



Damn **YANKEES**

ON THE **FICHANDLER STAGE**
SEPTEMBER 9 - NOVEMBER 9, 2025

*"Mister, you can be a hero.
You can open any door,
there's nothin' to it,
but to do it,
you've gotta have heart!"*

— Van Buren, *Damn Yankees*

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY **RICHARD ADLER** AND **JERRY ROSS**
BOOK BY **GEORGE ABBOTT** AND **DOUGLASS WALLOP**
BASED ON THE NOVEL *THE YEAR THE YANKEES LOST THE PENNANT* BY DOUGLASS WALLOP
NEW ADAPTATION BY **WILL POWER** AND **DOUG WRIGHT**
ADDITIONAL LYRICS BY **LYNN AHRENS**
DIRECTED AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY **SERGIO TRUJILLO**

THIS PRODUCTION IS PRESENTED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH
HALEY SWINDAL AND JULIE BOARDMAN

THE PLAY

Have you ever wanted something so much you would do anything to get it?

It's the year 2000 in Baltimore, Maryland. **Joe Boyd** is a middle-aged Orioles fan who, frustrated by seeing them lose again and again, decides he would sell his soul to see his team win the pennant. That night the Devil - **Applegate** - visits Joe and offers him the deal of a lifetime. He will turn Joe into a young baseball star who will lead the Orioles to victory if Joe leaves his wife and gives his soul to Applegate.

Joe agrees to the plan but insists on an escape clause.

The next thing he knows, he has transformed into **Joe Hardy**, the young, handsome, long-ball hitter. Despite his immediate success and fame, Joe misses his wife, **Meg**. Nervous that Joe will use his escape clause to regain his soul, Applegate throws different obstacles in his way, including the beautiful **Lola**.

What follows is a spirited battle between good and evil and a season the Orioles will never forget.



Bryonha Marie and Quentin Earl Darrington in *Damn Yankees*. Photo by Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman.



Left Image Source: Wikimedia Commons
Middle & Right Image Source: masterworksbroadway.com

MEET THE ORIGINAL CREATORS GEORGE ABBOTT, RICHARD ADLER, AND JERRY ROSS

The original *Damn Yankees* was co-written and directed by Broadway legend George Abbott in 1955. Abbott's career as a director, actor, producer, and playwright spanned more than 80 years. He was well-known for being a "show doctor," stepping in to improve plays before their Broadway premieres.

The songs were written by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross. While most songwriting teams divide the roles of composer and lyricist, Adler and Ross are a unique team with both credited for both music and the lyrics. Unfortunately, their collaboration was cut short when Ross died of lung cancer at age 29.

As a trio, Abbott, Adler, and Ross are credited with two hit musicals: *Damn Yankees* and *The Pajama Game*, which graced Arena's Fichandler Stage in 2017.

JOE, A MODERN FAUST

Damn Yankees is a retelling of the Faust legend. Loosely based on the life of Johann Georg Faust, the legend tells the story of a German necromancer (someone who practices dark magic) who sells his soul to the Devil in exchange for knowledge and power. In one of the most influential versions—the 2-part dramatic work *Faust*—the German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe depicts Faust as a seeker. He also adds an element of love as Faust sells his soul for knowledge and power to win the love of a woman.

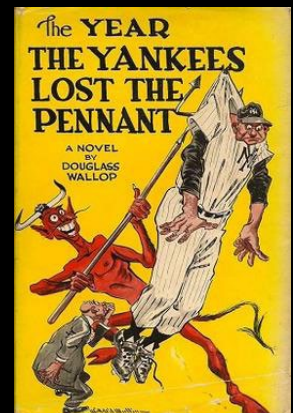
The Faust legend has been interpreted in nearly every art form, including opera, classical music, fiction, movies, and even comic books. "Felix Faust" was a magical villain for DC Comics. The legend continues to resonate with audiences today in its themes of temptation and moral dilemmas. What other stories or instances can you think of when someone makes a bargain to exchange something essential for something they deeply desire? What is the outcome?



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DID YOU KNOW?

Damn Yankees is based on the book *The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant* by Douglass Wallop.



Source: Abe Books

A MUSICAL “*REVISAL*”

How do you preserve the legacy of a classic show and bring it into a new millennium for modern audiences?

