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Boston, MA
February 2000

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This Teacher Curriculum Guide

for

MARY STUART

by

Friedrich Schiller

translated by Michael Feingold

was prepared for the
Huntington Theatre Company

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The John Hancock Student Matinee Series is funded in part by a generous grant from the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company.

ABOUT THIS CURRICULUM

This curriculum package has been developed for use in conjunction with the Study Guide for the Huntington Theatre Company's production of *Mary Stuart* written by Friedrich Schiller and translated by Michael Feingold. The guide is appropriate for English, social studies, music, history, and drama classes for middle school through high school, and can be integrated into discussions and activities of an historical, social, literary, artistic, or interpersonal nature. Students may explore themes, characters, and issues while using their curiosity, creativity, writing skills, and analytical and critical judgment skills. The curriculum includes classroom activities, discussion questions (both group and individual), research topics which can be worked on in groups or individually with information presented orally or in writing, and suggestions for writing assignments. Teachers are encouraged to pick and choose, and to change and adapt each entry to meet the preferences and needs of individual classes and students.

We recommend that teachers read the study guide for *Mary Stuart* before approaching this curriculum guide, and then read the curriculum guide in its entirety.

This curriculum includes the following sections:

Audience Etiquette introduces students to the concept of drama and audience etiquette.

Objectives provide the teacher with measurable goals.

Preparation offers background information and introduces issues of the play without requiring special knowledge.

Critical Viewing and Reading helps students to develop specific skills by encouraging them to focus on particular elements of the play.

Question & Answer Breakdown of the Action of the Play helps students assess the main points of the play.

For Further Discussion encourages students to develop independent judgments about the issues and a clearer understanding of complexities of the play, and helps them to relate such issues to their own lives.

For Further Exploration allows students to explore independently and creatively some of the issues and background of the play.

Writing Assignments affords students opportunities for self-expression and analytical thought and for developing their writing skills.

Questions for After Attending a Performance of the Play encourages students to consider the aesthetic and practical elements of a live performance.

Activities provides hands-on and interactive consideration of the play.

Quotations allows students to approach relevant thoughts from a variety of authors on the themes of the play.

Related Works encourages students to read other literature and to see movies with similar themes, conflicts, and characters, and provides computer web sites for additional research.

Vocabulary offers a hand-out sheet without definitions for work with words and language. (The definitions are supplied in the accompanying study guide.)

Bibliography lists valuable sources used by the Education Department in developing the Curriculum Guide.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

Because many students have not had the opportunity to view live theatre, we are including an audience etiquette section in this curriculum guide. **Teachers, please spend some time on this subject since it will greatly enhance your students' experience at the theatre.**

1. What are the differences between live theatre and the movies?
2. How does one respond to a live performance of a play, as opposed to when seeing a film at a local cinema or watching a video at home?
3. What is the audience's role during a live performance? How do you think audience behavior can affect an actor's performance?
4. How does a play script differ from a novel?
5. What do you know about the theatrical rehearsal process? Have you ever participated in one as an actor, singer, director or technical person?
6. What are some of the elements involved in producing a play? (set, costumes, lighting, actors, director, stage management, tech direction, etc.)
7. What is a professional stage actor's life like?

Unlike at a movie theatre, no food, gum or beverages are allowed at a Huntington Theatre Company performance. Book bags should be left at school or on the school bus. Beepers, cameras, flashlights, laser lights, walkmen, and cell phones are also not allowed in the theatre. Hats must be removed.

The acoustics in the theatre are such that whispers in the balcony can be heard as clearly on the stage as the actors' voices are heard in the balcony. **Audience members should refrain from talking during the performance.**

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- identify central themes and issues in *Mary Stuart* including:
 - 16th century British History
 - Mary, Queen of Scots
 - Queen Elizabeth I
 - the English Renaissance
 - religious beliefs and government
 - loyalty and heroism
 - women and power
- relate themes and issues of *Mary Stuart* to their own lives
- identify political, economic and social conflicts of their own while coming to understand those of the characters in *Mary Stuart*
- examine the uses of deception and betrayal within the play and grow to understand how such behavior may impact their own lives
- familiarize themselves with various prominent historical figures of 15th and 16th century Europe
- identify and understand Friedrich Schiller's philosophical, historical and dramatic relevance
- participate in hands-on arts activities including acting, visual arts and performing music and movement
- evaluate the Huntington Theatre Company's production of *Mary Stuart*

PREPARATION

Cultural and Historical Background

The Tudors and the Stuarts

While it is practically impossible for students to master quickly the subtleties of European Tudor and Stuart family and political history; still, the more they know, the better they will be equipped to enjoy *Mary Stuart*. Similar to television soap operas which begin each episode in the middle of a complicated storyline, *Mary Stuart's* characters do not share lengthy exposition about their relationships, plots or plans. The unspoken understanding is that we observe these characters as members of the court, or of 16th century English society.

1. Divide your class into groups and assign the students a specific amount of class time to create an overview of each of the following:

Elizabeth I and her 45 year reign (1558-1603)
Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots: (1542-1587)
Life In Tudor Times
Henry VIII: (1509-1547)
Protestantism vs Catholicism during 15th and 16th centuries in Britain
The Spanish Armada
European political conflicts and alliances in The Age of Elizabeth

After a certain amount of time, hand out THE TUDORS - A QUIZ (provided in the back of this curriculum) using the left side only, and allowing each group no more than 30 minutes to answer the questions. Compare final quizzes and name a winning group.

2. Following this exercise, ask students, in groups or individually, to choose one of the original seven categories and expand on the introductory work already begun. In particular, have students focus on the following historical figures who are mentioned in, but do not appear in Schiller's play. Have students report their findings to the rest of the class.

