

WU?[@]therep

ELLA

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CONTENTS

- 2 The 411
- 3 A/S/L & RMAI
- 4 FYI & RBTL
- 5 HTH
- 6 F2F
- 8 B4U
- 10 IRL
- 12 SWDYT?



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At The Rep, we know that life moves fast—okay, really fast. But we also know that some

things are worth slowing down for. We believe that live theatre is one of those pit stops worth making and are excited that you are going to stop by for a show. To help you get the most bang for your buck, we have put together **WU? @ THE REP**—an IM guide that will give you everything you need to know to get at the top of your theatergoing game—fast. You'll find character descriptions (**A/S/L**), a plot summary (**FYI**), biographical information on the playwright (**F&F**), historical context (**B4U**), and other bits and pieces (**HTH**). Most importantly, we'll have some ideas about what this all means **IRL**, anyway.

CU@therep!



The Teacher's Lounge

In an effort to make our educational materials more accessible to students and easier for educators to incorporate into the classroom, our study guide is written in a student-oriented format. We hope that you will circulate this guide among your students in the weeks preceding your visit to The Rep, encouraging them to browse it before and after class and as time allows, using it as a launch point for both pre- and post-performance discussions. You may also want to visit our website, www.repstl.org, for additional information including activity suggestions and behind-the-scenes information. Any materials, either from this guide or from our website may be reproduced for use in the classroom. As always, we appreciate your making live theatre a part of your classroom experience and welcome your feedback and questions.

NEATO!

Show Me Standards: CA 2, 3, 5, 7; FA 2, 3, 4, 5; SS 2, 6; HP 2, 5; and Illinois Learning Standards: 1, 2, 5, 16, 18, 25, 27.

MIHYAP: TOP TEN WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED AT THE REP

- 10. TBA** Ushers will seat your school or class as a group, so even if you are dying to mingle with the group from the all girls school that just walked in the door, stick with your friends until you have been shown your section in the theatre.
- 9. SITD** The house lights will dim immediately before the performance begins and then go dark. Fight off that oh-so-immature urge to whisper, giggle like a grade schooler or yell at this time and during any other blackouts in the show.
- 8. SED** Before the performance begins, turn off all cell phones, pagers, beepers and watch alarms. If you need to text, talk or dial back during intermission, please make sure to click off before the show resumes.
- 7. TMI** Not to sound like your mom, but “if you need to go now, you needed to go then.” Leaving the theatre during the performance is disruptive, so take care of any personal needs before the show starts.
- 6. RTM** When you arrive at the theatre, read the production program. It's like a deluxe version of liner notes and a free souvenir, all in one.
- 5. P-ZA? NW!** Though your ability to eat ten slices at one sitting may impress your friends, no one wants to listen to you chew, slurp or smack, so please leave all food, drink and gum outside the theatre.
- 4. TLK-2-U-L-8-R** We know that you will be dying to discuss what you see onstage with your friends, but please wait until intermission. Any talking—even whispering—is very distracting for both the actors onstage and the audience seated around you.
- 3. LOL** Without you, we really wouldn't have a show. It's your job to laugh when a scene is funny or maybe even shed a tear or two in a tender moment. However, since you are not the audience at *The Jerry Springer Show* please refrain from inappropriate responses such as talking, whistling, making catcalls or singing along with the performers.
- 2. SOP** While it's great that you want a celeb picture of your day at The Rep, the theatre is off-limits to the paparazzi. Flash photography interrupts the performance and along with videorecording is prohibited by Actors Equity rules. You can sneak a peek at production photos on our website, www.repstl.org.
- 1. LLTA** Let the actors know that you respect their work by remaining for the curtain call at the end of the performance. Show your appreciation through applause.

AS/L

ELLA is a 50-year-old singer who served as an icon on the rising jazz, blues and swing scene.

Ella's manager, NORMAN, keeps her career on track with advice and his ability to book big gigs.

JOE is Ella's abusive stepfather.

