

About the Artist



Composer/Playwright/Artistic Director Allen Desnoyers (A.R.C.T.)

After co-founding the Rosebud Theatre in Alberta, and Vancouver's Pacific Theatre, I created Canadiana Musical Theatre Company to produce original Canadian musicals. Our country is full of fantastic stories and interesting people that we rarely hear about, and I love the challenge of exploring and composing many different styles of music to tell these stories. Playing music is a

personal passion, and I also enjoy creating lyrics, plays and theatre productions. Schools are a great place to share these true-life Canadian stories. Students respond enthusiastically to music and drama, and they're amazed and inspired by what other Canadians have accomplished.

About the Performance

The Birth of the CPR is a hilarious, historically accurate musical theatre performance that has been performed over a thousand times! It features live music, played by the cast in the following styles: boogie-woogie, bluegrass, and English Music Hall.

Duration: 45 minutes

Audience expectations - We appreciate your attention, laughter, and applause at the end of each song. We prefer you don't clap along so you don't drown out our words. Let the actors do the talking, and you will enjoy our show!

For more information see: www.canadianamusical.com

About the Art Form

Telling or acting out stories, or singing about past events, has been around as long as human beings had a need to share their experiences. Over the centuries, these stories have evolved into written and performed plays, operas, ballads, choreographed stage productions, and popular musicals.

A subject like the C.P. railway is ideal for a musical because of the rhythm created by a locomotive on a track. Many people have been inspired by these rhythms. Imagine what it must have been like in those steam train days, before cars were even invented. They decided to build a railroad across a vast country like Canada without knowing if it would even be possible. I hope you'll be inspired to learn more about the C.P.R., and you'll want to play an instrument or try writing your own music, lyrics, or plays. You might want to become a performer yourself.

Links to Curriculum

Music: Explain thoughts, images, and feelings derived from a music experience.

Identify personal opportunities in music

Social Studies: Create a presentation on a selected historical event or topic

Science and Technology: Describe a transportation system and evaluate its impact on society

Theatre: Analyse how performance elements are used in theatre works to achieve specific purposes and reach specific audiences.

KNOW

WONDER

Pre-Performance Discussion Questions

Performers will play a variety of instruments and you'll hear a range of different styles of music. Listen closely for songs that sound like train rhythms.

Pay attention to how actors can create a variety of characters using small costume changes or vocal mannerisms.

You will also be introduced to some key people who built the railroad. Listen carefully to be able to remember their names; one character has an entire song devoted to him.

Post-Performance Activities

Think of a story about people you know or events you've heard of.

If you were writing this story as a play, how many characters would you need to present the story?

If it was a musical, what style of music would help tell the story?

Can you write lyrics about a character or the story itself?

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

What instruments were played in the show?

Do you play an instrument or if you could choose, which instrument would you prefer to play?

What do you think was the most challenging part of building the railway?

What would have happened to Canada if the railway *wasn't* built?