- Henry VIII
- Anne Boleyn
- Kathryn Howard
- Lady Jane Grey
- Anthony Babington
- Francis Walsingham
- Phillip II, King of Spain

3. Ask students to create a genealogy, a family tree, that demonstrates how Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth I were related. Begin with Henry VIII and end with James VI (who ultimately became known as James I). Instead of having them write only names, suggest that they

photocopy, download, or scan pictures of the key players to add to their tree. Beneath each of the royal family members' pictures, have the students list three adjectives they feel best describe the people personally and three adjectives describing their reigns. A genealogy of the Tudor and Stuart Royal Families is contained in the Huntington's *Mary Stuart* Study Guide.

Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller

“*For he was one of us*’: Friedrich Schiller, *The Poet of America*” These words have often been used in celebrations of Friedrich Schiller, whose name was held in high esteem throughout the United States from the American Revolution through the beginning of the 20th century. While he is not widely remembered today, except by scholars, discovering the reasons why this German philosopher, historian and playwright captured the imaginations of a struggling America for generations is fascinating. Have students in groups research the following topics:

- Schiller's life story
- His poetic and dramatic works, and his essays
- His contemporaries - Thomas Jefferson, Napoleon, Thomas Paine, Lafayette
- Prevalent philosophies and themes in his work
- The theatre of 18th century Germany
- Influences on Schiller of the German classical movement and the *Sturm und Drang* (“storm and stress”) movement
- The philosophers Goethe and Kant
- Influence of Schiller on the American anti-slavery movement, the Napoleonic Wars, and the presidential campaign of Abraham Lincoln

After the groups complete their research, have one member of each take on the role of Friedrich Schiller. Have a group stage an interview, using a single interviewer or a panel, asking “Schiller” various questions on his life and his work.

Next, read this statement written by Schiller regarding his definition of true art and provide evidence from the research to explain how one could create a statement of belief such as this. “*True art is not intended as a mere passing fancy; its earnest endeavor is not to transport man into a mere momentary dream of freedom, but rather to make him actually free, and to do so by awakening, exercising, and developing within him his power to achieve an objective distance from the sensible world, which otherwise weighs down upon us like a dead object, pressing us like a blind force. This distance gives us the power to transform the material world into the free product of our own intellect, and to exert dominion over it through ideas.*” Ask students if they agree with this statement.

Legal and Religious Conflicts

To enhance your students' understanding of *Mary Stuart*, have them become familiar with the

following legal and religious terms, titles, and phrases which are referred to in the play. One useful method might be to write all the terms on the board and then poll students on their general understanding of the terms or phrases. Then have students research - individually or in groups - specific definitions and share with their classmates.

Legal Terms and Titles

scribe	House of Commons	Inquisitor's Court
notary	International Law	Peers {British Terminology}
commissioners	Lord Marshall	White staff {borne by Sheriff}
House of Lords		

Religious Terms, Titles and Phrases

Dean (of a Protestant Church parish)	<i>Agnus Dei</i>
Jesuits	"made the spring pour from the rock"
holy sanctuary	"Where two or three are gathered--"
confession/absolution	the Host
penance	

Introducing the Issues

Women and Power

Mary Stuart provides a formidable battleground for two powerful and demanding women, Mary Stuart and Queen Elizabeth I. Examine these two historical figures, contrasting and comparing their real childhoods, their family relationships, the expectations placed upon them, their training and/or natural inclinations to be rulers, decisions made that ultimately affected their lives and others, and finally, the decision Elizabeth ultimately made ordaining the execution of Mary Stuart.

Have students freewrite expressing their opinions on these women and their destinies. How did the queens wield power in real life? Were they able to control the power that they possessed? In Schiller's play, how much free will do they possess? What are the political, economic, social and religious elements which affect their ability to reign? How much control do they truly have over their followers? What and who influences their use of power? Are there examples of abuse of power?

Next, have students, either in groups or individually, create collages, in the medium or media of their choice (paper, cloth, wood, metal, plastic, photographs, illustrations, words or phrases cut from print media) that symbolically represent the essence of power for either Mary Stuart or Queen Elizabeth I. Display the collages and ask the students who created them to discuss the development of their work.

Deception and Betrayal

1. *Mary Stuart* is, in part, about deception and betrayal. Ask your students the following:
 - In what ways do we deceive each other and for what reasons?
 - In what ways have you acquired things you wanted through deception?
 - In what ways have you been deceived?
 - How did finding out that you had been deceived make you feel?
2. The outward personae of people are sometimes quite different from their inner natures. Why do you think that is? Describe people you know about whom this is true. Attempt to determine why the outward impressions certain people make differ from their true natures. Have you ever exhibited an outward appearance that is different from the real you? Why did you do so?
3. Define betrayal. Discuss incidents of betrayal in film, literature, and your life. Why does someone betray another? How does the person betrayed typically feel? Encourage students to distinguish among the following varieties of deception:
 - Excuses as protective devices
 - Denial
 - Obfuscation
 - Misrepresentation
 - Outright lying
4. After your class has viewed *Mary Stuart*, revisit this exercise. Students should be better able to evaluate the effects of duplicity on the life of the drama, and most will be able to link modes of deception to particular characters.

Heroism

In *Mary Stuart*, there exists a tension between the responsibilities and convictions of the individual and others' definition of what constitutes justice, and also between personal gain and what is considered "the common good." This is a timeless debate: at what point does the right or responsibility of the individual to follow his or her convictions supersede the interests of the "majority?"

Have students discuss the concept of "heroes." Our notion of the "hero" often comes from our understanding of the Greek, or classical, definition of the term "heroic." There are many songs, poems and stories that deal with the concepts of heroism and heroics. Difficult situations offer opportunities for such action. Often heroes are not publicly acclaimed in their own time, and a heroic person is recognized only by a few family members or close friends. What makes someone a hero? How do we choose and honor heroes in our society? When have your students themselves felt that they acted "heroically," or been presented with an opportunity but, for whatever reason, could not take heroic action?