When the chips are down early in Ella's career, a man of small stature but large ambition named CHICK steps in and helps make Ella a star.

BENNY, an overly devoted fan, is the first man Ella falls for and ends up marrying.

Ella's second husband, RAY, played his bass right into Ella's heart.

For the duration of the play, Ella anxiously awaits the arrival of RAY JUNIOR, her nephew/adopted son.



READ MORE ABOUT IT

We encourage you to examine these topics in-depth by exploring the following books, DVDs and websites.

<http://www.smithsonianjazz.org/>

Audio and visual histories, major biographies, a discussion board and more – this jazz website hosted by the Smithsonian has it all.

<http://www.pbs.org/jazz/index.htm>

Based on information in *JAZZ*, a documentary by Ken Burns, this PBS website has a wealth of information including a historical look at the roots of jazz.

JAZZ – A Film by Ken Burns. 1140 minutes, PBS Paramount, 2004, DVD. This film series explores the history of a major American musical form from its inception through major players to cultural and social impacts.

Dahl, Linda. *Stormy Weather: The Music and Lives of a Century of Jazzwomen. Limelight Editions Reprint, 2004.* A tribute to the often unnoticed women of jazz.

Fordham, John. *Jazz. Barnes and Noble, 1999.*

With photos, album covers and even instrument descriptions, this book is a comprehensive source on all things jazz.

Gourse, Leslie. *Swingers and Crooners: The Art of Jazz Singing. Franklin Watts, 1997.* Jazz isn't just about guitars, drums and horns, it's about the singing too. Find out about singing in this style as well as some of the genre's greats.

Kliment, Bud. *Ella Fitzgerald. Chelsea House Publishers, 1988.* With photos and personal anecdotes, this biography is good for both adult and young readers.

Peretti, Burton W. *Jazz in American Culture. Ivan R. Dee, 1998.* A look at the history of jazz as well as its impact on American culture.

EY

ELLA BEGINS in a French theater in 1966 as Ella Fitzgerald warms up for a performance later on that evening. As she polishes off a song, Norman tells her she needs to cut a number to make room for “patter,” or some time to converse with the audience between numbers. Ella is resistant to the idea, as she says she’s just there to sing and dance. That’s what she’s always been there to do.

IN HER RESISTANCE, Ella begins reminiscing about the early moments of her career, sneaking out and dancing on the streets. After a stroke of luck, she finds herself performing on stage at the Apollo, following another young woman who has just danced. Fearful that she will get booed for her dance performance, at the last second Ella steps on stage and begins singing. She’s met with wild applause and admiration.

BUT IT WOULDN’T be that simple for Ella, for when she returned to the Apollo for another performance she was turned away.

Referred to in the play as “the homeliest girl,” Ella did not meet show business’ stringent demands for beauty. Luckily for Ella, a drummer named Chick recognized Ella for her talent and would later make her a star with his band.

FROM THERE, the sky was the limit for Ella. When Chick lost a battle with tuberculosis, Ella took over the band. After a stroke of bad luck with men, Ella found a husband in a bass player named Ray Brown. After failed attempts to have children, Ella adopted her sister’s son and named him Ray Junior. As Act One draws to a close, we find out that Ray Junior is coming to Ella’s show tonight, despite him telling her he never wanted to see her again.

ACT TWO takes us back to the present and through the musical performance that evening, with Ella in top form as she sings and patters with the audience. As the night draws to a close, she attempts to apologize to her son and make amends, and ends up keeping that number she was going to cut.



RBTL

BEAUTY

While *Ella* is about beautiful music, it is no less about a beautiful person. Called the “homeliest girl” by even her friend Chick at one point in the play, Ella did not live up to the unrealistic expectations for physical attractiveness that show business expects. However, she shows us that true beauty is on the inside, and that every person is beautiful, no matter what they look like on the outside.

PERSEVERANCE

Against all odds—racial discrimination, abuse, poverty and much, much more—Ella persevered to become a star. She chased her dream at all costs, never giving up on what she loved to do. Leading by example, Ella shows us that if we want something bad enough, hang in there, and never give in, we can achieve our dreams.



