

A BOOK MUSICAL OF *DEAD POETS SOCIETY*

by

Logan Schurr

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for Departmental Honors in  
the Department of Theatre  
Texas Christian University  
Fort Worth, Texas

May 6th, 2019

A BOOK MUSICAL OF *DEAD POETS SOCIETY*

Project Approved:

Supervising Professor: Alan Shorter, M.F.A.

Department of Theatre

Penny Maas, M.F.A.

Department of Theatre

Candace Tangorra Matelic, Ph. D.

College of Fine Arts

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	4
ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A MUSICAL.....	5
What Makes a Musical “Good?” .....	5
THE MOVIE.....	8
Summary.....	8
Potential for Musical Adaptation.....	9
Iconic and Necessary Moments from the Movie.....	10
Problems and Concerns .....	12
ADAPTING <i>DEAD POETS SOCIETY</i> FOR MUSICAL THEATRE.....	14
Process .....	14
What Should Be Kept?.....	14
Plot Structure.....	24
What Should Be Omitted?.....	25
Potential Songs.....	26
CHARACTERS .....	31
Character breakdowns .....	31
CONCLUSION.....	32
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	35

## INTRODUCTION

When I decided to major in theatre in college, I honestly couldn't articulate the reason why I wanted to pursue it. "It is fun," I told my parents. Once I got to TCU and began to study it every day, I began to understand why I loved it and saw it as such a noble profession: Storytelling. It is an ancient tradition essential to our culture and to humanity itself. Without stories, we would not have history. Without stories, we would not have a culture. Without stories, we would not have entertainment. The Greeks first adopted the art of storytelling. Aristotle, in his book, *The Poetics*, wrote, "...it achieves, through pity and fear, the catharsis of these sorts of feelings (1449b21–29)." In other words, theatre helps people release their emotions by experiencing the characters' emotions.

Theatre can change the world and influence people. That is why I am fascinated with the art and believe it to be a fundamental element of our culture. During my time at TCU, I have learned about what makes a story well-told and how to tell a story well. As an actor, it's essential to know what story you are telling, but as an artist, it is crucial to understand how and why you are telling the story.

Ever since I first saw the movie, *Dead Poets Society*, I have been captivated by the story, the characters, the many emotions it evokes, and the sense of inspiration it provides. With prominent elements of poetry, rhythm, and abundant energy, I immediately felt I should adapt it into a musical. Seemingly lighthearted, it tackles difficult themes, elicits a lot of emotion, and examines tragedy.

Stephen Sondheim, a prolific musical theatre composer/lyricist, some deem as the "Shakespeare of Musical Theatre," was mentored by the famous lyricist, Oscar Hammerstein III. Hammerstein gave him a plan to improve his writing that Sondheim describes in his book, *Finishing the Hat*, "first, adapt a good play; next, adapt a not-so-good play, then adapt a non-

drama; and only then try an original.” I may be skipping to step 3 with this project, but I feel confident in this story’s potential to relate to and affect an audience.

### ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A MUSICAL

#### **What Makes a Musical “Good”**

Before I can turn something into a musical, I need to breakdown what makes a musical a musical. I can make a list of some essential attributes found in any musical: music and conflict. Other than these, there are no hard and fast rules depicting what a musical has to be. There are some musicals with hardly any dialogue. There are some musicals without an intermission. Some musicals do not move chronologically or logically. There are some musicals with minimal story. Although there is a wide range of what musicals *can* be, I’m interested in breaking down what a musical *should* be to be successful, specifically in preparation for this adaptation.

First, I must narrow down what type of musical it should be. There is a *book musical*, which is a musical with a chronological storyline with music intertwined with dialogue. A revue is a musical without a storyline, usually used to highlight songs. A *jukebox musical* is a show created around pre-existing songs. Another type is called the *concept musical* in which the show isn't necessarily following a storyline but instead centers around an idea or specific theme. I believe that the *book musical* is the most suitable type of musical for this adaptation, as defined by Cohen:

Traditionally the story is told as a linear narrative in which speech, song, and dance alternate smoothly and unobtrusively. The musical numbers usually occur at crucial points in the story – that is, at emotionally high points. They are also often found at significant structural points, such as the beginning and the end of each act. (Cohen, 10)

These elements serve as the foundation for most successful musicals and therefore, will be the starting point for my adaptation. The story of *Dead Poets Society* moves through time chronologically, with a cast of about 20.

An essential element of a book musical is conflict. Stories are uninteresting without purpose, without obstacles, without an objective, and thus, often without conflict. Conflict reveals what the play is about; therefore, it must be introduced early in the show. The tension that conflict creates forces characters to make choices and take actions; that is what is exciting to watch, and that is what creates each character's journey through the arc of the story. For example, in *Wicked*, Elphaba's green skin color is what forces her to overcome prejudice. In *The Producers*, Mr. Bialystock and Bloom must avoid bankruptcy. In *Les Misérables*, Jean Valjean struggles to prove he is an honest man.

Historically, conflict in drama can fall into three categories; man vs. God, man vs. man, or man vs. self. In contemporary theatre, specifically musical theatre, *man vs. God* is rare, *man vs. man* is slightly more common, but the one that I find most interesting is *man vs. self*, and this is the one I will explore in this project.

Another significant feature of successful musicals is a strong, passionate protagonist on a journey. "To us, they are wholly remarkable because their desire to achieve greatness means they are misfits in the normal world," (Spencer, 29). Their earnest desire is what drives the show, as the conflict is what prohibits them from achieving something and thus forces them to try, try, try again. An audience roots for this type of character. According to Spencer in his book, *The Musical Theatre Writer's Survival Guide*, here are some examples of success:

- In *Man of La Mancha*, Don Quixote wants to bring nobility and decency back to a base and debauched world.

- In *Sweeney Todd, Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, Sweeney wants revenge upon the judge and the corrupt system that destroyed his life and his family.
- In *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye tries desperately to hold onto old-world traditions and values in a world where traditions and values are inexorably changing. (Spencer, 28)

In my opinion, one primarily important feature of a successful musical is that it is character driven rather than plot driven. I believe audiences don't want to see a bunch of things happen; they want to see humans *react* to things happening. The protagonist, as discussed earlier, has to be the one moving the plot forward, not getting lost in it. The result can be a character's transformation. Whether this character has achieved their goal or not, they are changed. If a musical does not include this dynamic character or gain a sense of lessons learned, audiences exit the theatre saying, "what was the point?"