Ask students to differentiate between a "hero" and a "martyr." What elements are necessary to

define a situation as martyrdom or a person as a martyr? Ask the students to write essays citing examples from literature, movies, or music which they read, view or listen to which might be categorized as either heroic or martyr-like. Return to a discussion of this issue following your class' viewing *Mary Stuart*, and then ask students to freewrite their definitions of "hero" and "martyr" according to the story and characters in the play.

FOR CRITICAL READING AND VIEWING

Prior to attending the production of *Mary Stuart* at the Huntington Theatre Company, students may form opinions on the character of these two strong-willed queens, Queen Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart, from many sources. Both queens composed poetry. Hand out copies of some poems and ask volunteers to read the selections aloud. After they have been read, ask members of the class to share what they thought of the poems, and what feelings the poetry aroused in them. Ask students what elements of the poetry struck them, e.g., rhythms, tone, style, and so forth. Then, ask students to create a character analysis of Elizabeth or Mary through reading and listening to the queens' poetry. **Teachers may want to include reading from the letters of Elizabeth and Mary as well (some of these are included in the Study Guide.)** List student responses on the board. Encourage students to look for these elements of style and emotion portrayed by the main characters in *Mary Stuart*.

Students may use these questions to guide their understanding of the action of the play or may choose to answer them only when they know how the play unfolds.

Sonnet written by Mary, Queen of Scots, to Queen Elizabeth, 1568

This sonnet was originally composed by Mary in both French and Italian to urge Elizabeth to arrange a meeting between them.

A longing haunts my spirit day and night
Bitter and sweet, torments my aching heart
Between doubt and fear, it holds its wayward part,
And while it lingers, rest and peace take flight.

Dear sister, if these lines too boldly speak
Of my fond wish to see you, 'tis for this -
That I repine and sink in bitterness,
If still denied the favour that I seek.

I have seen a ship freed from control
On the high seas, outside a friendly port,
And what was peaceful change to woe and pain;
Even so am I, a lonely, trembling soul,

Fearing - not you, but to be made the sport
Of Fate, that bursts the closest, strongest chain.

The Doubt Of Future Foes by Elizabeth I, Queen of England

The doubt of future foes exiles my present joy,
And wit me warns to shun such snares as threaten mine annoy;
For falsehood now doth flow, and subjects' faith doth ebb,
Which should not be if reason ruled or wisdom weaved the web.
But clouds of joys untried do cloak aspiring minds,
Which turn to rain of late repent by changed course of winds.
The top of hope supposed the root upreared shall be,
And fruitless all their grafted guile, as shortly ye shall see.
The dazzled eyes with pride, which great ambition blinds,
Shall be unsealed by worthy wights whose foresight falsehood finds.
The daughter of debate that discord aye doth sow
Shall reap no gain where former rule still peace hath taught to know.
No foreign banished wight shall anchor in this port;
Our realm brooks not seditious sects, let them elsewhere resort.
My rusty sword through rest shall first his edge employ
To poll their tops that seek such change or gape for future joy.

QUESTION AND ANSWER BREAKDOWN OF ACTION OF THE PLAY

1. Where does the action of the first scene take place? What inferences can be made about its characters from the initial situation?
2. In what language does Mary write her letters?
3. Why has Mary been imprisoned? Who is Mary's jailer?
4. What four demands does Mary make of Paulet?
5. How long has it been since the English commissioners interrogated Mary? What do they decide?
6. On whom does Mary blame her imprisonment and personal misfortune?
7. Why does Mary feel guilty about Darnley's death? How does Hannah justify Mary's role in Darnley's death?
8. Why does Mortimer come to Mary's cell? What does he hope to accomplish?
9. What does Mary reveal that she fears more than the scaffold? Why?

10. What news does Lord Burleigh bring to Mary? How does Mary react?
11. What evidence does Burleigh offer in proof of Mary's guilt of plotting to overthrow Queen Elizabeth?
12. Where does the action of the second scene take place? What inferences can be made about its characters from the situation shown?
13. Who are Aubespine and Bellievre? What is their mission?
14. How does Elizabeth react to the entire French proposal?
15. What does Elizabeth consider to be her most precious jewel?
16. Describe the political position of each of the following advisors on the Mary Stuart issue: Burleigh, Talbot, and Leicester.
17. How does Mortimer present himself to Elizabeth? What is his true objective while he is at her court?
18. What does Elizabeth ask of Mortimer?
19. What actions do Mortimer and Leicester plot?
20. Why does Elizabeth agree to go on the hunt?
21. How does the face to face encounter of Mary and Elizabeth change the circumstances for each of the women?
22. What is Mortimer's reaction to Mary's "victory"? What preparations has he made for her rescue? What is motivating him to do all of this?
23. What disturbing and misleading news is received from Paulet?
24. What incident really occurs and how does it determine Mary's fate?
25. Why does Leicester reject Mortimer as an ally? What happens to Mortimer?
26. Besides her reluctance to sign the death warrant for Mary, what other evidence is there of Elizabeth's indecisive nature?
27. How does Leicester connive his way out of banishment to the Tower? Whom does he reveal as a traitor instead of himself? How does Leicester try to convince Elizabeth of his loyalty?
28. How does Burleigh attempt to trap Leicester?
29. What influences finally force Elizabeth to sign Mary's death warrant? How does Elizabeth try to still avoid responsibility for condemning Mary even after she signs the warrant? What happens to the warrant?
30. Who comes to visit Mary in her final hour? For what purposes?
31. Who is Margaret? Why is she so upset?
32. What is Mary's final request?
33. What requests does Mary make of Burleigh before she dies?
34. What disturbing news does Talbot deliver to Elizabeth? How does she react?
35. Where is Leicester's destination at the end of the play?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

1. What does Mary mean when she says, “I never touch/The rim of any goblet to my lips/Without a shuddering thought that it might be/Enriched by the friendship of my royal sister”?