MARQUEE: a roof-like projection over the entrance to a theatre, hotel or other building

HOMELIEST: most unattractive in appearance

TUBERCULOSIS: an infectious bacterial disease characterized by the growth of nodules in the tissues, especially in the lungs

RACKETEERING: engaging in dishonest and fraudulent business dealings

SHILL: to act or work as an accomplice of a gambler or swindler, acting like an enthusiastic customer to entice or encourage others

TRANSATLANTIC: spanning or crossing the Atlantic Ocean

INDISPOSED: slightly unwell

APOLLO THEATRE: one of the most famous clubs for popular music in the United States, and certainly the most famous club associated almost exclusively with African-American performers

GINGER ROGERS: Fred Astaire's most frequent dance partner, also an elegant and beautiful actress and singer, most popular in the 1930s

LOUIS ARMSTRONG: an innovative jazz trumpet performer who shaped what jazz is today, focusing specifically on improvised soloing

JERRY LEWIS: a famous comedian getting his start in the '40s

SCAT: improvised jazz singing in which the voice is used in imitation of an instrument

SCATOLOGICAL: though Ella thinks it has to do with scatting, this word actually means having an interest or preoccupation with excrement and excretion

IMPROVISE (OR IMPROV): to create or perform spontaneously

LINE-UP: the people within a band or group who play in a given performance

BRIDGE: the middle section of a tune, usually contrasting the rest of the tune

BALLAD: a slow tune that typically has a fluid sound

AXE: one's instrument, including the voice

DISSONANCE: a tension or a clash resulting from the combination of two disharmonious or unsuitable elements

PICK-UP: a musical phrase beginning that comes before the first bar of a song

HEAD: the first and last chorus of a tune, in which the song or melody doesn't include improvisation

RIFF: a catchy repeated phrase that may be played behind a soloist or as part of a lead

SWING: a '30s style when the big band was dominant in jazz music

BLOW: a term for improvise, also indicating to simply play an instrument

PROGRESSION: a definite series of chords that form a passage with some harmonic unity or dramatic meaning

SYNCOPATION: displacing the beats or accents in music or a rhythm so that strong beats become weak and vice versa

DOUBLE TIME: a tempo twice as fast as the original

PLAYER: a musician within a group

VAMP: a simple section, like a riff, but designed to repeat as often as necessary

BLUES: a melodic style that typically associates harmonies using certain "blues scales," riffs and grace notes; a musical style ancestral to jazz; a feeling that is said to inform all jazz music

BEBOP: a style of jazz developed by young players in the early '40s; bebop is usually a rapid pace, many-noted improvisation using long, irregular, syncopated phrasing





ELLA TAKES US on a biographical journey into one of the most celebrated singers of the 20th century. While the play highlights a variety of points in Ella's life, there's still much to be told about the woman behind the story.

ELLA JANE FITZGERALD was often known as "The First Lady of Song," and in her 62-year career she would dazzle audiences around the world with her versatility and accuracy as a singer. There wasn't much she wasn't known for, from sultry ballads to bebop, swing and her uncanny ability to imitate every instrument in an orchestra. She worked with all the greats over the course of her life, including Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Dizzy Gillespie and Benny Goodman.

ELLA WAS BORN in Newport News, Virginia on April 25, 1917. Her parents (William and Temperance) split up shortly after she was born. Temperance (Tempie) took Ella and moved to Yonkers, New York, where they eventually moved in with Tempie's boyfriend Joseph Da Silva. In 1923 Ella's half sister, Frances, was born.

TO KEEP THE FAMILY afloat, everyone had some sort of job. Joe would dig ditches and work as a part time chauffeur. Tempie worked at a laundromat and did some catering on the side. Ella worked picking up bets for local gamblers and dropping off their money.