Last, but certainly not least, the music itself must combine appropriate style and sound to support the story. Songs should be strategically placed at critical points of the plot where emotions run high. The foundation of musical theatre hinges on the idea that singing is a heightened version of speech, thus requiring that the emotion be intensified as well. In other words, a character's emotion has to be so strong, that merely speaking is not enough: they must sing. Songs should help develop the plot, not stand alone as merely a beautiful song. Spencer explains, "A given song or musical sequence can develop a newly introduced idea or move the story forward – but the one thing it must never do is repeat information we already know," (Spencer, 43). Music is a substantial tool used to intertwine and intensify the story of a musical seamlessly.

## THE MOVIE

### **Summary**

*Dead Poets Society* (1989), a film directed by Peter Weir, is a movie about an unorthodox English teacher who shakes things up at an elite boy's school in 1959. *Rotten Tomatoes* summarizes the film:

In 1959, the Welton Academy is a staid but well-respected prep school where education is a pragmatic and rather dull affair. Several of the students, however, have their thoughts on the learning process (and life itself) changed when a new teacher comes to the school... John Keating introduces his students to poetry, and his free-thinking attitude and the liberating philosophies of the authors he introduces to his class have a profound effect on his students, especially Todd, who would like to be a writer; Neil, who dreams of being an actor, despite the objections of his father; Knox, a hopeless romantic; Steven, an intellectual who learns to use his heart as well as his head; and Charlie, who begins to lose his blasé attitude. Keating urges his students to seize the day and live their lives boldly; but when this philosophy leads to an unexpected tragedy, headmaster Mr. Nolan fires Keating, and his students leap to his defense. (Rotten Tomatoes)

The movie was nominated for four Oscars including Best Picture, Best Actor in a Leading Role, Best Director and won the category, Best Writing, Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen. It was nominated for four Golden Globes including Best Motion Picture, Best Director, Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture – Drama, and Best Screenplay. It won eighteen other awards, including international and independent film festivals. It ranked number 10 on the 1989 charts and has grossed 235.9 million over its lifetime (IMDb).

## Potential for Musical Adaptation

Movies and musicals are two separate forms of storytelling. Cinema does not rely on audience response to achieve meaning. Regardless of how it makes you feel, it is the same movie every single time you watch it. Theatre consists of real, living and breathing people and does rely on audience response.

Why this movie? *Dead Poets Society* is a movie that has impacted audiences for a few decades. Characters are authentic, and the transformation they undergo is very compelling. Upon watching it, there are a few concepts that I believe can be further explored and developed by theatrical conventions.

*Dead Poets Society* frequently repeats the lines and actions associated with “*carpe diem*” and “seize the day.” These repeated lines and actions are called leitmotif. Interestingly, it has the same function and meaning in music. A leitmotif is a recurring theme or phrase in literary pieces, and it is recurring musical phrases or ideas in music. It would be easy to translate “*carpe diem*” and “seize the day” into music and have them repeated throughout the show.

One recurring metaphor in the movie that strikes me as being an exciting element to incorporate in a musical is Keating’s lesson relating to conformity. In this initial introduction of the metaphor, Keating asks a few of the students to walk around the courtyard together in a line. As they begin the exercise, they are each walking at their own pace with varied rhythms. After about 10 seconds, they all fall into sync with one another and walk at the same rhythm and pace. Keating’s lesson is to teach the boys to stay true to themselves and walk to their own rhythm. The final iteration of this metaphor is seen when Todd is walking to Nolan’s office to sign the documents blaming Keating for Neil’s death. Dr. Hagar walks up the stairs in front of Todd. At first, they are walking in two different rhythms. By the 4<sup>th</sup> stair, Todd

falls into step with Dr. Hagar, which is a metaphorical reflection of his conformity in signing the papers and assigning blame to Keating. Because this concept of conformity is associated with rhythm, I believe there is some fascinating potential to express it through music.

Additionally, many of the boys' individual characteristics create musical opportunities. Neil wants to be an actor, and therefore he knows how to emote and tell stories. Adapting this into music might mean Neil's musical motives may be very dramatic and powerful with a wide vocal range. Todd has the potential to be a poet. Because of his love for language and strength in articulating emotion with words, his music may include a significant amount of verbosity. Knox is a hopeless romantic just bursting with love for Chris. Knox's musical style may employ romantic-era structure, duets, and classic theatrical conventions (like expressing his love by singing about *not* being in love). While one wants to avoid stereotypes when creating characters, raising them to the level of archetypes provides the audience with relatable traits. Archetypes may be used here to help the audience connect to their lives, which, in turn, aids in developing the plot. As these characters embrace a transformation by becoming their own person and thinking freely, the music will be consequently transformed. The music may have faster tempos, be more varied, have more melodically exciting sounds, jazzier rhythms, and louder instrumentation as the transformation occurs, and each characters' journey can dictate this.

### **Iconic and Necessary Moments from the Movie**

*Dead Poets Society* is critically acclaimed and enduringly popular, as demonstrated by its numerous awards and box office results. Because this movie is so well-known and celebrated, some iconic lines, scenes, moments, and images are essential to the musical adaptation.

First and foremost is Walt Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain!" One of Keating's dreams is to be a role model for these boys, as introduced by this poem. Keating invites his class to call him "Captain" in the seventh scene of the movie as he introduces himself. Whitman's poem proclaims admiration for a leader which appropriately sets up the relationship. It also gives us a foreshadowing of loss, as the poem is about the loss of the captain; in the movie, that is Keating getting fired. Throughout the movie, the boys refer to Keating as "Captain" when pursuing actions inspired by him. The phrase "O Captain, my Captain" is heavily associated with the movie and is very important to preserve in the musical adaptation.

In the same scene, Keating introduces the students to the phrase, "*carpe diem*," translated from Latin to English; it means, "seize the day." This becomes a consistent theme throughout the rest of the movie and a battle cry as the boys learn to break the rules and become their own person: Neil yells it before auditioning for the play at Henley Hall, Knox yells it before he calls Chris on the phone, and Charlie references it as source of inspiration for publishing his article. This phrase is so central to the theme of the movie; it cannot be excluded.

Another poem very significant to the film is Henry David Thoreau's "On Life in the Woods." The first time it is mentioned in the movie is scene seventeen when the boys are about to depart for the cave for their first Dead Poets Society meeting. There is a camera shot depicting Neil's textbook inscribed with Keating's name at the top of the title page. Below "John Keating" is Thoreau's poem, with a note that indicates the poem must be read at the beginning of every meeting. Later, Neil reads it to kick off the first re-installment meeting. At the end of the film, after Neil has committed suicide, Keating opens Neil's textbook to read the passage. The poem demonstrates the idea of living life to its fullest yet resonates on a

deeper level following Neil's death. Thus, it is a very significant element of the movie. The poem reads:

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. (Thoreau)

In addition to significant poems and dialogue in the film, there are powerful images that should be recreated or suggested in the musical adaptation. Two images that immediately stand out to me are Keating standing on his desk at the front of his classroom and then the students, at the end of the film, standing on their desks. The latter reinforces Keating's lesson about seeing the world from a new perspective, which he teaches as he stands on top of his desk. By challenging the conformity of the school, it moves the students to examine their lives. Later in the film, when Keating gets fired, and the boys are responsible for it, Todd stands on his desk, in protest of the school's norms and to show respect towards Keating.

While many things will need to be adjusted, omitted, and further developed, these are the things that are too iconic to ignore and should remain within the musical version. These components are some of the primary identifiable images in *Dead Poets Society*, and thus, they must stay in the musical.

### **Problems and Concerns**

Now that I have presented the essential elements and a few ideas about what to include in the musical adaptation, I want to explore a few concerns about translating the movie to musical form.

Firstly, one common critique of the movie is the lack of character development Keating undergoes. He is one of the leading forces and the catalyst in this movie's story, yet he receives very little screen time. Roger Ebert, perhaps the most prolific and well-respected

film critic of all time, writes, “Keating is more of a plot device than a human being,” (Ebert). I can understand that he is a rebellious teacher who cares for these boys, but in my musical adaptation, I would need to include him more in the plot. He is an impactful character, but I need to see how this story impacts *him* by providing more of his reactions and emotions as the story progresses

Next, the plot is often described as a little bit scattered. There isn't a clear sense of the main conflict and the main character. Most people conclude Neil's story is the main one, but some reviews guess that Todd retells the movie, and from his point of view Knox's love story is wedged in there too. Neil's story is most relevant to the overall themes and the most tragic, but it is not always the main focus. In my musical adaptation, to develop this idea further, I would need to make him the definitive protagonist. Todd's story, however, is still important and adds another layer of development. His transformation throughout the movie makes him a hero and the one perhaps most affected by Keating's teachings. Making him the second story will be difficult, but I think his story is still significant. Knox's love story is quite sweet, comical, and a great example of how Keating's philosophy affects the boys. However, as Ebert describes it, “a teenage romance between one of the Welton students and a local girl is given so little screen time, so arbitrarily, that it seems like a distraction.” Ebert is right; as sweet as it is, this story seems random and an unnecessary break in the plotline. I think this storyline can shrink and become more of a sidelight of comedic relief than one of the main focuses.

Another issue in the movie is the Dead Poets Society itself. It's explained as a type of rebellious club, but the boys go to a cave and read out of a book. "The society's meetings have been badly written and are dramatically shapeless, featuring a dance line to Lindsay's "The Congo" and various attempts to impress girls with random lines of poetry,” (Ebert). Indeed,

there is no sense of mystery or defiance and very little bohemian activity. I would need to explore further how to fix this issue, but perhaps some more research on nonconformist groups would inspire additional, possibly controversial actions, during their Dead Poets Society meetings.

Overall, my biggest concern is fitting all of this into a two-hour time frame. So much of the film is so valuable and recognizable that it is difficult for me to select the areas that must be cut. Many aspects are underdeveloped, but the movie itself is already too long. The next step will be to pare down the essential elements of the film and determine which pieces can be abandoned.

### ADAPTING FOR MUSICAL THEATRE

#### **Process**

To figure out how to adapt this movie to the stage, I had to start with a full version of the film. I watched the film in full, pausing after every other second to note the mood, dialogue, and action. My full list of components is 70 scenes long and comprises 36 pages of notes. This kind of detailed information is what I would need to generate the book. This process makes it easier to determine stage directions and to identify who speaks when, and how. After viewing the full inventory of every single thing that happens, I can see the big picture and understand what I should keep, what I should change, and what I should omit.

#### **What Should Be Kept?**

The very first scene of the movie is set in the school church. It is a processional to start the school year, where the school's flags with the four pillars on them can be seen: tradition, honor, discipline, and excellence. These four words alone set up the conflict in the show. Also, I think it is essential to see the homogenous schoolboys in this scene, the formality, and

rigidity of their academic world, following all orders and in sync with each other, to give us a contrast at the end of the film. During this scene, Mr. Nolan, the headmaster, introduces Mr. Keating as the new English teacher. This is also crucial information, as Keating will be a central character in the rest of the story and we learn that his thoughts and ideas will be new to his students. Immediately following this scene is one where the boys and their families leave the church. In this scene, we meet Neil and Mr. Perry for the first time. Dr. Hagar says to Mr. Perry, "we expect great things from Neil," and Mr. Perry responds sternly, "he won't disappoint." This exchange perfectly sets up our protagonist and his conflict. These two scenes are longer in the movie than they need to be, but the main points will be kept and highlighted.

Following this scene is a scene showing the boys moving into their dorms. We meet Todd Anderson who is Neil's roommate. There is another major exchange between Neil and his father: Mr. Perry tells Neil he is taking too many extracurriculars this year and he must drop Yearbook. After a brief protest from Neil, Mr. Perry puts his foot down and instructs Neil that he will do what he says. The interaction is another important interaction to set up the relationship between Neil and his father. There is quite a bit of unnecessary action in between this and the previous conversation at the church, so I think I can combine them and tack them onto the first scene for efficiency.

The next scene demonstrates the traditional way things are done at Welton, which is vital to set up Keating. It shows the boys in 3 different classes, performing dull schoolwork. In their Latin class, they repeat words in sync with no inflection; their chemistry teacher explains that there is a large amount of homework that will be due the next day, in Trigonometry class, their professor threatens the students if they don't turn in their homework. This series of classes is worth keeping because it provides a great juxtaposition

when the boys get to Keating's class. I think these three classes can be shown in rapid succession, not full scenes, but just enough to establish the status quo.

A hugely important element to preserve is Keating's first class period, as we meet him, and see how reluctant the boys are in following his directions. Keating walks the boys out of the classroom to the trophy cases in the hallway and explains that life is short and introduces the famous "carpe diem concept." This scene, of course, is instrumental to the rest of the story; thus it must be kept.

