

MAN OF LA MANCHA

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Character List

THE PLAY: IN THE PRISON

CAPTAIN OF THE INQUISITION

Cervantes

A poet, trained actor, playwright, and tax-collector filled with curiosity and candor. He is imprisoned and awaiting trial by the Spanish Inquisition.

The Governor

Authority among his fellow prisoners, he spearheads Cervantes's "trial."

The Duke

Another prisoner, he asks to take charge of Cervantes's mock trial.

SOLDIERS

Cervantes's Manservant

The pragmatic and devoted servant to Cervantes. Also imprisoned for colluding with Cervantes.

Other Prisoners

are enlisted to play characters in the performance of Cervantes's story.

THE PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY: CERVANTES STORY

Alonso Quijana/Don Quixote

Quijana, an older country squire disheartened by the cruelty of man, decides to abandon his identity and assume a new one: a chivalrous knight called Don Quixote whose purpose is to right all the wrongs in the world. Cervantes portrays this character.

Sancho Panza

Quixote's faithful squire, he is portrayed by Cervantes's manservant.

THE INN

The Innkeeper

The Innkeeper's Wife, Maria

Aldonza/Dulcinea

A waitress at the Inn, she is tough and suffers no fools. She also works as a prostitute. When Quixote sees her he falls instantly in love and exclaims she is his lady, Dulcinea.

Barber

Fermina: another waitress at the Inn

Muleteers

Jose, Juan, Pedro, Anselmo, Paco, and Tenor. They all spend time at the Inn and frequently harass Aldonza.

QUIJANA'S OLD NEIGHBORHOOD

Dr. Sansón Carrasco

Antonia's fiancé, he is self-important and concerned about the embarrassment of marrying into a family with a "lunatic" in it.

Antonia

Alonso Quijana's niece. She is engaged to Dr. Sansón Carrasco.

Housekeeper

Quijana's housekeeper of many years, she worries Quixote may return and mistake her for his true love.

The Padre

He has known Quijana all his life. Antonia and the Housekeeper go to him for guidance when Quijana assumes the identity of Quixote.

Musical Numbers



Windmills in Spain.

"Man of La Mancha" ("I, Don Quixote")	Don Quixote & Sancho
"It's All the Same"	Aldonza and Muleteers
"Dulcinea"	Don Quixote, Muleteers
"I'm Only Thinking of Him"	Antonia, Padre, Housekeeper
"We're Only Thinking of Him"	Carrasco, Padre, Antonia, Housekeeper
"I Really Like Him"	Sancho
"What Does He Want of Me"	Aldonza
"Little Bird, Little Bird"	Don Quixote, Muleteers
"Barber's Song"	Barber
"Golden Helmet of Mambrino"	Don Quixote, Sancho, Barber, Ensemble
"To Each His Dulcinea"	Padre
"The Impossible Dream" ("The Quest")	Don Quixote
"Knight of the Woeful Countenance"	Innkeeper, Sancho, Aldonza, Don Quixote
"The Impossible Dream" (reprise)	Don Quixote
"Man of La Mancha" (reprise)	Don Quixote
"Moorish Dance"	Ensemble
"Aldonza"	Aldonza
"A Little Gossip"	Sancho
"Dulcinea" (reprise)	Aldonza
"The Impossible Dream" (reprise)	Aldonza and Don Quixote
"Man of La Mancha" (reprise)	Don Quixote, Aldonza, Sancho
"The Psalm"	The Padre
"Finale"	Company

Synopsis

MAN OF LA MANCHA is set in the late 1500s, when Miguel de Cervantes is thrown into prison by the Spanish Inquisition. Having failed as a soldier and as a playwright, Cervantes was working as a tax collector—until he made the mistake of foreclosing on a church. Now Cervantes and his manservant face a group of fellow prisoners, who stage a mock trial before the inmate known as “The Governor.” Faced with the loss of all his possessions, including a tattered manuscript, Cervantes proposes that his defense will take the form of a play. He begins to spin the tale of Alonso Quijana, “a country squire...no longer young...bony, hollow faced...eyes that burn with the fire of inner vision.” Quijana, having read too many tales of heroic knights in the age of chivalry, declares he will become a knight-errant—Don Quixote de la Mancha—traveling the countryside righting all wrongs. Cervantes’ manservant takes on the role of Don Quixote’s faithful companion, Sancho Panza.

Quixote battles a “giant”—in reality, one of the many windmills that dot the landscape of the plains of La Mancha. He is defeated, retreating to a “castle”—really a roadside inn. The inn is populated by rough mule drivers (muleteers); the kitchen serving-wench, Aldonza, scorns their advances, making no secret of her low beginning and harsh life. (“I was spawned in a ditch by a mother who left me there....”)

Quixote sees the boisterous muleteers as fellow knights and believes the hard-edged Aldonza to be a beautiful noble lady, whom he calls “Dulcinea” (meaning “sweetness”). Aldonza is confused by this; no one has ever treated her with kindness.

Cervantes now takes the story to Quijana’s home, where his niece Antonia and her fiancé, Dr. Carrasco, along with the housekeeper and Quijana’s friend Padre Perez, worry about Quijana’s increasingly erratic behavior. Although they each declare they are “only thinking of him,” it’s clear that they are determined to put a stop to Quijana’s antics and bring him home.

While Quixote admires “Dulcinea” from afar, Aldonza confronts Sancho: she asks why he follows a madman like Quixote. Sancho replies that he simply likes Quixote; Aldonza, alone, wonders what Quixote could possibly see in a woman like her. Meanwhile, the muleteers jeer at Aldonza and her eccentric admirer.

A wandering barber arrives at the inn. Quixote believes the barber’s brass shaving basin to be a magical golden helmet that makes its wearer invulnerable and demands that the barber give it to him. Dr. Carrasco and the Padre witness this. Carrasco is certain that Quijana/Quixote is mad, while the Padre is not so sure.

