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THE PLAY

It is 1954 and the Sleep-Tite Pajama Factory workers in Cedar Rose, Iowa are at the top of their game, churning out pajamas in a fast-paced rhythm. But when the workers' union asks for a 7½¢ raise, problems arise.

Enter **Sid Sorokin**, the dashing new supervisor, who has all the women in the factory distracted from their machines. He has his eyes set on **Babe Williams**, the leader of the **grievance committee**. Sid wants efficiency while Babe is ready to fight for that raise.

Meanwhile **Hines**, the executive time keeper is in love with his boss's secretary **Gladys Prez**, the head of the union is flirting with **Mae**. Although love is in the air, the workers could go on **strike** at any moment.

Everyone is fighting for what they believe in, both at work and in relationships. Who will win *The Pajama Game*?

grievance committee — a group formed by management and employees to address workers' complaints

strike — an organized protest, typically by employees to obtain rights from their employer

THE PAJAMA GAME

BY BOOK BY **GEORGE ABBOTT** AND **RICHARD BISSELL**
MUSIC AND LYRICS BY **RICHARD ADLER** AND **JERRY ROSS**
DIRECTED BY **ALAN PAUL** | CHOREOGRAPHY BY **PARKER ESSE**
MUSIC DIRECTION BY **JAMES CUNNINGHAM**
FICHANDLER STAGE | OCTOBER 27 – DECEMBER 24, 2017



“My future depends upon the titanic struggle for pajama survival.”

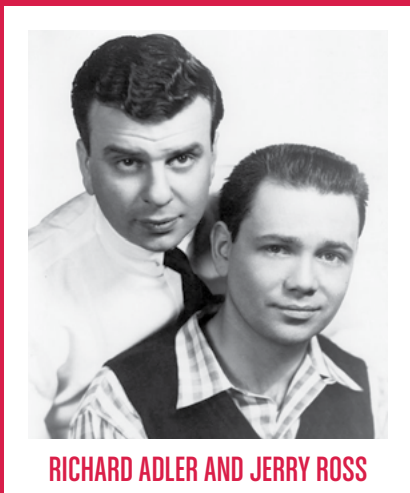
— Sid, *The Pajama Game*

The Pajama Game is generously sponsored by AT&T.

Additional support is provided by **Hubert (Hank) Schlosberg**, **George and Duffy Ftikas**, **Sheila Stampfli** and **GEICO**. Choreography is sponsored by **Virginia McGehee Friend**.

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MEET ADLER AND ROSS



RICHARD ADLER AND JERRY ROSS

Lyricist/Composer team, Richard Adler and Jerry Ross were known as Broadway's hottest young musical duo in 1955.

Born and raised in New York City, Adler and Ross had very different musical upbringings. Adler's father was a renowned Jewish concert pianist, but Adler avoided classical music growing up. Instead he studied to become a writer and later joined the U.S. Navy. Ross, born to Russian immigrant parents, was a child actor and singer in the Yiddish Theater.

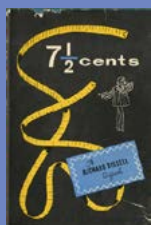
The two met in 1950 and wrote their first chart-topping song "Rags to Riches" under the guidance of the great composer Frank Loesser.

Adler and Ross had three consecutive years of Broadway successes: *John Murray Anderson's Almanac* in 1953, *The Pajama Game* in 1954 and the baseball fantasy musical *Damn Yankees* in 1955. Their partnership ended six months after that when Ross died of bronchitis.

lyricist — writes the words for songs

composer — writes the music

FROM PAGE TO STAGE



The Pajama Game is based on a 1953 novel, *7 1/2 cents*, co-written by Richard Bissel and George Abbot, an American theater producer, director and playwright. They also wrote the script for the musical.

THE STORY BEHIND "STEAM HEAT"



In an article in *The New York Times*, Adler recalls his inspiration for "Steam Heat," the opening number of Act 2 of *The Pajama Game*:

"I went to the bathroom one day, and when I got in there, I decided, 'I'm not leaving this room until I've written a song about something in the room. There were certain things you can't write about in a bathroom. Then, all of a sudden, the radiator started clanging and hissing.'"

