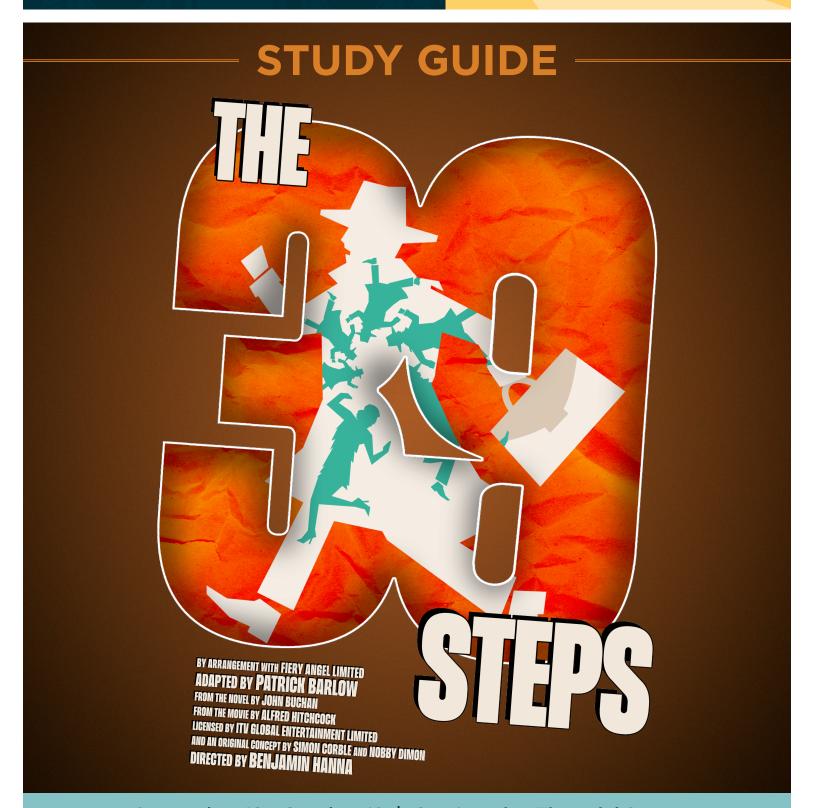
at the Indiana Repertory Theatre



September 16 - October 12 | OneAmerica Financial Stage

Oringal artwork by Jake Lebowitz.













THE 39 STEPS

ADAPTED BY PATRICK BARLOW, FROM THE NOVEL BY JOHN BUCHAN, FROM THE MOVIE BY ALFRED HITCHCOCK



Contains mild profanity, verbal and physical innuendo and inferences regarding sexual situations, guns and gunshots, depictions of physical violence and death often played for comedy, alcohol consumption, knives and knife violence, smoking and tobacco pipes, depictions of plane crashes, and antiquated language about race, religion, and gender in pre-WWII Europe.

BENJAMIN HANNA

MARGOT LACY ECCLES
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SUZANNE SWEENEY

MANAGING DIRECTOR

For more information, contact:

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madcap romance thriller

In classic Hitchcock fashion, a notorious fugitive and a spellbound blonde travel north by northwest from London to Scotland. Will they save Britain from a den of devious spies? Will they stop arguing and fall in love? Four actors play more than 40 characters in this hilarious take on one of Alfred Hitchcock's best movies. A comic thrill ride full of plot twists, quick-changes, and laughs, delivered at a delightfully dizzying pace.

Recommended for students in grades 6-12

The performance will last approximately **2 hours**, including one intermission.

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PLANNING YOUR VISIT



You, the audience, are one of the most important parts of any performance. Experiencing the theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allow the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. Here are a few simple tips to help make each theatre experience enjoyable for everyone:

Leave mobile phones, cameras, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home or turned off.

You may think texting is private, but the light and the motion are very annoying to those around you and on stage. Do not text during the performance.

The house lights dimming and going out signal the audience to get quiet and settle in your seats: the play is about to begin.

Don't talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage. Even if you think they can't hear you, they can.

Never throw anything onto the stage. People could be injured.

Remain in your seat during the play. Use the restroom before or after the show, or during intermission.

Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.

Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, sigh, gasp—whatever the story draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.

Remain at your seat and applaud during the curtain call; this is part of the performance too. It gives you a chance to recognize a job well done and the actors a moment to thank you for your attention.

STUDENT MATINEE ARRIVAL & PARKING INFORMATION

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

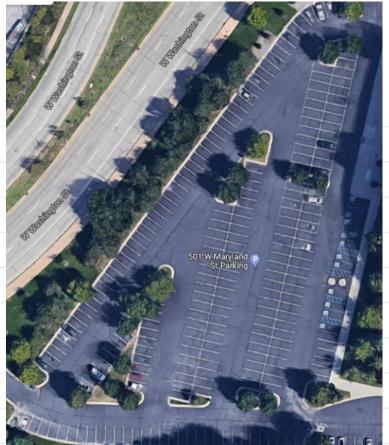
- IRT is located one-half block west of Circle Centre Mall on Washington St., between north bound Illinois St. and southbound Capitol Ave.
- The physical address of IRT is 140 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204.
- Buses should unload and load directly in front of the theatre. (Do not block the entrance to Embassy Suites garage.) Please plan to arrive 20-30 minutes before your performance is scheduled to begin.
- You will be greeted at the curb by an IRT Staff Member and directed to the correct entrance.
- For shows on the Janet Allen Stage, students and teachers will take the stairs to the 4th floor.
- The teacher named on the reservation should check in with the IRT Education staff member stationed in the lobby.
- Your group will be ushered to your assigned seats.
- Students and chaperones should follow instructions of all IRT Staff for your safety.

