Educational Supplement
for the movie
FRANKENSTEIN

by Eric B. Sirota
based on Mary Shelley's novel

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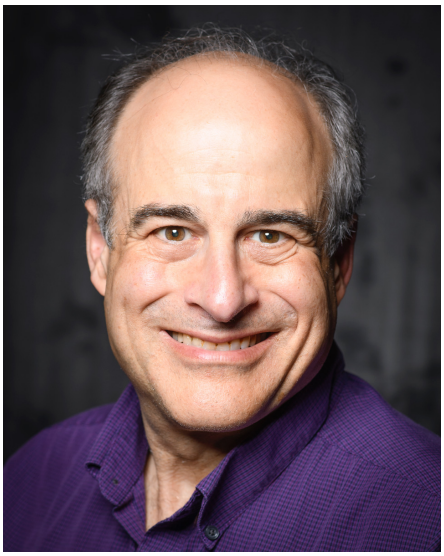
Eric B. Sirota's Bio

Eric B. Sirota is a composer/playwright, having written five full-length musicals. He studied musical composition at Brown University. He is also a highly published research scientist with a PhD in Physics. His musical, *Frankenstein*, played Off-Broadway at St. Luke's Theatre for three years, following earlier development at NYMF. His musical *Your Name on My Lips*, an original love story, had two productions at the award-winning venue Theater for the New City, where Sirota was a resident playwright. *Go, My Child* had staged readings at the Actor's Temple Theatre in NYC, and is slated for a 2024 production. In 2019, he was the recipient of the Denis Diderot grant to attend the Chateau Orquevaux residency where he wrote A *Good Day* (Music, memory, an old flame, and Alzheimer's) which recently had a developmental production by the Shawnee Playhouse. As composer he wrote the music for the musical comedy *A Day at the White House*, which was recorded as a radio podcast in 2020, and slated for a 2025 production. Other major works include *The Flemington Oratorio* and a dramatic musical setting of Unetane Tokef. Eric is married to the artist Cara London.

Eric B. Sirota's website: https://EricSirota.com



Playwright/Composer Eric B. Sirota's Notes

How I came to write musicals, and Frankenstein in particular:

I came to theatre first from the music side, having studied music composition. Wanting to take people on emotional journeys, I knew I could do that with the music. But there are also stories I wanted to tell. Music can stir the soul and is a universal language. But when you find the words that join the music as equal partners, and in service to the story, propelling it forward in both plot and emotional arc, nothing is more creatively fulfilling. I just had to learn how to do that - which took me a few decades.

I studied piano from the age of 9, and always enjoyed writing my own pieces. I was also always interested in science and attended Stuyvesant High School in New York City, a public school specializing in science and math. My homeroom teacher throughout high-school was Frank McCourt (author of Angela's Ashes). However, at the time I had no interest in taking his class on creative writing! Little did I expect that I would one day become a playwright having my work performed on the New York stage.

College and Grad School

I went to Brown University ('80) where I majored in Physics, and also studied music theory and composition. I then went to graduate school at Harvard University ('86) to get my PhD in Physics. As a scientist, I always wanted to understand nature and it is what I needed to do. When I graduated from Brown heading to grad school in physics, I told my music professor Gerald (Shep) Shapiro, that I would still keep up with my music. He told me that despite my best intention, I wouldn't; but one day I would return to it. He was right.

At Harvard, the music building with practice rooms was next to the physics building where I worked in my professor, Peter Pershan's laboratory. I intended to play piano every day. But you know what they say about 'intentions'. As I began doing new exciting research in physics, it became nearly impossible to pull myself away. I was not just doing "labs" as part of classwork that have been done thousands of times by every student. Now I was learning new things about the nature of matter that no one ever knew before. Therefore, leaving the lab to play the piano (or sleeping for that matter) was not a priority. However, when I went home for holidays, I did play the piano and write music.

The "Inciting Event"

I had first read Frankenstein years before, in 8th grade, with my first copy from SBS publishers. During winter break of my first year in grad school in 1981, my mother took me to a preview of the infamously short-lived Broadway production of the Gialanella play, based on Mary Shelley's novel. I thought, "Why AREN'T they singing?!" I re-read the book and heard the story sing in my head as a musical. Like Victor Frankenstein, I was a scientist working towards my degree, far from home and far from the girl I loved, and the story spoke to me both intellectually and emotionally.

