

ARTS CLUB THEATRE COMPANY
TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE
2010/2011 Season



Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage
October 21 – November 21, 2010

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WELCOME

This guide was created to encourage teachers, students, and audience members to explore the play further, either before or after the actual performance.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions for the guide, please contact our group sales representative at 604.687.5315 x253, or by email at groups@artsclub.com.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

The Arts Club of Vancouver was founded in 1958 as a private club for artists, musicians, and actors, and officially became the Arts Club Theatre in 1964 when the company opened its first stage at a converted gospel hall at Seymour and Davie Streets.

Now in its 47th season of producing professional live theatre in Vancouver, the Arts Club Theatre Company is a non-profit charitable organization that operates two theatres, the Granville Island Stage and the Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage, on a year-round basis. Our popular productions range from musicals and contemporary comedies to new works and classics. The company also tours provincially on a regular basis, with a three-show season presented at venues around British Columbia.

The 39 Steps is generously supported by:

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Performance Host



SYNOPSIS

*A seductive mystery woman, an accusation of murder, a missing finger, and a mad dash to foil foreign spies! Four gifted actors play over 150 zany characters in this Monty Python-flavoured **Hitchcock spoof** that just might give you vertigo!*

Richard Hannay is at a London theatre, attending a demonstration of the remarkable powers of “Mr. Memory”, a man with a photographic memory, when a fight breaks out and shots are fired. In the ensuing panic, he finds himself holding a frightened Annabella Schmidt, who talks him into taking her back to his flat. There, she tells him that she is a spy, being chased by assassins out to kill her. She claims to have uncovered a plot to steal vital British military secrets, implemented by a man with the top joint missing from one of his fingers, who is the head of an espionage organization called the “39 Steps”.

Photographic memory or **eidetic memory** is defined as the ability to recall images, sounds, or objects in memory with extreme accuracy and in abundant



The 39 Steps on Broadway
Photo by Joan Marcus.

The next day, Hannay wakes up to find her dead, stabbed with his bread knife. He sneaks out of the flat disguised as a milkman and takes a train to Scotland, where she had told him she was going to find the man. On the train, he sees the police on his trail. In desperation, he enters a compartment and kisses the sole occupant, the attractive Pamela, in an attempt to escape detection. She however manages to free herself from his unwanted embrace and betrays him to the law. He jumps from the train onto the Forth Rail Bridge and escapes.

He stays the night with a poor older farmer and his young wife who flirts with Hannay. The next morning, he leaves in the farmer’s Sunday coat, and calls at the house the woman had told him of. There he finds the man with the missing finger-joint, the seemingly

respectable Professor Jordan, who shoots him after a brief conversation and leaves him for dead. Luckily, the bullet fails to penetrate the farmer’s prayer-book, left in a coat pocket, and Hannay flees once more.

He goes to the police, but they refuse to accept his story, since they know Jordan well. Hannay then jumps through a window and escapes into the crowd. He tries to hide himself in a political meeting, but is mistaken for the keynote speaker; he gives a

rousing impromptu speech (without knowing a thing about the candidate he is introducing), but is recognized by Pamela, who gives him up once more. They are handcuffed together and taken away by “policemen”. Hannay eventually realizes they

are agents of the conspiracy when they bypass the nearest police station. When the car is forced to stop, he escapes, dragging an unwilling Pamela along.

They travel cross country, and stay the night at an inn, the girl still not believing Hannay's story. While he sleeps, she slips out of the handcuffs, but then eavesdrops on one of the fake policemen on the telephone downstairs; the conversation confirms Hannay's assertions. She returns to the room and sleeps on a sofa. Next morning, she tells him what she heard, and is sent to London to pass it on to the police. No secrets have been reported missing however, so they do nothing to help. Instead, they follow her to get to Hannay.

The London Palladium is a 2,286 seat West End theatre located off Oxford Street in the City of Westminster. From the roster of stars that have played there and many televised performances, it is arguably the most famous theatre in London and the United Kingdom, especially for musical



The 39 Steps, New York City production. Photo from The New York Times.

