

That Men May Fly



Oct 21
— Nov 16
2013

A detailed illustration of a red poppy flower with a green center, positioned over the text.A simple line drawing of a cloud, positioned below the text.

by **Winn Bray**
Directed By
Glenda Stirling
Musical Direction by
Tom Doyle

Study Guide

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Theatre is like a gym for empathy. It's where we can go to build up the muscles of compassion, to practice listening and understanding and engaging with people that are not just like ourselves. We practice sitting down, paying attention and learning from other people's actions. We practice caring.

Author Unknown

About Going to the Theatre

Going to the theatre to see a play is a unique and wonderful experience. The sense of being “right there” in the characters’ lives, the exchange of energy between actors and audience, this cannot be found in front of television, films, social or electronic media. In the theatre, the audience shares what the actors on stage are doing by watching and listening. The actors on stage also respond to the audience and the way they are reacting to the performance.

Some students may be coming to the theatre for the first time; others may need to be reminded of appropriate audience behavior. The following is offered in the hope that your students gain the most from their theatre experience.

- Stay with your group at all times and pay attention to your teachers, chaperones and theatre personnel.
- Once seated, stay put, watch and enjoy the play. If you absolutely must use the washroom during the performance, please exit the theatre quickly and quietly. You may or may not be readmitted to the theatre at the discretion of theatre personnel.
- Please do not stand up, walk around or put your feet on the seat or stage in front of you.
- Remember, this is “live” theatre. If you even whisper to someone beside you during the performance or in a blackout between scenes, you could disturb the concentration of the actors doing their jobs, or other audience members’ enjoyment of the play.
- Since this is Lunchbox Theatre, you are permitted to eat your lunch in the theatre; however, please be mindful of loud bag rustling and crunchy food.
- Feel free to talk quietly before the show. When the houselights go down at the beginning of the play, this lets you know that we’re starting. It is at this moment that the actors and technical staff do their final preparation for the opening moment, so please let them do their work by being quiet and respectful.
- Laugh if it’s funny, cry if it’s sad, think, watch, listen, feel, respond, and, above all, applaud at the end. Let the actors and everyone else involved in the production know in the curtain call that you had a good time and appreciated their work.
- If you have a cell phone or any other electronic device, please make sure it is turned off or leave it at the Box Office until the performance is over. If you feel the urge to text during the performance, just don’t out of courtesy to your fellow audience members and the performers.
- However, you can tweet, facebook and share your experience freely after the performance.

Tweet @lunchboxtheatre or facebook.com/lunchboxtheatre

- The use of cameras and recording devices in the theatre is strictly prohibited.
- At the end of the performance and “talk back”, if there is one, please wait for instructions to exit the theatre.
- Above all else, have a good time!

Credits

Cast List

Kit Mackie
Jack Dunmore
Neville Shannon
Tommy the Piano Player

Justine Westby
Matthew Hulshof
Eric Wigston
Tom Doyle

Production Team

Playwright
Director
Musical Director
Stage Manager
Set Design
Lighting Design
Costume Design
Sound Design

Winn Bray
Glenda Stirling
Tom Doyle
Nova Lea Thorne & Patti Neice
Julia Wasilewski
Dave Smith
Julia Wasilewski
Dewi Wood

About the Play

The year is 1943. The play, *THAT MEN MAY FLY*, is set at the No. 7 Special Flight Training School that operated in Fort Macleod, Alberta during the Second World War. This air base was one of many across Canada that were part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Program designed to prepare pilots to fly planes in battle in the skies over Europe.

