

theatre:
CALGARY
Stafford Arima, Artistic Director



JIMMY BUFFETT'S
ESCAPE TO MARGARITAVILLE
BOOK BY GREG GARCIA & MIKE O'MALLEY
MUSIC AND LYRICS BY JIMMY BUFFETT

APR 18 - MAY 13
2023

THIS PRODUCTION IS MADE POSSIBLE
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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Welcome educators!

Theatre Calgary's 2022-2023 Play Guides are intended to support your students' experience at Theatre Calgary this season. We encourage you to use some or all of these materials to provide context for your students before, during, and after their visit to Theatre Calgary. While not mandatory for students to enjoy the production, research shows that where young people are given opportunities to connect a work of art to their personal lives and experiences, the more deeply they are able to understand and appreciate the piece.

With that in mind, each guide provides you and your students with a range of contextual material. You will find background information on the play and playwright; social, linguistic, and historical context; expectations for the theatre; activities for you to lead in the classroom; and reflection questions to guide discussions. You'll find activities that connect to current events, are interdisciplinary, tie to your curriculum, and can be facilitated for various lengths of time.

Pages marked with a ★ can be photocopied and distributed to students.

We hope that you and your students enjoy your experience at Theatre Calgary this year!

ABOUT THE PLAY

SUMMARY.

Tully Mars works as a singer for the bar at Margaritaville, a run down hotel on a small island in the Caribbean, along with Brick, the bartender, Jamal, the busboy, Marley, the owner, and J.D., a one eyed beach bum who spends his days at the bar.

In Cincinnati, Ohio, Rachel and Tammy prepare to go on vacation at Margaritaville before Tammy gets married. Her fiancé, Chadd, forces Tammy to go on a diet of carrot juice and sunflower seeds, so she can lose weight for the wedding, which infuriates Rachel. Chadd has Tammy promise not to cheat on him, and his friends warn the two women of the land sharks. Tammy and Rachel laugh their warning off and travel to the hotel.

Upon arriving at the hotel, Tully flirts with Rachel, who is more concerned about work, and has Brick bring tequila shots, to which Rachel questions if it's the appropriate time to start drinking. Tully, Brick, J.D., and the patrons insist that "it's five o'clock somewhere." Rachel insists on going up to the volcano so she can obtain a soil sample. Brick offers to drive them up in his run down convertible. On the beach, J.D. tells guests stories about his life and his buried treasure, which Marley dismisses as lies.

At the volcano, Tully tries to get Rachel to relax and enjoy her time on the island. He breaks the ice between them by teaching her how to play guitar.

Tammy and Brick discuss their childhoods and how their parents had very high expectations for them, finding amusement that they had become the people their parents frowned upon. The two almost kiss before Tammy reveals that she is engaged. Later that night, Tully reveals to Rachel that he grew up in Maine, where his father wanted him to continue the family line of fisherman. He arrived at the island to get away from the cold weather, pollution, and irritations of society. Rachel, finding herself charmed, kisses him.

BUFFETT TUNES IN ACT 1

- License to Chill
- License to Reggae
- Fins
- It's Five O'Clock Somewhere
- It's My Job
- Why Don't We Get Drunk
- Three Chords
- We Are The People Our Parents Warned Us About
- Son of Son of a Sailor
- Tuesday on the Island
- Wednesday on the Island
- Thursday on the Island
- Friday on the Island
- Come Monday
- Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes
- Margaritaville

Back at the hotel, Tully and Rachel prepare to go snorkeling, and Marley notices something different about Tully. He then admits to her that he thinks he's in love with Rachel. After swearing that she wouldn't tell anyone, she tells some guests, and word spreads around the hotel. Tully and Rachel spend the rest of the week together, causing Tully to miss work. On Tammy's last night on the island, Brick suggests they get tattoos. Then, she and Rachel discuss how the past week has changed their views of the future.

Tully decides to tell Rachel how he feels, but she and Tammy leave before he can. Brick discovers that his tattoo on his stomach is of Tammy's face and admits to Tully that he has feelings for her. The two lament their failed romances, while J.D. looks for a salt shaker for his shrimp. The guests feel tremors and realize the volcano is about to erupt. Everyone begins to panic, sending Margaritaville into chaos.

Jamal wonders where he will go after evacuating the island as the patrons panic, Marley tries to keep everyone calm, and Tully and Brick pack the boat with whatever they can. After everyone is onboard the evacuation boat, Marley notices J.D. is missing, and Jamal reveals that he saw him heading into the jungle. Tully and Brick go to find J.D., despite Brick's objections.

In the jungle, Tully tells Brick to think of things that make him happy in order to control his fear. The two find J.D., who is digging up his buried treasure. The two insist that the treasure isn't real, as they believe he just makes up his stories. The two are shocked when J.D. digs up a chest as Marley arrives, revealing she had to let the boat leave due to the guests panicking. J.D. has Marley take them to his plane, which she hid due to his pilot license being revoked. At the airport, Tammy and Rachel prepare to take off and Rachel learns that funding for her experiment has been denied, much to her dismay.

Up in the air, J.D. flies Marley, Tully, and Brick to safety. Tully and Brick go through J.D.'s treasure and find pictures and journals, learning that J.D. moved to Europe, married an actress, and had a son. His wife and son were killed when a bomb went off, while J.D. survived. J.D. tells them that even though he's been through tragedy, he's had a good life. Tully reveals to J.D. that he hoped the treasure would be money that he could give to Rachel to help fund her experiment. J.D. tells Tully that the real treasure is what is in the heart and the memories of all the good times. He insists that Tully tell Rachel that he loves her, and Tully has J.D. fly them to Cincinnati.

BUFFETT TUNES IN ACT 2

- Volcano
- Grapefruit, Juicy Fruit
- He Went to Paris
- Cheeseburger in Paradise
- Tin Cup Chalice
- Luck / Breathe In
Breathe Out
- King of Somewhere Hot
- Coast of Marseilles
- A Pirate Looks at 40
- One Particular Harbor

At a bar in Cincinnati, Tammy and Chadd's rehearsal dinner is underway. She prepares to eat a cheeseburger, but Chadd has set up a vegetarian buffet for her. She fantasizes about eating a cheeseburger, when Brick enters and urges her to quit her diet. Chadd sees them eating the burgers and tells Tammy that he can't love her if she's fat, causing Tammy to punch him and call the wedding off. J.D. and Marley admit that they have feelings for each other. Tully tells Rachel that he loves her, to which Rachel isn't sure how to respond. He plays a song to remind her of their time together on the island. She admits that she has feelings for Tully, but they are too different. She leaves, and Tully is approached by Ted, a talent agent, who insists that Tully can become famous with his mix of country and beach music.

Over the course of three years, Brick and Tammy get married and have a daughter; after being denied by numerous banks, Rachel finally gets funding for her research; J.D. and Marley become a couple, rebuild Margaritaville, and have a daughter; and Tully becomes an international music star. Tully returns to Margaritaville to perform for the hotel's re-opening and notices Rachel in the crowd. The two catch up and realize they are still in love with each other. A year later, Brick and Tammy receive an invitation to Tully and Rachel's wedding and first class tickets. Tully, Rachel, Tammy, Brick, J.D. and Marley reflect on how much their lives have changed in the past few years as the wedding is being prepared and the guests arrive. The two are married and everyone celebrates at Margaritaville.

STORY WHOOSH

is an interactive storytelling technique that enables any kind of plot to come alive, even without participants having prior knowledge.

- The teacher facilitates the shared storytelling by bringing individuals and groups in and out of the action.
- As soon as characters, objects, places, or events in the story (i.e., servants, bad thoughts, ships, etc.) are mentioned, the first students step into the circle and make a shape or pose that represents what has been narrated.
- At any time the teacher can say "Whoosh!" and students quickly return to their 'places' in a circle.
- Continue the story around the group, so that different students get to play various characters and everyone gets a chance to try several roles, regardless of gender.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN.