She leads them to Mr. Memory's show at the London Palladium, where the police close in on the fugitive. When the performer is introduced, Hannay recognizes his theme music – it is the annoyingly catchy tune he has not been able to forget for days. Hannay puts two and two together and realizes that Mr. Memory is how the spies are smuggling the secrets out: he has them memorized. As the police take him into custody, he shouts out a question about the 39 Steps. When Mr. Memory compulsively begins to answer, Jordan shoots him and tries to flee, but is apprehended. The dying Mr. Memory recites the information stored in his brain, a design for silent aircraft, and Hannay and the girl stroll off, hand in hand.

AWARDS & NOMINATIONS

2007 Laurence Olivier Award

- Best New Comedy (*WINNER*)

2008 Drama Desk Awards

- Outstanding Lighting Design - Kevin Adams (*WINNER*)
- Outstanding Sound Design - Mic Pool
- Unique Theatrical Experience (*WINNER*)

2008 Tony Awards

- Best Costume Design - Peter McKintosh
- Best Direction of a Play - Play Maria Aiken
- Best Lighting Design of a Play - Kevin Adams (*WINNER*)
- Best Play
- Best Scenic Design of a Play - Peter McKintosh
- Best Sound Design of a Play - Mic Pool (*WINNER*)



Scenes from The 39 Steps. Photo from Playbill.com and taken by Joan Marcus.

ABOUT JOHN BUCHAN



John Buchan
Photo from La Jolla Playhouse.

When John Buchan (1875-1940) wrote *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915), he called it a "shocker," a novel "where the incidents defy the probabilities, and march just inside the borders of the possible." With secret cyphers, German conspiracies, ruthless foreign agents, and chance encounters, it fit this description, but the circumstances of its writing did not; this book was penned out of complete boredom.

Confined to bed in winter of 1914 with an ulcer, Buchan ran out of shockers to read and decided to make his own. This was not, however, the first he had written. His two earlier attempts, *Prester John* (1910) and *The Power-House* (1913), were popular

hits, and he had already established his reputation in literary circles as a biographer, historian, and writer of historical fiction.

The Thirty-Nine Steps pits protagonist Richard Hannay, a self-proclaimed ordinary guy, against a network of German spies preparing to storm Great Britain. It was the first in a series of five novels featuring Hannay, who would later outsmart Turks during World War I in *Greenmantle* (1916) and gangsters in three other books.

After finishing *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, Buchan served as an intelligence officer and war correspondent and was promoted in 1917 to direct the propaganda wing of the Foreign Office, due to his knowledge of German, his experience with secret codes from his time as a South African bureaucrat at the turn of the century, and his political appeal as a moderate Tory.

After the war, he gained more accolades, becoming a member of Parliament in 1927, Lord High Commissioner of the Church of Scotland in 1933, and Governor-General of Canada in 1935. In the same year, Alfred Hitchcock directed a film adaptation of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, adding a love interest to the story and stripping it of any mention of Germany or impending attack. Germany, however, remained of great importance to Buchan; the last major political act of his life was to pledge Canada's support to the allies in World War II.

ABOUT ALFRED HITCHCOCK



Alfred Hitchcock
Photo from Esquire.com

The son of a London poultry dealer, Hitchcock attended St. Ignatius College, London, and the University of London, where he studied engineering. In 1920 he began to work in the motion-picture industry, designing title cards for the Famous Players-Lasky Company. Within a few years he had become a scenario writer and an assistant director, and he directed his first film (*The Pleasure Garden*) in 1925. With *The Lodger* (1926), the story of a family who mistakenly suspect their roomer to be Jack the Ripper, Hitchcock began making the “thrillers” with which he was to become identified. His *Blackmail* (1929) was the first successful British talking picture. During the 1930s he directed such classic suspense films as *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934), *The Thirty-nine Steps* (1935), *Sabotage* (1936), and *The Lady Vanishes* (1938). In 1939 Hitchcock left England for Hollywood, where his first film, *Rebecca* (1940), won an Academy Award for best picture.

During the next three decades Hitchcock usually made a film a year in the Hollywood motion-picture system. Among the important films he directed during the 1940s were *Suspicion* (1941), *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), *Lifeboat* (1944), *Spellbound* (1945), and *Rope* (1948). He began functioning as his own producer in 1948, and he went on in the 1950s to make a series of big-budget suspense films starring some of the leading actors and actresses of Hollywood. These films include *Strangers on a Train* (1951), *Dial M for Murder* (1954), *Rear Window* (1954), *To Catch a Thief* (1954), *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1955; a remake of the 1934 film), *Vertigo* (1958), and *North by Northwest* (1959). In the 1960s Hitchcock turned to making thrillers with new and original emphases, among them *Psycho* (1960), *The Birds* (1963), and *Marnie* (1964). His *Torn Curtain* (1966) and *Topaz* (1969) are conventional espionage stories, while in his last films, *Frenzy* (1972) and *Family Plot* (1976), he returned to his original themes. From the 1940s on Hitchcock usually made a fleeting, wordless appearance in a bit part in each of his films.

Hitchcock's films usually centre on either murder or espionage, with deception, mistaken identities, and chase sequences complicating and enlivening the plot. Wry touches of humour and occasional intrusions of the macabre complete this mixture of cinematic elements. Three main themes predominate in Hitchcock's films. The most common is that of the innocent man who is mistakenly suspected or accused of a crime and who must then track down the real perpetrator in order to clear himself. Examples of films having this theme include *The Lodger*, *The Thirty-nine Steps*, *Saboteur*, *Strangers on a Train*, *I Confess*, *To Catch a Thief*, *The Wrong Man*, *North by Northwest*, and *Frenzy*. The second theme is that of the guilty woman who enmeshes

a male protagonist and ends up either destroying him or being saved by him; examples of this theme include *Blackmail*, *Sabotage*, *Notorious*, *Rebecca*, *Vertigo*, and *Marnie*. The third theme is that of the (frequently psychopathic) murderer whose identity is established during the working out of the plot; examples of this theme include *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Rope*, *Rear Window*, and *Psycho*. The psychopathic killer theme may sometimes be combined with the plot of the falsely accused innocent man, as in *Frenzy*.

Hitchcock's greatest gift was his mastery of the technical means to build and maintain suspense. To this end he used innovative camera viewpoints and movements, elaborate editing techniques, and effective soundtrack music. He had a sound grasp of human psychology, as manifested both in his credible treatment of everyday life and in the tense and nightmarish situations encountered in his more chilling films. His ability to convincingly evoke human menace, subterfuge, and fear gave his psychological thrillers great impact while maintaining their subtlety and believability.

Hitchcock produced several popular American television series in the 1950s and '60s, which he introduced and sometimes directed. His name also appeared on a series of mystery-story anthologies. He received the American Film Institute's Life Achievement Award in 1979 and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1980.

ABOUT DEAN PAUL GIBSON



Dean Paul Gibson is an accomplished actor who has become one of Vancouver's pre-eminent directors in recent years.

His selected directing credits include *7 Stories* (Theatre Calgary/CanStage), *Black Comedy*, *The History Boys*, *It's A Wonderful Life*, *The School for Scandal* and *A Flea in Her Ear* (Arts Club), *Toronto, Mississippi*, *True West*, *No Great Mischiefs*, and *Noises Off* (Playhouse), *The Boyfriend* (Studio 58), *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, and many more (Bard on the Beach), *Lend Me a Tenor*, *Good Night Desdemona—Good Morning Juliet*, and *Powerlines* (Gateway Theatre).

As an actor, Dean has also been seen on stage and in various film and TV roles, including *The Drowsy Chaperone* (MTC), *A Christmas Carol*, *The Dead Reckoning*, *Music Man*, *Little Voice* and the acclaimed production of *The Overcoat* (Playhouse), *Vigil* (Theatre Calgary and WCT), Felix Humble in two productions of *Humble Boy* (Tarragon and Playhouse/National Arts Centre), *Little Mercy's First Murder* (Touchstone), *Shopping & Fucking* (Pi/Ruby Slippers), *Stones in his Pockets* (Playhouse and The Belfry), *The Family Way* (Touchstone), *Cymbeline* (Bard on the Beach), and the award winning production of *Problem Child* (Green Thumb Theatre)

Dean has been honoured with Jessie Richardson Awards for his acting and directing and is a graduate of Studio 58.

AN INTERVIEW WITH PATRICK BARLOW



Patrick Barlow, 2006
Photo by Fatimah Namdar

How many writers does it take to adapt *The 39 Steps*? There's no punch line. Just take a look at the title page in this program and you'll have an idea of how many minds were involved in the creation of the play you're about to see.

John Buchan first devised the story in 1914. Buchan went on to write four more adventure novels featuring the stiff-upper-lipped hero of *The 39 Steps*, Richard Hannay.

The novel was the basis for a number of film adaptations, notably Alfred Hitchcock's original 1935 version. Others came out in 1959 and 1978, and there is a remake in production now, set to come out in 2011.

In 1995, Nobby Dimon and Simon Corble, two writers with the Midsommer Actors' Company in North England, came up with a version of *The 39 Steps*, which toured with great success to small venues throughout the U.K. This version was based both on John Buchan's book and Hitchcock's film version, and it featured four actors playing all of the parts.

Patrick Barlow—best known for his satirical two-man National Theatre of Brent—was tapped to write the next version. His adaptation premiered in 2005. Below is an interview with him conducted in 2006 when the production transferred to London's West End. Below is an interview conducted on 18th December, 2006 by The Mousetrap Foundation.

Were you adapting the film or the book in this piece?

It's the film. That was decided before I'd say yes to doing it. Definitely the film. It's the film and me and a tiny bit from the opening of the book.

Do you have any comments to make about genre with regard to the piece?

Well the film is comedy thriller I suppose.

Talk us through the adaptation process from film to stage version.

Well there is no published screenplay so I watched the film lots of times and scribbled it down. That was a blueprint but I gave myself lots of liberty to change. So I just took the film and then added things that make me laugh. So the stockings scene is the same but I added in the sandwich, and the kind of mad argument between them. The relationship between Pamela and Hannay fascinated me, the repression of it. Repression is very interesting for a writer to look at. It's very like *Brief Encounter*, it's that world. The Hitchcock film treats the relationship quite lightly, so I added a lot to it.

And what are the things you add to make it funny or to make it pastiche?

Well doing things really fast seems to work, so the dialogue in the train with the underwear salesmen would not be funny at normal pace, but really fast it works.

And is it easier to write from scratch or to adapt?

If it's just you involved, adapting is a joy. But generally, there are others involved who may differ from you, and that can be miserable. Writing your own stuff from the heart is a joy, so I guess it is easier. I mean, for anyone who wants to know about the nightmares for a writer of adaptation, there is a great book called *Adventures in the Screen Trade* by William Goldman, which says it all.

So is this pastiche?

It is pastiche, but it is very important that there is a real story going on. It's about a man who is lonely and lost in his heart ... really a powerful story. And emotionally there is a journey; otherwise I wouldn't be interested in doing it. I mean for Pamela, too, as well as Hannay. She's very uptight, repressed.

Any comments on linguistic choices you make in the piece... how the language of the early 20th century differs to our own?

'Crumbs', 'crikey', 'golly', 'absolutely beastly'. You had to be really careful... all the language has to be of the period and of the genre. In fact there is a line near the end I noticed the other day. Hannay says, "Hang on, this is a hymn book"... and that 'hang on' just isn't quite right. It's more recent.

THE 39 STEPS: A PRODUCTION HISTORY

1988-1989 TV Series, *Hannay*

Robert Powell — who portrayed Richard Hannay in the 1978 film — stepped into the role again for this UK television program, which aired on Thames TV. Airing for two seasons (six episodes in 1988, and seven in 1989), the show followed Hannay's pre-World War I exploits.

2006 Live Theatre, *The 39 Steps*

This live theatrical adaptation draws heavily from Hitchcock's movie, but relies on four actors to play all roles. It was adapted by Patrick Barlow, a comic performer and writer known for reworking many-character pieces into two-actor shows. First presented at West Yorkshire Playhouse, it went on to successful runs in London's West End and on Broadway, as well as Australia, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Israel, Mexico, Spain and South Korea.

2008 Interactive Online Novella, *The 21 Steps*

Part of Penguin Books' online series of six interactive stories, spy fiction author Charles Cumming's version is only tenuously based on Buchan's novel. Using a Google Maps interface, *The 21 Steps* tells the story of Rick Blackwell, a man forced to smuggle an unidentified package across the UK after a complete stranger dies from gunshot wounds in front of him.