LATE ARRIVAL

- If you believe that you are going to be late, please contact the IRT House Manager, Katy Thompson at 317.916.4803. Provide them with a phone number and the name of the school so that Education staff may be in contact with you.
- You can contact IRT Education (education@irtlive.com) with non-emergency information on the day of the show.

PARKING

- Buses may park for free at Victory Field unless they are having an event we will inform you if that is the case. The House Manager will give you a parking pass for each bus when you arrive at the theatre. It should be displayed in the windshield.
- Continue east on Washington St. past the JW Marriott and turn left across Maryland St. into the Victory Field lot.
- PLEASE NOTE that Victory Field no longer has public restroom spaces available. We apologize for any inconvenience.
- See the map on the next page for full details.
- Additional parking options are located on the next page.
- While IRT will make every effort to communicate parking information in advance, it is the responsibility of schools and drivers to make alternate arrangements.



VICTORY FIELD PARKING MAP

Victory Field parking lot is located on the West side of the stadium. From IRT, continue west on Washington Street past the JW Marriott. Turn left on Schumacher Way, and cross Maryland Street into the Victory Field lot.

Some buses may need to double park in the lot. The image is of the Victory Field parking lot.

PLEASE NOTE that Victory Field no longer has public restrooms available to drivers. This is a change from years past. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Thank you, Indianapolis Indians and Indiana Repertory Theatre

ADDITIONAL PARKING OPTIONS

In the event that Victory Field is unavailable for free parking, here are some other potential options. While IRT will make every effort to communicate parking info in advance, it is the responsibility of schools and drivers to make alternate arrangements.

402 Kentucky Avenue: This is an overflow lot for Victory Field and will be available to buses if the Victory Field Lot is full.

White River State Park: Paid surface parking is located on Washington Street, across from Victory Field. May require advance notice; event rates may apply. (Approximately .6 mi from IRT.)



Indianapolis Zoo: Paid parking is available on Washington Street, west of White River State Park. First come, first served. (*Approximately 1.2 mi from IRT.*)



Downtown Indy: Explore all available parking options at the Downtown Indy website. Buses are welcome to utilize street parking if all used spaces are paid.

CAR AND VAN PARKING OPTIONS

COURT STREET GARAGE

Ask a Theatre employee for a voucher that will reduce your parking fee to \$10. This voucher is available at the Court Street Garage when attending an IRT show. This is only valid during the IRT's season.

Address for the Court Street Garage

110 West Washington Street

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

IndyGo's Red Line, the city's rapid bus transit system, connects Broad Ripple and Fountain Square to the heart of downtown and other neighborhoods in Indianapolis. With buses running every 10-20 minutes and a stop directly next to the IRT on Capitol Avenue, the Red Line provides another convenient option for your transportation to the Theatre.

To plan your trip or for more information about the Red Line and other nearby routes, visit IndyGo.net or call IndyGo Customer Service at 317-635-3344.

INDIANA STATE STANDARDS

Seeing a performance at Indiana
Repertory Theatre is a great way to
help make connections for students
and facilitate their understanding of a
text. Some key education standards to
consider on your trip can be found by
scanning this QR Code:



THE AUTHORS

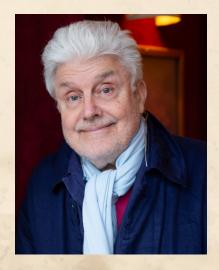
JOHN BUCHAN, NOVELIST



John Buchan (1875–1940) was a Scottish novelist, historian, journalist, and politician. After attending Glasgow and Oxford universities, he practiced as a barrister in London, served as a private secretary to the Governor of Cape Colony in Africa, and later went into publishing. During World War I, he was British Director of Information and Head of Intelligence. After several years as a member of Parliament, he was appointed Governor General of Canada, serving from 1935 to his death in 1940. King George V raised him to the peerage as Baron Tweedsmuir. Buchan published his first novel in 1895 and went on to write more than a hundred books, of which the best known is *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915). The first of five novels featuring action hero Richard Hannay, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* is one of the earliest examples of the "man on the run" thriller, a genre that would become very popular with both writers and filmmakers, particularly Alfred Hitchcock.

PATRICK BARLOW, PLAYWRIGHT

Patrick Barlow is a British actor, comedian, and playwright. He was born in Leicester, England, in 1947. His comedic alter ego, Desmond Olivier Dingle, is the founder, artistic director, and chief executive of the National Theatre of Brent, a two-man mock theatre troupe that has performed on stage, television, and radio. (Other performers in the troupe have included Jim Broadbent.) Barlow has written and performed in many National Theatre of Brent productions, including *All the World's a Globe* (1987), *Desmond Olivier Dingle's Compleat Life and Works of William Shakespeare* (1995), and *The Arts and How They Was Done* (2007). He has had cameo roles in such films as *Shakespeare in Love, Notting Hill, Bridget Jones's Diary*, and *Nanny McPhee*, and has appeared on such diverse television shows as *Absolutely Fabulous* and *Midsomer Murders*. Barlow's stage adaptation of *The 39 Steps* premiered in 2005 and has enjoyed long runs in London, on Broadway, and around the world.



THE STORY OF

THE 39 STEPS

The year is 1935, Richard Hannay, an ordinary London chap with nothing much going on, decides to go to the theatre. There he sees a demonstration of the remarkable powers of "Mr. Memory," a man who remembers everything he has ever learned. Suddenly a shot is fired, and Hannay finds himself escorting a frightened Annabella Schmidt to hide at his flat. She tells him that she is a spy being chased by assassins. There is a plot to steal vital British military secrets by an espionage organization called "The 39 Steps," led by a man with a missing finger. To stop him, Annabella must go to meet a man in a big house in Alt-na-Shellach, Scotland.

The next day, Hannay wakes up to find Annabella with a knife in her back. To avoid being incriminated, he sneaks out of his flat and takes a train to Scotland to find the man in Alt-na-Shellach. On the train, he sees the police on his trail. In desperation, he enters a compartment and, trying to hide his face and escape detection, passionately kisses the sole occupant, Pamela. She manages to free herself from his unwanted embrace and betrays him to the law. He jumps from the train and escapes.

Hannay stays the night with a crotchety old farmer and his young wife, who sees in Hannay the dashing, romantic man she has longed for. Late that night, the police arrive, but Hannay escapes and continues his journey, eventually arriving at the big house Annabella had mentioned. There he meets Professor Jordon, a charming host who is a prominent figure in the local village. But when Hannay sees that part of the professor's finger missing, he realizes that Jordan is the leader of the plot. Jordan shoots Hannay and leaves him for dead.

Hannay, who is not dead, goes to the local sheriff, who knows Jordan well and refuses to believe the story. Hannay escapes yet again and tries to hide himself in a political meeting, where he is mistaken for the keynote speaker. He gives a rousing impromptu speech—without knowing a thing about the candidate he is promoting—but Pamela, who is there with the police, recognizes him and gives him up once more. The two are handcuffed together and taken away. When they bypass the nearest police station, Hannay realizes that these "policemen" are actually spies, and

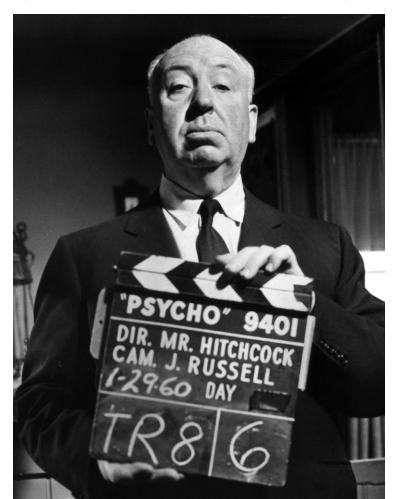
again he escapes, now dragging an unwilling Pamela along.

The pair travel cross country and stay the night at an inn, Pamela still not believing Hannay's story. When he falls asleep, she wrangles out of the handcuffs; but when she overhears the fake policemen talking downstairs, she realizes that Hannay has been telling the truth. The next morning, she tells Hannay that the spies have headed off to the London Palladium. The play ends where it began, at the theatre, as the story comes to its exciting, romantic, and comical conclusion.



ALFRED HITCHCOCK, MASTER OF SUSPENSE

by Richard J Roberts, Resident Dramaturg



In a career spanning more than half a century and some 54 feature films, director Alfred Hitchcock created psychological thrillers that blended humor and romance with thrills and chills. Born in London in 1899, he did not remember his childhood as a particularly happy one. His father once punished his young son by sending him to the police station to be locked in a cell for ten minutes; the theme of being unjustly accused is one of the most pervasive in his films (including *The 39 Steps*). Alfred's strained relationship with his mother is also echoed in his films, where the protagonist is often dominated by his mother in a relationship that is either excessively combative or disturbingly indulgent—or both.

After studying engineering and navigation, Hitchcock became a draftsman and advertising artist. Fascinated by photography, he got a job as a designer of title cards for silent movies; five years later, at the age of 23, he was directing his first film. Success did not come until *The Lodger* (1927), an expressionistic study of murder in foggy London. In 1929 he directed *Blackmail*, the first British talkie. His most well known British films are *The 39 Steps* (1935) and *The Lady Vanishes* (1938). In 1939 he signed a seven-year contract with Hollywood producer David O. Selznick and moved to California.



Hitchcock's first Hollywood film was a Gothic blend of mystery and romance set in a cliff-side English manor house. Rebecca (1940) turned out to be Hitchcock's only Best Picture Academy Award winner. (Hitchcock himself would be nominated as Best Director five times, but he never won.) Over the next thirty years, Hitchcock developed a distinctive style through such films as Foreign Correspondent (1940), Suspicion (1941), Shadow of a Doubt (1943, his personal favorite of all his films), Spellbound (1945), Notorious (1946), Strangers on a Train (1951), Rear Window (1954), To Catch a Thief (1955), Vertigo (1958, considered by many to be his masterpiece), and North by Northwest (1959). Even today his name evokes a particular combination of humor, suspense, and romance that has never been equaled. Late in his career, Psycho (1960) and The Birds (1963) were unique pioneers in the horror genre, evoking great terror while showing very little actual violence.

Like Walt Disney, Hitchcock was one of the first filmmakers to understand the power of television. From 1955 to 1965, he hosted *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, an anthology series that evoked the same amusingly creepy tone as his feature films. While his cameo appearances in most of his own films had made his face and rotund figure well known, his eccentric delivery of droll yet macabre introductions to this series' episodes made him not only a celebrity, but a cultural icon. He died in 1980.

