Leonard Bernstein’s
Candide
directed and newly adapted from the Voltaire
by Mary Zimmerman

SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY
FIRST FOLIO:
TEACHER AND STUDENT RESOURCE GUIDE
Welcome to the Shakespeare Theatre Company’s production of *Candide* by Voltaire

Consistent with STC’s central mission to be the leading force in producing and preserving the highest quality classic theatre, the Education Department challenges learners of all ages to explore the ideas, emotions and principles contained in classic texts and to discover the connection between classic theatre and our modern perceptions. We hope that this First Folio Teacher and Student Resource Guide will prove useful as you prepare to bring your students to the theatre!

*First Folio Guides* provide information and activities to help students form a personal connection to the play before attending the production. *First Folio Guides* contain material about the playwrights, their world and their works. Also included are approaches to explore the plays and productions in the classroom before and after the performance.

*First Folio Guides* are designed as a resource both for teachers and students. We encourage you to photocopy articles you find helpful and distribute them to your students as supplemental reading.

**Enjoy the show!**

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**ON SHAKESPEARE**

For articles and information about Shakespeare’s life and world please visit ShakespeareTheatre.org/Education to download the file *On Shakespeare*.

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**Next Steps**

If you would like more information on how you can participate in other Shakespeare Theatre Company programs, please call the Education Hotline at 202.547.5688 or visit our website ShakespeareTheatre.org/Education.

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The First Folio Teacher and Student Resource Guide for *Candide* was developed by the Shakespeare Theatre Company Education Department.

Miles Gilburne and Nina Zolt are founding sponsors of the education programs at the Shakespeare Theatre Company.

Cover photo of Geoff Packard by Brian Warling. Design/Direction: Kelly Rickert.
Synopsis of Candide

In the idyllic German castle of Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh, resident philosopher Dr. Pangloss trains the baron’s illegitimate nephew Candide in optimism—that he lives in the “best of all possible worlds.” When the Baron’s beautiful daughter Cunegonde sees Pangloss and the chambermaid Paquette sexually engaged in some bushes, she flirts with Candide. When the Baron sees them, he expels Candide from the castle.

Nursing his emotional wounds in town, Candide is conscripted into the vicious Bulgar army. He escapes to Holland, where he meets Jacques the Anabaptist, whose charity reinforces Candide’s optimism. There he finds his old tutor Pangloss, who is almost unrecognizable as a beggar with syphilis (contracted from Paquette). Pangloss reveals that the Bulgars sacked the castle of Thunder-ten-tronckh and then murdered the Baron’s entire family. Candide is heartbroken at the loss of Cunegonde, but he takes Pangloss to be cured by Jacques.

The three men sail for Lisbon, only to be shipwrecked in a violent storm. Jacques dies trying to save an ungrateful sailor, and Pangloss comforts Candide by claiming that the Lisbon harbor was created for Jacques to drown in it. The survivors reach land just in time to experience a devastating earthquake. In the morning, Pangloss unwittingly discusses his philosophy with a member of the Spanish Inquisition, who sentences both Pangloss and Candide to die for heresy in an auto-da-fé meant to avert another earthquake. Pangloss is hanged. Candide escapes but is shocked when an old woman leads him to Cunegonde, who explains that people survive being raped and disemboweled. She serves as the mistress to the Inquisitor and to a Jewish merchant, and when they arrive to use her, Candide kills both.

Candide and Cacambo find themselves in El Dorado, where the pebbles are precious stones and everyone lives peacefully according to rational thought. After a month of bliss, Candide leaves El Dorado to find Cunegonde. When they reach Suriname, Cacambo goes to find Cunegonde for his master. Before Candide leaves for Europe, he hires the thoroughly un-optimistic Martin as a new companion. The two discuss philosophy as they travel from South America to Europe.

Cacambo meets Candide in Venice with news that Cunegonde is a slave in Constantinople. On the way there, Candide meets two galley slaves who are actually Pangloss and Cunegonde’s brother. Once they arrive in Turkey, Candide buys the now ugly Cunegonde’s freedom, and Candide marries her to spite her brother. Devoting their lives to simple work, Candide, Pangloss, Cunegonde and her brother, the old woman, Cacambo and Martin settle down on a farm and set about cultivating their garden.
Notes from the Adapter and Director: Mary Zimmerman discusses Candide

I’ve always been drawn to adapt thorny, difficult, epic old texts. Voltaire’s Candide has that epic sweep and broad range of feeling that I like, and it is full of difficult things to stage, which I like as well. And then Bernstein’s music is so glorious.