The story revolves around the relationships of four people. Airwoman Kit Mackie is the Avro Engine Mechanic at the Flight Training School. Avro refers to the Avro Anson, the twin-engine aircraft used as an advance trainer for the pilots attending the school. Kit is a no-nonsense, down to brass tacks kind of woman who takes her job very seriously. The other two main characters in the play could not be any more different. Jack Dunmore is a cocky Canadian pilot with a wicked sense of humour and a lack of respect for rules. He does not appear to take his training very seriously. Staid and uptight Neville Shannon is a British pilot with strong morals and a determined work ethic. As a survivor of the bombings of London, he has his own demons to fight. Tommy is the piano player at the Queen's Hotel. He is warm, friendly, and always willing to lend an ear or offer advice. And he is a World War I Veteran.

THAT MEN MAY FLY is musical romantic comedy featuring some of the best-loved songs from the era, such as *I'll Be Seeing You*, *In the Mood* and *Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered*. It is a story of friendship, sacrifice and courage in the face of war.

Meet Playwright Winn Bray

Briefly describe your training and education. Were there any mentors or teachers along the way who encouraged and inspired you to follow the career path you have chosen?

I have always written. And like many young people I fell in love with the Theatre in High School where I found the venue for my passion. I applied to and was accepted into what was then the top Technical Theatre Training School in Canada. Niagara College Theatre Centre offered a three year intensive training programme which included a professional apprenticeship upon graduation. I studied all aspects of the professional Theatre and learned to understand and respect the technical, performance and administrative sides because we had to work in all those areas. Frank Norris, our Artistic Director, taught us to have respect for work in progress and to be honest. Norah Morgan taught me to be fearless; that if you do not fail sometimes, then you are not taking enough risks. Des Davis and Carousel Players introduced me to the professional world and gave me wonderful opportunities to practice my craft. But I likely would not have done any of that had it not been for my High School Guidance Counsellor, Doug Simpson, who convinced my mother that the Theatre was where I belonged.

What was your inspiration for your play, THAT MEN MAY FLY?

As a Canadian, I am often captivated by the richness of our past and I delight in finding great stories right in our own back yard. THAT MEN MAY FLY is one such story. In a time like no other, before or since, a huge piece of history played out here in the west, and in 106 other towns and cities across Canada. With their involvement in the British Commonwealth Air Training Program, Canadians became major contributors to the Allied victory of World War II. It is a story worth telling.

What do you like best and what scares you the most about the first rehearsal of a play you have written? What about the first performance of your play?

In terms of the production process, the first reading of a new work is an exciting experience. It's no longer you and your world of writing. Now there are other players involved who will test the mettle of your work. Is the story clear? Is the play well crafted? Are the characters fully developed? Is the dialogue natural and economical and are the characters true to what I believe I have written? Can we move this page to the stage? Then, of course, there is the anticipation of putting the work before an audience. You may love what you have done, but will they? It's the risk Norah Morgan taught me to take.

What do you hope young people will think and talk about after they see your play at Lunchbox Theatre?

THAT MEN MAY FLY is about young people, very close to the age of our high school audiences. Kit, Jack and Neville may have lived in 1943, but youthful passions, hopes, fears and joie de vivre resonate in the lives of young people regardless of the decade. As with any play, the intent is for the audience to relate to the work on some level. You trust that they will see themselves in the characters or see some piece of their own lives in the relationships and experiences they witness. That engagement brings the work to life and makes it real. With THAT MEN MAY FLY, the young audience experiences a three dimensional history lesson about their own county and their own heritage. They may come to understand that that great grandparents weren't always senior citizens that others take care of. They were once young and energetic, strong and impassioned by life and its challenges, too. And hopefully, our young audience will leave the theatre with a better understanding of their own history and with the driving, energetic and romantic music of the era in their heads.

What advice could you offer to young people who are interested in writing plays?