The Innkeeper, whom Quixote believes to be the “Lord of the Castle,” agrees to dub Quixote a knight once he has spent a night holding vigil. As he meditates alone, Aldonza interrupts him. She cannot understand—why does he do



Archival Photo by Craig Schwartz, Pictured: Nadia Ahern, Geoff Elliott, Alan Blumenfeld, and Stephen Weingartner (Man of La Mancha, 2006-07 Season)

these things? He replies that it is necessary to follow the quest—every knight’s mission.

When the lead muleteer abuses Aldonza, Quixote leaps to her defense, leading to a fight between Quixote (aided by Sancho and Aldonza) and the gang of muledrivers. Quixote is victorious and is dubbed a knight by the Innkeeper. Meanwhile, Quixote is unaware that the angry muleteers have abducted Aldonza in revenge.

Setting out on the road once more, Quixote and Sancho are attacked by thieves, who take everything they have. When they return to the inn, they find Aldonza, who has been beaten bloody by the muleteers. She expresses her frustration and rage at ever having believed in Quixote’s dreams.

The Knight of the Mirrors, whom Quixote sees as his mortal enemy, the Enchanter, enters and challenges Quixote to a duel. As they battle, Quixote is struck by his reflection in the Knight’s mirrored shield—he sees himself for the broken old man that he truly is. The Knight reveals himself to be Dr. Carrasco.

The guards interrupt the story to inform Cervantes that he will soon be taken to face the Inquisitors. He asks for enough time to conclude his story.

Alonso Quijana, no longer Don Quixote, lays in his bed at home, surrounded by his family. His spirit has been broken; he is dying. Fighting her way through his family, Aldonza comes to Quijana’s side. He does not recognize her and does not know her name. She pleads with him, saying that he once called her “Dulcinea,” and he begins to remember. She reminds him of the words of his quest—“to dream the impossible dream.” Quixote dies as the Padre prays over him, and Aldonza declares that she is now Dulcinea.

Cervantes’ story is finished: the prisoners give him his manuscript, as the guards return to remove him from the cell and bring him before the officials of the Inquisition. As Cervantes is lead out of the prison, the inmates join together, singing Quixote’s song of his impossible dream. ♦

Source: http://www.robhartmann.com/Rob_Hartmann/Publications/Pblications_files/ManOfLaManchaStudyGuide.pdf

Playwright, Lyricist, Composer Biographies

Playwright Dale Wasserman first wrote *Man of La Mancha* as the ninety-minute television drama, *I, Don Quixote*, which won considerable acclaim and many awards. Personally dissatisfied with his first written tribute to Don Quixote and its author Miguel de Cervantes, Wasserman revamped *Man of La Mancha* for the theatre. The new version never reached the production stage, and Wasserman remained dissatisfied with his work.

It was not until Wasserman joined forces with lyricist Joe Darion and songwriter Mitch Leigh that it became, as Wasserman said, “a kind of theatre that was, at least within the boundaries of our experience, without precedent”



DALE WASSERMAN

Dale Wasserman was born in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. As to when, he claims to not know exactly. His formal education ended after one year of high school. He now holds three honorary doctorates from three universities. A self-proclaimed “show biz hobo” and “secretly lazy man” (he has written over seventy works for television, approximately two dozen plays and musicals and

seventeen feature films), Wasserman entered the world of pro theatre at age nineteen. He has worn almost every theatre hat from lighting designer to producer and director. His theatre career took a sharp, permanent turn when he walked out on a Broadway musical he was directing with the feeling he “couldn’t possibly write worse than the stuff [he] was directing” (Dale Wasserman Biography. www.dalewasserman.com: [Rodin International, April 12, 2001] 1).

His abrupt career change to writer has seen success in every performance venue. His theatre credits include, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, *How I Saved the Whole Damn World*, and his recent work, *A Walk in the Sky*. Television and feature film credits include *The Power and the Glory*, *Circle of Death*, *Perchance to Dream*, *Cleopatra*, and *Aboard the Flying Swan*. He has received over forty-five awards including Emmys, Tonys, Ellys, and Robys. Yet, he rarely attends award ceremonies or opening nights. One theatre critic has even questioned his existence.

Wasserman may avoid the limelight but there are a few clues to his inner psyche, and nowhere are they more

(Dale Wasserman, *Man of La Mancha*: Preface [New York: Random House, 1966], viii). And so the three men, not unlike Don Quixote, ventured on a quest that was in some ways an impossible dream. Despite an initially cool response to *Man of La Mancha* from producers and backers, the playwright, the lyricist, and the songwriter persevered. They were finally rewarded when audience after audience gave their resounding approval. In Wasserman, Darion, and Leigh we find three men who throughout their theatre and musical careers have continued to reach for the stars, always guided by their own quixotic dream.

apparent than in his work, *Man of La Mancha*. “I wrote *Man of La Mancha* because I believed in it. It is my most personal play,” he said in an interview (Dale Wasserman Biography, www.dalewasserman.com [Rodin International, April 12, 2001] 1).

“It happened by pure accident, actually,” Mr. Wasserman said in an interview that appeared in the literary journal **Cervantes** in 1999. “I was in Spain writing a movie when I read in a newspaper that I was there for the purpose of researching a dramatization of ‘Don Quixote.’ That was a laughing matter, because like most people on earth, I had not read ‘Don Quixote.’ ”

Wasserman decided to write *Man of La Mancha* because he felt drawn to the author of the original novel, *Don Quixote*. Miguel de Cervantes led a life that Wasserman calls a “catalogue of catastrophe.” Yet he managed to produce one of the most beautiful stories ever told. We can take a line from Wasserman’s own play to explain why he wanted, even needed to pay tribute to Cervantes.

The Duke asks: Why are you poets so fascinated with madmen?

Cervantes replies: I suppose...We have much in common.

Duke: You both turn your backs on life.

Cervantes: We both select from life what pleases us (60).