It’s the story of a young man named Candide, who is the illegitimate relative of a Baron in a small province called Westphalia. Along with the Baron’s daughter, he is tutored by a professor named Doctor Pangloss, who claims that Westphalia is “the best possible place in all the world.” When Candide falls in love with Cunegonde, his benefactors kick him out of the kingdom without a penny. The rest of the story follows Candide making his way in the world, having adventure after adventure. He is candid and honest and innocent, and he is mistreated and swindled over and over again. Cunegonde and her family also meet great misfortune in a war, so some of Candide’s adventures involve reuniting with her.

I read all the previous adaptations—the books for the musical—about three or four years ago, and then I stopped reading because I wanted to go back to Voltaire’s original novel. Some of the versions have big changes from the original structure of the novel, and the primary challenge for me in adapting it anew is that some of the songs have lyrics that are tied to events or circumstances that don’t exist in the novel. We want to preserve these songs in a context that makes sense, while trying to be as trusting as possible of Voltaire’s original structure and story.

Finding the tone is the most difficult key to Candide because terrible things happen to the characters, yet the novel is hilarious. What makes the play funny and absurd, I hope, is the way in which chance and mischance pile up so fast and furious, while the characters’ views of the world as “all for the best” remains absolutely unchanged in the face of all evidence to the contrary.

Candide is a tougher text than people realize. It challenges some of our most cherished ideas—ideas about one’s own virtue and the virtues of one’s own home. I think this play is challenging in whichever country it is performed, because every country thinks it is the best in the best of all possible worlds. The novel and the play ask people to think about the fact that life is really complicated and that random, tragic things happen all the time. It rejects blithe optimism, or the idea that everything is part of a grand plan as an excuse for inaction in the face of social injustice. This novel is always contemporary because there is always reason to point out hypocrisy and abuse of power.

I am hoping that audiences take away extreme and exquisite entertainment from this production. Candide has gorgeous music and it is incredibly witty, both lyrically and musically. Voltaire’s and Bernstein’s works are both achievements of such high order that when combined, they remind us what people are capable of at their best at the very same moment they are showing us what is worst. And in this way, the work manages to be affirmative—even transcendent—in the face of its own cynicism and satiric edge.
The youngest child of François Arouet, a minor treasury official, and Marie Marguerite d'Aumart, was born in Paris in 1694. They named him François Marie Arouet, and following a proper Jesuit education, he took a job as a notary’s assistant. But the younger Arouet had already decided to become a writer, prompting his father to send him to study law. He continued to write, however, and soon developed a following of admirers of his audacious wit. Again father tried to steer son toward respectable employment, so François Marie moved to the Netherlands as a secretary for the French ambassador. His father squashed an attempted elopement there, and recalled François Marie to Paris.

The younger Arouet was welcomed into Parisian literary society, but his propensity for offending those in power quickly led to trouble. Within a year his satirical poem about the Prince Regent led to a brief exile. By the time his punishment ended, his name had been attributed to enough politically satirical works that he served a sentence in the Bastille for pieces he had not written. Upon his release, he rearranged the letters in his name “Arouet the younger” to create his famous nom de plume: Voltaire.

Known already as poet, essayist, historian and satirist, the newly minted Voltaire established his reputation as playwright with the 1718 debut of Oedipe. He also began work on an epic poem about France’s King Henri IV, in which the king is seen as beloved for ending civil war and as a forerunner of religious tolerance. Another arrest, this time for offending a young aristocrat from a powerful family, led to a two-year exile to England in 1726.

In England, Voltaire encountered the works of Isaac Newton and John Locke, whose writings would influence his work in science and philosophy. Voltaire also began two prose works: a biography of Charles XII of Sweden, in which he rejects the concept of a divinely ordained destiny, and Letters Concerning the English Nation, a collection of his views on the British political structure, literature and religion.

Voltaire’s preference of England’s constitutional monarchy and separation of church and state over the French system of government caused such uproar that he again fled Paris for his mistress’ home in Cirey. In this haven, Voltaire amassed a library of over 20,000 volumes, and continued to write extensively. When his mistress died in 1749, Voltaire spent time at the court of Frederick II of Prussia, whom he considered the ideal enlightened monarch. But he could not resist a literary quarrel, and enraged the king by publishing a satirical pamphlet.