There would be no Theatre as we know it without plays and Playwrights. 'The play's the thing.' A *wright* is a person who builds or constructs. Millwright, shipwright etc. It is work. A Playwright works at building a play. So work at it. See as much Theatre as you

can; good, bad or indifferent. You can learn from each experience. Read. Not just plays. Books, magazines, blogs, everything. Make time for it. Write things down as they come to you no matter where you happen to be at the time. A phrase, a theme or a word. Learn about all aspects of Theatre. You need to understand how the production process works; how a director visualizes a piece and motivates the actors; how the technical creativity needs as much time to develop as does the action on stage; what an actor needs from you to bring your work to life; what is technically possible. Don't be precious. The work is not about you even though it comes to you through inspiration and hard work. Be willing to listen to suggestions and accept change. Your focus is to make it work. By the same token, you know what it is you are trying to create. Second guessing yourself too often based on too many suggestions can poke a lot of holes in your work and your confidence. So be willing to self-examine but not to write someone else's play. You don't need to be a Playwright for life. But if you feel the need and the desire to write, then start. Prepare and start.

Glossary of Terms and References

The Blitz (from the German “lightning”) is the phrase used in English to describe the period of sustained strategic bombing of the United Kingdom by Germany during the Second World War.

Edward R. Murrow (1908 – 1965), whose voice will be heard in the newscasts throughout the play, *THAT MEN MAY FLY*, was an American broadcast journalist who became well known by millions for his radio news broadcasts during the Second World War.

Fort Macleod, Alberta, the setting for *THAT MEN MAY FLY*, was the site of the No. 7 Service Flight Training School during the Second World War.

The Avro Anson was a British twin-engine, multi-role aircraft that served with the Royal Air Force, Fleet Air Arm, Royal Canadian Air Force and numerous other air forces before, during and after the Second World War. It was a reconnaissance bomber, also used as an advanced trainer. This aircraft was affectionately known as “Faithful Annie.”

The De Havilland Mosquito was a British multi-role combat aircraft with a two-man crew that served during the Second World War and the post-war era.

The Halifax was one of the four-engined heavy bombers of the Royal Air Force during the Second World War. It was also operated by squadrons of the Royal Canadian air Force.

The Luftwaffe was the aerial warfare branch of the German Wehrmacht (Defence Force) during the Second World War.

Per Ardua Ad Astra is a Latin phrase meaning through hardship or adversity to the stars.

Jezebel is a name of Hebrew origin meaning “not exalted.” It was later used as a term for a “painted lady” or brazen hussy.

High Flight is a poem by Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee Jr., No. 412 Squadron RCAF, killed December 11, 1941 in a military flight accident. Over the years, his poem has become a mantra to pilots and astronauts of all generations. There have also been several musical adaptations.

Pre-Show Activities

Topics for Discussion

1/ Share what you know about the roles the Canadian Armed Forces played during the Second World War. Do you have any family members who may have served or heard stories from others who did? What does Remembrance Day mean to you?

2/ Music from the Second World War is an important component in the play, *THAT MEN MAY FLY*. It reflects and reinforces the story as well as the relationships and feelings of the characters. Can you think of other examples of films, plays, television shows or videos in which the music supports and enhances the story telling?

3/ Have you ever feared for your life or the life of someone close to you? What did that feel like? How do you imagine it would feel if you haven't had that kind of experience?

4/ One of the characters in the play, Neville Shannon, is from Britain. He is tortured by nightmares of the bombings of London by the Germans during World War 2. Have you ever had nightmares? How did you feel when you woke up? Did you remember them? Do you think the nightmares were brought on by a specific event in your life, or, perhaps something or someone you feared or dreaded? How do we interpret our dreams and nightmares?

5/ Sometimes unlikely friendships are forged due to extraordinary circumstances as you will see with the characters in *THAT MEN MAY FLY*. Have you ever been in a situation in which you became good friends with someone with whom you originally thought you had nothing in common? How did that come about?

6/ *THAT MEN MAY FLY* is a story of courage and sacrifice. What do those words mean to you? What images come to mind? Do you think that you are a courageous person? Under what circumstances might you sacrifice yourself for the sake of someone else?