GROWING UP, Ella never found it hard to make friends. As a youngster she was something of a tomboy, often joining in on the neighborhood games of baseball. From a very young age she enjoyed dancing and singing with her friends, and she always enjoyed the treat of going into Harlem to see performers onstage at the Apollo Theater.

IN 1932, HOWEVER, Ella's life took a rough turn. Her mother died from injuries received in a car accident, and Ella began to

bounce from one living arrangement to the next in rapid succession. For a short time she stayed with Joe, but would soon move in with Tempie's sister Virginia. Ella struggled in dealing with her mother's death, and her schoolwork began to suffer. After getting into trouble with the law, Ella was placed in a reform school where she was beaten by caregivers. Ella was fortunate enough to escape, but then found herself alone in the middle of the Great Depression.

AFTER HER BOUT with bad luck, things were bound to change, and in 1934, they did. Ella won an opportunity to compete in Amateur Night at the Apollo. Ella intended to dance her way through the competition, but when she arrived she saw that the Edwards Sisters were also performing. Knowing that she could not compete, Ella had to find some way to salvage the night.

AS SHE STEPPED ONSTAGE, she faced every performer's horror—a rising murmur of the crowd's dissatisfaction. At the last minute, Ella asked the band to play Hoagy Carmichael's *Judy*. Within a few bars of music the crowd was hushed. By the time the song was over, their disapproval turned into demands for an encore, and Ella obliged with a performance of *The Object of My Affections*.

IT WAS HERE that the often shy and reserved Ella found her fearless place on stage. Often self-conscious about her appearance and even her talents, Ella ironically found a safe haven in the spotlight. Ella found herself loved and accepted by her audiences, and from that moment on she knew what she was meant to do—sing.

AFTER CHANCING into some great connections, Ella did the talent show circuit, winning everything she entered. When performing at the Harlem Opera House, she happened to impress drummer and bandleader Chick Webb. He decided to give



her a trial performance and if the audience liked her, he'd keep her on. Needless to say, the audience loved Ella, and she became a part of the band.

IN THE MID-'30S Ella continued to refine her style, sharpening her ability to scat to a point where she redefined scatting as a form of art. Her initial recordings were met with only moderate success, until her 1938 recording of *A-Tisket A-Tasket*. The album sold one million copies, hit number one, and remained on the pop charts for 17 weeks.

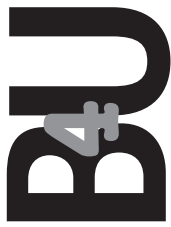
IN 1939 CHICK passed away and Ella took the forefront of the band. After some bad luck with men, Ella found her second husband Ray Brown in 1946, and the two adopted their son Ray Junior.

THROUGH RAY, Ella met her lifelong manager and friend Norman Granz. Norman connected Ella with names such as Cole Porter, Duke Ellington and the Gershwins, solidifying Ella's status as a star.

HER BUSY SCHEDULE included worldwide touring, various television appearances and recording albums. Unfortunately, the hectic schedule took its toll on her relationship with her husband, and in 1952 they divorced. Her celebrity also placed strain on her relationship with her son, but in the end they reconnected and found their relationship.

OVER THE COURSE of her distinguished career, Ella recorded over 200 albums, sold over 40 million records during her lifetime, and won an unprecedented 13 Grammy Awards.

"I KNOW I'M NO GLAMOUR GIRL, AND IT'S NOT EASY FOR ME TO GET UP IN FRONT OF A CROWD OF PEOPLE. IT USED TO BOTHER ME A LOT, BUT NOW I'VE GOT IT FIGURED OUT THAT GOD GAVE ME THIS TALENT TO USE, SO I JUST STAND THERE AND SING."



ELLA FITZGERALD is known as one of the most celebrated female vocalists of the 20th century, and also as an innovator in jazz music. While you may not realize it, much of today's popular music and rock 'n' roll was influenced by the jazz music before it. But what is jazz? Is it just a song with a swinging beat and some horns? Hardly.