The next few scenes only establish two things; Todd's shyness and Knox's dinner at the Danburry's (where he will meet his love interest, Chris). Although these are both important things, they can be very simplified. I can tack on the acknowledgment of Todd's shyness and his reluctance to join the boys' study group to the end of Keating's class as a transition. I believe I can also tack on the information about Knox's dinner at the Danburry's in the same transition, as the next scene is at this dinner party.

The next two scenes are showing Knox's dinner at the Danburry's where he coincidentally meets Chris (and falls in love with her), and his returning to the boys during study time and telling them about it. We need to know that Knox met Chris and he's head over heels in love with her, but we don't necessarily need to see it happen.

The next scene is Keating's class again. Before class begins, I would reveal the information about Knox's meeting in a conversation before class. By doing this, it will shorten the number of unnecessary scenes, so I don't take as much time with secondary storylines. Besides, this will allow me to develop each of the characters by showing their reaction to Knox's meeting of Chris. We can start to learn about their personalities through their dialogue here. When class begins, the most critical part of the scene is Keating's instruction to rip out the pages of the textbook. In the film, he takes his time to set up the

uselessness of the text. I could establish his point in a lot less time so I can get to the action of the boys agreeing to rip out the pages as instructed by Keating, as that is the critical moment of this scene.

The boys discover something important from Keating's past in the next scene: he was a student at Welton involved in the Dead Poets Society. Neil brings an old yearbook from many years ago, and they find Keating's page. After reading his credits, Charlie assumes that Keating must have been a hell-raiser. They talk amongst themselves to try to figure out what the Dead Poets Society could have been. I can combine this with the next scene where the boys follow Keating out into the courtyard and ask him what the Dead Poets Society is. After Keating explains the purpose and reveals the club as a secret, the boys are inspired. Keating leaves, and Neil asks the boys if they want to restart the club. Although some are at first reluctant, they eventually agree. This scene is vital in the development of the plot and hints at the journey our protagonist, Neil is about to embark on.

The next scene involves the boys sneaking out and arriving in the cave for their first meeting. This scene is critical as we hear Neil recite Thoreau's "I went into the woods" poem, which foreshadows the end of the story. In the movie, not a lot happens other than them eating food and telling stories. I want to change this and focus more on their awkward effort to figure out what "thinking freely" really means. This scene requires additional study of the bohemian philosophy that Keating might have been championing, and I would develop their discussion more deeply.

Next up is another scene in Keating's classroom. The next scene is the iconic scene where he stands on his desk. Everything in this scene is relatively concise and meaningful. It illustrates Keating's personality and drives home the central theme of the entire film using a very strong and memorable visual.

The next scene is another essential one, though I think it could be simplified. The next scene is scene 22 in the film, set in Neil and Todd's dorm room. Now is when we learn that Neil wants to be an actor and is going to audition for the play at Henley Hall. Todd doubts him, but this is the first time any character takes Keating's lesson to heart, as Neil screams, "CARPE DIEM!" In this scene, we also learn about Todd's secret aptitude for writing. Also, towards the end of a small argument, Neil explains that being part of the "club" (Dead Poets Society) means you have to "get stirred up by things" and listen to what Keating is teaching. This moment is pivotal because he articulates the role of this club which will allow the boys to explore and challenge their views and assumptions. Until the club, the boys do as they're told, they now cling to this club as a touchstone as they navigate a new way of looking at their lives and themselves. Neil points out the obvious to Todd, but it also helps the audience follow along. I think there is a way to combine all of these discoveries in this scene and make them more concise and clear.

The next few scenes are a little gratuitous and scattered, but there are some essential things we learn; Neil is cast as Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Henley Hall, and Todd has written a poem for class but crumples it up before he gets there. These two actions can occur in a transition into the next classroom scene for simplicity. This next classroom scene is another significant one (scene 28 in the film). The boys have to read their self-written poems. Knox begins, as he dedicated his poem to Chris. It is a pretty sappy and the boys tease him. When it is Todd's turn, Todd stutters and tells Keating he did not write it. Keating undertakes an exercise, using Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" poem, introducing the line, "YAWP." He badgers Todd until he spits out a few lines of poetry, an exciting breakthrough in Todd's character development and a demonstration of Keating's teaching style.

The next scene is another meeting of the Dead Poets Society in the cave. This particular meeting in the movie will need further development and adaptation for the musical. The most important part of the conference is Knox's yearning for Chris, as he now knows she is dating Chet Danburry. After wallowing in self-pity, he decides to do something about it and runs out of the cave and back to school. (I would combine this with the next scene.) He reaches the telephone booth at school where he calls Chris, who invites him to an upcoming party. He screams "YAWP" and runs upstairs singing "carpe."

This next scene, scene 32 in the film, is that iconic courtyard scene where Keating explains the notion of conformity. After the boys begin walking in sync, Keating explains the lesson, telling them to think their individual thoughts, walk to their own beat.

I would set the next scene at Chet's Party. Though it doesn't occur in the film, I would have Knox's friends accompany him to the party. In this scene, Knox gets too drunk and kisses Chris's forehead. I like the idea of including this scene because I think it is interesting to show how the Welton boys behave at a public school high school party. There are opportunities for them to exhibit their character traits and new ways to demonstrate their interpretation of Keating's "carpe diem." In the end, Chet tackles Knox, beats him up a little bit, Chris pulls him off of Knox, but Chet leaves him with this threat, "the next time I see you, you die."

The next scene will be Neil getting back to school from rehearsal to a surprise visit from his father. This scene is necessary because it demonstrates the intolerance Neil's father has, and the desire Neil has to stand up to him and speak his mind. His father has found out that Neil is in the play and demands that he quit. Neil tries to fight back, explaining that the play is the following night and Neil loves it. Eventually, Neil gives up and says he will obey his father.

We now move to Scene 46 in the film which is instrumental in exploring Neil's relationship with Keating. It is the conversation between the two, where Keating advises Neil on how to handle this situation with his father. Neil explains his love for acting and his father's disdain towards it. Keating tells him to talk to his father before the performance tomorrow night. Neil asks if there is another way, Keating says there is not.

Skipping over the next few scenes, I will combine the information we learned into this next scene. After Keating dismisses class, we learn that Knox went to profess his love for Chris with the requisite flowers and a poem. Upon his return, the boys question how it turned out. Neil is the last one left in class, and Keating asks him how the conversation went. Neil nervously tells him that his father didn't like the situation one bit, but he's letting him stay in the play. He explains that his father will be out of town for the next few days so he'll have to miss the show. Neil thanks Keating for the advice.