2. What does Burleigh mean by “A man assigned to guard a venomous snake should not think he protects a precious jewel”? What is Paulet’s reaction when he realizes the meaning of Burleigh’s words?

3. Describe how Mary’s demeanor changes from the beginning to the end of her confrontation with Elizabeth in the park of Fotheringay Castle. Use adjectives to describe the changing tone and the diverse intent of their confrontation.

4. Who do you think is victorious in the explosive scene between Mary and Elizabeth? Carefully consider what you think victory really means in this case. Is the winner the woman who made the most hurtful comments, the one who maintained her dignity, or the one who maintains the power? Explain.

5. Loyalties are often unclear in *Mary Stuart*. Create a chart with two columns - one entitled Elizabeth’s Loyal Subjects and the other, Mary’s Loyal Subjects. Place the following names where they belong: Leicester, Mortimer, Talbot, Burleigh, Davison, Paulet, and Melvil. Underneath each name, cite a line from the play which you believe confirms the character’s loyalty to the queen he supports.

6. Define subtext and motivation in the context of performance. Using the scene from *Mary Stuart* contained in the accompanying Study Guide, have students examine the subtext or motivation of the lines and action by discussing the following questions:

- Does the character say precisely what he or she means, or does the character intentionally mislead other characters?
- Are words the character's only expression at this point in the play?
- Why does the character speak at this particular time?
- Why in this way?
- Why to this person?
- If the character is silent, why?
- Why does the character stop speaking?
- What does the character want to accomplish in the scene?
- How does the character's intention determine the character's action, tone of voice, or facial expressions?

7. Who is honest in this play, and who isn’t? Determine each character’s motivation for honesty or deceit.

8. While *Mary Stuart* focuses on the world of the Elizabethan court, there is always an awareness of the power of the queens’ subjects, should they unite toward a specific goal. This

awareness informs the interactions of the royalty and their counselors with urgency and even apprehension. The English “commoner”’s prominence is often a controlling factor behind the motivations of many of the characters, although they supposedly wield all power. Can you provide examples of scenes where the English commoner’s influence is felt by royal characters? What evidence can you cite to support your choices? What do the royalty or courtiers say? What do they hide or deny? What are their actions/inactions to support your choices?

9. A utility character, one who performs a particular function in the play, often acts as a sounding board so that another character can reveal important information or feelings to the audience. Hannah Kennedy, O’Kelley, and Melvil are all utility characters. Examine each character’s lines to determine what vital information each one brings to the stage. If each of these characters were interviewed and asked for his or her honest assessments of Queen Elizabeth, Mary Stuart, Leicester, Burleigh and Talbot, what would they say?

10. Define poetic license. Find out what elements of *Mary Stuart*, besides the fact that in history there never was a meeting between the two women, are historically inaccurate. What purpose was served by Fredrich Schiller changing the facts for his play?

According to William Witte (*Schiller*), 1974:

“If Schiller’s play is to be faulted on the score of historical accuracy, its most vulnerable point is the portrayal of Elizabeth. Schiller chose to dramatize the unloveable features in Elizabeth’s nature - her vanity, her cynicism, her occasional cruelty.”

In reviewing your research on Elizabeth I, do you agree with Mr. Witte’s assessment? Discuss the liberties possible for a playwright when he/she works from the stories of actual people and events. Name some recent books made into films where poetic license is taken. It is interesting to note that playwright Maxwell Anderson, in his *Mary of Scotland* (1934), used poetic license as well.

11. “In the End is my Beginning” was the saying Mary embroidered on the royal cloth of state which hung over her head, above her chair, during her years of captivity. Describe what this quote means to you.

12. According to historian Alison Plowden: “Elizabeth Tudor and Mary Stuart were trapped by history in a life and death struggle over which they have little control--cousins foredoomed to enmity by their blood and their birth.” Agree or disagree with this statement and support your answer.

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

1. Francis, Darnley, and Bothwell were each husbands of Mary. Re-examine preparation research on these men and their deaths. Who was Rizzio? Leicester? Explain why Elizabeth says to Mary in the play, “You will seduce no more men of my court/The world has other cares, and no man hungers/To be your--what?--fourth husband, for you to kill/Your wooers as you do your husbands!” Why does Elizabeth say this? Who are the ‘wooters’ she refers to?
2. There are many good ways to study Elizabethan and Stuart England. Learn about life in England between the years 1533 (Elizabeth’s birth) and 1612 (James I, son of Mary Stuart, arranges to have his mother’s body moved to Westminster Abbey) to understand the institutions and customs influencing the world of Schiller’s play. Let students divide into groups and explore the following areas. Do not hesitate to eliminate some and add other areas as students uncover ideas concerning their topic. Though areas are listed here below, they are not to be treated as isolated or unrelated to other areas, but rather should be explored as being interconnected. Keep in mind that each topic can be presented in a related and interesting way. Students should take care not to bombard their audience with facts, but rather try to present their material so that all can acquire a concept of what it was like to be an Elizabethan at any level of society. Above all, try to be creative and to have fun discussing unusual aspects of their topics. (**Special Note:** You may want to present films for sources of reference. See Related Works for suggestions.)

Suggested areas:

- Queen Elizabeth I and her style of ruling
- Various legends surrounding the life and death of Mary Stuart
- Different occupations during Elizabethan Times
- Important people during Elizabethan Times
- Significant events or occurrences of the era, such as plague or the defeat of the Spanish Armada
- Types of government in England, France, and Scotland during the late 16th century
- England’s conflict between Catholics and Protestants
- English family life around 1600
- Education
- The status of women, the issue of class in England

Let each group present its findings in class. All forms of teaching aids may be used (visual aids, slides, films, music, etc.) Encourage students to be creative in their class presentation, perhaps role playing what they believe to be a typical day in the court of Elizabeth, or breakfast with Queen Elizabeth at court, or Queen Mary in captivity.