JAZZ ISN'T SIMPLY a musical movement—it's a response to the social experiences, conditions and culture of African Americans. To best appreciate the depth and history of jazz, you're best to read up on African American history, especially during the 20th century.

A JAZZ BAND can be anything from a solo pianist to an orchestra. Jazz most often involves brass instruments, pianos and/or a standing bass, though it's certainly not limited to just these instruments. Rhythmically, jazz music typically removes the beat from the ground beat, or utilizes some kind of polyrhythm or syncopated rhythm. Jazz musicians tend to use blue notes, notes not quite on the European scale. The technique for playing an instrument is different from other musical types, as in jazz the slurring and bending of notes is key, not straight playing.

A STRONG DEFINING PRINCIPLE behind jazz is improvisation. Instead of merely playing notes from a page in the attempt to recreate a composer's vision, the jazz musician strives to make each note his own. The jazz musician will never play the same song the same way twice, as each time different notes will express the musician's state within the moment. In this way jazz is a strong storytelling medium, and each song tells a new tale from a new angle every time.

TO REALLY GET to know jazz you have to listen to it. Not just some jingle or elevator music, but the real thing. There are a host of artists to choose from, from Art Tatum to

Miles Davis. There's often a certain emotional or spiritual quality to the music that simply cannot be captured by words—you have to listen and feel for yourself.

HISTORY OF JAZZ

While the history of jazz has its roots deep within African American history, a cursory glance at the music's evolution in the 20th century can give some perspective as to what jazz is all about.

WHILE NOT RECORDED until around 1918, jazz is speculated to have begun to take form sometime around 1890. The form arose in New Orleans as African American musicians sampled from European church and religious music, brass marches, blues, Creole culture, European orchestral music and popular song. Mix it all up with an African American approach to polyrhythm and harmony, and you've got the beginnings of jazz music. Also influential to the movement was ragtime music contributing its syncopated approach to rhythm and melody.

THE EARLY MOMENTS of jazz were confined to New Orleans, as musicians influenced one another. Trumpets, clarinets, trombones and tubas were common, while bass drums and partial kits are also thought to have been utilized. Prior to recordings of the music, various musicians would innovate the musical world by contributing to the improvisational style and means of jazz music, primarily playing at local events and dance halls.

IN THE EARLY DAYS of jazz, it often seemed inseparable from blues, which exerted a heavy influence on jazz. The two forms share many of the same basic orientations, including progressions and approach to instruments. Initial jazz recordings sounded very similar to blues recordings in mood and instrumentation. By



1925, however, blues began to step out on its own with smaller bands (or a solo singer playing an instrument). Modern day rock 'n' roll finds its roots in the blues.

IN 1918 a New Orleans group called the Original Dixieland Jazz Band made the first jazz recording. Amidst a time when record players were beginning to find their popularity and America thirsted for records, the recording proved to be an instant success. By the mid-'20s it was clear that jazz had become the new popular art form, as the young, hipster crowd called the decade the "jazz age."

SUDDENLY JAZZ was no longer isolated to New Orleans—jazz bands began popping up everywhere. A flood of jazz records came onto the scene, and new audiences swallowed them whole. The "jazz age" would give rise to such stars as Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet and Johnny Dodds.

AROUND 1935, jazz would find itself growing again. This time, it quite literally grew in size of band and size of sound, as dance halls sprung up across the nation demanding jazz. Bands grew to fill the space with a big band sound, and dancing became the focus. Beats picked up and bands tried to tear the roofs off each and every dance hall with their high-swung beats and projected tunes.

WHILE SWING was dancing the night away, some musicians turned to a smaller, more laid back sound. Known as the "Cool School," these musicians focused on an evenness in their tone, a slower pace and a straightforward approach to the melody.

AROUND 1956, jazz would find a new, happening movement in Free Jazz, which broke all conventions of rhythm, harmony and melody. The focus was on the sound, and a direct communication with an audience. Another jazz movement would also be born in 1956—Funk. Funk was about attitude and variety. Musicians were about emotional connection with their work while getting back to their African American roots in church call and response, slow dirge blues and more traditional music. Funk often held a heavy political agenda, as songs would critique the social situation the musicians lived in.