Voltaire’s most famous work was inspired by the devastating Lisbon earthquake of 1755: his short satirical masterpiece Candide, or Optimism (1759), which showed his growing dissatisfaction with Leibniz’s philosophy of Optimism. The philosophy’s main tenant is that everything is for the best because God is benevolent. Five years later, Voltaire published his own Philosophical Dictionary.

Voltaire’s youthful dissatisfaction with the justice system returned with vengeance. He spent his final years as champion for those he felt unfairly punished, especially in cases of religious persecution. By his death in 1778, Voltaire’s criticisms of European civilization and organized religion had angered so many people that he was denied Christian burial. But by the time of the French Revolution, he was seen as a pioneer of their cause and his remains were reburied with great ceremony in the Panthéon.
One could say that the musical of Candide has been a work in progress for over fifty years. Again and again, artists have been drawn to Voltaire’s story and Leonard Bernstein’s magnificent musical score, yet every major production has tried to tweak a thing or two (or three or four) along the way. How did a satirical novel by an eighteenth-century French philosopher find its way onto Broadway in the first place, and why have playwrights, composers, lyricists and theatre directors continued to try to find new ways to tell the same story?

In 1953, the playwright Lillian Hellman had the idea of adapting Voltaire’s Candide for the theatre and when she began to collaborate with composer Leonard Bernstein, the project turned into a full-scale musical. Hellman adapted the story and wrote the book of the musical (all the parts of the show that aren’t sung) and Bernstein wrote the musical score. With the help of lyricist Richard Wilbur, who wrote the words for each song to match Bernstein’s music, Hellman and Bernstein worked for two years on their musical. Candide finally opened on Broadway on December 1, 1956. The show wasn’t received well by audiences and closed after only two months. What had gone wrong?

Hellman had originally been inspired to adapt Candide for the stage because of parallels she saw between Voltaire’s story and America in the 1950s. The religious persecution Candide found in the Inquisition echoed the anti-Communist fever that was rampant in Hellman’s day. When she wrote the musical’s book, she focused on this side of the story and produced a Candide that was a dark political satire. Audiences thought the show was too serious and that her book didn’t match the humor and sophistication of Bernstein’s music.

Hellman’s version of Candide might have flopped on Broadway in the 1950s, but with its story full of surprise resurrections and reunions, the show itself deserved a second chance. In 1974, Candide got that chance. Director Harold Prince was asked to stage a new production of the musical in Brooklyn. Hellman decided not to be part of the show’s revival, giving Prince the opportunity to find a new book writer. Hugh Wheeler stepped in and gave Voltaire’s story a spin that was very different from Hellman’s. Whereas Hellman’s adaptation focused on the politics, Wheeler went back to the humor of Voltaire’s original novel. The new production was a huge hit when it transferred to Broadway, and it ran for two years.

Unfortunately, not everyone was happy with the revised Candide. Leonard Bernstein thought that Harold Prince had removed too many songs from the play and didn’t like how other songs were now being sung by different characters than he had intended. In 1988, Bernstein collaborated on a new production that restored much of what Prince had cut or rearranged. Even though Bernstein optimistically called his version the “final,” definitive Candide, more changes were still to come.

Ten years later, in 1998, London’s Royal National Theatre decided to tinker with Candide for the third time in the play’s history. Director John Caird rewrote the musical’s book once again. Instead of Hellman’s political satire or Wheeler’s humor, Caird took his Candide back to the source, making the story follow Voltaire’s original plot more closely than either of the versions that came before. Audiences connected with this version and made it a great success.

Again and again, artists have found a different way to tell the same story, reinventing the musical to suit new audiences. Now, Mary Zimmerman, a director known for her innovative adaptations, has taken on the challenge. Her new version finds its own balance between politics and humor, invention and faithfulness to Voltaire’s story and Bernstein’s musical vision. Will this, at last, be the definitive Candide? Only time will tell.
Rally to Restore Optimism?

Glenn Beck held his Restoring Honor Rally on August 28 in Washington, D.C. In response, Jon Stewart held the Rally to Restore Sanity on October 30. Jon Stewart and his fellow cast members on The Daily Show are known for satirizing the current events in politics and the news media. So what if Voltaire was still with us today? Would he be holding his own satirical rally to mock the idea of optimism?

**Satire** is defined as the following: a) the use of irony, sarcasm, ridicule or the like, in exposing, denouncing or deriding vice, folly, b) a literary composition, in verse or prose, in which human folly and vice are held up to scorn, derision or ridicule, c) a literary genre comprising such compositions. Satire has been around for centuries. The earliest examples of satire are believed to have started in Ancient Egypt in 2 BC. Nowadays, satire can be seen in many artistic forms: literature, plays, commentary, cartoons, lyrics, etc.