3. Once research has been completed, we suggest a multi-media presentation, with students developing their version of a televised news or magazine show, similar to Public Television’s *Greater Boston*, *The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*, or Channel 5’s *Chronicle*. The students might “report” events leading up to Mary Stuart’s execution, and the days following. This could be an

excellent opportunity for students to discover how information can be manipulated, controlled and organized when it is presented to the general public. For those students who may be role-playing the royal figures, this project could be a great opportunity to be “Queen (or Courtier) for a Day!” Have students videotape or record their presentations. Consider the following suggestions:

Interviews: Students should create at least 5 interview questions that are specific. What facts do they wish to elicit? How about opinions? Controversy? What kinds of questions will help an interviewer obtain the information wanted?

News Story: Have students brainstorm ideas for scenes that could be labeled “news.” Assign them to choose one idea, improvise, and outline their scene in scripted form. Have them script the interactions between hosts/news anchors and reporters/eyewitnesses/trial personalities “in the field.” Include at least two questions from the anchors/hosts which “seem” (or “are”) unplanned or unrehearsed.

Point-Counterpoint: Identify an important debate in *Mary Stuart*. If the debate is between “characters,” opening and closing remarks could be considered a monologue.

Editorial-Opinion: Ask students to choose a peer to deliver an editorial and decide on its opinions on a “*Mary Stuart* topic.” Script the editorial in words and visual images.

Preview of Coming Attractions: Have students choose three or four ideas for advance “teaser” announcements. How much information do you wish your audience to get from these? Do you want to “tease” the audience with certain information? Decide on the tone of your coming attractions.

An additional activity could be to create a radio talk show, similar to National Public Radio’s *Talk of the Nation* or to *The Rush Limbaugh Show*. Brainstorm the political focus on your radio talk show. Who would be the guests you’d invite for your program about Mary and Elizabeth? What topics would be discussed? Create questions. Create calls from outside callers and responses.

3. Research the extraordinary impact which German playwright, historian and philosopher Friedrich Schiller’s work had on the newly formed United States during the years following the American Revolution, continuing through the early 20th century. Identify the core themes found in Schiller’s work which resonated with American philosophy and ideals. What prominent politicians and writers especially admired Schiller and why? Examine Schiller’s plays, including *The Robbers*, *The Maid of Orleans* and *William Tell*, as well as his essay, “Theater Considered as a Moral Institution” for documentation.

4. The complex range of personality between Mary Stuart and Elizabeth I makes for great conflict, great tragedy, and ultimately, great theatre. Schiller’s play’s structure, scenic settings, and use of language have been compared to the rigorous symmetry of a chess game - Red Queen

vs. White Queen, each with her supporting figures to match. On one side is Mary's passionate integrity; on the other side, Elizabeth's calculating hypocrisy. Examine the play and create a series of charts which contrast the following:

- the queens' attitudes, philosophies and plans (or plots) of action
- other characters aligned with each queen throughout the play
- alternating scenic settings
- style of language, reflecting relationships, beliefs and status

How does Schiller's use of duality of structure influence the dramatic plot, characterization, tone and mood of *Mary Stuart*?

5. If you were assigned to be the dramaturg for a production of *Mary Stuart*, what research material would you provide for the director and actors at the first rehearsal (e.g., on Tudor and Elizabethan history, attitudes towards Protestants and Catholics, women as rulers in the 16th century...)? What images would you display at rehearsal? Bring in some of these pictures and hang them around the classroom.

6. The Michael Feingold translation of *Mary Stuart* was first produced in 1998 at American Conservatory Theater to critical acclaim. Director Carey Perloff directed the play in San Francisco and also directs the Huntington's production. Contact these theatre companies and request marketing materials, especially items that contain visual images. How are the posters and images similar or different for each production? How are descriptions of the play similar or different? Imagine you are a Marketing Director for a theatre company that plans to produce this play. Design a poster and write a press release that will reflect your understanding of the play's important themes and topics.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Mary and Elizabeth never met in real life, but the two queens corresponded through letters. Samples of these letters are included in the Study Guide. Prior to their reading the original correspondence, have students choose a partner, assume a role each of one of the queens, and write three letters a piece. One should be written upon Mary's imprisonment, one after Mary hears of the judges' guilty verdict, and one when Mary learns that she will be executed. Elizabeth should respond to each letter. Then have your students read some of the actual letters exchanged between the women and try to capture the right tone in their own letters. If students would like, they could exchange email addresses with others beside their project partner, and send their letters to each other.
2. There are many letters written and sent by emissaries in the play (for instance, the letter Mortimer brings to Leicester from Mary). Have students imagine the contents of one of these letters and write it. It may be helpful to reread the section of the play where the letter is received so that students can write to elicit the appropriate response from the recipient of their letters.
3. Mary Stuart's trial, and the meeting and decision making of the 40 commissioners who condemned her, have previously occurred when Schiller's play begins. We learn that Mary was not provided with defense counsel at her trial. Mortimer brings her the news that a judgement has been passed. "The forty-two judges have pronounced you *guilty*. The House of Lords, the Commons, the City of London, all demand the sentence be carried out in haste." Ask students to imagine themselves as members of the prosecution and defense team representing either Elizabeth's rule or the case for Mary Stuart. Have each team draft a memorandum outlining its legal strategy. Compare the strategies used by the rival teams.
4. Assign class members to write an obituary for Mary Stuart.
5. Assign class members to write and deliver an eulogy for Mary Stuart.
6. In response to the question of what differences exist between Shakespeare's and Schiller's language, Carey Perloff, director of *Mary Stuart* says:

"Schiller's language is profoundly different from Shakespeare's both in its intention and in its muscle. Shakespearean language is rich in metaphor and extended imagery; Schiller's is direct, taut, often legalistic and highly active. His plays are plays of argument; they are dialectical and the conflicts run deep. The language is far less poetic than Shakespeare's, it is not the language of meditation and moderation, but of excess." Using this statement as a thesis statement, write a position paper on this theme.
7. Assign students to choose a character from this play and create a biographical timeline of the ten most important occurrences in his or her life. Only ten events which are most focal for that character may be selected, so students need to understand that they must prioritize. One event might be very traumatic, such as the death of a loved one; another may be something as

simple as a child's surprise party. Each list should cover its character's childhood and finish with the end of the play. Events should be ordered in sequence beginning with the earliest recollection. Students may draw from information from the play, research, or events that they might envision happening. This exercise can also be fun to do for oneself.