Wasserman’s two most popular plays, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* and *Man of La Mancha*, have made him the most produced American playwright worldwide. Still he continues to put pen to paper. Perhaps, Wasserman would echo his own Don Quixote on why he continues to work so hard. “I hope to add some measure of grace to the world. . . Whether I win or lose does not matter, only that I follow the quest” (49).

JOE DARION

Joe Darion left a legacy of musicals, cantatas, pop songs, operas, librettos, and masses when he died in June 2001 at eighty-four. His lyrics for “To Dream the Impossible Dream” in *Man of La Mancha* won Darion the 1965-66 Tony™ award for best lyrics of the Broadway season. Other popular songs that he was the lyricist for, such as “Ricochet,” “Midnight Train,” and “Changing Partners,” sold records in the tens of millions. His opera based on the characters Archy and Mehitabel was turned into the Broadway musical *Shinbone Alley*. On the more serious side, his work with composer Ezra Laderman includes the oratorio operas *Galileo* and *And David Wept* and the cantatas *A Handful of Souls* and *The Questions of Abraham*. He has received a variety of awards including the Drama Critics Circle Award, the Outer Critics Circle Award, the Gabriel Award, the Ohio State Award, and the International Broadcasting Award.

Like his *Man of La Mancha* colleagues, his talent reached into every aspect of written music. In the past eighty-four years he has touched all of us with his poetry. He too could take a line from Don Quixote and his own lyrics to describe his life: My destiny calls and I go; And the wild winds of fortune will carry me onward, Oh whithersoever they go (12).

MITCH LEIGH

Pianist Arthur Rubenstein has said of Mitch Leigh, “He’s the most brilliant composer writing for music today.” Leigh earned his bachelor’s degree in music from Yale in 1951 and his master’s in music in 1952, studying with Paul Hindemith. Since then he has worked as a composer, a producer, a director, and a businessman. He is the only living composer whose work was included in the Metropolitan Opera’s Centennial Celebration. Among Leigh’s awards are the Drama Critic’s Circle Award, the Contemporary Classics Award from the Songwriter’s Hall of Fame for “To Dream the Impossible Dream,” and the first Yale Arts Award for Outstanding Achievement in Musical Composition.

In 1957 Leigh formed Music Makers, Inc., a radio and television commercial production house, where as creative director, he won every major award within the advertising industry. His most recent honor came in September 2001, when Yale University named their new School of Music building after him and his wife, Abby. ♦

SOURCE: Insights Study Guide, Utah Shakespeare Festival. Author: Rachelle Hughes

Timeline

- 1304** — **Amadís de Gaula** is written. A landmark work among the chivalric romances which were in vogue in sixteenth-century Spain.
- 1490** — **Tirant lo Blanch**—is published. It is one of the best known medieval works of literature in the Valencian language and played an important role in the evolution of the Western novel through its influence on the author Miguel de Cervantes.
- 1516** — **Orlando Furioso**—is first published. It is an Italian epic poem by Ludovico Ariosto which exerted a wide influence on later culture. Cervantes frequently refers to this work in **Don Quixote**; Quixote's "Golden Helmet of Mambrino" is one notable reference.
- 1547** — Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra is born.
- 1569** — Cervantes is forced into exile from Castile, moves to Rome and works as chamber assistant of a cardinal.
- 1575** — Cervantes, a soldier in the Spanish Navy, is captured by Barbary pirates and spends five years in captivity. He is released by his captors on payment of a ransom by his parents and the Trinitarians, a Catholic religious order.
- 1597** — Cervantes was working as a tax collector when discrepancies in his accounts for three years previous landed him in the Crown Jail of Seville.
- 1605** — **Don Quixote** (Part One)—first published in Spanish.
- 1612** — **Don Quixote** (Part One)—first published in English.
- 1615** — **Don Quixote** (Part Two)—first published in Spanish.
- 1616** — Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, at age 68, passes away.
- 1620** — **Don Quixote** (Part Two)—first published in English.
- 1914** — Dale Wasserman born.
- 1959** — Dale Wasserman is in Spain writing for a movie and reads in the International Herald Tribune, that he is busy preparing a screenplay based on *Don Quixote*, which he is not. He hasn't even read **Don Quixote** at this point.
- 1959** — *I, Don Quixote* was broadcast live for CBS's *DuPont Show of the Month* program, with an estimated audience of 20 million.
- 1964** — Dale Wasserman writes **Man of La Mancha** in collaboration with composer Mitch Leigh and lyricist Joe Darion.
- 1965** — **Man of La Mancha** opens at Goodspeed Opera House.
- 1965** — **Man of La Mancha** opens on Broadway
- 1968** — **Man of La Mancha** opens on the West End in London
- 1972** — **Man of La Mancha** Broadway revival
- 1972** — **Man of La Mancha** Film released, starring Peter O'Toole and Sofia Loren.
- 1977** — **Man of La Mancha** Broadway revival
- 1992** — **Man of La Mancha** Broadway revival
- 2001** — Joe Darian passes away at the age of 90
- 2002** — **Man of La Mancha** Broadway revival
- 2003** — **The Impossible Musical** is published. This book written by Dale Wasserman recounts the journey and development of the musical play which has touched the hearts and minds of millions.
- 2008** — Dale Wasserman passes away at the age of 94.
- 2014** — Mitch Leigh passes away at the age of 86

Man of La Mancha Themes



La Mancha Windmills.

Imprisonment—Captivity of the Human Condition

Man of La Mancha's prison setting is a constant reminder of human captivity—both literally and metaphorically. The theme of imprisonment permeates *La Mancha*: while Cervantes and his fellow inmates are quite literally imprisoned, the story of Don Quixote is filled with characters who are trapped by circumstance and viewpoint. Dr. Carrasco views Quijana/Quixote as suffering from a "prison of the mind," while Cervantes describes Quixote's madness as a liberation from a realistic, but often unbearable understanding of the hardships and suffering of man. Quixote's idealistic visions serve as a catalyst which liberates Aldonza, Antonia, and others from their psychological prison. Quixote's journey leaves the audience questioning what psychological "freedom" looks like.

