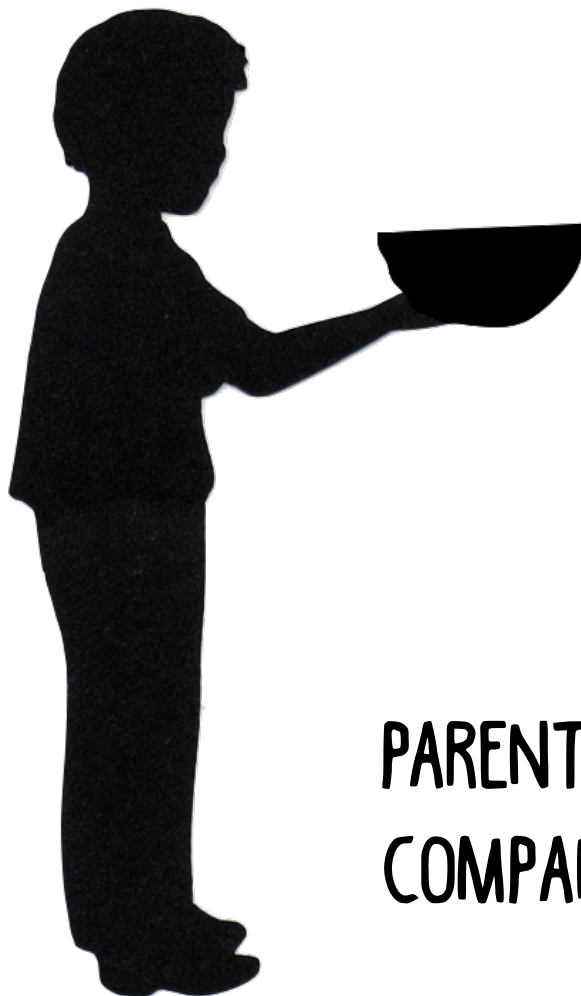


oliver!

THE MUSICAL

MUSIC, LYRICS AND BOOK BY LIONEL BART

LICENSED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH OLIVER PRODUCTIONS LTD. AND OLIVER PROMOTIONS LTD.



WRITTEN & COMPILED BY
EMMA RUND

PARENT /STUDENT
COMPANION GUIDE

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Guerin Catholic Fine Arts Purpose Statement

The central purpose of the Performing and Fine Arts Alliance is to illuminate the mission of Guerin Catholic High School by continually seeking the Lord's truth and beauty through education, performance, design and exhibit.

To His glory we will...

- Educate and nurture our students' artistic gifts talents and leadership skills so that they may understand the value of truth and beauty
- Foster an environment that is interactive, supportive and welcoming
- Involve students fully in all aspects of artistic development, management and performance resulting in the acquiring new skills, broadening talents, and growing in self-esteem and confidence
- Program vital artistic events that provide discovery, teaching and learning
- Prove to be good stewards through wise and prudent use of resources
- Foster the desire to reach for the highest artistic standards
- Enrich the lives of our audiences and community through performance, exhibit, and outreach
- Prepare our students to be disciplined, confident leaders as they embark on their college and life vocations

Purpose of this Guide

I remember watching the movie *Oliver!* with my mother shortly after it was released. I sang *Consider Yourself* for the next week. Later when I was a sophomore in high school the Girl's Choir did a medley of *Oliver!* songs. Once again I was enthralled by the music. This summer when I was doing research on what show to do for the spring musical I kept coming back to *Oliver!*

When I reread the script I was amazed to find I had forgotten about so many scenes and the darker side of the show. The show reveals some of the problems that the common Londoner in 1840 faced. This is a common theme for many of Dickens' stories. He makes the reader aware of the struggles that the unknowns faced poverty, violence and abuse. But what I love about Dickens is that darkness is not the point of the story, but provides a contrast to the light that emanates from some humble characters.

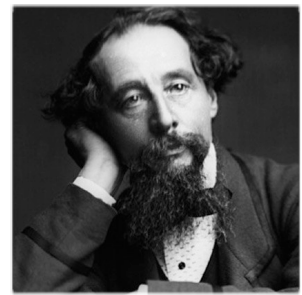
Many of the rehearsals took place during Lent. As we have journeyed through this show I began to see something that I had never seen before. I always believed that the protagonist was Oliver, however I realized that the real main character is Nancy. She gives us a beautiful example of sacrificial love. She is the seemingly bad character that becomes a instrument of God's light. She provides the example of complete and unconditional love.

This guide was created to help parents and student gain a greater understanding of the characters in *Oliver* and the context in which the novel that the musical was based on was written. It was exciting to see how Emma Rund, a senior in the show, embraced this project. The desire is that understanding more about the themes, 19th century London, and Charles Dickens will give viewers a greater appreciation of the show.

Marcia Murphy
Director

Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens was one of the most influential British authors in history. Dickens is responsible for the creation of the beloved classics including *A Christmas Carol*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, and of course *Oliver Twist*. Dickens was born on February 7, 1812, in Portsmouth, England into a family struggling with poverty. Dickens was forced to leave school to help support his family. Looking back on the situation Dickens saw this as the loss of his innocence. He felt abandoned by those adults who were supposed to care for him. This became a recurring theme in Dickens' novels. When Dickens was 15, he became an office boy, which would later be considered the beginning of his literary career. Dickens began submitting sketches to major London newspapers under the pseudonym "Boz". In 1836 his clippings were published in a book called *Sketches by Boz*. After paying his dues, Dickens became the publisher of a magazine called *Bentley's Miscellany*. It was in this magazine where Dickens began to publish his first novel, *Oliver Twist*, in weekly installments. The story was inspired by how Dickens experience as a boy growing up in poverty. The story went over so well with the public that Dickens had to publish the full novel. After *Oliver Twists'* success, Dickens struggled to live up to his newfound fame as a writer. In his later years Dickens suffered the deaths of his father and daughter, as well as a the separation from his wife. His novels began to take on themes even



"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of it to anyone else."

Charles Dickens

darker than those in *Oliver Twist*. Dickens died of a stroke on June 9, 1870 that was, according to legend, brought about by his obsession over the death of his beloved Nancy in *Oliver Twist*.

Oliver!

A BRIEF SYNOPSIS

Act 1 opens in a workhouse. A well-fed Mr. Bumble and a herd of hungry workhouse boys being served their daily gruel appear onstage. One boy, Oliver, approaches Mr. Bumble and does the unthinkable: he asks for more. As punishment, Oliver is sold to an undertaker. Oliver runs away to the streets of London, where he meets the Artful Dodger. Dodger takes him home to the Thieves Kitchen, where he meets Fagin and his band of young thieves. After getting a lesson on pickpocketing and a good night's sleep Oliver is sent off for his first day on the job but is caught trying to steal from a wealthy gentleman, Mr. Brownlow.

Act 2 opens in a cheerful bar, The Three Cripples. A frantic Dodger barges in and informs Fagin of Oliver's arrest. (Unbeknownst to Dodger, Oliver has been released and is now staying with Mr. Brownlow.) Bill commands Nancy to get Oliver back. The scene shifts to Mr. Brownlow's home, strikingly lovely in contrast. Mr. Brownlow asks Oliver to run some errands. On the street, Oliver is snatched up by Nancy and dragged to the Thieves Kitchen, where the tension rises between Nancy and Bill. The scene shifts to the workhouse where a dying nursemaid reveals a trinket that belonged to Oliver's mother. Mr. Bumble is prompted to reveal the trinket to Mr. Brownlow. Upon closer inspection of the trinket, Mr. Brownlow realizes that Oliver is his grandson. Nancy barges in to confess her guilt in Oliver's kidnapping and her desire to return him. Nancy brings Oliver to London Bridge where she is murdered by Sykes who is then shot by a policeman. Oliver is reunited with Mr. Brownlow. Fagin appears and asks himself: *can I start over and be an honest man?* Without a clear answer, Fagin walks off into the night.