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S NOTEBOOK

At the first rehearsal of *The Pajama Game*, Alan Paul, the director, shared his thoughts on the show.

PERSONAL CONNECTION: I have been attending Arena Stage shows, like *Guys and Dolls* from a young age. In high school I was in a production of *The Pajama Game* for which I was the dance captain, even though I did not think I could dance. Now, directing *The Pajama Game* at Arena Stage, a musical that is loved by everyone but not seen enough, it feels like an Oprah-Winfrey-full-circle moment.



Alan Paul

CENTRAL THEME: Besides being a fabulous entertainment, *The Pajama Game* is about protest. When you fight, you fight to be taken seriously; you fight because you feel undervalued and you fight because what you believe in is threatened. So it is a piece about injustice, about fighting for what you believe, and about being heard in a relationship.

ACTING STYLE: *The Pajama Game* characters have their roots in **vaudeville** and cannot be played naturalistically. Gladys is a loud-mouth hilarious drunk and Hines is a self-proclaimed professional knife-thrower. Their reality is not small, it's BOOM! It's big! So the challenge is to create truthful but larger-than-life characters.

vaudeville — a light entertainment popular in the early 1900s of individual, unrelated acts, featuring magicians, acrobats, comedians, trained animals, jugglers, singers and dancers

ARENA STAGE'S *THE PAJAMA GAME*

The original Tony Award-winning Broadway production of *The Pajama Game* opened on May 13, 1954. While honoring the cartoony-spunk of the original, *The Pajama Game* production team at Arena re-invents the musical for contemporary audiences.



ARTWORK: Original Broadway windowcard, illustrated by Peter Arno.

CHOREOGRAPHY: The original featured 1950s jazz choreography by the legendary Bob Fosse. Fosse was famous for using the sideways shuffle and jazz hands. His steps were inspired by Jack Cole, the father of theatrical jazz.

MUSIC: 26-piece orchestra.

STAGING: Proscenium theater with a hidden orchestra pit. In a traditional proscenium stage (stage in front, audience facing it) the director is creating pictures like illustrations for a storybook..



ARTWORK: Illustration by Nigel Buchanan

CHOREOGRAPHY: Arena's choreographer, Parker Esse, has been in Fosse shows on Broadway and is combining the signature jazz style of Cole and Fosse with modern musical theater dance arrangements. Popular numbers like "Steam Heat," have retained their original choreography.

MUSIC: 12-piece orchestra, including an electric guitar for "Steam Heat" reminiscent of the 1950s Harlem jazz.

STAGING: Theater-in-the-round with an orchestra pit underneath the stage. In the round, a director is creating a sculpture garden that can be viewed from all sides.

THE WORLD OF THE MUSICAL: FACTORY LIFE IN THE 1900s



U.S. Oil Worker's Strike in 1945.

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF LABOR UNIONS

During the Industrial Revolution in the mid-19th century factories grew in number and more workers were forced to work in overcrowded conditions. During this time there were no safety procedures for using machines and workers injured themselves frequently. People worked 14 to 16 hours a day for 6 days a week. Men received about \$8-\$10 a week. Women received 1/3 or 1/2 of that.

To protect their rights against unfair treatment, workers began organizing into labor unions.

Labor unions are organizations of workers dedicated to protecting members' interests and improving wages, hours and working conditions for all. Unions work like a democracy. They hold elections for officers who make decisions on behalf of members, giving workers more power over their jobs.

During World War II, a divide emerged between the union officers and the factory workers. Production of oil, automobiles and military goods had increased to meet the needs of the war, but the wages of the workers had not. Union officers also began disciplining the workers and firing them for not keeping up production. As a result, workers organized strikes independent of their unions. Between 1945 and 1946 5 million American workers were involved in strikes.

The Taft-Hartley Act was passed in 1947 by President Truman. It restricted the power and activities of the unions and allowed the federal government to intervene in strikes.

BY THE NUMBERS

The Pajama Game is a massive production. Here is an idea of the scale:

CAST: 23 performers

ALSO IN THE REHEARSAL HALL: 25 designers, assistants, interns, the director, etc.