Hitchcock's films draw the viewer in; we feel complicit in the action. The camera moves as the eye moves, casting the filmgoer as a kind of voyeur. Unique angles, framing, and editing techniques are designed to heighten our anxiety and empathy. Themes are frequently drawn from the realm of psychoanalysis, and many situations are rife with strong sexual undertones. Hitchcock's plots often feature innocent fugitives on the run from the law, ordinary men who find themselves in extraordinary circumstances. He had a penchant for blonde leading ladies, including Joan Fontaine, Grace Kelly (three films), Eva Marie Sainte, Doris Day, Kim Novak, Janet Leigh, and Tippi Hedren, as well as Madeleine Carroll in The 39 Steps. Other frequent collaborators include Ingrid Bergman (three films), Cary Grant and Jimmy Stewart (four films each), composer Bernard Hermann (eight films), and costume designer Edith Head (eleven films). Today Alfred Hitchcock is considered one of the most influential filmmakers of all time.

Top Left: Alfred Hitchcock

Bottom Left: Godfrey Tearle and Robert Donat in The 39 Steps.

Right: Jimmy Stewart in Vertigo.



THEMES

The director's deepest subjects—theatre and its relation to film, the abandonment of human beings in vacant and foreboding landscapes, the complex human quest for knowledge, and the nature of accidents—abound in *The 39 Steps*. Hitchcock's perception of the precariousness of human existence, and his belief in film's capacity to reveal and reflect on it, lie at the heart of his achievement as a master of the art of film.

-film historian Marian Keane

The Wronged Man

At the beginning of the play, Richard Hannay tells us that he is bored and needs excitement. Suddenly he is accused of a crime he did not commit and is thrown into the world of espionage. Caught up in danger and intrigue, he must fight to survive, eluding the police while finding the real culprits and clearing his name. This scenario plays out in several of Hitchcock's films; Saboteur, The Wrong Man, To Catch a Thief, The Man Who Knew Too Much, and North by Northwest, as well as The 39 Steps. The theme of the wronged man places ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. Richard Hannay is no hero, but he must act heroically, risking exposure, incarceration, and death, putting himself in danger to save himself—and his country. This experience brings out the best in him, revealing qualities he did not know he possessed.

Adventure

The 39 Steps is an adventure tale. The events in the story might be unlikely, but they are plausible; the viewer is just barely able to believe that they might really happen. Hannay must evade both criminals and the police, climb outside a moving train, and jump from a bridge. He is threatened, chased, and shot at. He must outwit his pursuers mentally as well as physically. In seeing how he responds to these very challenging obstacles, we see him grow and develop as a person, and we understand more about his inner character.

Comedy

The comedy in *The 39 Steps* comes from a variety of sources. Hannay, the protagonist, has an ironic viewpoint, and his fish-out-of-water experience in the world of espionage gives him plenty of fodder for wry observations. From the beginning, Pamela is not impressed by him, and she wittily punctures his easily inflated ego. And the two Clowns, playing a total of nearly 40 different people, offer clever disguises, sleight-of-hand, and plenty of old-fashioned vaudeville jokes, suggesting the finest and funniest of classic cinema character actors and bit players.

Romance

Besides being an action-adventure story, *The 39 Steps* is a romantic comedy. Although they are obviously attracted to one another, Hannay and Pamela meet under very unusual and difficult circumstances, and for most of the play they can't stand each other. Watching them dance back and forth between love and hate is entertaining, and (spoiler alert) their ultimate embrace is satisfying.

Theatre

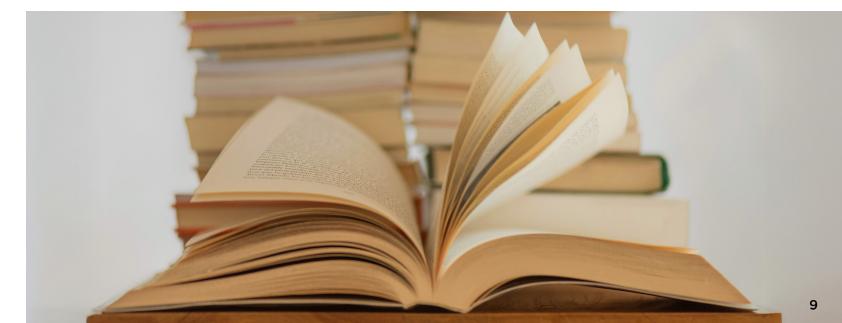
The 39 Steps opens and closes with scenes set in a theatre. The opening scene helps prepare us for the overt theatricality of the play itself: scene changes will be created with just a few random props on a bare stage, character changes will be suggested with as little as a change of hat. Sometimes an actor will play two different characters at the same time. But these bookending theatre scenes also reflect the nature of the story itself: just as Hannay's humdrum life is interrupted by unexpected adventure, so the planned and rehearsed events of illusionary stage performances are interrupted by the reality of life-and-death dangers.

Disguise

From his initial masquerade as a milkman, the protagonist Richard Hannay takes on various disguises during his adventure. Sometimes his transformation involves nothing more than a false dialect. Other disguises are more elaborate. At one point he pretends to be a political candidate and gives a rousing speech on a subject he knows nothing about. One woman plays three very different characters, with different dialects, costumes, and wigs. In addition, there are two Clowns who change a hat, an article of clothing, or facial hair to become various characters of both genders. Some of these disguises are obvious, others quite subtle, and all are comical.

Duty

A sense of duty motivates many of the play's characters. Hannay and Annabella try to uncover a threat to England's national security. Pamela believes Hannay to be a criminal, and she feels duty-bound to reveal him to the police. Even the spies feel a duty to their organization, however nefarious we might consider that cause. Mr. Memory feels compelled to answer all questions asked him, and in the final moments of the play, when he is asked about the 39 Steps, his sense of duty overcomes his sense of self-preservation, and he is shot—a truly heroic death that is perhaps unexpected in this comic story.



WHAT'S A MACGUFFIN?

Filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock popularized the term MacGuffin. A MacGuffin is a plot element that catches the viewers' attention or drives the plot of a film. The defining aspect of a MacGuffin is that the major players in the story are (at least initially) willing to do and sacrifice almost anything to obtain it, regardless of what the MacGuffin actually is. In fact, the specific nature of the MacGuffin may be ambiguous, undefined, generic, left open to interpretation, or otherwise completely unimportant to the plot. Common examples are money, victory, glory, survival, a source of power, or a potential threat, or it may simply be something entirely unexplained.

The MacGuffin is a common element in Hitchcock's thrillers. Usually, though not always, the MacGuffin is the central focus of the film in the first act, and then declines in importance as the struggles and motivations of characters play out. It may come back into play at the climax of the story, but sometimes the MacGuffin is actually forgotten by the end of the film.

Hitchcock popularized the technique with his film *The 39 Steps*, an early example of the MacGuffin. He explained the term in a 1939 lecture at Columbia University:

[We] have a name in the studio, and we call it the MacGuffin. It is the mechanical element that usually crops up in any story. In crook stories it is almost always the necklace, and in spy stories it is most always the papers.

In The 39 Steps, the MacGuffin is vaguely described in an early scene as "highly confidential information vital to your air defense." Only in the last few moments of the film (and the play) do we learn anything more specific.

Interviewed in 1966 by fellow film maker François Truffaut, Alfred Hitchcock illustrated the term with this story:

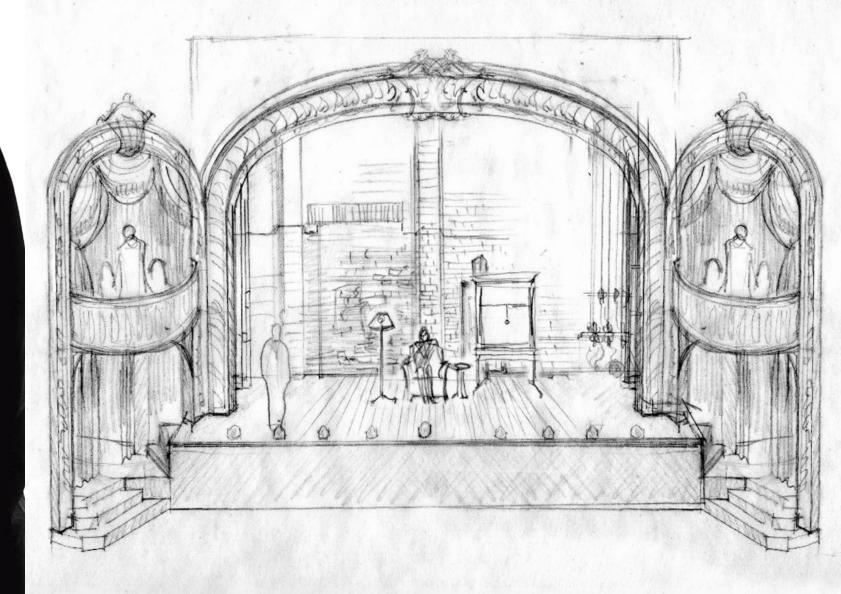
It might be a Scottish name, taken from a story about two men in a train. One man says, "What's that package up there in the baggage rack?." and the other answers. "Oh, that's a MacGuffin." The first one asks, "What's a MacGuffin?" "Well," the other man says, "It's an apparatus for trapping lions in the Scottish Highlands." The first man says, "But there are no lions in the Scottish Highlands," and the other one answers, "Well, then that's no MacGuffin!" So you see, a MacGuffin is nothing at all.

ACTION!

LINDA BUCHANAN | SCENIC DESIGNER

The most important quality in a set design for *The 39 Steps* is a sense of theatricality. The premise of the play is that four actors set out to re-enact the film with limited resources. We should see them creating each location with items that might be found backstage: old flats, prop tables, ad hoc rigging. The "cheesiness" of their staging is a great contrast to the film noir quality of Hitchcock's work. The film also begins and ends in London music hall theatres, and the script actually requires the

kinds of spaces found in these turn-of-the century theatres: a fancy proscenium arch to frame the action, box seats close to the stage. The audience should feel that these are contemporary actors re-enacting a film that was made in 1935. Because the Moorish interior of the IRT space is typical of this period—it was built in 1927—we chose to work with the design of the theatre and to continue it onto the stage, adding the necessary boxes and a smaller proscenium arch.



Preliminary scenic sketch by Linda Buchanan.

THE BRITISH LANGUAGE

The 39 Steps is set in the United Kingdom, specifically England and Scotland. The play features numerous British and Scotlish terms, expressions, people, and organizations.

Arsenal Gunners

A professional English Premier League football club based in North London.

biscuit

A small and hard, often sweetened, flour-based product, most akin in American English to a cookie, or sometimes in the case of cheese biscuits, a cracker.

Bob's your uncle

A commonly used British expression usually used to conclude a set of simple instructions, meaning, "and there you have it," or "you're all set." For example, "To make a ham sandwich, just put a piece of ham between two slices of bread, and Bob's your uncle."

buffer

The colloquial term for the senior seaman sailor in a British Navy ship.

bugger

A euphemism for sodomy that is often used as a general-purpose expletive.

Cockney

Geographically and culturally, the term cockney often refers to working class Londoners, particularly those in the East End. Linguistically, it refers to the form of English spoken by this group. Cockney speakers have a distinctive accent and dialect, and frequently use rhyming slang.

COOS

Scottish dialect: cows.

Cor blimey!

Slang: An derivative of "God blind me" used as an interjection to express shock or surprise.

crofter

A tenant farmer.

the Cup

The Football Association Challenge Cup, commonly known as the FA Cup, is a championship competition in English football (soccer).

do a bunk

Slang: To run away in suspicious circumstances; perhaps from the sense of occupying a bunk.

the Foreign Office

The British government department responsible for promoting the interests of the United Kingdom overseas.

gaol

The British spelling of jail.

Garibaldi

The Garibaldi biscuit consists of currants squeezed between two thin, oblong biscuits. They are often dunked in a beverage such as tea or coffee.

George the Fifth

George V (1865-1936) was King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, and Emperor of India, from 1910 until his death in 1936. George was a grandson of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

Harris Tweed

Harris Tweed is a luxury cloth that has long been handwoven by the islanders on the isles of Harris, Lewis, Uist, and Barra in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland, using local wool.

ken'd

Scottish: knew.

liverish

Disagreeable; crabbed; melancholy: to have a liverish disposition.

pudding

Slang: dessert.

Procurer Fiscal

A public prosecutor in Scotland. Similar to a coroner in other legal systems, they investigate sudden and suspicious deaths in Scotland.

race meetings

A regular occasion on which a number of horse races are held on the same track, such as the Royal Ascot or the Epsom Derby; some such meetings are important society events.

shakedown

Slang: to sleep somewhere such as on the floor or in a chair instead of in a bed.

tickety boo

Slang: fine, excellent, in working order; derived from the expression "that's the ticket!"

Tottenham Hotspurs

An English Premier League association football club based in Tottenham, North London.

two and six

Two shillings and sixpence; one eighth of a pound. Worth about \$17 today.

BRITISH PLACES

During *The 39 Steps*, Richard Hanny travels from London to Scotland (approximately the distance from Indianapolis to Minnesota) and back again. Many place names are mentioned over the course of the play.

Alt-na-Shellach | A village located about 12 miles west of Dundee, which is on the east coast of Scotland.

the BBC | Broadcasting House, the headquarters and registered office of the British Broadcasting Corporation, is located in Portland Place, London.

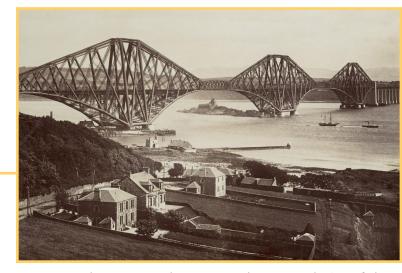
Berwick-upon-Tweed | A town in Northumberland, England, on the east coast at the mouth of the River Tweed. Located 2.5 miles south of the Scottish border, it is the northernmost town in England.

British Museum | A museum of human history and culture in London, among the largest in the world.

Durham | A city in northeast England, 103 miles north of Halifax. Durham is well known for its Norman Cathedral and 11th-century castle, and is home to Durham University.

Edinburgh | The capital city of Scotland, located 404 miles north of London, 56 miles west of Berwick-upon-Tweed, and 55 miles south of Dundee and Alt-na-Shellach.

the Forth Bridge | The Forth Bridge is a cantilever railway bridge over the Firth of Forth in the east of Scotland, located 9 miles west of central Edinburgh. (Firth is a word in the Lowland Scots language used to denote various coastal waters in Scotland; the Firth of Forth is an inlet from the sea.) Described in the Collins Encyclopaedia of Scotland as "the one immediately and internationally recognized Scotlish landmark," it has the second longest single cantilever bridge span in the world.



Glasgow | The largest city in Scotland, located near the west coast. Glasgow was known as "the Second City of the British Empire" for much of the Victorian era and Edwardian period.

Halifax | An industrial town in Yorkshire England, 204 miles north of London. It is well-known as a center of England's wool manufacturing from the 15th century onward.

Hammersmith | An urban center in west London, approximately 5 miles west of Charing Cross on the north bank of the River Thames. One of west London's key transport hubs and commercial centers.

Hampshire | A county on the southern coast of England, notable for housing the original birthplaces of the Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force. Located about 50 miles southwest of London.

the Highlands | The Scottish Highlands are located in the northwest half of Scotland; Alt-na-Shellach is near the eastern edge of the region. This is the region where the musical *Brigadoon* is set.

Inveraray | A town in Argyll and Bute, Scotland, located on the western shore of Loch Fyne near its head, 75 miles west of Edinburgh.

Loch Crimond | There is no Loch Crimond. There is a town called Crimond located in northeast Scotland near the Loch of Strathbeg, about 100 miles northeast of Alt-na-Shellach, far out of Hannay's way.

London Palladium | a 2,286 seat West End theatre located off Oxford Street. It is arguably the most famous theatre in London and the United Kingdom, especially for musical variety shows.

Madame Tussauds | a wax museum (a collection of life-sized wax figures representing famous people from history and contemporary personalities exhibited in lifelike poses). It was set up by wax sculptor Marie Tussaud (1761-1850) on Baker Street in London in 1835.

New Scotland Yard | When the London Metropolitan Police moved away from Scotland Yard in 1890, the official name New Scotland Yard was adopted for the new headquarters (most people still say "Scotland Yard").

Portland Place | A street in the Marylebone district of central London.

Reading | Reading railway station (formerly Reading General) is a major rail transport hub in the English town of Reading, about 40 miles west of London.

Sauchiehall Street | One of the main shopping and business streets in the city center of Glasgow.

Scotland Yard | often used as a metonym for the Metropolitan Police Service of London. The term derives from the location of the original Metropolitan Police headquarters at 4 Whitehall Place, which had a rear entrance on a street called Great Scotland Yard.

Scottish Moors | Moorland or moor is a type of habitat found in upland areas, characterized by low growing vegetation on acidic soils and heavy fog. Scottish "muirs" are generally heather moors, but will also have extensive covering of grass, mosses, bracken, and under-shrubs.

St. Paul's Cathedral | an Anglican cathedral at the top of Ludgate Hill, the highest point in the City of London. The present building, designed by Christopher Wren, dates from the 17th century.

West End | West End theatre is a popular term for mainstream professional theatre staged in the large theatres of London's West End; the London equivalent of Broadway.

West One | A London postal district.

Windsor | Windsor Racecourse, also known as Royal Windsor Racecourse, is a thoroughbred horse racing venue located in Windsor (also the site of Windsor Castle), 21 miles west of London.

UNITED KINGDOM SCOTLAND THE HIGHLANDS ALT-NA-SHELLACH **EDINBURGH BERWICK-UPON-TWEED** DURHAM • HALIFAX **ENGLAND** LONDON WINDSOR • **READING** •

MAP OF THE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before Seeing the Play

- 1. Think of books you have read that have been adapted into plays or movies you have seen. What happens to story and characters when adapting a novel to a movie or a play? Or in this case, from a novel to a movie and then to a play? What is left out or added? What is changed to fit the medium?
- 2. What plot devices and/or characters are needed to make a mystery or suspense play work?
- 3. What Hitchcock movies have you seen? (See "Resources" on page 19 for a list of some of the most popular.) What characteristics have you noted that these films share? What makes them continue to be popular many years after they were made?

After Seeing the Play

- 1. How does the character of Richard Hanny change during the play? How would you describe him at the beginning of the play? How would you describe him at the end? What happens during the play to cause these changes?
- 2. How do the genres of film noir and vaudeville accentuate the play? Give specific examples of where a piece of plot or character development fits into one of these genres and how that element affects the play.
- 3. How does the play comment on class issues? How would you describe Hannay's different interactions with different characters? How does class play a part in these interactions?
- 4. In this play, some forty characters are played by four actors. How are some of these character changes created simply? How are some of them complex? What are some of the different challenges between playing one character for the entire play as opposed to playing as many as twenty characters in one play?
- 5. What other ways can you imagine staging the scenes in *The 39 Steps*? What other ways could you make a train, or a bridge, or a car?
- 6. Do you have a favorite Hitchcock movie? If so, what is it, and why do you like it? Is there a moment in the movie that you saw depicted in the play?
- 7. How many Hitchcock movie titles did you recognize during the play?
- 8. This production of *The 39 Steps* could be considered a stylized comedy. What comedy elements are similar to the contemporary comedy that you have seen either live on stage or in TV sitcoms? What elements are different? Keep in mind the vocal and physical activities of the actors as well as the text.
- 9. What mystery-espionage writers do you like and why? Which of these writers' works would lend themselves to adaptation as a stage spoof?
- 10. How do the female characters in the play (no matter who plays them) work within the social confines of women in the 1930s to achieve their objectives?
- 11. The play includes several examples of British slang and some foreign language. How did these terms hinder and/or enhance your understanding of the play? What American slang phrases can you think of that might confuse a foreign visitor? What foreign language words and phrases have made their way into mainstream American culture?

- 12. Famous comic Sid Caesar said, "Comedy has to be based on truth. You take the truth and you put a little curlicue at the end." Discuss how this quote applies to the play *The 39 Steps*. Take into account what happens to the main character, Richard Hannay, throughout the play, and what happens to the others that come in contact with him. What is the core truth of the story and how is it altered for a humorous effect?
- 13. Many different locations are represented in the play. Discuss all the theatrical devices used to portray these different locales.
- 14. Read the definition of a MacGuffin on page 10 of this study guide. What does the MacGuffin in *The 39 Steps* turn out to be? How is it important (and unimportant) in the action of the play? What are MacGuffins in other Hitchcock movies you have seen? What MacGuffins can you identify in more recent movies?
- 15. Discuss the differences in manners, courtesies, and customs between the world seen in *The 39 Steps* and our current American society. What has brought about these changes? How might some of these changes be seen as improvements in society? How might some be seen as deteriorations? How might different generations answer this question differently?
- 16. What writing and performance elements make this play a comedy?

WRITING PROMPTS

- 1. Research what a limerick is and what comprises the style, and write one of your own with an Indiana twist.
- 2. You might have noticed that there were many different accents used in the play, a number of them from different areas of Britain. Imagine the story took place here in the United States during the 1930s. Where might the story begin? Where might Richard Hannay travel to find the Professor? Write an itinerary of Hannay's journey, using different modes of transportation that were utilized at that time, traveling across America, encountering different accents and modes of life. Perhaps he starts out in New York or Chicago.... What parts of the story might take place in Indiana?
- 3. Imagine if the play were a true story. How might our world be different if the formula for a silent airplane engine had been discovered by the Nazis? Write a new story or an essay discussing this development.
- 4. Write a review of the play. A well-rounded review includes your opinion of the theatrical aspects-scenery, lights, costumes, sound, direction, acting—as well as your impressions of the script and the impact of the story and/or themes and the overall production. What moments made an impression? How do the elements of scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound work with the actors' performances of the text to tell the story? What ideas or themes did the play make you think about? How did it make you feel? Did you notice the reactions of the audience as a whole? Would you recommend this play to others? Why or why not? To share your reviews with others, send to: education@irtlive.com

ACTIVITIES

- 1. Make a detailed list of an actor's tools. Think of the actor in terms of physical and mental instrument as well as the outside elements the actor uses. Talk about all the ways these tools were used throughout this production. What was used in a particularly innovative fashion that surprised you? After this discussion, assemble a pile of everyday items and try using them in creative ways to represent other things.
- 2. Sound is a major element of this production. Discuss the many types of sound you heard and the sources of the sound. What was created by the actors live and what was recorded? In what ways did the sound enhance the production? After this discussion, take a scene from a novel or play that you have read this year and create a soundtrack for it. This can include both recorded music and sound effects coordinated with staged action sound (for example, fish frying in a skillet.)
- 3. In what ways do the costumes support the production? What did you learn about the characters from their costumes? How were the costumes used to highlight the comedic work of the actors? What did you discover about the fashion of the 1930s that differs greatly from fashion today? After your discussion, find your own character hats or other props and try your hand at juggling and switching back and forth from one character to the other first as a solo performer and then trading off with a partner.
- 4. Watch one of the British mystery shows on PBS, other stations, or streaming platforms. Outline the plot. Divide the plot into sections and then, working in groups, use improvisation to bring your section of the plot to life. After performing for the class, discuss the similarities and differences of how the characters were portrayed. How clear was the story in each improvisation? If costumes, props, or sound were used, how did these elements help or hinder the storytelling?
- 5. Add to your sound effects library by dividing into groups and recording different sound types. For example, one group might record walking down stairs. This can be recorded in many different types of shoes, at different speeds, with different rhythms and different staircases. Keep careful records of the details of each recording. After each group has assembled about five different samples, make a game of playing the sounds and seeing how close everyone can come to figuring out the details of the sound just from listening.
- 6. The 39 Steps makes light of real events that were happening in the 1930s: spies and recruiters for the growing Nazi forces, reconnaissance missions by the British forces, and the impending reality of war on the continent. Why do you think we are able to find humor in events of hardship and tragedy? View on DVD or YouTube some popular TV shows like Hogan's Heroes, M*A*S*H, and Get Smart that allowed us to view war and espionage through the lens of comedy. What do you think made these shows popular in their time with people who had lived through the actual events?

RESOURCES

Books

The Art of Alfred Hitchcock: Fifty Years of His Motion Pictures by Donald Spoto Hitchcock/Truffaut by Francois Truffaut

Writing with Hitchcock: The Collaboration of Alfred Hitchcock and John Michael Hayes by Stephen DeRosa

The Five Adventures of Richard Hannay by John Buchan

The Thirty-Nine Steps

Greenmantle

Mr. Standfast

The Three Hostages

The Island of Sheep

Britannia in Brief: The Scoop on All Things British by Leslie Banker and William Mullins
Divided by a Common Language: A Guide to British and American English
by Christopher Davies

Knickers in a Twist: A Dictionary of British Slang by Jonathan Bernstein Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour by Kate Fox

Euphemania: Our Love Affair with Euphemisms by Ralph Keyes

Accents and Dialects for Stage and Screen by Paul Meier

The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre by Jacques Lecoq

Improvise: Scene from the Inside Out by Mick Napier

Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre by Keith Johnstone

Films

Murder by Death

The Thin Man

The Last Detective

Monty Python and the Holy Grail

Robin Hood—Men in Tights

Young Frankenstein

The Reduced Shakespeare Company: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)

Scan for a list of Alfred Hitchcock's entire filmography

Websites

Women Spies



The 1930s

Masterpiece Mystery on PBS



The Speech Accent Archive



Best Films of the 1930s



Paul Meier Dialect Services



GLOSSARY

Compere | The master of ceremonies, as of a television entertainment program or a variety show.

democratikisch bovenscheissdrivvle | German: democratic bullshit drivel.

double governor valves | The governor valve senses engine speed (transmission output shaft speed) to help control gear shifting.

exentrinsic | Perhaps a portmanteau (word combination) of eccentric (odd) and extrinsic (non-essential).

heather | A low-growing Eurasian shrub growing in dense masses and having small evergreen leaves and clusters of small, bell-shaped pinkish-purple flowers.

the Limpopo | The Limpopo River is found in central southern Africa. It was immortalized in the short story "The Elephant's Child" by British author Rudyard Kipling, in the *Just So Stories*.

mein liebling | German: my darling.

Munch | A reference to *The Scream*, an expressionist painting by Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863-1944) showing an agonized figure against a blood red sky.

persecution mania | A delusional condition in which the affected person believes—wrongly—that he or she is being harmfully persecuted.

pusillanimous | Lacking courage and resolution: marked by contemptible timidity.

ratio of compression | The compression ratio of an internal-combustion engine or external combustion engine is a value that represents the ratio of the volume of its combustion chamber from its largest capacity to its smallest capacity. It is a fundamental specification for many common combustion engines.

sheisse | German: shit.

shooting party | A genteel hunting party.

stile | A set of steps surmounting a fence or wall, or a narrow gate or contrived passage through a fence or wall, which in either case allows people but not livestock to pass.

supernumary | Perhaps a corruption of supernumerary (an additional member, a temporary staffer, an extra).

suspender belt A ladies' garter belt.

Tiger Moth | The Tiger Moth is a 1930s biplane used by the Royal Air Force and others as a primary trainer.

Sir Christopher Wren | Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723) is one of the most highly acclaimed English architects in history. His masterpiece is St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

wunderbar | German: wonderful.