High Flight

During the Second World War, many Americans came to Canada to sign up and train with the Royal Canadian Air Force. John Gillespie Magee, Jr. was one such American. Only eighteen years of age when he entered flight training, within a year he was sent to England and posted to the No. 412 Fighter Squadron, RCAF, in Digby. He flew the Supermarine Spitfire over France and provided air defense over England against the German Luftwaffe.

In September of 1941, Magee flew a high altitude test flight in a newer model of the Spitfire V, during which time he was inspired to write his now iconic poem, *High Flight*. Once he landed, he wrote a letter to his parents and included the poem.

A few short months later, Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee, Jr. was killed when the Spitfire V he was flying collided mid-air with another training aircraft. He was nineteen years of age.

The poem is attached below. Read it with your students. Talk about the vivid imagery and how it makes them feel.

Divide students into groups. Using the poem as inspiration, have them come up with a way to express it, anything from artwork, tableaux, a movement piece, choral speech, music, video – the options are endless.

Once the work is complete, have each group share their creation with the rest of the class.

High Flight

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, - and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of – wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air ...

Up, up the long delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or ever eagle flew –
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

She Serves That Men May Fly

At the beginning of the Second World War, the Royal Canadian Air Force was suffering from a shortage of personnel. Men were required for combat duties overseas and training duties at Air Training Schools across Canada. A 1941 order-in-council authorized the formation of a component of the RCAF to be known as the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force. Later known as the Royal Canadian Air Force Women's Division, whose personnel were also known as WDs. Their official motto was 'She Serves That Men May Fly', hence the title of Winn Bray's play THAT MEN MAY FLY.

Her Royal Highness Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, was the Honorary Air Commandant of the RCAF (WD). This was her message to the women of Canada. *"The RCAF needs women in its ranks to work shoulder to shoulder with the men ... Indeed,*

service in the RCAF must fill everyone with a sense of deep satisfaction, knowing, as each one must, that she is playing her part in a supreme effort to bring into being a better and happier world."

What roles did women play during WW2 as part of the RCAF WD?

How were these women treated?

What was their rate of pay compared to the men?

Did any of these women serve overseas?

What was the appeal and motivation for these women to sign up?

Did they all believe in the motto 'She Serves That Men May Fly' or did some of them sign up for other reasons?

What happened to the WD after the war was over?

Post- Show Activities

Topics for Discussion

1/ What kind of play were you expecting before you saw THAT MEN MAY FLY? Did the play disappoint you, meet or surpass your expectations? Why/why not?

2/ Was there any particular moment in the play that made a strong impression you? If so, what was it and why?

3/ Which of the characters did you identify with the most and why?

4/ Choose one of the characters and describe his or her journey from the beginning of the play to the end.

5/ How did you feel about the songs of the era that were scattered throughout the story? Why do you think the playwright, Winn Bray, chose those particular songs? Did they work for you as part of the telling of the story.

6/ Why do you think Neville chose to go with Jack when he took the Avro Anson up when all flights were supposed to be grounded? Why did Kit cover for them when she said she didn't recognize the pilots? Would you have done the same thing under those circumstances?

7/ Try to express the main message or theme of the play in one or two sentences.

8/ How did you feel about the way the play ended? If you could change it, how would you do so? What do you think might happen to each of the characters if the story continued?

Monologue Work

Now that students have seen the play, *THAT MEN MAY FLY*, have them each choose one of the following monologues to rehearse and present as a reading. Please note that included here are song lyrics that can also be presented as spoken text. The preparation and actor homework are the same. What is the character thinking and feeling? What does the character want and need?

NEVILLE:

We had spent the night together ... in a sheltered underground. Talking, laughing, everything but sleeping. No one slept much, except some of the younger children perhaps. The Luftwaffe must have dropped a thousand bombs on London that night. About seven in the morning the all clear sounded and we headed up into the light. Fire trucks were screaming by. Shops were beginning to open. Just another morning. I went to work, she went home. I should have walked her home. Next night, another raid. But she didn't come to the shelter that night. So, in the morning I went to find her. Every building on her street was gone. She was just gone. I never saw her again. So I'm going back. Going to bomb the hell out of those Gerries. For Alice.