It was at that point I decided to write a musical based on Frankenstein. I didn't really know what I was doing. I wasn't even sure whether it would be an opera or a musical. Since I hadn't really studied writing in any formal way, I was more focused on the music. I enjoyed opera and totally understood it without actually understanding a single word in languages I did not know. I thought that the music could convey everything, especially the emotions; and lyrics could be placeholders. Also, knowing nothing at that time about "musical bookwriting" and the structure of a musical, I would later conclude that I had a lot to learn.

First Draft

I started my adaptation of Frankenstein by writing individual songs; usually when going home for holidays and vacations. I envisioned some specific dramatic moments that I wanted to portray. One was the "Trio" from Act-I. I wanted a love duet between Victor and Elizabeth, with the Creature observing from the outside. I reworked a melody from a 3-part canon that I had written as an exercise a few years earlier. Only the lyrics to the last line of the song where all three sing "I will never let you go" survived the countless rewrites; In some sense the purpose of the song was to get to that line. The 2nd song I wrote was the music for "Why (have you created me)?", the duet between the Creature and Victor, with the title being the only lyrics I had at the time. Years later, I learned that it is best to structure a musical and choose the locations of the songs first. It will save a lot a rewriting!

In 1986, I finished my PhD thesis in the area of soft condensed matter physics, using x-ray scattering to study melting in liquid-crystals. I was hired as a post-doctoral fellow at Exxon's corporate research laboratory (the company's basic research laboratory) and was eventually hired permanently onto the scientific staff. Still working there today, I continue my research into the fundamental physical properties of soft materials. My publications can be found here: https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=fIs6ALAAAAAJ&hl=en

In 1988, with a little extra time in the evenings and weekends, I returned to writing some music, and by 1990, I completed a first draft of the musical based on Frankenstein which was titled "Day of Wrath" at the time. Not knowing anything about the process for developing a musical, I ended up having a full production of my first draft, as an after-work extra-curricular activity in the research lab where I worked. It was a great experience. But then the question was: now what? After sending many letters, copies of the script (and cassettes of the recordings) to professional theatres, I soon realized it wasn't where it needed to be, and I had a lot to learn.

In 1992 and 1993, I attended the ASCAP musical theatre workshop in New York, where I watched other new works being presented as staged readings, and listened as the panels consisting of successful Broadway writers, directors and producers critiqued them. In the midst of working on my own work, I was able to apply many of the comments and critiques about the presented work, to my own. In hearing these works, I realized that my music was among the best, but my understanding of structuring a musical, and my lyric writing was not quite there.

What is the "book" of a musical?

With a musical, there are usually credits for music, book and lyrics. Music and lyrics are obvious. But what is the book? If a musical was simply a play with songs added at different moments, then the "book" would be the play's dialogue; But this is not what a musical is. The term "book" sometimes refers to the dialogue, but it is really much more than that. The "book" refers to the structure of the musical, the story, not merely the non-sung dialogue. When Lin Manuel Miranda was nominated in the category for writing the book for Hamilton, the NY Theatre Critic wrote that he was puzzled, since the show has almost no spoken dialogue. As a response, the Dramatists Guild published an excellent letter which explains this. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/11/opinion/writing-the-book-for-a-musical-a-misunderstood-art.html

What inspires me:

The kind of work that inspires me the most and which I want to write, is mostly material driven emotionally and intended to elicit an emotional response, more so than an intellectual one. Thus, my interest in musicals rather than plays. Through my school years, I had a Beethoven poster on my wall, where I had appended to his famous quote "Music should strike fire from the heart of man, and bring tears from the eyes of woman. . . *And vice versa*." After seeing Massenet's Werther as a 12-year old, I developed a love for opera, even in languages I did not understand. It was Andrew Lloyd Weber's Jesus Christ Superstar which inspired me and taught me that such an emotional musically-driven score could live in the contemporary world of musical theater. Later, I became equally inspired by Stephen Sondheim, his work and his discussions of the importance of the lyrics. On developing the "book" for a musical theatre piece, I learned from Stephen Schwartz and his co-panelists at the ASCAP musical theatre workshops.