Many musicals remain exactly as they were when first performed. However, the team of *Damn Yankees* believed the show needed to be reimaged. They approached playwright Doug Wright, who immediately asked Will Power to collaborate. Known for writing *Fetch Clay, Make Man*, a play about boxing legend Muhammad Ali, Power is experienced in bringing sports to the stage. After five years of drafts, Wright and Power created what they’re calling a “revisal” of the 1955 musical, which features songs from the original as well as carefully reworked lyrics by lyricist Lynn Ahrens.

Now set in 2000, the rivalry is between the Baltimore Orioles (previously the Washington Senators) and the New York Yankees. The show depicts the money and scandals that are part of modern baseball. The female roles have also been updated. Meg is no longer a passive housewife but a working woman, who knows her worth. Lola is now portrayed as a Latina rather than a white woman in Latin dress. While making these significant changes and more, the new collaborators remained committed to maintaining the spirit of the original.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Lola is one of Applegate’s key agents. The production also includes characters representing the Seven Deadly Sins. In Roman-Catholic theology, the Seven Deadly Sins are pride, wrath, gluttony, envy, sloth, greed, and lust.



Ana Villafañe, Rob McClure, and the ensemble of *Damn Yankees*. Photo by Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman.

DEEPENING THE BACKSTORY: THE NEGRO LEAGUES

One of the key changes to *Damn Yankees* is writing the character Joe as a Black man. Joe’s desire to win the pennant deepens with his new backstory. His father was a star player in the Negro Leagues who was unable to break through the color line. The Negro Leagues were professional African-American baseball leagues, which emerged as the “color line” or racial segregation excluded African Americans from playing on Major League teams and some minor league teams. If he could win the pennant for the Orioles, Joe would not only win for himself but for his father, too.

Jackie Robinson notably broke the color line when he signed a contract with the Brooklyn Dodgers and became the first African American to play Major League Baseball, opening the way for the end of racial segregation in baseball. The DC area was home to multiple Negro Leagues teams including the Washington Homestead Grays, the Washington Elite Giants (who moved to Baltimore), and the Washington Black Senators.



Source: Heritage Auctions (picryl.com, public domain)

Dive into the rich history of the Negro Leagues via the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum:



Listen to oral histories of the Negro Leagues in Baltimore:



BASEBALL IN THE ROUND

The Fichandler Stage is an arena theater, or a theater in the round, with the audience seated on all sides of the stage. In this type of space, actors do not follow traditional stage directions such as left and right. Instead, the director tells them where to move based on navigational instructions such as north, south, east, and west. When seeing a show in an arena, each audience member has a different view and can see the reactions of other audience members, adding to the feeling of a shared experience.

This production is special because Sergio Trujillo is both the director and choreographer, and dance becomes a key part of the musical’s storytelling. The rectangular stage also resembles a baseball field. In order to more realistically portray the game through movement, baseball consultant Tony Mercado, Jr was brought in to work with the actors.





FROM THE DIRECTOR- CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTEBOOK

"I want audiences to be able to see themselves in the material, but also for them to be able to understand the power that theater and musicals have in bringing laughter, in bringing joy."

– **SERGIO TRUJILLO**

THREE BIG QUESTIONS

1

What does it mean to have heart?

2

What do you do when faced with temptation?

3

Why do sports make for compelling art?

RESOURCES

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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 early.
- Visit the restroom before the show starts.
- Sit in the seat indicated on your ticket.
- Ushers are there to help you!
- 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, pictures, or recording.
- Respond to the show! You can laugh, cry, and gasp. However, don't distract the performers onstage.
- There is no food allowed in the theater.
- Intermission is the best time to discuss the show and visit the restroom.
- If you must leave during the show, wait for a scene change and exit quietly and quickly.
- Be sure to applaud at the end! During a musical, audiences sometimes clap after a song or dance.
- If you love the show or a performer, you can give a standing ovation. The actors bow to thank you.

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

Support for *Damn Yankees* is provided by **Deborah Bowles** and **Derik Burgess**.

(Front Cover) Quentin Earl Darrington and Jordan Donica in *Damn Yankees*.
Photo by Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman.

(Back Cover) Jordan Donica in *Damn Yankees*. Photo by Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman.