NEW YORK CITY CENTER
EDUCATION

HIGH BUTTON SHOES

INSIDE ENCORES!

Your personal guide to the performance.

MAY 2019
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CONTEXT
MEET THE CREATIVE TEAM

Lyrics • Book • Music

SAMMY CAHN (1913–1993) was an American composer and lyricist. His best-known songs were recorded by Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Doris Day, and many others. Among his most popular numbers is “Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!” co-written with Jule Styne in 1945. He played the piano and violin. Over the course of his career, he was nominated for 31 Academy Awards, five Golden Globe Awards, and an Emmy Award. He also received a Grammy Award nomination, with Van Heusen, for Best Original Score Written for a Motion Picture or Television Show for the film Robin and the 7 Hoods. He has won the Christopher Award, the Outer Critics Circle Award, and the Theatre World Award (for Best Newcomer to Broadway). In 1988, the Sammy Film Music Awards (the “Sammys”), an annual award for movie songs and scores, were started in his honor.

STEPHEN LONGSTREET (1907-2002) was an artist, screenwriter, and author of more than 100 works of fiction and non-fiction. An artist by training, Longstreet started writing during the Great Depression in order to make a living, creating radio scripts, film reviews, and detective novels. During the 1940s, under contract at Warner Bros., Longstreet penned The Jolson Story and Stallion Road. His novel The Sisters Liked Them Handsome served as the basis for the Broadway musical High Button Shoes. A number of Longstreet’s works deal with the emergence of jazz music, and Longstreet’s depictions of jazz-age figures such as Count Basie, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, and Duke Ellington have been exhibited in museums and galleries throughout the world.

JULE STYNE (1905-1994) made Broadway sing for 50 years with shows including High Button Shoes; Gentlemen Prefer Blondes; Hazel Flag; Gypsy; Peter Pan; Bells are Ringing; Do Re Mi; Subways are for Sleeping; Funny Girl;Fade Out-Fade In; Hallelujah, Baby!; The Red Shoes; and Darling of the Day. His film work includes Anchors Aweigh and the Oscar-winning title song of “Three Coins in the Fountain.” His songbook includes, “I Don’t Want to Walk With-out You,” “Just in Time,” “People,” “Guess I’ll Hang My Tears Out To Dry,” “Everything’s Coming Up Roses,” “I Fall in Love Too Easily,” “Make Someone Happy,” “Small World,” and “Time After Time.” Mr. Styne was a 1990 Kennedy Center Honoree and was the recipient of an Oscar, a Tony, two Grammys, an Emmy, a Donaldson Award, and a Drama Critics Award. The following lyricists collaborated with Mr. Styne: Frank Loesser, Sammy Cahn, Leo Robin, E.Y. Harburg, Stephen Sondheim, Susan Birkenhead, Betty Comden and Adolph Green, and Bob Merrill. Mr. Styne served on the Dramatists Guild Council and was a member of the ASCAP for more than 50 years.

Director

JOHN RANDO Broadway: Gettin’ the Band Back Together, On the Town (Tony Nomination), Penn & Teller on Broadway, A Christmas Story, The Wedding Singer, Urinetown (Tony and Outer Critics Circle Awards), A Thousand Clowns and Neil Simon’s The Dinner Party. Off-Broadway: Jerry Springer – The Opera (New Group), Lives of the Saints (Primary Stages), The Heir Apparent (SDCF Calloway Award – Classic Stage Company), All in the Timing (Primary Stages – Obie Award), Carousel (New York Philharmonic) and The Toxic Avenger, among many others. Regional: The Sting and The Honeymooners (Paper Mill Playhouse), The Royal Family of Broadway, On the Town, and Pirates of Penzance (Barrington Stage). City Center Encores!: The New Yorkers, Annie Get Your Gun, Little Me, It’s a Bird... It’s a Plane... It’s Superman, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, Face The Music, Damn Yankees, and others.
KEVIN CHAMBERLIN (Mr. Pontdu) has been nominated for three Tony® Awards, originating the roles of Horton in Seussical, Charlie in Dirty Blonde and Uncle Fester in The Addams Family. Other Broadway credits include Wicked, Disaster, The Ritz, Chicago, Triumph of Love, My Favorite Year and Abe Lincoln in Illinois. LA theater credits include the Hollywood Bowl productions of Hair, West Side Story, and Spamalot. Film: Die Hard with A Vengeance, Road to Perdition, Taking Woodstock, In and Out, Christmas with the Kranks TV: Modern Family, Heroes, Frasier, Grace and Frankie, and as Bertram on Disney Channel’s long-running hit show, Jessie.