Cervantes' fellow inmates are hasty to attack and steal from Cervantes when he first arrives. However, when Cervantes presents his defense in the form of a story about one man's journey to hope and idealism, he guides the prisoners on a journey to their own psychological freedom. Cervantes shows them how hope and fantasy have the power to free their minds even though they are still physically imprisoned. At the beginning of the play, the musical element only exists in the world of Don Quixote, however, by the end of the play the other prisoners are singing "The Impossible Dream" to Cervantes as he is taken to trial. This concrete shift shows how both art and optimism can be instrumental in the quest for freedom of mind and spirit, even for those who are physically imprisoned.

Quixotism, Idealism, and Faith

Don Quixote is such an iconic literary figure, that his name has become synonymous with the ideas of chivalry and unrealistic idealism. So much so, in fact, that the adjective "quixotic" means impractical, idealistic, foolishly romantic, rash, chivalric, and unrealistic—all characteristics attributed to Don Quixote. *Man of La Mancha* was born out of a movement of experimental and political theatre in the 1960s. Often, politically radical individuals are challenged or written off for being irrational, overly idealistic, or impractical. Anything outside the scope of traditional ways of thinking is labeled quixotic. In this play, quixotism is an attribute celebrated as something that opens minds and hearts and challenges pervasive cynicism and despair.

Quijana's transformation into Quixote is catalyzed by his despair about the cruelty of human kind and his desire to right all the world's wrongs. He is perceived as mad in part because of his utter selflessness. His actions, while often absurd and extravagant, are ultimately in the interest of serving others. One of his biggest gifts to others is attributing to them their best self. We see this most notably in his treatment of Aldonza as Dulcinea.

Aldonza is forced to work as a waitress and prostitute, she is harassed constantly by muleteers who treat her as little more than an object available to their whims. Quixote, however, sees her as his beautiful lady, Dulcinea. Quixote shows Aldonza kindness, adoration, and respect—treatment she has never before experienced. When Aldonza chooses to accept Quixote and his idealized

vision of her, she is set free from the oppressiveness of her position and able to find faith and hope in herself and others.

Quixote's unfaltering belief in the good of others and the importance of his idealistic fantasies is a powerful one. He creates purpose and meaning in his life by finding a way to right the wrongs he saw in the world. When Carrasco promises a cure for Quixote's madness, the Padre says, "May it not be worse than the disease." He knows that taking a man's dream away from him can be devastating, or in this case, fatal. Ultimately, the death of Quixote's dream causes his actual death. When the Padre sings, "To Each His Dulcinea," his lyrics suggest that people *need* a dream, that in fact, it is healthier to have a dream to follow than to live life mired in realism, "And yet how lovely life would seem if every man could weave a dream to keep him from despair."

The Power of Storytelling and Art

The prisoners in *Man of La Mancha* viciously attack Cervantes and his servant when they arrive. When the inmates try to steal their possessions, Cervantes wants to protect his precious manuscript at all costs. Cervantes attempts to gain respect and empathy from his fellow prisoners through the power of his storytelling.

Alonso Quijana, the protagonist of Cervantes' story, is a man disheartened by the world he lives in, trapped by feelings of despair and overwhelmed by human cruelty and suffering. He seeks solace and comfort in novels about chivalrous knights and heroic journeys. Quijana is so moved by the stories he reads, that he changes his entire identity to mirror the knights he so greatly admires. Quijana, transformed into Quixote, believes that by living out these stories, he can effect change in the world. Quixote creates meaning for himself and for others whom he enlists on his hero's journey. Ultimately, by allowing himself to be so moved by these stories, he positively changes his own life, as well as the lives of the people he meets along the way.

Cervantes' story is so powerful that not only do his fellow prisoners agree to return his belongings to him by the end of the play, but they also all begin to sing "The Impossible Dream" as Cervantes and his servant are marched to their trials. The prisoners are moved to empathize with Cervantes and his servant and they too begin to accept Quixote's idealism and believe in the impossible. The inmates are encouraged to dream, allow themselves to be moved, and treat one another with kindness. Just like Quixote effects positive change through enacting his own story-life, Cervantes effects positive change by sharing that story in the form of a play. ♦

“I know who I am and who I may be if I choose.”

PERHAPS *Don Quixote* was always destined to be one of the world's great masterpieces. And perhaps it was inevitable that Cervantes' great novel would become a stage musical. After all, Cervantes was primarily a playwright and actor. And in the novel, Quixote says to Sancho, “In my childhood I loved plays, and I have always been an admirer of the drama. Plays are the semblance of reality, and deserve to be loved because they set before our eyes looking-glasses that reflect human life. Nothing tells us better what we are or ought to be than comedians and comedy.” In another passage in the novel, Quixote says, “I know who I am and who I may be if I choose.”

The actors in *Man of La Mancha* play the part of an audience for Cervantes' play, and then that audience becomes actors by playing parts in his play. For added dramatic effect, the prisoners' personalities are like those of the characters they are given to portray. The Governor becomes the Innkeeper, the cynical Duke becomes Dr. Carrasco, etc. There are two audiences to be served—the prisoners who have put Cervantes “on trial” and the theater audience. Because of the parallel between the prisoners and their characters, Cervantes attempts to convince the prisoners of his story's value while his character, Quixote, is trying to convince the characters *within* the play of the value of his world view. It can be argued that the director and actors of *Man of La Mancha* are trying to convince *their* audience of the value of the musical's story. The burden of suspension of disbelief falls on both audiences simultaneously.

