



in association with
927 Noyes St, Suite 225
Evanston, IL 60201-2799

"Diamonds, finely cut and sparkling with brilliance, are rare. Meet John Sparks, the Hope Diamond of developmental musical theater."

—Sachi Oyama --
Imelda, The Pineapple Story

Write A Musical!

*If you are a composer, lyricist or playwright, put your talent to work in musical theater
Learn musical theater structure with Midwest New Musicals*

Midwest New Musicals is a forum where writers create and discuss their work.

Bookwriters, composers and lyricists invent new musicals of all descriptions - Broadway-style musicals, operas, children's musicals, rock operas, revues and innovative new works.

Midwest New Musicals is a place for writers to showcase their musicals with audiences.

Writers work with actors, directors, music directors and designers. Creative teams collaborate on both private readings and public performances.

Midwest New Musicals offers an intensive process that is a pyramid of creative activity.

The base of the pyramid is the Core Curriculum, a series of writing assignments and production exercises that provides writers with a common experience, a technical vocabulary and process, and the opportunity to meet collaborators with whom they will create musicals.

From the Core Curriculum writers advance to a developmental level where their works are rehearsed and presented in readings and further developed in more intensive workshop productions. This part of the process provides audience feedback to help writers complete their work.

At the top of the pyramid writers develop new works for theater companies and producers locally and around the country.

"John Sparks gave me a safe place to learn about art, craft and collaboration: three essential elements of writing for and working in the musical theater."

Jan Tranen – *The Minister's Wife* – Jeff Award winner

"I had a terrific experience working with John Sparks...super-smart, nurturing teacher with great instincts and advice, and I'm very much looking forward to working with him again. I totally recommend his program for any musical theater writer looking for constructive feedback, challenging assignments (and deadlines!), and a wonderful, supportive peer group."

Jeff Marx -- *Avenue Q* – Tony Award winner



Midwest New Musicals is conducted by John Sparks. John is the Artistic Director for the Academy for New Musical Theatre in Los Angeles where he has taught since 1981. In 1987 he founded the musical theater writers workshop at Theatre Building Chicago where he also served as Artistic Director from 1999 to 2009. John is also currently a board member and guest instructor with Mercury Musical

Developmental works in London.

John has written many shows in Los Angeles and Chicago, among other cities, including:

Babes In Barns -- music and lyrics, 1984-1985

Hans Brinker -- lyrics, 1994-2000

Cashel Byron -- book, 2000

The Arresting Dilemma of Mister K -- book, 2003/2004

On The Brink -- book and lyrics, 2009

John studied with the late Lehman Engel, renowned musical director and founder of the BMI-Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop and with Broadway and Hollywood director Michael Gordon at UCLA, where he acquired an MFA in Playwriting.

"Anyone who wants to write musicals should study with John Sparks. He thoroughly understands the craft and conveys that understanding with kindness and encouragement. I still rely on the basic principles of theater songwriting that John taught me over 20 years ago."

Mark Hollmann – *Urinetown* -- Tony Award winner 2002

For more information about the musical theater writing workshop curriculum, contact:

John Sparks

323-371-8205

jsparks@light-opera-works.org



For musical theater writing workshop fees/payments, contact: Light Opera Works Box Office: 847-869-6300 • www.lightoperaworks.com



A Writers Workshop and Development Program

Begins in September 2011



"John Sparks (workshop director) has the rare gift of being able to inspire high standards while remaining open to work in the broadest range of styles"

Ken Stone—*Trask and Fenn, Overland*—Kleban Award winner

ENROLL TODAY!

Midwest New Musicals
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Core Curriculum -- Fall Term: Writing The Parts of a Musical

A series of song writing and scene writing assignments covers the following points of craft:

Lyrics:	Poetry vs. Lyrics Imagery Rhyme	Prosody Character
Music:	Melody Rhythm Form	Harmony Style
Book:	Plays vs. Musicals Song Placement Format	Structure Dialogue

Core Curriculum -- Winter/Spring: Production

Writers collaborate with actors and directors to create and perform a mini-musical for the public, during which the following aspects of the process occur:

Planning the Show:	
What to Write	Presentational Styles
Size of the Cast	Language Patterns
Vocal Range vs. Character	
Writing the Show:	
Collaboration	Outlining
Spotting Songs	First Draft
Creating Roles for Specific Actors	

The Rehearsal Process:	
Revisions	Rehearsal Etiquette
Artistic Conflicts	Performance
Collaborating with Production Personnel	

The Midwest New Musicals Core Curriculum is an intensive program that assists writers through the process of creating a new musical. Writers explore the use of music, lyrics and dialogue through hands-on assignments that introduce them to musical theater forms and collaborative techniques.