BY THE 1960S, rock 'n' roll had taken a dominant hold on America's popular music scene. Musicians like Miles Davis, recognizing the blues roots behind both jazz and rock, began to experiment with mixing the two, and so the Fusion movement was born. By 1967 jazz musicians began to start using a rock sound, while rock bands tried to sound like jazz bands.

"JUST DON'T GIVE UP TRYING TO DO WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TO DO. WHERE THERE IS LOVE AND INSPIRATION, I DON'T THINK YOU CAN GO WRONG."



ELLA ISN'T just the story of an influential and innovative artist whose influence can still be felt today—it's the story of an individual who persevered against all odds to succeed. While Ella Fitzgerald faced a number of issues in rising to stardom, perhaps the darkest and most chilling are the moments in which she suffered child abuse.

CHILD ABUSE is typically defined as any physical, sexual or emotional maltreatment or neglect by parents, guardians or others. It's important to note that normal punishment and disciplinary action is not child abuse, though severe forms of punishment may be classified as child abuse. As depicted between the play and real-life accounts, Ella Fitzgerald was both sexually and physically abused.

EACH YEAR, the government releases annual statistics on child abuse, and sadly recent statistics show an incline in confirmed child abuse cases. A recent report (2005) showed that 899,000 children were abused in the United States alone. Perhaps most distressing is the fact that the statistics don't tell the full tale, as it is believed that most child abuse cases go unreported.

THE EFFECTS of child abuse are many and far reaching, and may be as obvious as physical injury or death but may also be as subtle and hard to detect as cognitive or developmental issues. Typically abused children are more prone to problems ranging from low self-esteem to personality disorders. Common effects may be relationship difficulties, withdrawal and delinquency.

STARTLINGLY ENOUGH, one of the primary causes for child abuse is child abuse. That is to say, often times those who abuse children were abused themselves as children. Mental illness may also be a factor in abuse, though just as often an abuser is neither mentally ill nor was abused themselves. Sometimes strain placed upon an individual or family may cause child abuse, including poverty, divorce, illness, disability, lack of parenting skills and drugs.

IMMEDIATE AND easily detectible signs of child abuse are often hard to come by, as both the abuser and the abused tend to hide the situation from others. Signs of physical abuse may include burns, bite marks, cuts, bruises or welts in the shape of an object. Emotional abuse is even trickier to detect, as its signs may be apathy, depression, hostility and difficulty concentrating. Those sexually abused may either be overly interested sexuality or entirely disinterested. Across the board, abused children may exhibit a resistance to going home and/or fear adults.

WHILE THE ABUSED often feel ashamed, at fault and alone, this is hardly the case. Child abuse is not the fault of the child, and is nothing to be ashamed of. There are a number of agencies in place to assist abused children, including the toll free Childhelp National Abuse Child Hotline which may be reached at 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453).

"THE ONLY THING BETTER THAN SINGING IS MORE SINGING."

FROM THE OPENING curtain to the final fade out, *Ella* is a musical celebration of the life and career of Ella Fitzgerald. Through her work as a musician she has touched the lives of millions across the globe and has influenced our modern day sense of what music is. Despite her many contributions to her art and the world, there are many who do not know her or her work. There are even more individuals who do not truly know or understand jazz, either. Why do you think that is?

WHILE MUSIC and the arts have always taken a back seat to reading, writing and arithmetic in schools, since the passing of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002 there appears to be a marked decrease in time devoted to music and the arts in the classroom. According to NCLB, schools are held accountable for the education given to students, focusing primarily on core subjects, often leaving less time for music and the arts.