CARLA DUREN (Fran) Broadway: Hairspray, 110 in the Shade. Off-Broadway: Chick Flick, Fortress of Solitude (The Public), Brooklynnite (Vineyard). Regional Theater: Marginal Loss (Humana Festival); The Bluest Eye (Guthrie); It Shoulda Been You (George Street Playhouse); Ruined (Berkeley Rep, LaJolla & Huntington); Amélie (Berkeley Rep); Parable of the Sower, Robert Wilson’s Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter. Film: Knucklehead, Maid in Manhattan, Dave Chappelle’s Block Party. TV: Bull, Gotham, The Jim Gaffigan Show, Mysteries of Laura. Album: BlackFolkRockStar

CHESTER GREGORY (Papa Longstreet) This versatile actor is excited to make his Encores! debut. Broadway credits include: Motown the Musical (Berry Gordy), Hairspray (Seaweed), Sister Act (Eddie), Tarzan (Terk), and Cry-Baby (Dupree). National tour: Motown (Berry Gordy), Sister Act (Eddie), Dreamgirls (James “Thunder” Early), and the title role in The Jackie Wilson Story. Regional: August Wilson’s Fences and Two Trains Running. Television: Crazy Ex-Girlfriend, The Daily Show, How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying, Angels In America, The Temperamentals (Lortel, Drama Desk, Theatre World Awards). Film: He’s Way More Famous Than You, Beverly Hills Chihuahua, The Hyperglot. TV: The Good Fight, Younger, Modern Family, The Good Wife, Ugly Betty. Training: Juilliard.


BETSY WOLFE (Sara Longstreet/Mama) starred in the Tony nominated musical Waitress. Prior to that, she played Cordelia, in the Broadway revival of Falsettos, which was filmed and currently plays on PBS. She is perhaps best known for her critically acclaimed performance as Cathy in the Off-Broadway revival of The Last Five Years. She made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Ida in Die Fledermaus, and reprised the role years later. Broadway credits include Bullets Over Broadway, The Mystery of Edwin Drood, Everyday Rapture, and 110 in the Shade. Other credits include the City Center Encores! production of Merrily We Roll Along, the La Jolla Playhouse world premiere production Up Here, ACT’s world premiere of Tales of the City. She has been a guest artist for over 50 symphony, pops, and philharmonic orchestras across the U.S. and internationally, including the New York Philharmonic and Chicago Symphony Orchestra. She has collaborated with The New York Pops and played to sold-out crowds at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center. She holds a BFA in musical theatre from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. She co-founded a training program for aspiring actors and educators who wish to continue their theatre education and more info can be found on www.broadwayevolved.com. In her free time she has been touring her one woman show All Bets Are Off which has now played to sold out crowds in San Francisco, New York, and Las Vegas. www.betsywolfe.com
AN INTERVIEW WITH ALLEN MOYER

High Button Shoes marks Scenic Designer Allen Moyer’s 9th Encores! production. Sarah Kutnowsky, Education Manager, spoke with Mr. Moyer about the uniqueness of Encores! and preparing for this production.
Sarah Kutnowsky: How did you come to be a scenic designer?

Allen Moyer: I started out years ago when I went to undergraduate school for biochemistry. I then changed majors after my first year and started studying dramatic literature. I decided that I wanted to get into theater somehow. I had done some acting in high school and early in college, but I knew I didn’t want to do that. I decided to be a designer, because I had always drawn, painted, and made things.

SK: What is your process when designing a set? What kind of research do you do to prepare?

AM: The Encores! process is unusual, in that it’s so fast. Also, you’re not really starting from scratch, so to speak. Certainly, when I sit down with directors for an Encores! show we have a lot of discussions about what the piece is about and what we want to feature in it, but sometimes the design is already determined for you by the piece, because it is so explicit. It’s different than if you’re doing Hamlet, where you can very easily explore different time periods or different locations. But in High Button Shoes, they talk about how it’s New Brunswick, New Jersey and how it’s near Rutgers. They also talk about the brand-new car at that time, The Model “T”, so you know what time period you’re in and where you are.

When you’re doing an Encores! show there’s also the other element of the history of when the piece was done and how it was done. High Button Shoes is very much tied to the original production, partly because of the commitment and obligation to the original choreography. There are certain things you must do. In High Button Shoes, we know that there’s a “Bathing Beauty Ballet” and the number “On a Sunday by the Sea”. There are certain things that the staging calls for, like seven practical cabana doors. It all becomes about giving the show the things that it requires.

SK: What is unique about designing a set for an Encores! production?

AM: When people ask me what it’s like designing for Encores!, I say that it’s almost like a totally idealized summer stock situation. Everyone working on the piece is at the top of their form. You’ve got stage hands that have been doing this for 35-40 years and are top-notch at what they do. They bring a certain level of knowledge, skill, and craftsmanship to it.

Also, Encores! is so much about the practicality. There’s the practicality of the schedule, the orchestra on stage, and everything being built onstage or in the building’s basement. It’s all done by a small crew and in limited time. I believe it’s a process that takes a seasoned designer to be able to do successfully. It’s so much about problem solving. It’s really quite a challenge. I do enjoy the sort of puzzle of it all.

SK: What drew you to design High Button Shoes?

AM: I’ve always been interested in High Button Shoes because I studied with the set designer Oliver Smith, who did the very famous designs for the original production. I’ll always remember early on at NYU, seeing his beautiful, original sketch for the seaside numbers. I’ve always loved the sketches and have always been interested in the show just because I loved Oliver’s designs. In a way my interest in this is a little bit personal in that I feel like I’m honoring Oliver and am remembering him a lot these days. That part is kind of unexpected and nice.

SK: You’ve designed sets for countless productions throughout your career. Are there any productions that stand out as highlights?

AM: I’ve held a lot of them dear to my heart. In terms of Encores! productions, I was mad for The New Yorkers and I’m so happy that there will be a cast recording. I loved every minute of watching it. Grand Hotel was also remarkable.
The final Encores! installment in City Center’s 75th Anniversary Season celebrates City Center’s historic relationship with choreographer Jerome Robbins—as well as the Jerome Robbins Centennial—and pays homage to the brilliance of hit-making duo Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn.
It was surprising to learn that the legendary composer Jule Styne (1905-1994) was already 41 years old when his first Broadway show opened in October 1947: the rollicking musical comedy *High Button Shoes*. For comparison, Richard Rodgers and Cole Porter were in their early 20s when they wrote their first Broadway musicals and Stephen Sondheim was 27 when he provided lyrics to *West Side Story*.

So what took so long? Styne was born in London but grew up in Chicago in the 1920’s, the real-life “All That Jazz” world depicted in the musical *Chicago*. A classical piano prodigy, he began playing jazz with dance bands and in burlesque halls, experiences that would come in handy years later when writing shows like *Gypsy*. At age 29 he moved briefly to New York but was then lured to Hollywood where he worked as a vocal coach at 20th Century Fox, working with Shirley Temple and many other performers.

It was in Hollywood that he began writing songs of his own, at first out of necessity. In those early days of the exploding film industry, vast amounts of musical material were needed, and needed quickly. Early on he was paired with Frank Loesser and together they wrote a few hits including “I Don’t Want To Walk Without You, Baby.” Loesser taught Styne the fine art of marrying music with lyrics, advising him, “Don’t ever write with smart-ass rhymers. Write with people who have something to say with their words.”

Sammy Cahn (1913-1993) was just such a writer. Born and raised in New York, Cahn arrived in Hollywood in 1940 with his first writing partner Saul Chaplin. The producer Al Cohn brought Styne and Cahn together and in 1943 they signed a deal with Columbia Pictures. This was the start of a hugely successful partnership; they turned out hit after hit in the 1940s. The first song they wrote together was “I’ve Heard That Song Before” and after that they wrote many popular standards including “It’s Been A Long, Long Time”, “It’s Magic”, “Let It Snow”, “Time After Time”, and “The Things We Did Last Summer.”

Both men had colorful show business personalities. The energetic Styne had been described as a “mad, buzzing bee” and was a compulsive gambler. For many years, Cahn enjoyed the swinging Hollywood bachelor’s life and both Styne and Cahn became part of Frank Sinatra’s circle of friends and collaborators.

*High Button Shoes* was not the team’s first attempt at a Broadway musical. In 1944 they teamed up with director Busby Berkeley (decidedly out of his element) on a show called *Glad To See You*. The plot involved a USO show touring the South Pacific and it starred the nightclub performer Eddie Davis. It had two disastrous out of town engagements in Philadelphia and Boston and was never seen in New York. Things were so dire that in Philadelphia when Davis got sick, Sammy Cahn himself went on in the lead role for several performances. Styne found the whole experience humiliating.
Both men returned to Hollywood, where Styne was encouraged not to give up on the theater by none other than the old master Jerome Kern. So Styne found a new property to adapt: the 1947 semi-autobiographical novel The Sisters Liked Them Handsome by Stephen Longstreet. Cahn agreed to give the stage another try and Longstreet was enlisted to write the adaptation himself.

So Styne and Cahn, two Hollywood giants but Broadway novices, were joined by two theater legends, choreographer Jerome Robbins and the director George Abbott (who also took over bookwriting duties). Styne recalled being rather intimidated by both Robbins and Abbott. Robbins, then just 28 years old, conceived the entire Mack Sennett-style ballet, “Sunday By The Sea.” To help celebrate the Jerome Robbins Centennial, the Encores! production has recreated Robbins’ ingenious choreography for that piece, as well as for the duet “I Still Get Jealous.”

The cast was led by comic Phil Silvers, who was a life-long friend of Sammy Cahn. Silvers played the role of Harrison Floy, a conman who tries to fleece an innocent family in New Jersey. His presence in the show insured a high level of madcap comedy. For the role of Mama, Nanette Fabray was brought in to replace the originally announced Vivienne Segal. It was a star-making turn for Fabray, who sang one of the biggest hits from the show, “Papa Won’t You Dance With Me.” The reviews were strong and the show ran for 727 performances—a significant hit for the Broadway first-timers.

By 1947-1949; Courtesy of Photofest

So Styne finally made it to Broadway by way of London, Chicago, New York (the first time), and Hollywood. And once he got there, he never left. Upon the opening of High Button Shoes, Robbins commented, “Jule’s been bitten, God help him.” He had a towering career on the Great White Way, writing at least 20 more Broadway shows. Styne’s second show on Broadway was Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, another major hit and one which Encores! presented in 2012.

Cahn, on the other hand would not have further success on Broadway. He wrote lyrics for three more Broadway shows: Skyscraper, Walking Happy and he reunited with Styne for the 1970 show Look to the Lilies, which ran for just 25 performances.

By the 1950s Styne and Cahn had mostly gone their separate ways. Cahn started writing with Jimmy van Heusen and continued his major Hollywood career as well as his ongoing collaboration with Sinatra. He was nominated for 31 Academy Awards and one of his four Oscar wins was with Styne for the 1954 song “Three Coins in the Fountain.”
The score for *High Button Shoes* may not have any major enduring hit songs, but it has all the hallmarks of what made Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn two of the most successful songwriters of the 20th Century: charm, wit, great melodies, honest sentiment, and showbiz flair. It was an impressive Broadway debut indeed.

*Rob Berman is in his twelfth season as music director of Encores!*

Check out [NYCityCenter.org/Blog](http://NYCityCenter.org/Blog) for an exclusive interview with original *High Button Shoes* cast member, Helen Gallagher.
RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES
CITY CENTER MAD LIBS

My Premiere at New York City Center

Today was the premiere of my _________ show at New York City Center! It starred _______ ________________ and the ____________, __________________ ____________________. The show began with the main character dancing a _____________ solo about losing his/her ___________. Then a chorus of _______________ appeared and sang a _____________ song, where it was discovered that the main character must ____________ his/her _______________ to find the _____________. In the second act, the main character decides to face his/her fears in search of his/her ____________. Eventually it is discovered that one of the animals in the chorus ____________ the _____________, leading to a climatic dance battle inspired by the musical, _________________. At the curtain call, the audience applauded ________! One critic commented, “This show is better than ____________ with ____________.”
**BEFORE THE SHOW**

*High Button Shoes* follows con man Harrison Floy, whose schemes have him on the run. In this activity, students will explore how to creatively market a contemporary product with a hidden flaw.

**OBJECTIVES**
- Students will analyze the lyrics from “There’s Nothing like a Model T” and make inferences about *High Button Shoes*
- Students will collaborate as a group to reimagine *High Button Shoes* lyrics for a modern product

**BLUEPRINT BENCHMARKS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THEATER, GRADES PREK-12**

Students will be able to respond imaginatively and expressively to imaginary and scripted circumstances in improvisations, scene work, and performances.

**WARM UP** Ask students to think of two truths and one lie about themselves. Ask for a few volunteers to share those statements with the class. The class should then guess which statements are true and which is the lie. Then, reflect as a group. How did they “sell” their lie? What made it convincing? How easy/hard was it to spot the lies?

**REVIEW** Share the lyrics of “There’s Nothing Like a Model T” (below) with the students. Ask students to pay close attention to what Floy is saying to sell the car. Does it sound like there could be something wrong with the car? What are some of the strategies he uses to sell the car?

**THERE’S NOTHING LIKE A MODEL “T”**
GET IN ONE AND YOU’LL AGREE
THERE’S NOT A CAR THAT CAN TOUCH IT FOR COMFORT AND STYLE
GO FOR A RIDE AND YOU’LL FIND IT BEATS WALKING A MILE
CLINK! CLANK!
IF IT WON’T CRANK, GIVE IT A SPANK
THERE’S NOTHING LIKE A MODEL “T”

**REWRITE** Break the students into small groups. Explain that in 1908, when the Model T was first introduced, it was revolutionary. Due to the advancements in factory assembly lines, Ford was able to offer the first car that was affordable for the average family. Because of this, it was incredibly popular. Ask groups to come up with a similarly popular contemporary product that they’d like to sell off. This product was previously owned, so it’s not in perfect condition. Announce that the groups will now create their own versions of “There’s Nothing Like a Model T”, marketing their own “used” products while hiding their imperfections. Encourage students to look at the strategies that Floy uses as he deceives his audience in “Model T.” In their groups, students should rewrite a verse of “Model T” to promote their chosen product using the text below. Share out groups’ revised lyrics.

**THERE’S NOTHING LIKE __________________________________________________, __________________________________________________ AND YOU’LL AGREE
THERE’S NOT A __________________________________________________ THAT CAN TOUCH IT FOR __________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________ AND YOU’LL FIND IT BEATS __________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________!
________________________________________________________________________!
IF IT WON’T __________________________________________________ GIVE IT A __________________________________________________
THERE’S NOTHING LIKE __________________________________________________

**REFLECT** Ask students to consider and respond to the following questions:
- How did you choose to market your product despite its flaw?
- What kind of language did you use to make it sound appealing?
AFTER THE SHOW

In this activity, students will utilize lyric and dance elements as they attempt to create a misleading advertisement for a product.

OBJECTIVES

• Students will create advertisements that deceptively market flawed products

BLUEPRINT BENCHMARKS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THEATER, GRADES PREK-12

Students will be able to contribute positively and responsibly to the ensemble through collaboration, sustained focus and concentration.

MARKETING MEETING Share that marketers sometimes try to sell ineffective products but advertise them in a way that makes them sound like a necessity. However, they have to be careful not to commit “false advertising” or “fraud.” The Fyre Festival, a recent music festival, is a good example of false advertising. Ask students to quickly share their observations about video advertisements they see online. What makes an ad convincing to them? Then ask students to brainstorm some ways that one could successfully advertise a flawed product. How could one market a flawed product without outright lying about the flaw? Give an example of the Model T that won’t start from HBS. Jot down observations on the whiteboard or large poster sheets.

ADVERTISE Share with students that their groups will be creating 30-second “video advertisements” marketing specific products. Groups will choose their product out of a hat. The list can include:

- A basketball without enough air to bounce
- A microphone that always squeaks
- A spray paint can that will explode when used
- Air Jordans with no soles
- An old cell phone without internet
- Unfashionable clothing
- Undercooked chicken

Encourage students to get creative with their advertisements and incorporate elements of spoken word, music, and dance. Visit the groups and provide support. Share the advertisements when they are ready.

REFLECT Present students with the following questions after the advertisements have been shared:

• How were the products flawed? Was the con easy to spot?
• How did the groups attempt to advertise the product without bringing attention to its flaws?
• Are there any real-life “Floys” in the world today? What kind of characteristics do they share with the character?
Alma Mater:
The anthem of a school, college, or university
*The Rutgers football team sings the school's Alma Mater at Floy’s request.*

Anecdote:
A short amusing story about an incident or person
*Pontdue begins to tell an anecdote about playing poker with J.P Morgan until he is interrupted by Floy.*

Chassis:
The structural frame of a motor vehicle
*Floy mentions that “no other chassis is half as classy” when describing the Model T.*

Fisticuffs:
To fight with the fists
*After getting into a fight with Oggle, Floy says that he does not condone the “art of fisticuffs”.*

Klaxon:
An electric horn or a similar loud warning device
*Floy says that the Model T has a klaxon that makes a beautiful sound.*

Model T:
An automobile produced by Ford Motor Company from October 1, 1908, to May 26, 1927.
It is generally regarded as the first affordable automobile
*Floy tells the people of New Brunswick that the Model T is a “car that’s fast become a real sensation.”*

Pension:
Money that is saved for retirement
*Floy tells the Police that arresting him will cost them their pensions.*
UP NEXT FOR
CITY CENTER EDUCATION!

FRONT & CENTER WITH LEA SALONGA
Monday, May 6th, 2019 6:30pm
Lea Salonga’s (Miss Saigon, Once on this Island) master class, Finding a Way In, helps students get to the heart of their performance. Focusing on song interpretation, Ms. Salonga’s approach zeros in on the acting behind the singing and the story behind the lyric.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPRENTICESHIPS
Applications open in May
New York City Center is committed to training the next generation of creative, passionate arts professionals and to building pathways to careers in the arts for candidates from underrepresented communities. Each year, we offer an Administrative Apprenticeship Program for early-career individuals to apprentice in our Education, Development, Marketing, and Programming departments. Through this program, apprentices will participate in a paid training, work directly with a mentor in their area of focus, attend weekly seminars with City Center staff and artists, and receive professional development workshops. All apprentices are paid $15 an hour.

2019-2020 IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING APPLICATION
Our programs are designed to bring our mainstage performances to students all over New York City. We offer three basic options for participation, ranging from $2 tickets, to workshops, to multi-week residencies in schools.

Interested in bringing City Center to your school next year? Applications for 2019-2020 programming in Musical Theater and Dance will be available in early June. The application is the first step in registering for our programs, and schools interested in needs-based funding must complete the application to be considered.

For more information on any of these programs, please go to www.NYCityCenter.org/Education
NEW YORK CITY CENTER EDUCATION

VISION STATEMENT

The mission of New York City Center Education is to ignite an appreciation of the performing arts, cultivate the creative mind, and create a culture of inquiry and exploration. Committed to drawing inspiration from works on the mainstage, New York City Center Education strives to provide innovative, accessible arts education to schools and communities across New York City.

ABOUT NEW YORK CITY CENTER EDUCATION

Each year City Center reaches over 9,000 students from NYC public and private schools, kindergarten to grade 12, through dance and musical theater performances and in-school workshops. In-depth residencies engage young people in building technical and expressive skills, personal voice, and collaborative spirit. Innovative workshops are crafted for families, seniors, and other special groups that express an interest in collaborating with City Center.

Through the Introduction to Performing Arts program, students have the opportunity to view live performing arts at City Center. At the Workshop level, students receive two in-school workshops in addition to attending a live performance. Residencies provide in-depth multi-week study around one of the productions presented during the season. During the 2018-2019 Season, City Center Education offers students the opportunity to study dance and musical theater productions from City Center’s mainstage.