Writers study the structure of the full musical book and score. Collaborative writing assignments begin with individual song and scenes. The study and writing process leads to a mini-musical project where participants create short musicals for a pre-selected ensemble and production team. This project culminates in a formal public presentation and an evaluation.

Upon completion of the Core Curriculum writers may be invited to an ongoing forum of writing peers, to intensive readings and workshop presentations and to introductions to theater companies and producers locally and across the country.

Schedule:

Midwest New Musicals Core Curriculum program meets monthly on Chicago's North Shore in two four-hour sessions on **Saturday and Sunday 10:00 AM - 1:30 PM.**

September	24 & 25	October	22 & 23
November	19 & 20	December	17 & 18
January	21 & 22	February	18 & 19
March	17 & 18	April	21 & 22
May	19 & 20	June	23 & 24

The Mini-Musical writing, revisions, rehearsals and performances take place from April through June on a schedule determined by the writers, actors and directors involved.

"John Sparks knows musicals the way Warren Buffett knows stocks. For a well-diversified portfolio of song and script, backed by a solid reserve of character-based writing and storytelling, let Sparks be your musical theater investment advisor. With Sparks' guidance you'll maximize your talent capital in a way that will pay lifelong dividends, both creative and financial."

Gregg Opelka -- *C'est la Vie, Charlie's Oasis, The Three Musketeers, Monky Business*

Award-winning and prominent local writers who have studied with John Sparks include:

Tony Award winner Mark Hollmann -- *Urinetown*

Richard Rodgers Award winners Paul Libman and Dave Hudson -- *Dust and Dreams, Main-Travelled Roads*

Kleban Award winner Susan DiLallo -- *Once Upon A Time In New Jersey*

Kleban Award winner Ken Stone -- *Trask and Fenn, Overland*

Jeff Award winner Jan Tranen -- *The Minister's Wife*

Judy Freed -- *So Happy I Could Scream, Emma & Company, Sleepy Hollow, Tantrum on the Tracks*

Jack Helbig -- *The Girl, The Grouch and The Goat, Hotel d'Amour*

Gregg Opelka -- *C'est la Vie, Charlie's Oasis, The Three Musketeers, Monky Business*

Jon Steinhagen -- *The Teapot Scandals, Emma & Company, The Arresting Dilemma of Mister K*

"Unlike most people who offer opinions on theater -- (blogs, chat rooms, your Aunt Alice) -- John Sparks really knows what he's talking about. He's my favorite go-to guy when it comes to crafting, creating, casting -- anything that has to do with making musicals. Or making your musical better."

Susan DiLallo -- *Once Upon a Time in New Jersey*
Kleban Award winner

"In every song I have written for the theater, I can point to something John Sparks taught me. His wisdom, passion and generous spirit continue to inform my craft and inspire my art."

Paul Libman -- *Dust and Dreams, Main-Travelled Roads*
Richard Rodgers Award winner

"John Sparks is one of the reasons I have continued in this business of music theater. His mentoring, enthusiasm and encouragement have consistently improved my writing and composing. I can't imagine getting through it without him. He was also responsible for introducing me to my long-time collaborator."

Jan Powell -- *Trask and Fenn, Overland*

Midwest New Musicals is funded in part by:

The National Endowment for the Arts, The ASCAP Foundation, Dramatists Guild Fund, and generous individual donors

Enrollment Form Midwest New Musicals Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

E-mail _____

Please check all that apply:

- Bookwriter**
Include resume, two short, contrasting scenes (or 4-5 pages of prose if you have not written plays, screenplays or musicals) and a brief statement of purpose that defines your interest in writing the book of a musical.
- Composer**
Include a resume, a recording and piano-vocal score of two contrasting songs (or instrumental music, including 3-4 pages of the piano score or orchestration) and a brief statement of purpose that defines your interest in writing music for the theater.
- Lyricist**
Include a resume, a lyric sheet, and a recording (if possible) for two contrasting songs, and a brief statement of purpose that defines your interest in writing lyrics for the theater.

Fees:

\$645 per term, or \$1,200 if enrolling for two terms in advance. The fall term is a pre-requisite for the winter/spring term.

Application Fee (non-refundable): \$25.

Payment:

- Check enclosed (payable to Light Opera Works)
 VISA MasterCard Am Express Discover

Card # _____ Expires: _____ Security Code _____

Signature (as it appears on card) _____

Payment is due in full no later than the first workshop session. Send this application form with your application fee and work samples to:

John Sparks
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927 Noyes Street, Suite 225
Evanston, IL 60201-2799