Visit <http://wetellstories.co.uk/stories/week1/> to learn more — but be sure not to click on the map while it's in motion, or you'll have to start the entire chapter over. - <http://googlemapsmania.blogspot.com/2008/03/21-steps.html>.

2008 TV Movie, *The 39 Steps*

This most recent version is a BBC-commissioned work for television that follows Buchan's original plot, but incorporates some changes, including adding a love interest for Hannay and cutting parts of the lengthy journey through Scotland. Although the movie was the most-viewed program on the day it aired (December 28th, 2008), it received poor reviews and was criticized for anachronisms (such as a biplane that chases Hannay and the appearance of a submarine).

SPIES, MACGUFFINS AND MEN WHO KNOW TOO MUCH: A PRIMER ON ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S ESPIONAGE FILMS

In a career spanning six decades, Alfred Hitchcock amassed a body of work that justly earned him the title "Master of Suspense." Some of Hitchcock's most popular films utilize similar themes and story devices, including the "MacGuffin".

Sometimes, the specific nature of the MacGuffin is not important to the plot such that anything that serves as a motivation serves its purpose. The MacGuffin can sometimes be ambiguous, completely undefined, and generic or left open to interpretation.

MacGuffin (or McGuffin)
a plot element that catches the viewers' attention or drives the plot of a work of fiction.

Commonly, though not always, the MacGuffin is the central focus of the film in the first [act](#), and later declines in importance as the struggles and motivations of characters play out. Sometimes the MacGuffin is all but forgotten by the end of the film.

Espionage thrillers are tailor-made for MacGuffins, and few filmmakers are as well known for both as Alfred Hitchcock. Here's a look at some of his more notable ones:

The Man Who Knew Too Much (1934 & 1956 Remake)

Stars: Leslie Banks, Edna Best (1934); Jimmy Stewart, Doris Day (1956)

Synopsis: While vacationing in Switzerland (Morocco in the 1956 remake), an innocent couple — having accidentally learned about a planned political assassination — is forced to go on the run to stop the attempt and save their kidnapped child.

MacGuffin: The assassination attempt

The 39 Steps (1935)

Stars: Robert Donat, Madeleine Carroll

Synopsis: When a spy is murdered in his home, an innocent man—mistaken for the murderer—is forced to go on the run and thwart an evil plot.

MacGuffin: British military secrets

Saboteur (1942)

Stars: Robert Cummings, Priscilla Lane

Synopsis: When the military aircraft plant at which he works is set on fire, an innocent man — mistaken for the arsonist — is forced to go on the run and thwart an evil plot.

MacGuffin: The plot to destroy a Navy ship

North by Northwest (1959)

Stars: Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint

Synopsis: When he attempts to send a telegram, an innocent man — mistaken for a CIA agent - is forced to go on the run and thwart an evil plot.

MacGuffin: Microfilm hidden inside a statue

Torn Curtain (1966)

Stars: Paul Newman, Julie Andrews

Synopsis: Fooling everyone into thinking he has defected to East Germany, an American physicist works undercover to unearth military secrets and thwart an evil plot.

MacGuffin: Mathematical equations

Topaz (1969)

Stars: Frederick Stafford, Dany Robin

Synopsis: Following the Bay of Pigs invasion, the CIA asks a French diplomat to infiltrate a spy ring and thwart an evil plot.

MacGuffin: NATO documents

Additional Movie MacGuffins

Film	Year	MacGuffin
<i>The Maltese Falcon</i>	1941	Eponymous statuette
<i>Casablanca</i>	1942	Letters of transit
<i>Notorious</i>	1946	Cache of Uranium
<i>Kiss Me Deadly</i>	1955	Case with glowing contents
<i>Charade</i>	1963	Stamps
<i>Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope</i>	1977	Death Star plans
<i>Indiana Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark</i>	1981	Ark of the Covenant
<i>Pulp Fiction</i>	1994	Briefcase
<i>Lord of the Rings Trilogy</i>	2001-2003	One Ring
<i>Mission: Impossible III</i>	2006	Rabbit's Foot
<i>Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest</i>	2006	Chest
<i>Transformers</i>	2007	Allspark
<i>RocknRolla</i>	2008	Russian painting
<i>Miracle at St. Anna</i>	2008	Sculpted head
<i>Jack Said</i>	2009	Silver briefcase
<i>Avatar</i>	2009	Unobtainium

THEMES AND PLOT DEVICES IN THE FILMS OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Alfred Hitchcock's films show an interesting tendency towards recurring themes and devices, such that one can almost feel that he was in some way making the same movie, or at least telling the same story, over and over again throughout his life as a director.

