

# BUZZ EXTRA

## THE NEW MEL BROOKS MUSICAL YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN

October 13-25 at PlayhouseSquare  
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PlayhouseSquare

### FEATURED ARTICLES



YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN  
**SCIENCE  
OR  
MUSICAL  
COMEDY?**

**WILL THE REAL  
FRANKENSTEIN  
PLEASE  
STAND UP?**

Talking with Roger Bart  
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It seems that  
Frederick  
Frankenstein &  
his grandfather  
Victor weren't  
so far off  
the mark.

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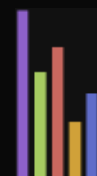


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Yes  
No

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### SPOTLIGHT

## IT'S ALIVE AND HEADED FOR CLEVELAND



Original Broadway Cast. Photo: Paul Kolnik

"If you're blue and you don't know where to go to, why don't you go" to the KeyBank Broadway Series opener **THE NEW MEL BROOKS MUSICAL YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN** at PlayhouseSquare October 13-25, 2009. This is "the Broadway musical at its dizziest, glitziest and funniest," according to the late Clive Barnes of *The New York Post*. Michael Kuchwara of the *Associated Press* declares, "You can't help having fun," and for this National Tour, Roger Bart and Shuler Hensley reprise their Broadway roles of Doctor Frankenstein and the Monster. "It's alive!"

**Awards**  
YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN received the Outer Critic's Circle Best Broadway Musical Award and five Audience Awards by Broadway.com.

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*Paul Kolnik and Andrew Eccles*

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### Awards

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN received the Outer Critic's Circle Best Broadway Musical Award and five Audience Awards by Broadway.com. Nominated for three Tony and eight Drama Desk Awards, YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN is the perfect blend of the

popular 1974 film by Mel Brooks and Gene Wilder and the classic *Mary Shelley* novel published in 1818. YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN was created by the Tony Award winning team that brought you *The Producers*: Mel Brooks, director/choreographer Susan Stroman, set designer Robin Wagner, costume designer William Ivey Long and lighting designer Peter Kaczorowski.

*The Hartford Courant* exclaims, "With lightning lashes, thunder crashes, fog creeps and electrical impulses zigzagging, YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN has come to life! A monster hit!"

"Raising the dead has never been more lively," broadcasts *WABC TV*.

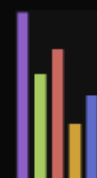
Syndicated columnist Liz Smith asserts, "Here's a show you can definitely take the kids to and still have a helluva good time too."

### Synopsis

The show opens in Transylvania where villagers rejoice at the death of Victor Von Frankenstein, the mad scientist whose creation once endangered their community. They fear that "as long as a Frankenstein walks the earth, their village will never be safe." Meanwhile in New York, scientist Frederick Frankenstein learns of his grandfather's death and journeys to settle the family estate. After meeting a cadre of characters and discovering the journals and secret laboratory of his infamous grandfather, Frederick is enticed to "Join the Family Business" and decides to "re-animate the dead." "When it comes to making monsters, you can't beat the Frankensteins."

Did You Know...

### FUN FEATURES



Have you read the classic novel *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley?

Yes  
No

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...the original story *Frankenstein: or The Modern Prometheus* was written by Mary Shelley when she was 18 years old? One stormy night at a party in Switzerland, Lord Byron challenged his guests to come up with the best ghost story. It was here that [Mary Shelley](#) dreamed of the "hideous phantasm of man" that was to become the Monster in the classic Gothic romance *Frankenstein*.

Before the novel was published and the Monster made famous, Shelley's story was rejected by publisher after publisher, including her husband's (poet [Percy Bysshe Shelley](#)) publisher and [Lord Byron's](#).

Finally published in 1818, *Frankenstein* is considered by many to be the first modern work of science fiction.

For more information on the Broadway Show go to: [THE NEW MEL BROOKS MUSICAL YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN](#)

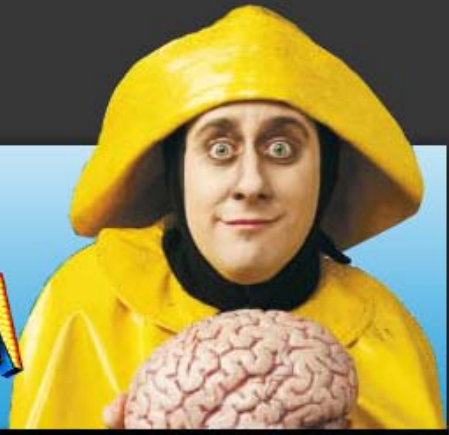
Quotations are lyrics from the musical.

