success; as a popular music act in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and as prominent performers of the disco music era in the late 1970s. The group sang recognizable three-part tight harmonies; Robin's clear vibrato lead vocals were a hallmark of their earlier hits, while Barry's R&B falsetto became their signature sound during the late 1970s and 1980s. They wrote all of their own hits, as well as writing and producing several major hits for other artists.

Born on the Isle of Man to English parents, the Gibb brothers lived in Chorlton, Manchester, England, until the late 1950s where they formed the Rattlesnakes. The family then moved to Redcliffe, in Queensland, Australia, and then to Cribb Island. After achieving their first chart success in Australia as the Bee Gees with "Spicks and Specks" (their 12th single), they returned to the UK in January 1967 where producer Robert Stigwood began promoting them to a worldwide audience.