An actor portrays Miguel de Cervantes in *Man of La Mancha*, who in turn portrays Señor Quijana, who has become Don Quixote de La Mancha. At the end of the show, the Governor says, “I think Don Quixote is brother to Don Miguel,” in other words, all that is brave and good about the mad knight is also a part of Cervantes. When this story takes place (the late 1500s), there have been no knights in Spain for over three hundred years, but this is entirely irrelevant to Quixote. What matters to him is what those knights stood for (at least as portrayed in his books). Most of the characters in the show think Quijana/Quixote is insane because he sees windmills as giants, a kitchen wench as a high-born lady; he sees the world as he'd like it to be, as he thinks it *should* be, instead of as it is. Quixote says in the musical, “When life itself seems lunatic, who knows where madness lies?” Even more today than when the show opened in 1965, our real world *does* seem lunatic. The only way to stay sane in our contemporary world is to see the world as it could be. Though *Man of La Mancha* is just over fifty years old, and the novel is almost four hundred years old, the message is as timely today as ever. ♦

Edited from: Scott Miller (1996), “From Assassins to West Side Story: The Director's Guide to Musical Theatre”. Scott Miller is the founder and artistic director of New Line Theatre, an alternative musical theatre company he established in 1991 in St. Louis, Missouri.



Don Quixote by Honoré Daumier.

Don Quixote: The Novel

DON QUIXOTE (*El Ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*) was first published in Madrid in 1605 when Cervantes was 57. The book was an immediate best-seller, but despite its success, Cervantes received very little money from the book as he had sold the rights to his publisher. Six editions were printed in the first year of its release. Part II was published in 1615. A single edition containing both parts was published in 1617.

It is considered to be one of the greatest works of fiction ever written and is the most published and translated book after the Bible. Seven years after the first part appeared, it was translated into French, German, Italian and English. It was subsequently translated into English more than 19 times, and several abridged versions appear.

Don Quixote is a humorous novel filled with satire: the first half of the novel is farcical, the second half serious and philosophical. Its *picaresque* style characterized it as a landmark work of literature. The novel's widespread influence helped cement the modern Spanish language. *Don Quixote* successfully straddled the two modes of literature popular at the time: the medieval chivalric romance and the modern novel.

The character of Don Quixote was so popular that the word *quixotic* meaning "extravagantly chivalrous or romantic, visionary, impractical, impulsive and rashly unpredictable" (Dictionary.com) was incorporated into many languages. ♦



IN ADDITION TO MAN OF LA MANCHA, THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER RENDITIONS OF DON QUIXOTE:

Don Quichotte, by Georg Philipp Telemann, Orchestral Suite

Don Quichotte auf der Hochzeit des Camacho, by George Philipp Telemann, Opera

Die Hochzeit des Camacho, by Felix Mendelssohn, 1827 Opera

Don Quichotte, by Jules Massenet, 1910 Opera

Master Peter's Puppet Show, by Manuel de Falla, puppet opera written in 1923

Don Quixote, by Richard Strauss, tone poem

Don Quixote, by Leon Minkus, ballet written in 1869

History of *Man of La Mancha*

MAN OF LA MANCHA

Man of La Mancha was perhaps the first true “concept musical,” the kind of musical in which the over-arching metaphor or statement is more important than the actual narrative, in which the method of storytelling is more important than the story.

The roots of Wasserman’s *Man of La Mancha* lay in the Golden Age of Television for CBS’s Dupont Show of the Month program. Originally produced as a non-musical television play *I, Don Quixote*, starred Lee J. Cobb as Cervantes, Colleen Dewhurst as Aldonza and Eli Wallach as Sancho Panza. Upon its telecast, the play was well received by both the public and the critics alike and Wasserman received an award from the Writers Guild of America.

The television play was then adapted for the stage. Albert Marre, who was directing the stage production, asked Wasserman to turn it into a musical. Mitch Leigh was selected as composer and the original lyricist was W.H. Auden. Auden wrote great poetry but not great lyrics and he was writing a different, more cynical show. Consequently, he was replaced by Joe Darion, of *Shinbone Alley* fame, who stepped in and wrote the lyrics for the musical which we know and love today.

I, Don Quixote has an almost identical plot to what would become *Man of La Mancha*. The opening lines to the most famous song in the show, “The Impossible Dream”, were written by Wasserman as part of a monologue. In the musical, the character of Cervantes proposes to improvise the story of Don Quixote inside the prison and invites the other prisoners to take part. In the play, Cervantes describes the character of Don Quixote and the play segues into the story of the knight. The play also includes many adventurous episodes from the novel which were omitted from the musical due to time constraints.

Man of La Mancha was born out of the experimental theatre movement of 1960s New York, and was written to be played in a small theatre. Its original New York production was staged in three-quarter thrust, with the audience on three sides of the stage. Just as Cervantes’ novel rarely provides much detail of the settings of Quixote’s adventures, leaving it up to the reader’s imagination, likewise the musical’s creators wanted their show to be extremely minimalist, with a bare set, minimal costumes and props, and the challenge to its audience to *participate* in the storytelling through the use of their own imagination. But it asks for us to participate in another way as well. In its heart, *Man of La Mancha* is about the 1960s, and by extension, about any time of political unrest—including today—and it is about the responsibility of each of us to make the world a better place than we found it.

Man of La Mancha is not a musicalization of *Don Quixote*; it is instead a show about a few hours in the life of Miguel



Don Quixote by Salvador Dali.

de Cervantes, using *Quixote* as a storytelling device. As the show’s bookwriter Dale Wasserman has written, “My man of La Mancha is *not* Don Quixote; he is Miguel de Cervantes.” In fact, only a tiny part of the novel is dramatized in the show; after all, there are more than four hundred characters in the novel. When Wasserman originally set out to write the first, non-musical version of his play, he remembers, “In theory the answer seemed simple. I’d write a play about Miguel de Cervantes in which his creation, Don Quixote, would be played by Cervantes himself. The two would progressively blend in spirit until the creator and his creation would be understood as one and the same.”

Man of La Mancha first opened at the Goodspeed Opera House in 1964. Rex Harrison was to be the star of this production, but when he found out that he actually had to sing the songs, he lost interest. Michael Redgrave was also a candidate for the role of Cervantes / Don Quixote.