*Original Broadway Cast. Photo: Paul Kolnik*

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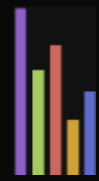


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## Science or Musical Comedy?



Doctor Frederick Frankenstein, Yale graduate, is a "professor, the Dean of Anatomy at New York's most famous institute of higher learning, the Johns, Miriam, and Anthony Hopkins School of Medicine."

He comes from a long line of scientists who have been trying to create life since 1201.

- Frederick's grandfather
- "Brought dead tissue back to life."
- "Created a horrifying monster."
- "Prowled around graveyards, digging up freshly buried corpses."

But Frederick is devoted to pure science and "deals in fact not fiction...truth and reason." Yet, upon reading the journals and finding the secret laboratory of his grandfather, he embarks upon a journey to create life. How can he do it?

"Take your knife, create a life."  
Exhume a corpse and steal a brain. Is this scientifically possible? Or is it just musical comedy?

Actually, it sounds a lot like **organ donation**. Organs can be transplanted from one body (living or dead) to another. Is this how Dr. Frankenstein created the Monster?

In today's scientific world, donated organs, often referred to as the "gift of life" are used by doctors to replace damaged or failing ones. The first successful kidney transplant taken from a cadaver was performed in 1962. In fact, some transplanted organs can come only from someone deceased. Today, however, living donors can provide people in need with a kidney, liver, lung, and in extremely rare circumstance, heart or intestines.

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Do the doctors use electricity to transplant an organ? No. [Surgery](#) is the answer.

But what about Frederick Frankenstein's "lightning bolts and thunder" to "ignite a mortal spark?" After all, a heart does have electrical signals that cause it to beat.

Could this be compared to the use of defibrillators that can help to start a heart?

A [defibrillator](#) is a device that gives an electric shock to the heart to move blood to the brain or other organs. If a heart is not beating, a [cardiopulmonary bypass](#) machine (also known as a heart lung machine), or an [ECMO machine](#), keeps a person alive while their heart is stopped or even removed, because it acts as a surrogate for the normal functions of the heart and lungs.

"Through the wind swept air, listen to his prayer, stir its brain, let breathing start."  
Can electricity start breathing? What about the use of a ventilator?

A [ventilator](#) is a machine powered by electricity that helps a person breathe when unable to do so for him or herself.

It seems that Frederick Frankenstein and his grandfather Victor weren't so far off the mark.  
"Now we call on science  
To end death's evil reign  
We shout in brave defiance  
This soul shall live again."

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN is a little bit of science and a lot of musical comedy.

All quotes are lyrics from THE NEW MEL BROOKS MUSICAL YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN.

For more lyrics from the show, [click here](#).

*Original Broadway Cast. Photo: Paul Kolnik*

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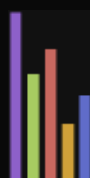


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## Talking with Roger Bart



*Buzz Extra* spoke with Roger Bart, who originated the role of Dr. Frederick Frankenstein, and now reprises the role in the National Tour. Mr. Bart is no stranger to Mel Brooks, as he originated the role of Carmen Ghia in *The Producers*, before taking over the role of Leo Bloom. He earned Tony and Drama Desk Awards for his portrayal of Snoopy in *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*, as well as Outer Critics Circle and Drama League Award nominations for his performance in *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN*.

**BART:** I'm very excited about the National Tour. I've been to PlayhouseSquare three times. I always like the theaters and the Cleveland audiences are wonderful and appreciative.

**EXTRA:** You played Igor (pronounced EYE-gor) in the original workshop previews of *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN*, right?

**BART:** I think they originally had me in mind for Igor, so I did the first workshop of it and it was a lot of fun. I always thought of myself as an Igor. I've always loved the clowns more than anything. But I think being hunched over for 300 shows would be a little tiring.