Voltaire’s *Candide* is a perfect example of satire. Voltaire wrote *Candide* in response to the 1755 earthquake in Lisbon, Portugal. After seeing the destruction that the earthquake caused, Voltaire needed an outlet to express his dissatisfaction with Gottfried Liebniz’s optimist philosophy. Liebniz believed that “God is all powerful and morally perfect, hence, whatever possible world created by God is the best of all possible worlds.” Thus, everything that happens in the world must be for the best.

In response to this belief, Voltaire created the character of Dr. Pangloss who teaches Candide and Cunegonde to always remain optimistic no matter how dire the situation becomes. Throughout the novel as both Dr. Pangloss and Candide are met with disaster time and again, they remain optimistic. Although the characters in the novel continued to believe that they lived in “the best of all possible worlds,” they are constantly suffering, which encourages the reader to question the philosophers’ presumption that they know what God intends for the world and humanity. By using satire, Voltaire was able to communicate his point of view and his opinions about the philosophers of his time.

**NEXT STEPS:**
Find an example of a satirical cartoon, television show and piece of literature and answer the following for each:
- What are they satirizing?
- What are the elements that they are exaggerating to make these a satire? And how do you know it’s an exaggeration?
- What are the authors saying about the subject matter? What point are they trying to get across?
WHO’S WHO in *Candide*

**Maximilian**
Cunegonde’s brother. He refuses to allow Candide and Cunegonde to marry.

**Jacques the Anabaptist**
Helps rescue Candide after he escapes to Holland. While sailing to Lisbon, he attempts to save a man and drowns.

**Cacambo**
Candide’s valet while traveling in South America. He helps reunite Candide with Cunegonde.

**Martin**
For his travels to Europe, Candide hires Martin as his travel partner. Martin has had a difficult life and is extremely pessimistic about how things will turn out.

**Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh**
Maximilian and Cunegonde’s father. Kicks Candide out of his castle after he finds out that he is in love with Cunegonde.

**Cunegonde**
The Baron’s daughter. She and Candide are in love with each other but they are often separated.

**Old Woman**
Becomes Cunegonde’s servant. The Old Woman brings Candide to Cunegonde after she is believed to be dead.

**Paquette**
Chambermaid to Cunegonde.

**Candide**
The protagonist of the story. He is extremely naïve and believes what Dr. Pangloss, his tutor, has taught him, that “all’s for the best in this best of all possible worlds”. After being kicked out of his adopted childhood home, he travels around the world and is faced with a number of hardships while searching for his lost love, Cunegonde.

**Dr. Pangloss**
Philosopher and Candide’s tutor. Believes that this world is “the best of all possible worlds”.

**KEY**
- **=** family
- **---** = love
- **----** = interest
- **. .** = friend
- **. . .** = servant
Where in the World is Candide?

Candide travels all over the world once he is expelled from the castle in Germany. He goes through Holland, Lisbon, Buenos Aires and Constantinople, just to name a few. What is the significance of all of these places? Voltaire was inspired to write *Candide* after the 1755 earthquake in Lisbon, but what else was going on in the world? How did the Spanish Inquisition and the Age of Enlightenment influence Voltaire’s writing?

Draw a map of the world in 1755 and show Candide on his journey through the following places: Germany, Holland, Lisbon, The Americas, Buenos Aires, Paraguay, El Dorado, Suriname, Venice and Constantinople.

Choose three of these places to research and answer the following for each location:
♦ What was life like in 1755?
♦ How did the Enlightenment change daily life?
♦ Why do you think Voltaire chose to have Candide travel through this location?

A Soundtrack for Your Life

“If you can’t say it, sing it.” This quote by Oscar Hammerstein explains why musicals are such a popular art form. Musicals were designed for the moments when emotions were too strong to express in speech. As the composer of *Candide*, Leonard Bernstein was able to create music for each step in Candide’s journey. The music is intended to enhance the emotions that the characters are feeling at each point of the story. When put all together, we get the soundtrack for *Candide*.

What would the soundtrack of your life sound like?

Choose five memorable events in your life and find a song (with lyrics or just instrumental) that matches up to how you were feeling for each one. Burn a CD with these five songs and for each one, write a narrative, draw a picture or choreograph a dance about the memorable event that inspired the song.
Optimism vs. Pessimism

Dr. Pangloss and Martin have very different views on the world. Dr. Pangloss believes that this is “the best of all possible worlds” and evil acts as a means to a greater good. In the musical number, “The Best of All Possible Worlds,” Dr. Pangloss sings:

Once one dismisses the rest of all possible worlds,  
One finds that this is the best of all possible worlds.

If Snake had not seduced our lot,  
And primed us for salvation,  
Jehovah could not pardon all  
The sins that we call cardinal,  
Involving bed and bottle.

Martin, on the other hand, believes that man has always been evil, that it is a part of our nature and will not change.

MARTIN: Do you not believe that hawks have always prey’d upon pigeons when they could light upon them?

CANDIDE: Certainly.

MARTIN: Well then, if hawks have always had the same nature, why do you think man has ever changed his? Or ever will?

Which of these men do you agree with? Is it foolish to be completely optimistic? Is it depressing to be entirely pessimistic? Is it best to have a mixture of optimism and pessimism?

Imagine that you are on the journey with Candide. Create an outline of the different disasters that Candide goes through. For each one, write down the advice that you would give to him. Would you remain optimistic and encourage him to continue to search for Cunegonde? Or would you eventually become a pessimist and tell him that it is no longer worth it? Once complete, share your advice with your classmates.

The Best of All Possible Shows?

Now that you’ve seen Mary Zimmerman’s version of the show, it’s your turn to write a review. This show has been remounted several times, each time with revisions. Did Mary Zimmerman get everything right this time? Should Candide have been left alone as a great piece of literature? Does the spectacle involved in the musical increase the ridiculousness of Dr. Pangloss’ ideas?

Once you have written your review, find others from outside sources (i.e. the Washington Post, Washington City Paper, etc.) and analyze them. How do their reviews compare? Do you agree or disagree with the outside critics?
Resource List

http://www.leonardbernstein.com/candide.htm

Goodman Theatre website
http://www.goodmantheatre.org/season/Production.aspx?prod=108

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz
http://kirjasto.sci.fi/leibnitz.htm

Gottfried Leibnitz
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gottfried_Leibniz

Standards of Learning

The activities and question sequences found in the Folio supports grade 8-12 Common Core standards in English Language Arts. Primary content areas addressed include but are not limited to:

- Classical Literature
- Stagecraft
- Inference
- Questioning and Listening
- Analysis and Evaluation
- Vocabulary and content development
- Argument and persuasive writing
- Performance
- Research

Specific examples include:
Activity: The best of all possible shows?
Analyze and evaluate our production of *Candide* and write a review of the performance. Find a review from an outside source and compare their thoughts to yours. Do you agree or disagree?

Activity: Where in the World is Candide?
Research three of the different locations that Candide traveled to and answer the following questions:
- What was life like in 1755?
- How did the Enlightenment change daily life?
- Why do you think Voltaire chose that location?
Theatre Etiquette: A Guide for Students

Above all, it is important to remember that the actors on stage can see and hear you at the same time you can see and hear them. Be respectful of the actors and your fellow audience members by being attentive and observing the general guidelines below.

The phrase “theatre etiquette” refers to the special rules of behavior that are called for when attending a theatre performance.

Here are some important things to do before you go inside the theatre:

♦ Turn off your cell phone and any other electronic devices (iPods, games, etc.), or better yet, leave them in coat check. It is very distracting, not to mention embarrassing, when a cell phone goes off during a performance. The light from cell phones and other electronic devices is also a big distraction, so please no text messaging.

♦ Spit out your gum.

♦ Leave all food and drinks in the coat check. NO food or drinks are allowed inside the theatre.

♦ Visit the restroom before the performance begins. Unless it is an emergency, plan to stay seated during the performance.

During the performance:

♦ React to what’s happening on stage: Please feel free to have honest reactions to what is happening onstage. You can laugh, applaud and enjoy the performance. However, please don’t talk during the performance; it is extremely distracting to other audience members and the actors. Save discussions for intermission and after the performance.

Thoughts about the importance of being an audience member from Shakespeare Theatre Company Artistic Director Michael Kahn

“When you go to the theatre, you are engaging with other living, breathing human beings, having an immediate human response. In the theatre you sense that all of this may never happen again in this particular way.

As a member of the audience, you are actually part of how that’s developing—you have a hand in it … You are part of a community where you are asked to be compassionate, perhaps to laugh with or grieve as well as to understand people, lives and cultures different from your own.”