On November 22, 1965, the musical opened at the ANTA Theatre off Broadway, downtown near Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village. It was the perfect place for it, sharing more in common with radical, anti-establishment works like *Marat/Sade* and Wasserman’s own *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, than with *Hello, Dolly!* or *The Sound of Music*. The ANTA had no fly space, no proscenium arch, no curtain, none of the trappings of traditional theatres. But by some weird quirk of contract law, the ANTA was officially categorized as a Broadway house because of its seating capacity, despite being some forty blocks from the rest of Broadway, and only a few blocks from other off Broadway houses. So, as it would all its strange life, *Man of La Mancha* was born straddling the

experimental world of off Broadway and the commercial world of Broadway.

Life magazine called the show “a metaphysical smasher.” The *New York Post* said, “*Man of La Mancha* is a triumph of creative imagination and stagecraft.” London’s *Morning Telegraph* said, “*Man of La Mancha* is what theatre is for, why theatre lives and endures.” *Rolling Stone* wrote, “*Man of La Mancha* has a heart that sings and a spirit that soars.” John Chapman of the *New York Daily News* called the original production, “an exquisite musical play—the finest and most original work in our musical theatre since *Fiddler on the Roof* opened. It moves enthrallingly from an imaginative beginning to a heart-wrenching end.” Norman Nadel wrote in the *World-Telegram & Sun*, “To reach the unreachable star—what a soaring aspiration for an indestructible dreamer, and what a glorious summation for a bold and beautiful new musical.” He went on, “Thus it goes all evening—realism aligned with romanticism, and each sharpened by the other.”

The show starred Richard Kiley as Quixote and Joan Diener as Aldonza, and it won the Drama Critics Circle Award, the Outer Critics Circle Award, the Variety Drama Critics Award, the Saturday Review Award, and five Tony Awards, including best musical and best score. The show moved uptown in March 1968 to a regular Broadway house, the Martin Beck Theatre, then, oddly, moved in March 1971 to the off Broadway Eden Theatre, then again in May 1971 to the Mark Hellinger Theatre back on Broadway. It ran a total of 2,328 performances and was revived in 1972 (less than a year after the first production closed), and again with Kiley in 1977. The world famous French/Belgian songwriter and singer Jacques Brel saw the show in New York and fell in love with it. He brought it to Paris, playing the lead himself. Luckily, a French cast album was made, preserving Brel’s soulful interpretation. Productions of *La Mancha* were mounted all over the world, and in September 1972, it even opened in the Soviet Union. The show was revived again in 1992 with Raul Julia and Sheena Easton, then again in 2003 with the African American actor Brian Stokes Mitchell as Quixote. Today, the show enjoys 300-400 productions each year.

When the play was made into a film in 1972, Peter O’Toole played Cervantes / Quixote. Everyone else in the cast with the exception of O’Toole, who was dubbed by Simon Gilbert, sang their own songs. Some material from the original television play, which was omitted from the stage musical, was included in the film version.

The Spanish Inquisition

Miguel de Cervantes was tried by the Spanish Inquisition in 1597, and was excommunicated for “offenses against His Majesty’s Most Catholic Church,” escaping more severe punishment, which could’ve included burning at the stake. He served several prison terms.

In 1478 Ferdinand and Isabella established the Spanish Inquisition. Quite separate from the Medieval Inquisition instituted by Pope Innocent III, the Spanish Inquisition was controlled by Ferdinand. The Spanish Inquisition was used as a cloak for grand larceny as well as political and private revenge, and the inquisitors were known for their fanatical zeal and great cruelties. The church and state were united closely (mostly for the profit of the state), and heresy was considered a crime against both, to be compared only with high treason and anarchy.

At the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, Spain was a mixture of Christian, Jewish and Muslim cultures that had generally lived a peaceful co-existence. Granada in the south was very Moorish and the cities of Seville and Barcelona had large Jewish populations. The Jews were very loyal subjects and occupied many important religious and political quotes. The kingdom of Castile even had an unofficial rabbi.

However, towards the end of the 14th century there was a growing feeling of anti-semitism. In Seville hundreds of Jews were killed and the synagogue was completely destroyed. Similar incidences happened in the cities of Cordoba, Valencia and Barcelona. Following this there was a huge conversion of Jews leading to a new social group in the 15th century: New Christians or *conversos*. By going through the long and difficult process of converting, Jews could escape persecution and hold many offices and posts that were earlier closed to them. *Conversos* were not trusted by either Jews or Christians.

Jews who continued to practice their faith were not a direct object of persecution; however, they were a target of suspicion because it was thought that they influenced *conversos* to return to their former faith. On March 31st of 1492 a decree was issued that all Jews had to accept baptism into the Catholic faith or leave the country by July 31st. They were allowed to take all their possessions with them, but were forced to sell their land. Gold, silver and coined money were forfeited to the Inquisition. It is thought that of a population of 80,000 Jews, about one-half of them chose emigration. The most intense period of persecution of *conversos* lasted through 1530. With the reign of King Charles I in 1516, *conversos* were hopeful of an end to the Inquisition; however, the new king left the system in place.

During the 16th century, most trials were focused on the beginnings of Protestantism. The first trials directed at Protestants were against a sect of mystics or *Alumbrados* in Guadalajara and Valladolid. None were executed, but the trials were long and ended with prison sentences. The subject of the *Alumbrados* opened up the Inquisition to many intellectuals and clerics interested in the ideas of Erasmus. Ironically both Charles I and Philip II of Spain were admirers of this philosopher and theologian.