Suspense

Hitchcock preferred the use of suspense over the use of surprise in his films. In surprise, the director assaults the viewer with frightening things. In suspense, the director tells or shows things to the audience which the characters in the film do not know, and then artfully builds tension around what will happen when the characters finally learn the truth.

Audience as voyeur

Further blurring the moral distinction between the innocent and the guilty, occasionally making this indictment inescapably clear to viewers one and all, Hitchcock also makes voyeurs of his "respectable" audience. *Psycho* begins with the camera moving toward a hotel-room window, through which the audience is introduced to Marion and her divorced boyfriend Sam. They are partially undressed, having apparently had sex though they are not married and Marion is on her lunch "hour". Later, along with Norman Bates, the audience watches Marion undress through a peephole.

MacGuffin

One of Hitchcock's favorite devices for driving the plots of his stories and creating suspense was what he called the "MacGuffin".

The ordinary person

Placing an ordinary person in extraordinary circumstances. In *The 39 Steps*, Richard Hannay is drawn into a web of espionage, after a female spy he meets in a theatre is killed in his apartment. In *Psycho*, Janet Leigh plays an unremarkable secretary whose personal story is violently interrupted by a furious psychopath. The focus on an ordinary character enables the audience to relate to the action in the movie.

Mistaken identity

In *North By Northwest*, Roger Thornhill is mistaken for George Kaplan, a non-existent CIA agent. In *The Wrong Man*, Henry Fonda is mistaken for a criminal. The plot of *Vertigo* revolves around Scottie Ferguson's investigation of the false Madeleine Elster's real identity.

Staircases

Images of staircases often play a central role in his films. *The Lodger* tracks a suspected serial killer's movement on a staircase. Years later, a similar shot appears in the final sequence of *Notorious*. In *Vertigo*, the staircase in the church bell tower plays

a crucial role in the plot. In *Psycho*, several staircases are featured prominently: as part of the path up to the Bates mansion, as the entrance to the fruit cellar, and as the site of Detective Arbogast's murder. In *Rear Window*, an entirely nonfunctional staircase adorns James Stewart's apartment, in addition to the numerous fire escape staircases seen each time we follow Stewart's gaze out of his window. In *Shadow of a Doubt*, Charlie Oakley attempts to murder his niece by rigging a staircase to collapse. In *Dial M for Murder*, a key kept under the stair carpet plays a pivotal role in booking the murderer. *Frenzy* features an unusual shot which tracks the killer and his victim first up the stairs, then retreats backwards down the stairs alone while the audience is left to imagine the killing which is taking place. This stylistic interest in staircases is attributed to the influence of German Expressionism, which often featured heavily stylized and menacing staircases, for example in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.

Trains

In Hitchcock's films, trains are often used as a sexual euphemism. Extended sequences on trains feature in a number of Hitchcock films, including *Number Seventeen*, *Shadow of a Doubt*, *The 39 Steps*, *The Lady Vanishes*, *Strangers on a Train*, and *North by Northwest*. In *The 39 Steps* and *North by Northwest*, the limitations imposed by train travel on characters' movements enhances the suspense as the lead character is pursued for a crime he did not commit. Hitchcock's most-extended train sequence is in *The Lady Vanishes*, where the inability to exit the train except at stations forces the two lead characters to accept that the lady for whom they are searching must still be aboard. The vertiginous excitement of moving around the outside of a moving train is exploited in *Number Seventeen* and *The Lady Vanishes*.

Sexuality

For their time, Hitchcock's films were regarded as rather sexualized, often dealing with perverse and taboo behaviors. Sometimes, the prudish conventions of his era caused him to convey sexuality in an emblematic fashion, such as in *North by Northwest*, when the film cuts abruptly from two aroused but visually chaste lovers to a train entering a tunnel. Hitchcock found a number of ways to convey sexuality without depicting graphic behaviors, such as the substitution of explicit sexual passion with the passionate consumption of food. In a particularly amusing scene in *Psycho*, Norman Bates carries on a conversation with Marion Crane while one of his hands strokes a dead animal and the other hand lingers on his crotch. Sexual feelings are often strongly associated with violent behavior. In *The Lodger* and *Psycho*, this association is the whole basis of the film. Biographers have noted how Hitchcock continued to challenge film censorship throughout his career, until he was allowed to show nudity in *Frenzy*.

Silent scenes

As a former silent film director, Hitchcock strongly preferred to convey narrative with images rather than dialogue. Hitchcock viewed film as a primarily visual medium in which the director's assemblage of images must convey the narrative. Examples of imagery over dialogue are in the lengthy sequence in *Vertigo* in which Scottie silently

follows Madeleine, or the Albert Hall sequence in the 1956 version of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*.

Number 13

Hitchcock has many scenes which exploit people's superstitious response to the number 13. The number shows up several times in his movies as an apartment number, room number or house number. In *Psycho*, when Marion checks into the Bates Motel, Norman reaches first for room 3, then room 1. The number on the license plate that she drives adds up to 13. And the car dealership when Marion trades cars the number on the dealership adds up to 13. Besides *Number 13* is also the title of the film in his early career.

The Perfect Murder

Several of Alfred Hitchcock's movies feature characters who are deeply fascinated with the craft of murder. Murder is often treated as an intellectual puzzle and several Hitchcock characters seek to establish a definitive "perfect" murder. This notion is a core concept in *Rope*, *Dial M for Murder*, *Strangers on a Train*, and *Vertigo* and to a lesser extent, *Shadow of Doubt*.

WEBSITES TO EXPLORE

hitchcock.tv/

Everything about Alfred Hitchcock.

www.nytimes.com/packages/html/arts/20080116_STEPS_FEATURE/

Designing *The 39 Steps*: Interview and Slideshow from The New York Times

www.squidoo.com/39-steps-alfred-hitchcock

Watch *The 39 Steps* Movie by Alfred Hitchcock

www.gutenberg.org/files/558/558-h/558-h.htm

An EBook of *The Thirty-nine Steps*, by John Buchan

ATTENDING THE SHOW

ARRIVING AT THE THEATRE

Please arrive at the theatre with ample time (45–60 minutes, depending on the size of your group) to pick up and distribute tickets and resolve any seating issues within your group. Please ensure chaperones arrive before or at the same time as students.

Buses may unload passengers in the loading zone in front of the theatre but engines must be turned off while doing so. Once passengers have exited the vehicle, please be advised that you must find alternate parking for the duration of the show.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

In order to ensure an enjoyable show for all audience members, please impart some general theatre etiquette to students. They should keep in mind that this is not a movie theatre and different audience etiquette applies to a live theatre environment.

- It is important to turn off wristwatch alarms, cellular phones, and beepers for the duration of the show. If you are concerned about missing an emergency call, please leave your name or device and seat location with an usher and we will alert you if a call comes through.
- No outside food or drink is allowed in the theatre or lobby.
- Please finish refreshments purchased at the concession in the lobby before entering the theatre.
- We request that you refrain from eating or unwrapping candy in the theatre, as it is a distraction for others.
- Please be modest with your use of fragrances so that audience members with allergies can also enjoy the performance.
- Seating at The Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage and the Granville Island Stage is assigned. Please sit in your assigned seat and respect the fact that other seats have been reserved for other patrons.
- If you must leave the theatre during the performance, you will not be seated again until the intermission or another appropriate interval.
- Please respect your fellow audience members and the performers by refraining from talking during the performance. Even whispers carry!
- If you have a complaint about another guest, please tell an usher or the Audience Services Manager rather than approaching the person yourself. We will be happy to address concerns on your behalf.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

1. What was the “39 Steps?” Does the answer matter within the context of Hannay’s adventure?

SOURCES

www.wikipedia.org

www.britannica.com/

lajollaplayhouse.org