The next scene depicts the boys getting ready for the show and transitions into the show. They are primping and teasing each other. On their way out, they are stopped by Chris in the foyer. Knox runs over to talk to her. Chris came to warn Knox that Chet has threatened him if he ever gets near Chris again. After teasing each other, Knox realizes she wouldn't be there if she didn't like him. They decide to walk to the show together. The play begins as all the boys take their seats. Neil is portraying Puck and is doing an outstanding job. We see Mr. Perry enter the back of the theatre, the same minute Neil does. Neil delivers the last monologue of the play, which is reflective of his relationship with his father. After the applause, when he hugs his cast-mates and friends, he faces his father. His father drags him out of the theatre and into the car. Keating congratulates Neil on his performance, and Mr. Perry sees this and confronts Keating. Mr. Perry tells Keating to stay away from his son.

There is a significant confrontation between Mr. Perry, Mrs. Perry, and Neil in the next scene. There is not much new information in this scene of the movie; however, the stakes are raised as Mr. Perry informs Neil that he will be un-enrolled from Welton and enrolled in military school the following day. I think I can develop this a little further and have Neil try to stand up for himself, rather than stay quiet; however, it would end the same way, with Mr. Perry winning and Neil obeying. Mr. Perry tells him to go to bed, as he and Mrs. Perry exit.

I will combine the next scenes for the sake of efficiency. The following is the pivotal scene where Neil commits suicide. However, I think the audience needs a little more insight. The circumstances are apparent, but what we're interested in is Neil's emotional state. We don't want to see the gunshot, perhaps the setup and just a sound effect. I think it is significant that Neil is sitting in his father's desk chair, using his father's gun. I also believe it is essential to see his parents' reaction to finding him dead. This gives the audience insight and shows that they are not entirely evil; they did love their son and provided some empathy between these characters and the audience.

Following the suicide will be another combination of a few scenes, where the boys at Welton learn of Neil's death. Todd is the most emotional and distraught, screaming that it was Neil's father's fault. I think this is a beautiful scene which displays the depth of friendship between the boys. I believe this is also an opportunity to include more poetry, to show that poetry is a tool in the healing process. I would have it start with the boys reciting poems to cheer Todd up, and perhaps ending with Todd writing his own words to show he has learned something from Keating and that he is comfortable using his talents as a writer.

Keating's reaction to Neil's death would likely be a transition from the previous scene. This is a transformative scene, as Keating tries to come to terms with his impact on his

students. I think he realizes the boys took his teachings too far, and he grapples with his teaching methods. Keating finds Neil's textbook, the one with Thoreau's "I went into the woods..." inscribed in it. As he grieves, there needs to be something more than an "I'm sad" scene. There needs more of a revelation about life, its vagaries and some self-reflection on his bravado in teaching the boys. Perhaps he takes action, for example, calling the Perry family, or writing his resignation letter.

In the next scene, we learn of the political repercussions at the school. The boys are sitting in an attic discussing their next plan of action as they are all about to be interviewed by Mr. Nolan about Neil's death. Charlie goes on to explain that he thinks Cameron is a "fink", spilling the secrets of the club. Cameron enters and tells them he cooperated with Mr. Nolan, and they should do the same. Cameron then goes on a rant about taking down Keating, blaming him for all of this. He goes so far as to say that Neil would still be alive if Keating didn't put these ideas about being an actor into his head. Cameron's rant ends in Charlie punching him. At this point, it is unclear if the boys will listen to Cameron and save themselves at the cost of Keating's job.

The next scene, a combination of scenes 66-68, includes the boys getting interviewed by Nolan. Todd is the last to meet with Nolan, and he tries to get information out of his friends each time they return. They all lock themselves in their rooms, revealing little to no information, but we do learn that Charlie got expelled. As Todd walks to Nolan's office, he climbs the stairs behind Mr. Hagar. Todd begins walking at his own pace, but by the top of the stairs, is entirely in sync with Mr. Hagar. He enters Nolan's office and finds his parents sitting there. Nolan gives a recount of the events that occurred. It is a twisted perspective of Keating's involvement in the situation. Nolan then passes a document over to Todd to sign, confirming that all of this is true. We see that all of his friends have signed it. After much

hesitation, and with his parents yelling at him to sign it, the scene ends. We do not know if he signed it or not, but we can assume he did.

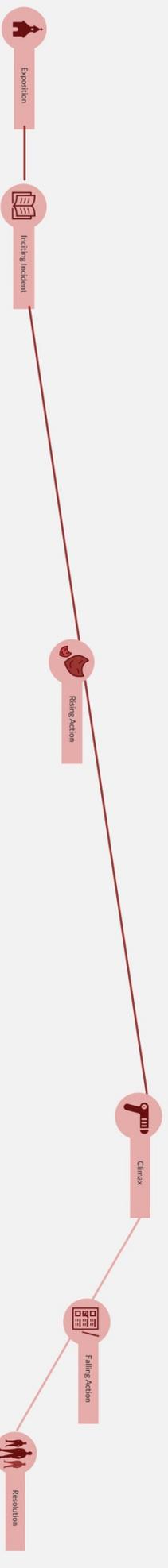
The final scene of the movie has the boys in English class. Mr. Nolan enters and introduces himself as the stand-in teacher. He patronizes the boys and has them open their textbooks and read the introduction that Keating previously deemed "useless." Just then, Keating enters, asking to pick up his personal belongings. On his way out of the room, Todd jumps up and screams, "Mr. Keating! They made everybody sign it!" Nolan tells him to sit down, and Todd does. Keating begins to leave again. Todd jumps up on his desk and says bravely, "O Captain, my Captain." Some of the boys soon follow. This is one of the most iconic images of the show, exemplifying their ability to break free of conformity, speak with their own voice and defy tradition, and see the world from a new perspective. All the while, Nolan is screaming at them to sit down, and threatening expulsion, but the boys bravely continue to stand on their desks. Keating smiles and says, "thank you, boys," and exits.

The end!

# Dead Poets Society Timeline

Logan Schurr

Plot Structure



**Scene 1**

**The Church**  
We enter all the scenes at this scene. It is the setting of the school year. The students are in possession of the school year. The students are in possession of the school year. The students are in possession of the school year.

**Scene 2**

**Keating's Class**  
We hear Knox read traditional and vernacular Latin class. Trigonometry class, and identity class.

**Scene 3**

**Keating's Class**  
Keating talks back to the other boys in the hallway. He explains the importance of the "carpe diem" to them and encourages them to see the world as a gift. He calls them "Captain" in reference to Walt Whitman. "O Captain, my Captain," he says. "How thy Todd is and that Knox is going to dinner at the Whitman's."