The third group to suffer under the Inquisition were



An instrument of torture used to make the accused confess



The coat of arms of the Inquisition

moriscos, or Muslims who had converted from Islam. The highest population of *moriscos* lived in the areas of Granada and Valencia. Officially, all Muslims in Castile had converted to Christianity in 1502. Those in Aragón and Valencia were forced to convert in 1526. Many *moriscos* maintained their religion in secret. Initial policy toward them was more of a peaceful evangelization than intense persecution. In the kingdoms of Valencia and Aragón, a large majority of *moriscos* were under the jurisdiction of the nobility and persecution would have been viewed as an assault on the economic interests of this social class.

The Inquisition judges, aided by local bishops and state authorities, would come to a town and announce a grace period, the Edict of Grace, for all heretics to come in and confess their crimes and be punished, after which the trials began. All the self-incriminated who presented themselves within a period of grace of one month were offered the possibility of reconciliation with the Church without severe punishment. Self-incrimination was not in and of itself the saving grace for many people, one also had to accuse all accomplices.

Every Catholic citizen was charged with the responsibility to report suspicious behavior. Accusers were anonymous—the defendant had no way of knowing who had accused him. False denunciations were common resulting from personal vendettas. The names of witnesses were kept

secret.

Following a denunciation, the case was examined by *calificadores*, followed by detention. Many people were detained for long periods of time (sometimes up to two years) before their case was heard. Property of the accused was immediately sequestered by the Inquisition. The property was used to pay for procedural expenses as well as the accused's maintenance and costs. This often subjected the relatives of the defendant to poverty.

Torture was often used to force confessions of guilt. At public ceremonies, the names of the guilty were announced and punishments inflicted, ranging from fines and excommunication to imprisonment for life or burning at the stake, called "purification." The most popular methods of torture by the Inquisition were *garrucha*, *toca* and the *potro*. The *garrucha* consisted of hanging the criminal from the ceiling by a pulley with weights tied to the ankles, with a series of lifts and drops during which arms and legs were pulled and often dislocated. The *toca* forced a cloth into the mouth of the victim forcing them to drink water spilled from a jar so that they had the impression of drowning. The *potro*, or the rack, was the most popular instrument of torture. When the victim confessed, the torture was ended.

Minor infractions were punished by having to wear the *sanbenito*, a gown on which was painted a sign of the crime committed. Other potential results of trial were acquittal, suspension, a public penance (consisting of a fine, exile or sentence to the galleys), a public ceremony of reconciliation, a long period in jail or public whipping. The most serious punishment was burning at the stake in a public execution. If repentant, the body was garroted before being burned, if not the individual was burned alive. If the accused died prior to the completion of trial, their body would be burned in effigy.

The Inquisition was abolished during the Napoleonic Empire (1808—1812) but was reinstituted when Ferdinand VII recovered the throne in 1814. The Inquisition was finally abolished in 1834 by Royal Decree during the reign of Isabel II. The total number processed by the Inquisition was approximately 150,000. Between 3,000 and 5,000 were put to death. ♦

La Mancha



Detail of painting of Don Quixote.

LA MANCHA is an area of both historical and agricultural significance. Castile—La Mancha is located south of Madrid and is made up of the provinces of Ciudad Real, Albacete, Cuenca and Toledo. The name 'La Mancha' comes from the old Arabic word ma-ansha (no water). La Mancha is the largest plain in the Iberian Peninsula and is made up of plateaus averaging 500—600 meters in altitude. The region is hydrated by the Guadiana, Javalón, Zánacara, Cigüela and Júcar rivers.

Until the 16th century, the easternmost part was called Mancha de Monte-Aragón because of the name of the mountains that were the old border between La Mancha and the Valencia. La Mancha was also divided into Mancha Alta and Mancha Baja due to the level and flow of its rivers.

La Mancha has always been an important agricultural area. Vineyards abound in Valdepeñas, Manzanares, Ciudad Real and Villarrobleto in Albacete. Other crops are cereals and

saffron. Sheep are also raised in this region providing the famous Manchego cheese.

There are two national parks in La Mancha: Las Tablas de Daimiel and Cabañeros; along with one national park: Las Lagunas de Ruidera.

Some people believe that through his work Don Quixote, Cervantes was making fun of the region. The word 'mancha' can also mean a stain on one's honor and Cervantes could have been making a pun as this would have been a totally inappropriate homeland for a dignified knight. Others think La Mancha is the perfect place for an idealist to originate as it is a very harsh area. The fictional Don Quixote started his adventures in the Campo de Montiel in the south part of the area.

Famous sons of the region include movie director Pedro Almadóvar, painters Antonio López and Antonio López Torres. ♦

About Don Miguel de Cervantes



MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA was born in 1547 and lived until 1616, a witness to the decline of Spain's great golden age. He joined the army at age twenty and showed great bravery during his five-year stint, and while he was in the army he experienced a bout of malaria. Despite his sickness, however, he prevailed and threw himself into battle, sustaining two wounds to the chest and a musket ball through his left hand, crippling it.

He returned to Spain at thirty-three and began to write plays, a total of thirty to forty in his lifetime, though almost none have survived. Though his great fame came from his novel *Don Quixote*, written at age fifty-seven, near the end of his life, most of his output was for the stage. He had an affair with a Portuguese woman but she deserted him, leaving him with a daughter named Isabel. He married again, this time into money—or so he thought. But now he had to support his wife, his daughter, his mother, his widowed mother-in-law, and two sisters. During this time, he was imprisoned twice for owing back taxes. The Inquisition tried him under the Purity of Blood laws and, because he had Jewish blood in his family history, he was excommunicated, only barely escaping nastier punishments. He finished his famous novel, *Don Quixote*, in 1604,

and though it was a huge success, he never received any royalties from it. Ten years later, as poor as ever, Cervantes began work on a *Quixote* sequel, but someone else beat him to it, and published a sequel of his own. Cervantes' own sequel directly responded to the faked one, incorporating the forgery into its narrative. He died in 1616.