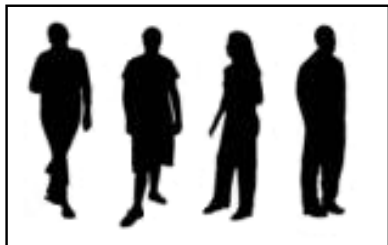
JUST AS IN ELLA'S STORY, however, music and the arts can have a powerful impact, especially in the classroom. Music and the arts provide students with not only an adequate outlet for creativity, but also a way to foster it and apply it to daily life. Various scientific studies have also linked greater cognitive ability to study of music and the arts. Higher marks of mental efficiency and a better ability to perform complex tasks have been found in those with musical and artistic training.

MUSIC AND THE ARTS in education also inform students in ways that the core

subjects simply cannot do. For example, to study African American history of the 20th century is one thing, reading in text books and looking at pictures—but listening to a sampling of jazz as it evolves over the decades gives an entirely different impression of the culture and history at play. Suddenly the history has a story and resonance that cannot be found in the words on any page. In this way, music and the arts serve as another way into the core subjects, a way to acquire a deeper appreciation and understanding of what's being studied.

OVER THE COURSE of history, and even today, music and the arts are often considered “higher pursuits” of culture—things that often mark how advanced a given society is. When we look at the Italian Renaissance, for example, we talk about a great society in which thinkers and artists like Michelangelo thrived. To be called a “Renaissance Man” is a great compliment, as it means you are highly skilled in many areas. The art goes hand in hand with innovation and intelligence as opposed to being entirely severed from it.

NOW THAT the NCLB is up for renewal, various coalitions of artists and musicians are banding together in the hopes to convince Congress of the necessity of music and the arts in school. Many believe if we are to broaden our perspective, continue forward with innovation and intelligence, and touch the lives of those around us, then we must continue to push for music and the arts in school.



► WHAT DO YOU THINK? Do you participate in the arts? Do you think something can be gained by this course of study?



SWDYT?

"We're filming tonight's performance. I don't want it to be two hours of 'and then I sing and then I sing.' Just give us some personal tidbits that we can edit around. Sinatra does it, Billie Holiday did it."

- Norman seems to be trying to fit Ella into the mold of other popular songbirds of the day. Why do you think she is resistant to his request? Why does he insist she listen to him? Would you be willing to talk about your personal life while on stage in front of hundreds of people?

"Now the first thing you have to know about a solo career is that it comes with a lotta people. There's the manager, then the agent, then the lawyer and the publicist, oh! And the accountant, the maid, secretary, wardrobe mistress, make-up and hair girls, cook, driver, Sunday driver...And does this go to a girl's head? Every time."

- Ella's new life starts taking over after she gets a little popularity. How do you think you would handle this kind of change in your life? Have you ever experienced a major, life-changing event? What did you do?

"Frances had got married, to a man who wanted her and no one else. He didn't even care that she couldn't sing or produce a big paycheck. Fancy that. I sang at their wedding."

- Ella is surprised when her sister marries a man who loves her. What events in her past colored her view of men? Do you think she views all men like this, or just men she thinks of romantically? Does this affect her business relationships? How might she overcome this bias?

"This brings up the sensitive subject of my waistline. I am not pleased with my waistline, but I cannot get it to get up and go. They used to call me 'The Little Girl with the Big Voice.' Then you go on the road, eatin' cheeseburgers and malteds, next thing you're 'The Big Girl with the Even Bigger Voice.' Frances'd say it just made more of me to love."

- Ella's sister is supportive of her weight, but the public and her management team are certainly not. Are you surprised that this was a struggle for her so many years ago? Do you see similarities to today's weight-obsessed culture? How do you think this affects the person on stage? How does it affect the people watching?

"I was in Sweden for Ray Junior's third birthday and I called home, and when he answered the phone I sang 'Happy Birthday' and Ray Jr. shouted, 'Mamma it's Ella Fitzgerald!' He called his nanny 'mamma.' I was that singer who came by to visit every few months."

- Many people must make a decision about how much time to spend with their family versus how much time to devote to a career. Ella chose her career, always thinking that she would have time for family. How did this decision change her life? How did it affect her family's? What would you do in this situation?