**EXTRA:** How did you transition from playing Igor to Frederick Frankenstein?

**BART:** I was ready to go as Igor but then I remember getting a phone call from the director asking me if I'd like to play Frederick. I had spent time playing Leo Bloom, Matthew Broderick's role in *The Producers*. I guess they thought I had the necessary tools to be both a romantic lead and funny.

**EXTRA:** What was it like to work with Mel Brooks?

**BART:** I was a big fan of this movie...all Mel Brooks movies. I had a lot of one-on-one time with him during *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN*. He is able to write on the spot in such a funny way. Mel is like an uncle, a dad to me. I love having him in the room, you can always tell if something is cooking or not. And since we were sitting with Mel, we were sitting with a master.

**EXTRA:** Is it true that you and Matthew Broderick were at the Four Seasons in Chicago before *The Producers* opened saying that *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN* should be the next Mel Brooks musical?

**BART:** That actually happened. Matthew and I said *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN* would be a

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natural transition for stage. There had not been a lot of comic monster musicals on Broadway, so we thought it would be unique. And because of the movie's popularity, it would be a great choice. We wanted to keep Mel on Broadway as long as we possibly could. We had one up and were pushing the next one on him. I wouldn't mind being part of the Mel Brooks Repertory Company for the rest of my career!

EXTRA: Actually, you *are* a part of the Mel Brooks Repertory Company.

BART: So it would appear.

EXTRA: What's your favorite song from the show?

BART: My favorite song is "Together Again." I do love vaudeville. My great uncle played with George Burns and Gracie Allen way back in '29 and '30. So whenever I do that song with Igor, I channel my great Uncle Murray. He was a whistling comic. I also loved Mel Blanc, the other Mel who was influential in my life and all the Warner Brothers cartoons. So many of them are great vaudeville sketches, probably where I learned everything. Daffy Duck was the greatest comic villain of our nation.

EXTRA: So, is *Blazing Saddles* the next Mel Brooks musical?

BART: I don't really know.

EXTRA: But if it is next?

BART: Oh yes, I'll be there.

EXTRA: Meanwhile, with YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN?

BART: Cleveland audiences are in for a good time. It's a fun romp. Halloween is a great time to have a monster musical in town.

*Original Broadway Cast. Roger Bart, Shuler Hensley. Photo: Paul Kolnik*

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## Frankenstein and Pop Culture

People have been fascinated with *Frankenstein* ever since Mary Shelley's novel was published almost 200 years ago.

It has inspired films, TV and radio shows, plays, comic books, novels, video games, music, stamps, and even a breakfast cereal! Actors have made their careers playing the role, bands have taken the name and toys have been created.

How many of these *Frankenstein*-inspired creations have you heard of?

### Films

**Boris Karloff** in the 1931 film and its sequel *Bride of Frankenstein*.

Dr. Frank N. Furter in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*

**Andy Warhol's *Flesh for Frankenstein***

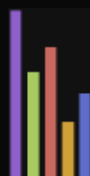
**Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* starring Robert De Niro**

***Van Helsing* starring Hugh Jackman (and YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN's Shuler Hensley as the Monster).**

***Edward Scissorhands* starring Johnny Depp**



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### TV

***The Munsters***

Nintendo: ***Frankenstein: The Monster Returns***

"The Post-Modern Prometheus" episode of ***The X-Files***

"Some Assembly Required" episode of ***Buffy, the Vampire Slayer***

"Frankenstein Wastes A Minute of Our Time" in ***Late Night with Conan O'Brien***

### Novels

**Dean Koontz's *Frankenstein***

***Frankenstein According to Spike Mulligan***

***The Frankenstein Murders* by Kathlyn Bradshaw**

**Stephen King's *It***

### Stage

***Joined at the Heart* played at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2006**

***Day of Wrath*, a 1990 original musical performance**

***Frankenstein or the Vampire's Victim***

***Frankenstein* starring Dianne Wiest**

### Games

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*Castlevania*

Wii: *Mad World*

Nintendo: *Frankenstein: The Monster Returns*  
*Fable II*

Music

Alice Cooper's "Teenage Frankenstein"

Metallica's "Some Kind of Monster"

Russian composer Evgeni Kostitsyn's "How I Made This"

Sam Cooke's "Another Saturday Night"

Cartoons/Comics

*Alvin and the Chipmunks Meet Frankenstein*

"Frinkenstein" from an episode of *The Simpsons*

Marvel Comics *The Monster of Frankenstein*

*Frankenstein Mobster*

Cereal

General Mills' *Frankenberry*

Stamps

Boris Karloff as Frankenstein

*Stamps of Frankenstein*

Toys

Lego's Frankenstein

While Mary Shelley's original novel received mixed reviews, it was quite popular during the 19th century. As you can see, that popularity still lives today.