"There is a passion for hunting something deeply implanted in the human breast."

— Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*

Oliver!

WHO'S WHO

Oliver Twist- boy orphaned in a workhouse. Has a very innocent view of life

Mr. Bumble- the Parish Beadle. A pompous, cruel man.

Widow Corney- The critical, overbearing workhouse mistress. Marries Bumble.

Mr. Sowerberry-The undertaker who buys Oliver

Mrs. Sowerberry- his wife and overseer.

The Artful Dodger- Fagin's most promising pickpocket

Fagin- self-centered, elderly, Jewish man who runs a boarding school for young thieves.

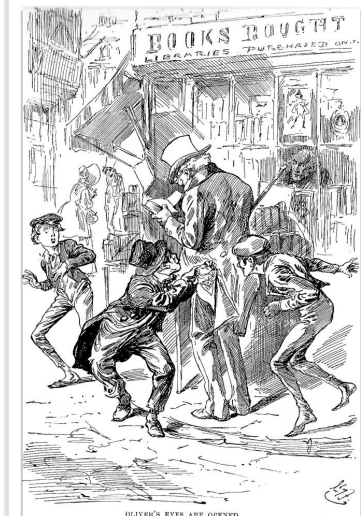
Nancy- prostitute who grew up in Fagin's care. Sykes' lover. Mother figure to the boys

Bet- Nancy's little sister. Idolizes Nancy.

Bill Sykes- professional robber. Strong and terrifying.

Mrs. Bedwin- Mr. Brownlow's housekeeper

Mr. Brownlow- a very kind, wealthy, elderly gentleman who turns out to be Oliver's grandfather.



Terms & Phrases in Oliver

avaricious - having an insatiable greed

baddin - a "bad one"

Beadle - a minor officer of a parish; in this case, he runs the parish workhouse

"blow upon" - inform against

blunt - money

crape - ridged/ruffled fabric, usually part of a mourning gown

drab - prostitute

gaff - home or hideout

green - inexperienced

gruel - a thin porridge, usually oatmeal

Liberal Terms - open to negotiation about a price

magistrate - minor judicial officer

"my fascinator" - term of endearment

parochial - of the parish, or having gone through a parish school

prentice boy - an apprentice

"Plummy and Slam!" - underworld password believed to have been coined by Dickens

togs - clothes

trap - police officer

vituals [VIT-ulz] - food, provisions

wipes - handkerchiefs

Workhouse/"workhus" - Noah's derogatory name, referring to a poorhouse, paid for through public funding and taxes, where impoverished citizens labored in exchange for food and shelter

London in the 19th Century

Violence was a part of the Victorian culture. Violence appeared in many forms including violent humor, murder, and sexual assault. Violence was used in humor to entertain crowds. A well-known example of this is *Punch and Judy*, a puppet show that included Punch beating his baby and Judy beating Punch. This puppet show is where the term “slap stick” originated. Murderers in the 19th century were often seen as celebrities. The public could purchase figurines of murderers, their victims, and the crime scenes. For a time, people went to Madame Tussaud’s *Chamber of Horrors* to view the visages of England’s most notorious criminals. Pieces of crime scenes were sometimes broken up and sold to the public. Jack the Ripper became particularly famous in London in 1888. Jack the Ripper was a serial killer in the slums of London who became famous almost entirely because the extensive media coverage he received. The story of Jack the Ripper helped draw attention to the need of the poor in the slums of London. Much of the violence seen in *Oliver Twist* is not at all unusual for Dickens’ time.



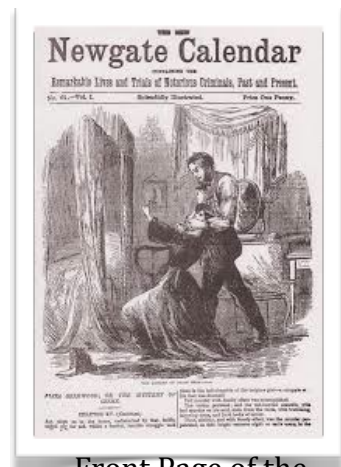
Punch & Judy

Crime

Due to the rapidly growing population of London and the soaring poverty levels, crime began to take over the city. Those who could not afford basic necessities turned to thievery to survive. The people of London began to carry pistols through the streets to protect themselves from ruffians who would demand their 'purses or their lives'. The need for a more powerful police force was evident. The Bow Street Runners began in 1742 as a group of six men and became London's official police force. During the Industrial Revolution, Police Commissioners were appointed to patrol the streets and erect street lamps to make London nights safer. People (especially children) thought to be in danger of becoming a criminal were sent to correctional facilities or industrial schools. Criminals were put in overcrowded prisons or sent to Australia. The most violent punishment was a public hanging, usually reserved for murderers. If Bill had not been shot, he would have been publicly hanged.

Murder of Eliza Grimwood

In the slums of Waterloo in Victorian London in May of 1838, Eliza Grimwood was discovered, brutally murdered in her own home. Her wounds suggested that her murderer had continued to stab and beat her after she died. Eliza was a young prostitute living with her procurer, William Hubbard. Hubbard was thought to have committed the murder because the evidence suggested that Eliza had known her murderer and tried to protect him.



Front Page of the newspaper covering Eliza Grimwood's murder.

Hubbard was never convicted. The murder was so violent that it became the talk of London for decades. Charles Dickens was one man who became entranced by this act of violence. Presumably, Dickens based Nancy's murder on the murder of Eliza Grimwood. Bill is shot and killed in the end in an attempt by Dickens to bring Hubbard to justice. The public criticized Dickens saying that Nancy's death was too violent to be real. Ironically they neglected to notice the parallels to the murder of Eliza in their very own London. Dickens was so obsessed with Nancy's death scene that it brought on the stroke that killed him.

PovCrty

In the early 19th century, London was being completely reshaped by the Industrial Revolution. Larger factories and more advanced machinery led to fewer jobs for the lower classes. To make things worse, residents from rural areas were moving into the industrial hubs such as London leading to record levels of unemployment. It was estimated that one third of the population of London was living below the poverty line. These people were crowded together in dirty, disease filled areas known as slums. In the slums, sewage was thrown directly into the street. This led to serious outbreaks of cholera. Many believed that cholera was transmitted by the smell, which contributed to the general public disgust for the poor. In London it became a general belief that those who were poor were poor because they had sinned. To deal with the record levels of poverty the New Poor Laws of 1834 were put in place. Under the Old Poor Laws of the 1600s the Church was responsible for the care of the poor.

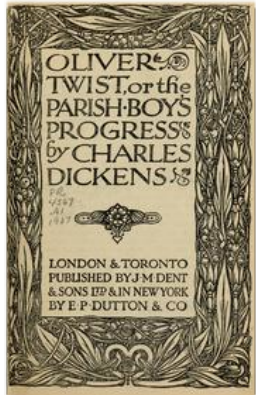
Under the New Poor Laws workhouses were strictly controlled by the nation-wide Poor Laws Commission. These new workhouses were purposefully made to be as miserable as possible to discourage the poor from moving in. In these workhouses men, women, boys, girls, elderly, and infirmed were all separated, regardless of family ties. The diet was strictly controlled, and, due to the greed of those in power, much of the funding for food was pocketed instead. *Oliver Twist* was written during the transition between the Old and New Poor Laws. Dickens used *Oliver Twist* to show the horrors of the workhouse. Unfortunately, workhouses were not abolished until 1930.

Rescue the poor and
helpless from the grasp of
evil men.

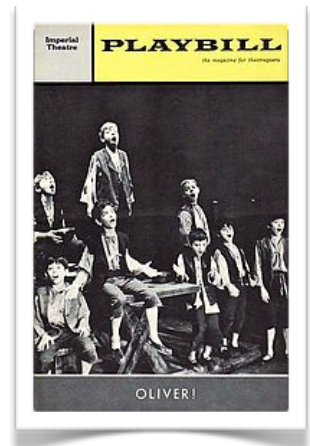
Psalm 82:4



Journey of Oliver from Paper to Stage



Oliver Twist was an extraordinarily popular novel, so it was no surprise when it was converted into a film in 1948. A young man, Lionel Bart, saw the movie and swore that he would one day turn it into a musical better than any Broadway musical. At this time Bart did not have a career in music. Over the years he became a successful pop songwriter, but still did not give up his dream of writing for the stage. After getting a few small-scale musicals under his belt, Bart began the processes of creating *Oliver!* He took his new musical to producer after producer, but they all refused him on the grounds that the show was far too gloomy. Producer Donald Albery finally agreed to take on the show in a small theatre with mediocre actors. Due to the show's surprising success, it was moved to the West End, London's equivalent of Broadway, in 1960 and ran for six years before heading to the United States for the Broadway debut. *Oliver!* received a Tony Award for Best Composer and Lyricist in 1963. Since then the show has traveled all over the world, been performed in at least twenty-two different languages, and been revived on Broadway and London stages several times, the most recent of which was on London's West End in 2009. Why do you think the show has been so successful?



Words by Dickens

Charles Dickens has been credited with the coining of dozens of words. While some of these words have been antedated — for example, an earlier citation of boredom, long credited to Dickens, has been found — there's no denying the author's role popularizing words that may have disappeared into obscurity. Here are 11 of our favorites:

1. abuzz

Dickens was one of the first authors to use abuzz, "characterized by excessive gossip or activity." Another "early adopter" of the word was George Eliot, who used it in her 1859 novel, *Adam Bede*: "I hate the sound of women's voices; they're always either a-buzz or a-squeak."

Example: "The court was all astir and a-buzz, when the black sheep — whom many fell away from in dread — pressed him into an obscure corner among the crowd."

— Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1859

2. creeps, the

You may be surprised to know the modern-sound phrase, the creeps, "a feeling of fear and revulsion," was coined by Dickens. He may have been influenced by the sense creepy, "chilled and crawling, as with horror or fear," which originated around 1831.

Example: "She was constantly complaining of the cold, and of its occasioning a visitation in her back which she called 'the creeps'."

— Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*, 1850

3. devil-may-care

Devil-may-care, meaning "reckless; careless," or "jovial and rakish in manner," seems to come from the saying, "The devil may care but I don't."

Example: "Not that this would have worried him much, anyway — he was a mighty free and easy, roving, devil-may-care sort of person, was my uncle, gentlemen."

— Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, 1837

4. flummox

To flummox means "to confuse; perplex." The origin is probably an English dialectal word which Dickens brought back into popularity. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the formation of the word "seems to be onomatopoeic, expressive of the notion of throwing down roughly and untidily; compare flump, hummock, dialect slommock sloven."

Example: "And my 'pinion is, Sammy, that if your governor don't prove a alleybi, he'll be what the Italians call reg'larly flummoxed, and that's all about it."

— Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, 1837

5. gonoph

Gonoph is slang for a pickpocket or thief. The word comes from gannabh, the Hebrew word for "thief." Dickens's seems to be the earliest recorded usage of the word in English.

Example: "He's as obstinate a young gonoph as I know."

— Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, 1853

6. lummy

Lummy is slang for "knowing; cute," or "first-rate," and probably comes from lumme, a corruption of "(Lord) love me," according to the OED. Lummy is another Dickens-coined word that has fallen into obscurity, though we would like to see it make a comeback.

Example: "To think of Jack Dawkins — lummy Jack — the Dodger — the Artful Dodger — going abroad for a common twopenny-halfpenny sneeze-box!"

— Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, 1839

7. on the rampage

The phrase on the rampage comes from the earlier verb form of rampage, "to act or move in a ramping manner; spring or rush violently; rage or storm about." The word rampage may come from ramp, "to rise for a leap or in leaping, as a wild beast; rear or spring up; prepare for or make a spring; jump violently."

Example: "When I got home at night, and delivered this message for Joe, my sister 'wenton the Rampage,' in a more alarming degree than at any previous period."

— Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 1860

8. red tapeworm

A red tapeworm is, according to the OED, "a person who adheres excessively to official rules and formalities." The phrase plays off red tape and tapeworm, and was coined by Dickens in *Household Words*, a weekly magazine he edited. Red tape, slang for "the collection or sequence of forms and procedures required to gain bureaucratic approval for something, especially when oppressively complex and time-consuming," comes from the English practice of using red or pink tape to tie official documents. The figurative sense arose around 1736, says the OED. A tapeworm is a ribbonlike parasite. Some call a phrase like red tapeworm a *sweet tooth fairy*, "three words where the first and second form a known expression and the second and third form a known expression and all three together make a credible expression."

Example: "If in any convenient part of the United Kingdom, (we suggest the capital as the centre of resort,) a similar museum could be established, for the destruction and exhibition of the Red-Tape-Worms with which the British Public are so sorely afflicted, there can be no doubt that it would be, at once, a vast national benefit, and a curious national spectacle."

— Charles Dickens, *Household Words*, 1851

9. sawbones

Sawbones is slang for a surgeon or doctor. Before the advent of anesthesia in 1846, speed was of the essence for surgeons. With a saw like the one pictured in this article, Victorian physicians could amputate a leg in half a minute.

Example: "'What! Don't you know what a sawbones is, sir?' inquired Mr. Weller. 'I thought everybody know'd as a sawbones was a surgeon.'"

— Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, 1837

10. whiz-bang

Whiz-bang in this example means something "very rapid and eventful; rushed," and is imitative of something that moves quickly, or whizzes, and perhaps lands with a bang. During World War I, whiz-bang came to refer to "the shell of a small-calibre high-velocity German gun, so called from the noise it made," according to the OED. By 1916, the term referred to "a resounding success," and in 1960, a type of firecracker.

Example: "'Present! think I was; fired a musket — fired with an idea — rushed into wine shop — wrote it down — back again — whiz, bang — another idea — wine shop again — pen and ink — back again — cut and slash — noble time, Sir. Sportsman, sir?' abruptly turning to Mr. Winkle."

— Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, 1836

FROM:Tung, Angela. "11 Words Coined by Charles Dickens." *WeeK* 8 Feb. 2013: n. pag. [Http://theweek.com](http://theweek.com). Web. 11 Apr. 2015.

Post-Show Discussion

Why was it so horrible that Oliver asked for more? Does this apply to just food?

In the 19th century, poverty was thought to be the result of moral failings: you were poor because you were bad. Do we have different attitudes today?

Could this story happen today? Why or why not?

Why does Nancy go along with Fagin and Bill's plan to recapture Oliver?

Does she have another option?

Why do you think Dickens wrote Nancy's story the way he did? Would it have been different if she had survived? In what way?

Oliver Twist was one of Dickens most popular books. It has been adapted for theatre and film. Why do you think the story is so enduring? What in the story appeals to readers and audiences?

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did Dickens make Nancy a prostitute?

Dickens had a habit of taking those seen as the scum of society and showing that they were human too. Dickens used Nancy's character to elicit feelings of sympathy for those women of London who had fallen to prostitution. He took a risk by making Nancy the selfless heroine of the story. His readers were not ready to accept the idea that someone so disgusting could be so deeply good, but that is exactly why Dickens wrote her that way. He wanted to show that even those whom society viewed as the scum of the earth could be truly good.

As Oliver's grandfather was such a kind person, why would Oliver's mother choose to leave Oliver in a workhouse rather than with her father?

Oliver's mother was probably humiliated by the fact that she found herself unmarried and with child. Sometimes we forget that God and others in our life have the ability to forgive us and love us unconditionally. If Oliver's mother wasn't blinded by her fear and allowed herself to confide in her father the story of Oliver would have been quite different.

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