**Scene 4**

**Keating's Class**  
Keating tells the boys that he is going to dinner at the Whitman's.

**Scene 5**

**Dining Hall**  
Neil brings an old poem to Keating. They discover that he was a member of the "Dead Poets Society." They find Keating's name in the list.

**Scene 6**

**Keating's Third Class**  
During this class period, Keating invites them to stand up on his desk to see the world from a different perspective. He tells them to "seize the day" and to "make the most of it." He assigns them their next assignment, which is to write their own poem.

**Scene 7**

**Keating's Fourth Class**  
We learn that Neil got cut at Peck in the play. Todd completed a poem for the class before class starts. The boys have to read their poems aloud to the class. Knox begins with a happy poem about a girl.

**Scene 8**

**Keating's Fifth Class**  
Keating creates an assignment. Keating creates an assignment. Keating creates an assignment. Keating creates an assignment.

**Scene 9**

**Keating's Fifth Class**  
In this class, Keating has the boys walk around the courtyard and explain that this was a poem that he wrote. He encourages them to walk around the courtyard and explain that this was a poem that he wrote.

**Scene 10**

**Keating's Fifth Class**  
A Neil returns from a rehearsal for the play, he receives a surprise visit from his father. He tells Neil that he found out about the play and that he is going to pull Neil out of school. Neil agrees to quit the play.

**Scene 11**

**McPerry Visits**  
Knox tells the boys about how he pulled Neil out of school. He says that his father won't let him go for a few days so he'll miss the play.

**Scene 12**

**After Class**  
Keating asks Neil how his conversation with his father went. Neil says that his father won't let him go for a few days so he'll miss the play.

**Scene 13**

**Keating's Fifth Class**  
The boys take their seats as the play begins. Neil enters at Peck. About halfway through the performance, Mr. Perry enters and delivers the last monologue of the play. He father angrily accuses Neil of being a liar and tells him to go home. Mr. Perry and Neil drive away.

**Scene 14**

**Neil's Suicide**  
Neil talks to himself and says how good he was in the play. He takes the gun out of his father's room and goes to his room. He shoots himself and Mr. Perry comes running into the room, finding Neil dead on the floor.

**Scene 15**

**Emergency Meeting**  
The boys meet in an art room to handle the upcoming investigation with the police. They discuss how to handle the situation. They decide to keep the play secret and to tell the police that Neil was a liar.

**Scene 16**

**Keating's Fifth Class**  
Neil talks to himself and says how good he was in the play. He takes the gun out of his father's room and goes to his room. He shoots himself and Mr. Perry comes running into the room, finding Neil dead on the floor.

**Scene 17**

**Keating's Fifth Class**  
Neil talks to himself and says how good he was in the play. He takes the gun out of his father's room and goes to his room. He shoots himself and Mr. Perry comes running into the room, finding Neil dead on the floor.

**Scene 18**

**Keating's Fifth Class**  
Neil talks to himself and says how good he was in the play. He takes the gun out of his father's room and goes to his room. He shoots himself and Mr. Perry comes running into the room, finding Neil dead on the floor.

**Scene 19**

**Keating's Fifth Class**  
Neil talks to himself and says how good he was in the play. He takes the gun out of his father's room and goes to his room. He shoots himself and Mr. Perry comes running into the room, finding Neil dead on the floor.

**Scene 20**

**Keating's Fifth Class**  
Neil talks to himself and says how good he was in the play. He takes the gun out of his father's room and goes to his room. He shoots himself and Mr. Perry comes running into the room, finding Neil dead on the floor.

**Scene 21**

**Keating's Fifth Class**  
Neil talks to himself and says how good he was in the play. He takes the gun out of his father's room and goes to his room. He shoots himself and Mr. Perry comes running into the room, finding Neil dead on the floor.

**Scene 22**

**Keating's Fifth Class**  
Neil talks to himself and says how good he was in the play. He takes the gun out of his father's room and goes to his room. He shoots himself and Mr. Perry comes running into the room, finding Neil dead on the floor.

**Scene 23**

**Final English Class**  
Nolan enters and introduces himself as the temporary English instructor. He introduces the erenboks and Cameron points out that the pages are ripped out. Keating enters asking for the erenboks. He walks back to his office to collect the things. Todd jumps up and tells them that they are the erenboks. Todd and Mr. Nolan talk to the boys. Keating is almost out the door when Todd begins to cry and sit down. Nolan threatens Todd to sit down. Keating is almost out the door when Todd begins to cry and sit down. Nolan threatens Todd to sit down. Keating is almost out the door when Todd begins to cry and sit down. Nolan threatens Todd to sit down.

## **What I'm Omitting**

Some critics argued that the film had too many storylines and certain characters and themes were underdeveloped. For the sake of resolving these issues, I have identified a few things to omit entirely from the movie.

Knox's love story with Chris takes too much focus for a minor storyline. Therefore, I will omit the scene when he goes to the Danburry's and meets Chris for the first time. For a small portion of exposition, the scene takes up too much time, so I think it would be more efficient to make it only dialogue and tack it on to another scene. Also, there is a scene that captures Knox sneaking off campus to see Chris at her school, and since it is not essential to the main plot, I will cut it completely.

The character of Mr. McAlister, another teacher at Welton, doesn't enhance the plot very much, and therefore should be cut from the musical. Though he is demonstrating Keating interacting with the traditional professors of Welton, their friendship never leads either of them to action, so I don't think it's necessary to include him in this adaptation.

Another character I will be omitting is Dr. Hagar. He and Mr. Nolan serve the same purpose: embodying the tradition of Welton and serving as the figurehead in charge of the school. In watching the movie, it is hard to tell them apart, as they have a very similar look and the same sort of demeanor throughout the story. Therefore, I think I can use Mr. Nolan as the rigid headmaster in charge of enforcing all the rules.

There is a particular Dead Poets Society meeting in a cave the night of Chet's party. Charlie brings two girls and recites poetry to them. He tells the boys to call him Nuwanda from now on, and he reveals that he has published an article in the school paper demanding that Welton begin enrolling females. This entire scene should get cut because it muddies the storyline and takes focus away from Neil. Instead, I will have the boys accompany Knox to

Chet's party so we can see them interact with public school kids and Charlie can flirt with women there. I will also be omitting the whole plot point of publishing the article in the school paper. This situation is the focus of several scenes and in the end, doesn't demonstrate anything new, so I will be cutting it. I believe I can show Charlie's natural sense of rebellion throughout the rest of the musical.

In addition, I will be reducing the buildup to Neil's suicide. In the film, it portrays many minutes of him staring out a window, walking throughout the house, and gazing at his flower crown from the play. I don't think it is necessary and may even take the suspense out of the situation. As I mentioned earlier, I will have him remain in his father's study after Mr. Perry has left to contemplate suicide, before he takes action.

I will be omitting the memorial service scene from the musical. In the movie, after Neil's suicide, there is a scene at Welton in the church where the students light a candle in remembrance of Neil. In this scene, Mr. Nolan tells them Neil's family has requested a full investigation of Neil's death. I think this information can be conveyed through dialogue; it would take up too much time to have a separate scene for it.

In order to keep the musical at around two hours, it is imperative to condense where I can. By omitting these particular items from the musical adaptation, I believe I can strengthen the story and create a more efficient show and focused plot.

### **Potential Songs**

Songs in musical theatre serve a purpose, often develop the plot, and occur at moments of high emotion. Now that I have outlined my version of the plot, there are certain moments that I believe would be ideally suited to the insertion of a song.

Great book musicals usually open with a high-energy song in the first few minutes to set the scene and typically include a great deal of exposition. The opening scene of the *Dead*

*Poets Society* musical occurs in the church. This would be an excellent opportunity to add a song to represent the disciplined, rule-heavy atmosphere of Welton, as well as introduce the characters. The first example that comes to mind is “Epiphany,” the opening song in the musical *BARE*. It establishes the rigorous nature of the elite school while also revealing the unspoken thoughts of the students.

The next moment that I believe could employ music would be Keating’s second class period when he tells the students to rip out the introduction of the textbook. In the movie, he repeats the line, “rip, rip, rip!” The students are very reluctant to do so, as they have never been told to do anything contrary to what they've been taught. The objective is strong here as Keating tries different ways to convince them to rip out the pages in their textbooks. It would also provide him an opportunity to develop his character further and interact with the students. “To Break in a Glove” from *Dear Evan Hansen* is an excellent example of the kind of song that would work here. That song includes an older figure explaining an idea to a teenager who is reluctant at first but becomes inspired. I like how Larry (the older character) sings a melodic line, and Evan (the teenager) repeats it a few beats later as if he is learning it right after Larry. That musical arrangement would work very well here to demonstrate Keating’s ability to lead.

The next song should be when Neil tells Todd about Neil's desire to be an actor. It is a classic declaration song full of emotion and ambition. There are endless examples of this type of song but the two that I would love to model Neil’s song after is “Corner of the Sky” from *Pippin* and “Something’s Coming” from *West Side Story*. Both encompass this sense of excitement which compels you to believe in the characters’ dreams. Both characters in these songs are driven to sing because they are overcome with emotion. In both *Pippin* and *West Side Story*, this type of song is right at the beginning because it is used to set up the hero’s

desires and thus explain their upcoming journey. Therefore, these are great models for Neil's song.

The next opportunity for a song is another Keating class. This time, he is trying to get words of poetry out of Todd, who is suffering from insecurity and shyness. This song is an excellent opportunity for Keating to revive some melody from his first song and for Todd to break out of his shell and develop his own leitmotif. Also, this song would be a perfect opportunity to introduce the "YAWP" phrase that originates from Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself." I picture this song as a duet between Todd and Keating. The style I am envisioning with this song is similar to that of "I Can See It" from *The Fantasticks*. It features a similar teacher-student relationship and incorporates this eager and nervous energy that Todd embodies. I like the way the song trades the melody off between the characters; I think that could be a useful device here.

Another opportunity for a song is Chet's party. A lot is going on, and it could be fun to include these interjections between characters. Very similar to "Hey Good Lookin'" from *Dogfight*, this song tells a story by way of musical montage. The song in *Dogfight* jumps from guy to guy trying to pick up women. This very device could serve this moment well; it can show the Welton boys trying to interact with the public school kids, and Knox following Chris around. Just as the *Dogfight* song ends with a bang, this song can end with Knox kissing Chris on the forehead, and Chet punching him. A song would serve this situation well to keep up with the story and the high energy of this party. This could also be an excellent finish to Act I.

The next critical moment is the courtyard scene where Keating demonstrates the meaning of conformity. I think this could be an energetic number that opens Act II. It is essential to be a song because I want to use the same leitmotif again when themes of

conformity appear later in the story. Keating sings, “left, left, left right left” during this scene, and I think I can utilize that and transform it into a song. It will be similar to the beginning of “Citizens of Venice” from *Venice*, a hip-hop musical. It incorporates a traditional chant into a new melody. When the boys begin to accept Keating’s challenge they start to walk in silly styles which provides an opportunity for a dance number.

Another moment that should include a song is the confrontation between Neil and his father. It is infused with emotion, and the stakes are high. This kind of conversational duet usually pulls an audience in and intensifies the situation. The best example of this that I can think of is "Make Me Happy" from Andrew Lipka's *The Wild Party*. The constant change in meter highlights the different tactics Queenie uses to calm Burrs down. One of my favorite parts of this is how Burrs is singing his own thing, and Black and Queenie are in the background begging him to calm down. I think this strategy can be used in Neil’s situation where Mr. Perry is singing his own melody, with an agenda of his own, as he is the one making the decisions, and Neil singing shorter lines in the background.

The next song should be Knox's big romantic love song to Chris when she comes to see him at Welton before the play. There are hundreds of love songs to model this one after in the world of musical theatre, but this particular song should be more playful since the two lovers don't know each other very well at this point. Also, Chris should be a little more resistant because her objective is to get Knox to leave her alone. This song can be heavily inspired by "Something to Believe In" from *Newsies* because I think it contains the same nervous energy as Knox and Chris should have. It’s not confessing deep, life-altering love, but admitting feelings for one another. Chris’s part may include more themes from “People Will Say We’re in Love” from *Oklahoma!* because she is a character who will expose her feelings in a more obtuse way. This song is allowed to be sappy because that’s who Knox is,

but to balance out the heaviness of the rest of the show, it should be slightly more upbeat and high energy.

The next song is the climax of the show: Neil's suicide. The song should follow the conversation with his father when he discovers he will be enrolled in Military School. This is the emotional pinnacle of the play, and the song should explore Neil's feelings, and try to explain what leads him to his decision. This is a very tricky song to create, as it is sensitive and challenging to depict thoughts about suicide. Bruce's song, "Edges of the World" from *Fun Home* captures the intensity of his suicide in a choppy musical style. The sound I am hoping to model this tune after is more like "Answer Me" from *The Band's Visit*. This song builds a stunning musical sound around a man questioning his values and trying to think through a decision. At this moment in the play, it is crucial to capture the intensity, the love, and the hopelessness Neil struggles with.

The last song occurs in the final scene. The moment when Todd stands up on his desk and says, "O Captain My Captain." It is an intense moment in the movie, and I think music could add drama and closure to the story. A good example of the simplicity and essence I'm looking for can be found in "History Has Its Eyes on You" from *Hamilton*. In the song, George Washington demonstrates bravery and defiance. As others join in using contemporary harmonies, it creates a very eerie and compelling song. Because the action of standing on their desks in *Dead Poets Society* has much significance by itself; I don't think the song needs to be musically sophisticated. This kind of song will have a profound impact on the audience. It is essential to leave the audience with hope in the final song, especially in a musical which depicts a suicide.

These specific moments in the plot seem to be perfect times to employ songs. They are moments of high emotion and will help develop the plot. There are a total of about ten songs which is an average number for most book musicals.

## CHARACTERS

### **Character Breakdowns**

Great book musicals are character-driven rather than plot-driven as mentioned earlier; thus it is essential to analyze characters to understand their function in the story. I will be analyzing a few main characters to break down their purpose in *Dead Poets Society*. To help understand them, I like to relate them to characters established in other musicals so I can get a better sense of their type.

To begin, I will analyze Neil Perry. He is an ambitious hero, longing to be an actor. He is easily inspired by Keating and is the first to take action as a result. He is the natural leader of his group of friends, yet he can't stand up to his father. He is inclusive, kind, and always does the morally correct thing. He is similar to the following characters: Pippin in *Pippin*, J. Pierrepont Finch in *How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying*, Enjolras in *Les Misérables*.

Todd Anderson is a supporting character. He is insecure and naïve. Todd is a rule-follower because he lives in the shadow of his successful older brother. He wants to blend in and be a part of a community. He stutters when he speaks and has a secret ability to be a great writer. He is similar to Motel in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Moritz in *Spring Awakening*, Calvin Berger in *Calvin Berger*, and Michael in *Be More Chill*.

Knox Overstreet is another supporting character similar to the "boy next door" type. He is the epitome of a hopeless romantic. Knox is the perfect ingenue, and though he

functions as comedic relief at times, he takes love seriously. He has very similar qualities to Matt in *The Fantasticks*, Antony in *Sweeney Todd*, and Aladdin in *Aladdin*.

John Keating is the classic role-model, leading man. He brings unorthodox teaching methods to Welton. Keating is passionate and cares deeply for his work and his students. He is continuously joyful, forgiving, and every word that comes out of his mouth should be venerable. He is similar to Bert in *Mary Poppins*, George Washington in *Hamilton*, Harold Hill in *The Music Man*, and Dewey Finn in *School of Rock*.

Charlie Dalton is one of the Welton students who is considered the class clown. He is a smart aleck, a rebel, and wants attention, good or bad. Charlie respects Keating because of his support of thinking freely. He is impulsive and doesn't care about the rules. Charlie is not necessarily unlikable, but he certainly isn't a charming character. He is similar to Andrew Jackson in *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, Mike Teavee from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, and William Morris Barfée from *The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*.

Steven Meeks is the typical nerd of the group. He is sweet and cares too much about the rules. It is assumed that he tutors the rest of the boys in every subject. He is nervous about "seizing the day." He is similar to Seymour Krelborne in *Little Shop of Horrors* and Eugene in *Grease*.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, adapting a movie to the stage requires a lot of analysis, planning and difficult decisions. Starting with a great film like *Dead Poets Society* makes it easier, but there is much dissection that is required.

*Dead Poets Society* explores themes of *carpe diem*, conformity, passion, self-discovery, and much more. Its inspiring saga provides plenty of opportunity for compelling character development and emotional expression.

After researching the essential elements of a musical, I discovered that *Dead Poets Society* is a great candidate for adaptation. It has many features that align well with the category of a book musical, including a distinct conflict, an ambitious protagonist, a strong cast of characters, and potential for great complimentary music.

The award-winning 1989 film is exciting and moving in its own right, which makes it a great piece to analyze for adaptation. Several moments inspire potential for musical adaptation. There are significant and iconic images and lines that make the movie identifiable that I plan to incorporate as well. Additionally, I recognize several areas that could cause problems when adapting for the stage.

After analyzing the movie, I was able to evaluate the plot and assess the best way to transform it into a musical. I discussed the elements I wanted to remain in the stage version and outlined the plot structure, as well as explaining the pieces I plan to omit. When translating a two hour and eight-minute movie to stage, there is much material that needs to be identified and evaluated when modifying for musical theatre.

Once I had a complete idea of how my plot would look, I was able to identify moments that would be logical places for a song. Songs are typically found in moments of high emotion in musical theatre, so I identified these moments in the plot and explained what would be accomplished with the song and related them to songs in popular musicals.

Finally, I broke down a few main characters and explained their function concerning the plot. Because a great book musical is driven heavily by characters, I felt it essential to establish their character traits. I was able to relate them to well-known roles in popular musicals to better understand their type.

After a thorough analysis of *Dead Poets Society*, I have found that it is a perfect story to translate into a musical that can impact a diverse audience. I have utilized the skills and

knowledge that I have acquired while at TCU to explore the many components of a musical and the art of great story-telling.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aristotle, et al. *Poetics*. Harvard University Press, 1995.

COHEN, A. *WRITING MUSICAL THEATER*. PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2017.

“Dead Poets Society (1989).” *Rotten Tomatoes*,

[www.rottentomatoes.com/m/dead\\_poets\\_society](http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/dead_poets_society).

“Dead Poets Society.” *IMDb*, IMDb.com, [www.imdb.com/title/tt0097165/awards](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0097165/awards).

Ebert, Roger. “Dead Poets Society Movie Review (1989) | Roger Ebert.” *RogerEbert.com*,

Steven Haft, 9 June 1989, [www.rogerebert.com/reviews/dead-poets-society-1989](http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/dead-poets-society-1989).

Frankel, Aaron. *Writing the Broadway Musical*. Da Capo Press, 2000.

Sondheim, Stephen. *Finishing the Hat: Collected Lyrics (1954-1981) with Attendant*

*Comments, Principles, Heresies, Grudges, Whines, and Anecdotes*. Knopf, 2011.

Spencer, David. *The Musical Theatre Writer's Survival Guide*. Heinemann, 2005.