JACK:

I was in Ottawa, see. And one day we were flying this cross country exercise. Ottawa to Kingston. And it was hot. Summer. Well, we got to Kingston and flying over the harbour and boy that water looked so cool and beautiful, I figured we'll go down and have a closer look. Suddenly I just dove down, beat it up the harbour, buzzed a couple ships then climbed back up to two thousand feet. Man! What a gas! Next thing we're flying over cottage country – great big shimmering lake. Then, raaarrhhhh! Down to zero feet! So close to the water I was skipping across the lake. People shouting at us. And me, waving back at them all. Then all of a sudden I see these wires. Too late! Wham! We hit the wires!

KIT:

For there's a change in the weather
There's a change in the sea
From now on there'll be a change in me
My world will be diff'rent my talk and my name
Nothin' about me is goin' to be the same,
I'm goin' to change my way of livin' if that ain't enough
I'm gonna change the way I strut my stuff,
'cause nobody wants you when you're old and gray,
There'll be some changes made.

Dear Diary

Sometimes it feels safer to express one's innermost thoughts and feelings within the privacy of a diary or journal. Have students choose one of the following suggested moments, or come up with their own moment from the play to express what the character might write in his or her journal.

- a) Jack, after his first meeting Kit Mackie
- b) Neville, after a nightmare about the London bombings
- c) Kit, after finding out about the death of her brother
- d) Neville, after Jack's demonstration of moves on Kit after her presentation about the Avro Anson aircraft
- e) Jack, after seeing Kit and Neville together under the starry night sky
- f) Kit, after covering for Jack and Neville taking the aircraft up when all flights were supposed to be grounded due to strong winds

Student Play Review

We would love to know what your students thought of our production of THAT MEN MAY FLY. Please encourage them to write and send us copies of their play reviews.

Please email to Maeike van Dijk, Marketing and Communications:
maeike.van.dijk@lunchboxtheatre.com

Before students write their reviews, talk about the role of a critic. Is the point of a review to merely describe the play and tell the story, or offer opinions on the production?

You may wish to offer the following as a guideline for student play reviews.

Some play and film reviews offer a rating in the form of a number of stars (*), with one star representing a weak rating and five stars representing a perfect one. Assign your review of THAT MEN MAY FLY the number of stars you think it merits.

Write a headline for your review that sums up your thoughts and feelings about the production.

In your opening statement, state your expectations before you attended the performance and whether or not they were met.

Follow with comments on some or all of the following play elements:

- Style, story and themes of the play
- Conflicts in the play
- Direction

- Acting
- Scenic design
- Costume design
- Make-up design (if applicable)
- Lighting, music and sound
- Special effects

In your closing statement, include any final thoughts on the production and whether you would recommend it.

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Teacher Evaluation

Your feedback is very important to us! The information you provide will help us to determine future programming, booking procedures and educational content so that you and your students will have the best possible experience at Lunchbox Theatre.

Please return by fax to 403-264-5461, or email to Maeike van Dijk, Marketing and Communications: maeike.van.dijk@lunchboxtheatre.com

PLAY & DATE:

SCHOOL:

TEACHER NAME:

GRADE(S):

Please rate the following from 1-10 (1=Poor, 5=Good, 10=Excellent)

1) Booking Procedure

(poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (excellent)

2) Affordability & Accessibility (Price, Bussing, etc)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3) Show Start Times & Performance Duration

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4) Study Guide Material

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5) Production Values (Set, Costume, Props etc.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6) Educational Value: (Was the production successful as a learning experience for your students?)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7) Entertainment Value (Did the production engage your students?)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8) Overall Experience

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments and suggestions:

Thank you for taking the time to give us your invaluable input!