Cervantes' own life was full of contradictions. He had great talent but was unsuccessful and poor most of his life. He was an artist but held prosaic jobs to pay his bills such as a soldier and tax collector. Likewise, his *Quixote* is full of contradictions, deeply principled and deeply crazy; an ordinary man, a bad knight, and yet a great philosopher. He can be moved far too easily to anger, and yet treats Aldonza with such profound respect. He tries to make the world a better place and yet also messes up people's lives everywhere he turns. Clearly, Wasserman's impulse to blend the characters of Cervantes and *Quixote* was an insightful choice. ♦

Source: Scott Miller (1996), "From Assassins to West Side Story: The Director's Guide to Musical Theatre". Scott Miller is the founder and artistic director of New Line Theatre, an alternative musical theatre company he established in 1991 in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Score

THE SCORE OF *Man of La Mancha* is somewhat anachronistic: while its musical style stays true to Spanish dances, none of those dances would actually have existed at the time of the story. Quixote's song "The Quest" ("The Impossible Dream") is a bolero, an immediately recognizable style with a patient but persistent beat, embodying Quixote's determination. The show's music and lyrics are very intense, even unpleasant, as often as they are sweet and optimistic. The relatively small orchestra (16 players originally) included two Spanish guitars, finger cymbals, castanets, and a tambourine, in addition to the more traditional brass and reeds. Wasserman also saw a production accompanied only by a single guitar, which he loved. As with most musicals, the characters' emotions are most vividly represented in their songs; but in the case of Aldonza, her character is built almost *entirely* through her songs, including her birth and childhood (in "Aldonza"), her current vocation and world view ("It's All the Same"), her confusion over Don Quixote ("What Does He Want of Me?"), and her eventual transformation and acceptance of Quixote (her reprises at the end). Two of her songs, "It's All the Same" and "Aldonza," share a similar rhythm, alternating between 6/8 and 3/4 meters. And "Aldonza" alternates between a minor key (representing her horrific life) and a major key (representing the better life she briefly experiences). In a way, "Aldonza" is a musical nervous breakdown, like other musical breakdowns including "Mama's Turn" in *Gypsy*, the title song in *Cabaret*, and "Live, Laugh, Love" in *Follies*. "Aldonza" is about the pain of re-birth; Aldonza has been given a new life by Quixote, a new sense of dignity and self-worth, but birth is a painful experience, and "Aldonza" expresses that pain.

Interestingly, Quixote also shares her rhythm in his song about her, "Dulcinea." Giving these two characters similar rhythms links them and shows that they are alike, that they belong together. This rhythm is the same pattern Leonard Bernstein used in the song "America" in *West Side Story*. Aldonza's song, "What Does He Want of Me?" is in a highly irregular 7/8 meter, giving it a feeling of impatience, discomfort, uneasiness. Quixote's attentions have thrown her off balance, so she can't sing in a regular meter.



Like Aldonza's music, both of Sancho's songs share the same accompaniment rhythm, a much simpler, much more repetitive accompaniment than the other characters' songs, based almost entirely on one or two chords in each case, perhaps to emphasize the simplicity and lack of education of Sancho. Appropriately, the instrumental music for "The Combat" and "The Abduction" both have constantly shifting meters to accompany the very explicit, violent action. And in one of composer Mitch Leigh's most interesting moves, he takes the seemingly innocuous love song "Little Bird" and turns it into the song the muleteers sing as they rape Aldonza later in the show.

In the last interior scene, back at Quijana's house, Aldonza and Sancho try to revive Quijana's memory of his adventures as Don Quixote, and as Quijana searches for those memories, Mitch Leigh dramatizes that with his music. We hear bits and pieces of "Dulcinea," "Man of La Mancha," "The Quest," and other songs, as bits and pieces of memory come back to Quijana; and his ultimate regaining of his memory is set to his opening number, a kind of re-birth as Quixote, the same music against which we first met our knight errant. ♦

Source: Scott Miller (1996), "From Assassins to *West Side Story*: The Director's Guide to Musical Theatre". Scott Miller is the founder and artistic director of New Line Theatre, an alternative musical theatre company he established in 1991 in St. Louis, Missouri.

Resources and Suggestions for Further Reading

BOOKS

Man of La Mancha (1964) - book by Dale Wasserman.

The Impossible Musical: The "Man of la Mancha" Story (2003) - book by Dale Wasserman.

The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha (1605) - novel by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra.

Amadís de Gaula (1508) - novel by Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo.

Tirant lo Blanch (1490) - novel by Joanot Martorell.

Orlando Furioso (1516) - Italian epic poem by Ludovico Ariosto.



ONLINE ARTICLES:

Don Quixote as Theatre by Dale Wasserman. <http://www.h-net.org/~cervantes/csa/artics99/wasserman.htm>

A Diary for I, Don Quixote by Dale Wasserman. <http://www.h-net.org/~cervantes/csa/articf01/diary.pdf>

Author, playwright, screenwriter...Dale Wasserman. <http://www.dalewasserman.com/>

Mitch Leigh. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitch_Leigh

List of works influenced by Don Quixote - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_works_influenced_by_Don_Quixote

Don Quixote's influence on Existentialist philosophy - <https://antonioyrocinante.com/2016/11/28/don-quixotes-influence-on-existentialist-philosophy/>

Existentialism and Latin America - http://www.academia.edu/1891797/Existentialism_and_Latin_America

15 Things You Might Not Know About 'Don Quixote' - <http://mentalfloss.com/article/65764/15-things-you-might-not-know-about-don-quixote>

Don Quixote: Bridging Reality and Fiction - Theocrit: The Online Journal of Undergraduate

Literary Theory and Criticism 2.1 (Fall 2009): 9-15, by M. Brett Gaffney.

<http://theocrit.sfasu.edu/docs/fall2009/Gaffney%20Revised.pdf>

Don Quixote Throughout Time: Imagining the Man of La Mancha - <https://ds-omeka.haverford.edu/quixote/exhibits/show/donquixote>

ONLINE VIDEO:

Dale Wasserman's Career. <http://www.dalewasserman.com/video/video1.htm>

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