BACKSTAGE: 20 people in props, wardrobe, stage management, etc.

WIGS: 22

COSTUMES: 6-9 per actor with at least three articles in each outfit

SETS OF PJ'S: 22

PAIRS OF SHOES: 95

LIGHTS: 375

DID YOU KNOW?



Photo provided as a courtesy of The Pajama Factory, Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

In 1951 The Weldon Pajama Company in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, was the largest pajama factory in the world. It was used as a model for *The Pajama Game* on Broadway.

Today there are around 14 million American workers that belong to unions.

WOMEN WHO MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

During the 19th and early 20th centuries large numbers of women were at work in the garment industry. Their pay was often below minimum wage, their hours too long, the production fast and the working conditions terrible. Many women leaders fought tirelessly for the rights of workers in the garment and textile industry.



AGNES NESTOR

Nestor played a leading role in a successful strike of female glove workers in 1898 and later became the head of the International Glove Workers Union.



LUCY PARSONS

In 1900 Parsons formed the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.



MOTHER JONES

On July 7, 1903, Mary Harris "Mother" Jones began the 3-week "March of the Mill Children" from Philadelphia to New York to publicize

the harsh conditions of child labor and to demand a reduced 55-hour workweek.



PAULINE NEWMAN

Newman, a Russian immigrant, found that many of her co-workers in Triangle Shirtwaist Factory could not read. In the early

1900s she organized an evening study group where they also discussed labor issues and politics.



CLARA LEMLICH

Lemlich led several strikes of shirtwaist makers and challenged the mostly male leadership of the union to organize women

garment workers. In 1909 she led the New York shirtwaist strike, the largest strike of women at that point in U.S. history.



ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN

In 1912 Flynn was the leading lady of the Great Textile Strike. This was a

walkout involving 400,000 textile workers protesting the system of speeding up production by increasing the number of looms assigned to each textile factory.



What are some elements of a successful protest? Can you think of examples of recent protests that have had a positive impact on your community?

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THEATER AUDIENCES

As an audience member at the theater, YOU are part of the show! Just as you see and hear the actors onstage, they can see and hear you in the audience. To help the performers do their best, please remember the following:

- Arrive at least 15 minutes early.
- Visit the restroom before the show starts.
- Sit in the exact seat on your ticket. Ask the usher for help finding it.
- Before the show begins, turn off your phone, watch alarms and any other electronic devices. If anything rings by accident, turn it off immediately.
- Do not use your phone for texts, calls, games or pictures.
- You cannot take pictures or make recordings in the theater, even before or after the play.
- There is no food allowed in the theater.
- Do not talk, whisper, sing or hum, unless invited by the performers to do so.
- Keep your feet on the floor and off the seat in front of you.
- Avoid getting up during a show. If you must leave, wait for a scene change and exit quietly and quickly.
- Respond to the show; you can laugh, cry and gasp. However, don't repeat lines out loud or talk to the performers on stage.
- Be sure to applaud at the end!

RESOURCES

"Economic Growth and the Early Industrial Revolution" UShistory.org <https://goo.gl/2RhDPD>

"How well can you live on Minimum Wage" *Business Insider* <https://goo.gl/hvucNV>

"Richard Adler and Jerry Ross" PBS goo.gl/nsQmcp

"Richard Adler, 'Pajama Game' collaborator, dies at 90" *The New York Times* <https://goo.gl/TjNuzU>

"The World War 2 and post-war strike wave" Lib.com <https://goo.gl/XPfqVJ>

"Women in Labor History" Zinn Education Project <https://goo.gl/TRJTf>

THE VALUE OF A DOLLAR

A dollar in 1954 would be worth \$9.13 in 2017.

	1950s	2017
Minimum Wage	\$0.75/hr	\$7.25/hr (federal)
A Gallon of Gas	\$0.27	\$2.52
Average Movie Ticket	\$0.48	\$8.06
Median Gross Rent	\$42	\$960



THREE BIG QUESTIONS

1

How do you stand up for what you believe in?

2

What happens when you love someone who has different beliefs?

3

Why are workers' rights important?



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Visit www.arenastage.org for more information on Arena Stage productions and educational opportunities.