For more information on Frankenstein in Pop Culture go to:

<http://www.mentalfloss.com/blogs/archives/19810>

or

<http://members.aon.at/frankenstein/frankenstein-introduction.htm>

*Mel Brooks with Hand - Photo: Andrew Eccles*

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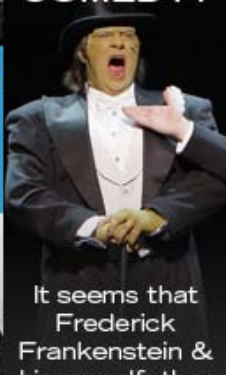
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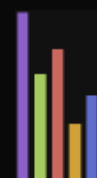


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## Mary or Mel?



Mel Brooks based his musical on the classic Mary Shelley novel. But how similar are they? In other words, how much of the musical is Mel and how much is Mary? The following statements describe the musical. Take this quiz to find out which originated with Mary and which ones came from Mel.

1. The year is 1934.
2. The setting is a castle in Transylvania.
3. Doctor Frankenstein is a college graduate.
4. Frankenstein is pronounced FRONK-en-steen.
5. Frederick inherits the estate of his grandfather.
6. The Doctor is called Frederick.
7. The Doctor's fiancée is Elizabeth.
8. The Housekeeper's name is Frau Blucher.
9. Doctor Frankenstein is visited in a dream by his ancestors.
10. Doctor Frankenstein finds the secret laboratory of his grandfather.
11. Igor, the doctor's assistant, pronounces his name EYE-gor.
12. Inga is another one of Doctor Frankenstein's assistants.
13. The Doctor makes a creature from body parts.
14. The Monster is enormous.
15. The Monster is brought to life during a massive thunder and lightning storm.
16. The Villagers learn the latest dance craze, the Transylvania Mania.
17. The Monster escapes to the forest.
18. The Monster becomes violent.
19. The Monster kidnaps Elizabeth.
20. Elizabeth becomes the Bride of the Monster.
21. The Monster meets a blind man.
22. Doctor Frankenstein is arrested by Inspector Kemp.
23. Frankenstein trains the Monster to perform at a theater.
24. Frankenstein transfers part of his brain to the Monster.

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25. Dracula offers to buy Castle Frankenstein.

ANSWERS:

Numbers 2, 7, 13, 15, 17, 20, 21, and 22 originated with Mary Shelley.

Everything else was in the 1974 film of the same name and is included in the musical YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN.

In addition to Shelley, Brooks and Wilder based their film on the *Frankenstein* movies starring Boris Karloff.

[Click here](#) for more information on the Boris Karloff films.

[Click here](#) for information on the Mel Brooks film.

[Click here](#) for information on the musical.

*Mel Brooks on his Broadway Stage - Photo: Andrew Eccles*

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### BROADWAY BUZZ EVENTS



Want to find out even more about the show? Come get "buzzed" with host Joe Garry at the Broadway Buzz Pre-Show Talk! Join us one hour before the curtain of each performance of YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN in the Idea Center® at PlayhouseSquare.

The Idea Center is located just two doors west of the Allen Theatre at 1375 Euclid Avenue. You can enter the Idea Center quickly from the PlayhouseSquare parking garage by taking the elevator or stairs to Level 1. Exit through the red doors and cross at the crosswalk which will lead you directly into the rear entrance of the building. You also may enter the Idea Center from Euclid Avenue.

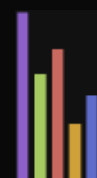
Catch our Post-Show Chats with the Cast following Thursday evening performances (15th and 22nd).

Cast members from YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN will lead a dance master class on Wednesday, October 21 from 3-4:30 p.m. Participants must be advanced dance students or professional dancers. Ages 14 and up only, please.

There is no charge for admission to Broadway Buzz events. Reservations for the master class are required; please call 216-348-7909 or email [reeds@playhousesquare.org](mailto:reeds@playhousesquare.org).

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