TULLY

smooth-talking, self-deprecating playboy; completely content with the life he's chosen as the singer/bartender at a tropical resort

RACHEL

fully committed to helping the world; will work as many hours as it takes & expects others to do the same; not easily distracted from her life plan

BRICK

the island bartender; has a big heart & is a good friend to Tully; sensitive and thoughtful

MARLEY

no-nonsense & assertive; runs the resort and keeps everyone in check, but clearly cares about her employees, her customers, and J.D.

TAMMY

loyal friend to Rachel; sees the best in people & has a zest for life that is often squelched by her fiancé, Chadd

J.D.

a funny, endearing older man who always has a parrot on his shoulder; always writing his memoirs on bar napkins and, as it turns out, he's lived a full life

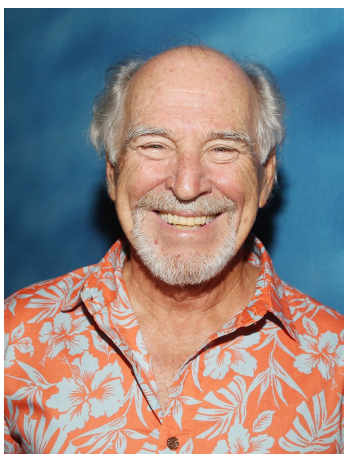
JAMAL

a busboy at Margaritaville

CHADD

Tammy's misogynistic fiancé

WRITERS.



Jimmy Buffett
Music & Lyrics



Greg Garcia
Book



Mike O'Malley
Book

HISTORICAL + SOCIAL CONTEXT.



WOMEN IN STEM

STEM refers to the fields of science, technology, engineering, & mathematics—areas that have historically had an under-representation of women and femme-presenting individuals.

47% of workforce is made up of women

25% of STEM jobs are held by women

15% of management positions in STEM careers are held by women

34% of graduates with degrees in STEM are women

Be an advocate for women in STEM:

- [Society for Canadian Women in Science & Technology](#)
- [hEr VOLUTION](#)
- [WinSETT Centre](#)

Data from [randstad \(3.2023\)](#)

HOW TO RECOGNIZE VERBAL ABUSE

In *Escape to Margaritaville*, Tammy is told repeatedly by her partner that she needs to lose weight. Emotional and verbal abuse can take many forms and can come from partners, caregivers, coworkers, parents, and others. This type of abuse presents as words or behaviours used to manipulate, intimidate, and maintain power and control over someone. These include insults, humiliation, the silent treatment, and attempts to scare, isolate, and control. If it's happening to you, it's important to remember that being abused is not your fault. Having a trustworthy friend or therapist can be calming and helpful while dealing with verbal abuse.

WHAT IS A JUKEBOX MUSICAL?

A jukebox musical is a stage musical that uses popular music (that doesn't directly connect to the story) as its musical score. In other words, a team of collaborators start with a popular musical artist and build a story around existing songs. This doesn't apply to musicals that tell the stories of those artists like *Jersey Boys* (The Four Seasons), *Beautiful* (Carole King), or *Million Dollar Quartet* (Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, & Jerry Lee Lewis).

5 JUKEBOX MUSICALS TO CHECK OUT

- 1 MAMMA MIA! (ABBA), 2001**
Music and Lyrics by Benny Andersson, Björn Ulvaeus, & Stig Anderson
Book by Catherine Johnson
Originally Conceived by Judy Craymer
- 2 American Idiot (Green Day), 2010**
Music by Green Day
Lyrics by Billie Joe Armstrong
Book by Billie Joe Armstrong & Michael Mayer
- 3 Tina (Tina Turner), 2019**
Music and Lyrics by Tina Turner (& others)
Book by Katori Hall, Kees Prins, Frank Ketelaar
- 4 Jagged Little Pill (Alanis Morissette), 2019**
Music by Alanis Morissette, Glen Ballard, Michael Farrell, & Guy Sigsworth
Lyrics by Alanis Morissette
Book by Diablo Cody
- 5 & Juliet (songwriter Max Martin), 2019**
Music and Lyrics by Max Martin & others
Book by David West Read

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE THEATRE



An open mind.

Let the performance surprise you! Stay open to what can happen. Look for moments of theatrical magic (how did they change that costume so quickly?) and unexpected dialogue.

Assigned seats.

Every seat in the theatre offers a unique perspective on the action. Appreciate what you can see from your seat that someone else might not.

Live actors.

The performers on stage can see you, hear you, and feel your energy. And actors love student audiences! Laugh when something is funny! Gasp when you're surprised! Applaud when you're impressed! The actors thrive on audience reactions.

A break from reality.

Theatre-makers ask the audience to "suspend their disbelief." If someone on stage says the red ribbon is blood, then it is! If an actor takes flight, then imagine you can't see the strings. This is what the actors ask of the audience. Embrace the magic of theatre.

Questions.

Listen carefully to the story being told. If you have a question, keep your voice to a whisper so it doesn't disturb others. (See the call out on Q + As to help you form great questions for the team behind the show.) Let yourself be challenged by the content. What new ideas or perspectives are you hearing?

Disconnection.

Put your phone away and immerse yourself in the technology of the theatre. The sounds and lights from your device are distracting to the actors, fellow audience members, and you! Plus, the law says that photos and videos aren't allowed, anyway.

PREPARING Q'S FOR A Q + A

While you watch the show, consider how the creative team (see pg. 10) brings the story to life on stage for you.

Consider questions about the process:

- How did the lighting / set / costume / sound designer...
- What made the director choose to...
- How did the playwright decide to...

Ask questions about the story:

- Why did [character] make the decision to...
- Can you explain how...
- Why didn't _____ happen?

Learn more about each job:

- Why did you decide to become a...
- What do I need to do to become a...
- What has been your favorite...



THEATRE TEAM TALKBACK

Theatre is a 'team sport,' and it's not the actors alone who bring a production to life. After your show, you'll have a chance to ask questions of the creative team. Here are some of the folks you might expect to speak with:

The Playwright writes the script—sometimes from an original idea, and sometimes adapted from a book or story; decides what the characters say and gives the designers guidelines on how the play should look.

The Director creates the vision for the production, how it will look on stage, and works closely with the actors, costume, set, and lighting designers to make sure everyone tells the same story.

The Actors use their bodies and voices to bring the playwright's words and the director's ideas to life on the stage.

The Designers imagine and create the lights, scenery, props, costumes, and sound that will compliment and tell the playwright's story in a way that matches the director's vision.

The Stage Manager assists the director during rehearsals by taking detailed notes and making sure the actors and designers understand these ideas. They run the show during each performance by making sure the actors' entrances and exits and the lights and sound all run smoothly.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

IF YOU HAVE 15 MINUTES...

Found Object Band

The spirit of Jimmy Buffett's Escape to Margaritaville is its music. This activity will give students an opportunity to play with the rhythm of the music, as well as dynamics—even without any formal musical instruments.

Focus Question. How can everyday objects allow us to explore musical concepts like *rhythm* and *dynamics*?

Objective. Students will be able explore musicality, *rhythm*, and *dynamics* using found object instruments.

Procedure.

- 1 Provide or ask students to pull from their belongings (or the classroom space) an object that can create music—not a cell phone—(i.e., a tin of mints, a beaded necklace, a bag of Goldfish, a pencil, etc.)
- 2 Choose a song from Escape from Margaritaville (linked to Spotify below).
[Cheeseburger in Paradise](#) | [Volcano](#) | [One Particular Harbor](#)
- 3 Have students listen to the song the first time with their eyes closed—paying specific attention to the music, rather than the lyrics.
- 4 Play the song again, this time asking students to play along with the *rhythm* of the song. (This step can be repeated as many times as you'd like.)
- 5 Play the song with your hand on the volume control. Raise and lower the volume at varying parts of the song. Have students match the *dynamics* with their instruments.

RHYTHM | a strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound

DYNAMICS | the varying levels of volume of sound in different parts of a musical performance.

IF YOU HAVE 30 MINUTES...

Build-Your-Own Jukebox Musical

Escape to Margaritaville is a 'jukebox musical' (Read more about this on page 8 of this guide) that takes existing Jimmy Buffett songs and builds a story around them. This activity will allow students to imagine their own favourite albums or artists' songs as the spine of a musical.

Focus Question. How do we build a story from a playlist?

Objective. Students will be able to identify the parts of a story, using a fixed set of songs as a springboard.

Procedure.

- 1 Have students select an album or a collection of songs from a musical artist of their choosing. There should be between 9 and 14 songs.
- 2 With a partner, have students discuss themes, patterns, and context for the songs they've selected. *What is the glue that holds them together?*
- 3 Using the lyrics and instrumentals of their song choices, students should map out the following to begin building their story around their songs:
 - **CHARACTERS.** Who are the people who appear in the story?
 - **SETTING.** Where and when might this story take place?
 - **CONFLICT.** What problem is posed in the lyrics that could be introduced in the plot? How would it be resolved?
 - **MESSAGE/THEME.** What would you, as the storyteller, be trying to say with this story and this music? Why does this story need to be told? Why these songs?
- 4 If time, have students put their songs in the order they might appear in the story.
- 5 Have students return to their partner from the start of the activity to share their story outlines.

EXTENSION. Write a scene of dialogue from the story. Where would the song appear?

Why would the characters need to sing at this moment? Would there be dialogue within the song, as well, or would it stand alone?

IF YOU HAVE AN HOUR...

Climate Change Art

The creators of Jimmy Buffett's *Escape to Margaritaville* use the medium of musical theatre to examine issues of climate change (the unexpected eruption of a years-dormant volcano). This station activity will provide students opportunities to explore an issue of climate change through three different art forms.

Focus Question. How do artists share a point of view through their artwork?

Objective. Students will be able share their perspectives on a climate change issue through different art forms.

Procedure.

- 1 Introduce the biggest climate change topics, using this [slide deck](#), facing the world today. Give students time to review, discuss, and determine which issue feels most impactful for them.
- 2 There are two ways to introduce this activity. Both options have benefits and drawbacks. Make your choice based on the needs and interests of your students:

OPTION A. STATIONS

This option provides more of a survey, allowing students an introduction to multiple art forms without enough time to complete what they start.

- Set up the room with three stations: Photography, Spoken Word Poetry, and Music Video
- Divide students into each group, and provide the instructions.
- Students should review the sample material before starting the activity.
- Set a timer.
- Allow students to explore the art form until the timer goes off.
- Move students to the next station, and repeat.

OPTION B. STUDENT CHOICE

This option allows students to see an art piece from start to finish but may have them choosing an art area with which they are comfortable or familiar.

- Set up the room with three stations: Photography, Spoken Word Poetry, and Music Video
- Show students all three options, then ask them to choose the art area they'd like to work with
- Have students review the sample material before starting the activity.
- Ensure that students use the time allotted to develop and revise their work

- 3 Be sure to allow time for a [Gallery Walk](#), partner share, or whole group presentation of at least one piece from each art area.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION + DISCUSSION

A theatrical experience is not complete without reflection. What is the audience talking about when they leave the theatre? Here are some questions to pose to your students following their experience with *Jimmy Buffett's Escape to Margaritaville* at Theatre Calgary.

- 1 Who do you think the main character (or protagonist) is in *Escape to Margaritaville*? Why do you say that? What would change if we shifted whose perspective we see?
- 2 The creators of this show, Jimmy Buffett, Mike O'Malley, and Greg Garcia, chose to set the story on an island. Think about the Jimmy Buffett songs used in this musical. Where else could this story take place?
- 3 What stereotypes can you identify in this script? If you were the writer, what would you do differently to eliminate them?
- 4 The Bechdel Test sprung from a comic by Alison Bechdel, where two femme-presenting characters discuss how they will only see a movie or play if it has the following:
 - At least two women in it
 - Who speak to one another
 - About something other than a man

Would you say that *Escape to Margaritaville* would pass the Bechdel Test? If not, what would you change so that it would?

THEATRE CALGARY PLAY GUIDES DEVELOPED BY

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