8. In *Mary Stuart* there are many references to characters who do not appear on stage. For instance, references are made to the royal family of Henry VIII and his wives, and to the husbands and lovers of Mary, Queen of Scots. Using research on the Tudor and Stuart families, have students write a scene involving Henry and one of his wives, or a scene portraying Mary, Queen of Scots with a husband or a lover. Cast class members in the roles and have the students perform for the rest of the class.

9. "Conflict" in a narrative arises from a problem; defining it attempts to put in general terms the nature of the struggle of the narrative's story. Be alert to the nature of the struggles in *Mary Stuart*. Prepare by recalling stories that illustrate each of these three types of struggle: Man (Woman) vs. Nature, Man (Woman) vs. Society, Man (Woman) vs. Him/herself. Have the students write papers analyzing one of these conflicts in *Mary Stuart*.

10. As a project, organize your class to create a *Elizabeth/Mary Stuart* newspaper describing events at the English Court (*The Elizabethan Eagle? The Tudor Times?*). Divide your class into groups and assign a newspaper section to each group. Include News - foreign and local; Editorial Page, with Op-ed pieces and cartoons; Sports; Living Section, including Gossip, Society News, and a *Dear Abby*-like advice column; Comics; Obituaries; Advertising; etc. Students could do paste ups and xerox the paper for the entire class. Send us a copy!

11. Actors often view their roles in terms of journeys. The way their characters change and the creative tensions between each turning point are potential building blocks of any given role. Ask students to imagine that they are actors playing roles in *Mary Stuart*. Have them trace the journey of their characters, addressing the following questions:

- What does my character want in the beginning of the play?
- How does each scene affect the "want" or objective, and how does my character change in response to the events in this particular scene?
- Is there a "pivotal scene" or moment for my character? A scene or moment in which he/she experiences a "turning point," or transforms in such a way that he/she will never be the same again?
- Does the initial objective for my character change by the play's end? Define what that change may be.

Students should summarize what the overall journey of their character is during the course of the entire play. For Elizabeth it may be: "From indecision and inactivity to enlightenment and action." How can each character's journey be outlined?

QUESTIONS FOR AFTER ATTENDING A PERFORMANCE OF THE PLAY

Note to teachers: Pass out these questions to your students and go over question #1 with them before they attend a performance of *Mary Stuart*.

1. Above the stage of the Huntington Theatre Company there is an inscription that states: "To hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature." There is also an inscription in the theatre's entryway that says "All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances and one man in his time plays many parts." From what plays are these lines? What do you think they mean? Why do you think the original owners of the theatre had these quotations inscribed? With these quotations in mind, consider the following questions while watching a performance of *Mary Stuart*.
2. What did the Huntington's set design for *Mary Stuart* tell you about the characters and their situation? Cite specific details about the set that made you feel as you do.
3. What clues did the costumes of *Mary Stuart* give you about this play's characters before they said or did anything?
4. How did the actors' physicalization of their characters enhance their interpretations of the plot? Give specific examples such as the way the actors walked, sat, gestured, handled props, and so forth.
5. Who was your favorite character in this play? What was it that the actor playing this role did to make you feel positively?
6. Did the physical elements of the Huntington's production (i.e., the sets, props, costuming and lighting) suggest different things about the characters? Discuss the many ways that the sets, props, costumes, and light and sound designs of this production attempt to serve its director and actors. Consider each element individually. **Note:** Teachers may want to assign groups of students one production element (sets, props, costumes, sound, music, etc.) each to concentrate on during the performance their class sees.
7. What major design choices were evident in the scenery, lighting and costumes of *Mary Stuart*? Think specifically about the colors, textures, and shapes used in the Huntington's production. How did sound or music influence the mood of certain scenes or moments?
8. Live theatre is fundamentally different from television and movies in that the audience contributes to the energy created on stage. How would you describe the audience's response to the performance you attended? Were there any specific moments which seemed to resonate particularly strongly with the audience, eliciting laughter, gasps, surprise, or applause? Why do you suppose those moments had strong meaning for a contemporary American audience in Boston?

ACTIVITIES

Warm Up Activities

The following introductory exercises are excerpted from the International Schools Theatre Association publication *Drama and the Active Study of Literature* by Tim Williams.

- **Five Minute Performances**

1. Arrange the class in small groups. Tell each group it is going to have to present the story of the play in exactly five minutes. The students can use whatever methods seem appropriate -- action, prose narration, mime, movement, song, background music, pictures or whatever. Point out that each group must select the most important features, events, and purposes of the play. Send the groups away for a class to discuss and practice. At the next lesson have them perform their five minute versions to the rest of the class, and then compare versions in terms of what was missing, interesting, important, surprising, in common, and emphasized. Discuss why the versions may have differed.

- **Still Life**

1. This exercise is especially useful if you're trying to talk about relationships between characters. Take a willing student and ask him or her to stand in front of the class. Get the student to stand in a pose which he or she thinks is in some way characteristic of one of the characters -- it could be kneeling and supplicant, or head bowed and despairing, or poking a nose into someone else's affairs, or looking behind or ahead, or... The student will look no doubt hopelessly bemused and embarrassed to begin; but get the rest of the class to make suggestions, either by saying something or by simply coming and moving the student to what seems a better position without speaking. This latter point is quite important. Add another student character to the tableau. The way that the second student stands in relationship to the first person is significant. He or she may be turning away or towards the other, be spurning or supporting, an enemy or a friend, or ambivalent or unrelated in any sense (and note that it is often a revelation to students that characters may not meet or know what the reader knows).

2. Base a still life on a particular moment in *Mary Stuart* and compare it with one of another moment in the work; doing so, see what has changed and why. Ask for other characters and see what changes or adjustments are needed. Start thinking about groups or factions. Start small groups of students off and ask them to compare versions. Try to get the students to justify what they do, but accept it if they are satisfied that they have expressed themselves clearly just through the tableau. Ask the other members of the class if they understand the tableau, and if they can identify particular moments, crises, characters, and groupings.

- **Creating Characterization**

1. Have each of your students choose a character from *Mary Stuart* that he/she would like to portray. As though they were preparing for the role in rehearsal, have them ask the following

questions about their characters:

- a. What do I want in the play? What is my overall objective?
- b. What is in the way of what I want in the play? What are my obstacles? Who is/are my obstacles? Does what gets in the way of what I want change throughout the course of the play? How?
- c. Does my character change during the course of the play? What is my character's journey, or plot of transformations?
- d. What are the contradictions inherent in my character?

2. Ask your students to think honestly about themselves: their own personalities and characteristics. Tell them that as they think of themselves, they should try to see themselves as:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| a. a musical instrument | With what instrument do they most closely identify? |
| b. a flower | If they were flowers, what would they be? |
| c. a color | What color (tone or hue) best describes them? |
| d. a song | With what song do they closely associate? |
| e. a type of music | What style of music best represents them? |
| f. a food | What food would they be if they were edible? |
| g. an animal | If they were a non-human animal, what would they be? |
| h. a car | What make and model of car are they (Be honest) |

• **Role Playing/Improvisation**

1. During Elizabeth's reign, she was often threatened by Catholic plots to depose her. As a result, she began to persecute Catholics in England. Imagine that you are a Catholic priest who has been sentenced to death; write a scene in which you explain to Mary why she should be queen instead of Elizabeth. Then add a scene in which your character meets Queen Elizabeth and explains his religious point of view.

2. Imagine that you are Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Torn between two loves, you must choose one to whom you will pledge your undying loyalty. Who wins your heart? Elizabeth or Mary? Consider not only what information is presented in the play, but information gathered from other sources regarding the two women. Who is more worthy of your affections? Write and perform a monologue debating the issues and revealing your innermost thoughts and anxieties.

3. Divide your class into groups to create tableaux that represent issues or ideas from the play, such as, the role of power for men and women, heroism, deception, etc. As each group presents its tableau, have the rest of the class guess what abstract issue or idea the group is representing. After each concept has been identified (in a general sense), discuss how the various components of each tableau helped to depict its concept. (It might be helpful if the students jotted down a few notes about each tableau.)

4. The study guide for *Mary Stuart* contains samples of the letters exchanged between the two queens over the long period of Mary's incarceration. Select students to play Mary and Elizabeth

and excerpt appropriate passages from the letters and perform them as monologues. With different students playing Mary and Elizabeth, the monologues will be diverse. Following this exercise, a discussion on the choices actors make should prove informative.

- Another exercise could involve either Mary or Elizabeth reading a letter, and then the next student, as the other queen, improvising a response. While the letters are in monologue form, it would be possible to break them up, using some phrases as responses to the other queen's thoughts, creating a dialogue between the two women.

5. Have each student in your class select a line from the play that best captures the essence of a particular character. Organizing the class by four main characters, have students present their lines and explain the reasons for their selections. After the representation of each character is completed and all the chosen lines have been read aloud and explained, discuss the rationale for the choices made.

- **Acting**

1. Have students act out a scene from *Mary Stuart*. The students should use props and elements of costumes. Have students consider who stands where, who moves when and where, gestures, tone of voice, music, and intended emotional impact.

2. Organize students to perform key speeches from the play. Have several different students present the same speech in different ways. After the readings, discuss which words and lines should receive the most emphasis.

3. Have each student select a line from the play that best captures the essence of a character. Have the students present their lines and then provide an explanation for their choice. After every student has presented his/her line, discuss the choices in class.

- **Visual Art**

1. Using plates, papier-mache, and other materials, have students create a mask that represents one of the Elizabethan *humors* (sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic, or melancholy). Ask students to explain their design. Have a group create a scene, using the masks for each humor, in which the various characters' types interact.

2. Using the materials listed above, have students create masks that represent characters in the play. Have students perform a scene twice -- once with the masks, once without. What impression do the masks make on the audience? How do the masks make the scene different?

3. Pass out art paper, paints, and brushes. Have students create abstract paintings of a character from the play. Make sure the students do not tell their classmates who their paintings represent. Hang the completed paintings around the room. Ask students to pick out qualities, moods, and

feelings of each painting. Next have each artist identify the character his/her painting represents and explain how the various details of the painting depict the character.

**** *The concept of abstract imagery may need to be explained to some students. Emphasize that they are trying to capture moods, feelings, and conflicts and that their paintings need not perfectly resemble their character (or anything concrete, for that matter.)*

4. Have students choose any character from *Mary Stuart* and create a character collage. The collages should include pictures (hand-drawn or cut from magazines/newspapers) of actions the character performs, images expressing relationships the character has with others, typical moods, feelings, or attitudes, etc. Include quotations from the play that reveal something about the character (these can be quotations from the character as well as quotations about the character).

7. Design a set for a production of *Mary Stuart*. Build a model of this design. Compare your class model to the Huntington Theatre Company's set.

8. Design costumes for the play.

10. Create a "character bag" for any character in the play. Each student will need a brown paper bag. Students should place objects in the bag which they feel are in some way representative of the character they chose. The students may use objects that already exist or create objects (example - a royal quill/feather for official signings by Queen Elizabeth). Have students trade bags and try to guess the character based on the objects inside. Have students provide a rationalization for why each object is included (either orally or in writing). Finally, in groups, have students improvise a scene relating to the play, using all of the props within a chosen bag.

- **Music/Dance**

1. Compose and perform a musical score for *Mary Stuart*. Make an audio or video tape of your performance.

3. Create background music and/or sound effects to accompany scenes in the play. Or, use music and/or effects to supplement any of the role-playing activities listed above.

4. The grandeur of Schiller's tragedies has inspired many composers to adapt them into operas, including Verdi's *Don Carlo*, Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, and Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*. Bring recordings of these operas to class and after listening to them, look at selected scenes from the plays. Compare similarities and differences in the plays and their operatic adaptations with a goal of forming an opinion of the adaptability of Schiller's works, and the degree of success achieved by the composers considered to authenticate Schiller's tragedies.

5. Conceive the scene of the confrontation between the queens in the park of Fotheringay Castle as a movement composition without words. Select a choreographer and dancers, as well as a movement style, i.e., ballet, jazz, hip-hop, blues, or modern. Have students develop a

performance together for the class. Is the group's presentation accurately reflective of the characters in this dramatic and passionate scene?

MEDIA

1. View the 1971 Vanessa Redgrave/Glenda Jackson film, *Mary, Queen of Scots* and the 1935 Katherine Hepburn film, *Mary of Scotland*, both of which contain confrontation scenes between Mary and Elizabeth; compare and contrast either or both of these scenes in the Michael Feingold translation of *Mary Stuart* at the Huntington. (**Teacher's Note:** This is a fascinating exercise. It allows students to compare the artistic expressions of prominent artists, compels them to consider the meaning of the play through their own experience, and enables them to see how the age in which the work is created feeds its artistic interpretation.)

QUOTATIONS

The following quotations reflect themes that are important in *Mary Stuart*. Have students choose one of the quotations and use that one as a thesis statement for an essay on some particular aspect of philosophy expressed in the play. If possible, students should cite events or lines from *Mary Stuart* to illustrate their essays.

“The Queen of England is Mary’s opposite in every way. Whereas Mary is rooted in sense, Elizabeth is grounded in reason, civilization, order and self-discipline. Whereas Mary is known for unrestrained self-indulgence, Elizabeth subordinates her personal feelings to the welfare of the state.”

John D. Simons
Friedrich Schiller (1981)

“Mary can well afford to insist on man’s inner freedom, on his authenticity, on his submission to the highest and eternal moral values, because all that is left to her is to die nobly. But is dying nobly an answer to the burning question of how to live in and with the world?”

Oskar Seidlin
“Schiller: Poet of Politics” (1960)

“It is not Mary but Elizabeth who is the truly tragic figure in the play . . . Mary is the evident center of their vast network of images connected with fire that extends throughout the tragedy, she inflames all around her . . . Of the character of Elizabeth and the course she steers, it is far less easy to be certain.

Schiller’s characters seem to dwell in the realm of possibility . . . they soon find themselves in the thick of an emotional predicament, and are propelled towards catastrophe by the relentless logic of the outward situation and their own passions.

Ilse Graham
Schiller: A Master of the Tragic Form (1975)

“Mary, Queen of Scots has to this day remained an enigmatic figure, a puzzle and a challenge to generations of historians. Saint or sinner, ambitious schemer or helpless victim, passionate lover or frigidly consenting party? The mystery seems to deepen with every new attempt to solve it.”

William Witte
Schiller (1974)

“Mary Stuart is a play particularly dominated by role-playing . . . Both queens are women struggling within a world of men, both forced to some extent to play roles men have devised for them. . . Schiller has juxtaposed the worlds of Mary and Elizabeth, letting our view of one modify our view of the other. It is only through seeing the two that we can gain a true perspective on either . . . By juxtaposing the worlds of private conscience and public action, Schiller emphasizes the fact that there is no easy solution to the problem of how to satisfy the demands of the political world.”

Lesley Sharpe
Schiller and the Historical Character (1982)

VOCABULARY

abet	fleur de lis	reconcile
absolution	Furies	renounce
abyss	fury	repudiate
adder	garlands	rouse
atone	guiding star	sacred host
barb	haste	scale
basilisk	haughty	scorning
bastard	house	scribe
besmirched	idolatry	serpent's brood
bloom	impotent	snake-haired-heads
brazen	inquisitor's court	spurn
bridal dower	intriguing	successor
censure	Jesuits	suppliant
Circe	last rites	tenets
collusion	madrigal	tiara
colonnaded	mountebank	tongue
confession	notary	transfigured
consecrate	oratory	trumpery
contravened	pallid	
convocation	Parliament	unscathed
credulous	Papal	usurped
Dean	Papist	vainglory
deferentially	paradox	wrath
discord	pious	zealots
endure	plumes	
estranged	precedent	
exact	pretense	
exalted	proffered	
feigning	reckoning	

Related Works

Royal Letters: Mary Queen of Scots to Queen Elizabeth I edited by Timothy McCann
Mary Queen of Scots: Romance and Nation by Jayne Lewis
Fatal Majesty: A novel of Mary Queen of Scots by Reay Tannahill
Mary of Scotland by Maxwell Anderson
Mary of Scotland (1935 film version) starring Katharine Hepburn and Florence Eldridge
Elizabeth the Queen by Maxwell Anderson
Elizabeth and Essex (1939 film version) starring Bette Davis
Mary Queen of Scots (1971 film) starring Vanessa Redgrave and Glenda Jackson
Elizabeth (1998 film) starring Cate Blanchett and Geoffrey Rush

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