From Page to Stage and Film

Developing a new musical

After the writer completes a draft of the work with which they are happy, the next step might be a table reading. A table reading is an unrehearsed informal read-through of the script (including lyrics to the songs), with each person assigned a character, and often sitting around a table. This might be the first time that the writer or writing team has heard the script read, and is useful, with feedback from the participants, in seeing what works and what kind of revisions may be needed. (There is also often a table read done when a cast is assembled for a production of an already completed work. The purpose of that is more for the director, cast and production team to get a feel for the work; rather than for the writer.)

A staged reading would be at the next level of development. This is a rehearsed presentation of the musical with a director and musical director engaged in the process. A *29-hour reading* is a typical format which limits the rehearsal/performance time of any actor to 29 hours. Technically it is an AEA (union) specification, but is the framework followed even for many non-union readings.

The rehearsal process for the staged reading allows the writer/composer to hear the music interpreted by professional actors and music director/pianist and can make changes, often cutting out extraneous material. While it is rehearsed, it is not memorized, and is performed book-in-hand (or on a music stand.)

This process might have just one presentation or sometimes 2 or 3, within the period of a week or so. There is usually no scenery, no costumes and minimal props; although an actor playing multiple roles might use a hat or scarf to distinguish the characters they play. A narrator will read some of the stage directions, so the audience will know what they would have seen visually in a full production.

It is presented in front of an invited audience and no admission is charged. As is often said: the price of admission is to give feedback to the team - what works? what doesn't? is something confusing? Is something extraneous? Sometimes this is done with a talkback Q&A immediately following the reading, or through a survey or by email.

In addition to allowing the writer to improve the material, these early readings provide an opportunity to clean up the script and score, making sure that typos, musical typos and consistency between script and score, are ironed out. For a script of 100 pages, plus 300 pages of the musical score, that is a lot of material and fresh eyes reading and performing it will notice both creative and technical things that are missed.

Dramaturgy and the help of a dramaturg is very helpful to a writer in the course of developing a new work. While dramaturgs may often work with a director/producer on aspects of a production, it is the interaction with a writer that I will discuss here.

Some people use the term 'script-doctor', which is somewhat a misnomer. A dramaturg does not change anything, but can guide the writers by asking the right questions, and helping them understand their script better. Dramaturgs are paid for their work and are not considered co-writers. I've worked with dramaturgs that have given both written feedback, phone discussions and in-person feedback. In a few cases I worked with directors who, prior to going actively into the reading or production process, functioned as dramaturgs.

Developing Frankenstein

For those whose knowledge of Frankenstein might be the Boris Karloff movie, or more likely the Mel Brooks parody of it, let me first say that this is not that. No flat head. No bolts. And no Igor! This Frankenstein is a sweeping romantic musical based on Mary Shelley's novel, (which happened to have recently celebrated the bicentennial of its publication). This work attempts to honor that source material, while adapting it into a compelling work of musical theatre.
The plot: Having lost his mother at a young age, Victor Frankenstein seeks to end human mortality and arrogantly enters territory beyond his control. While he enjoys unconditional love from Elizabeth, he grants none to his creation.

Some people have used the Frankenstein story to stoke fear of science and technology. But Frankenstein's Creature was not a piece of technology, rather, a living being, and the musical I wrote is about the human need for love and companionship.

After many rewrites, some dramaturgy, and then a table reading, the next step in development of my Frankenstein was a staged reading in 2014 at Emerging Artists Theatre in NYC, run by Paul Adams. As part of their New Works Series, they provided the venue and logistics for putting on staged readings of new works.

Following that, it was accepted into the prestigious NYMF (New York Musicals Festival) reading series in the summer of 2015. NYMF provided me with a dramaturg to work on the script in the months leading up to the festival. NYMF had three presentations of the reading over a few days.

In each of these development steps I had the opportunity to work with different directors and musical directors. I learned more about the work, seeing it from different points of view and with different interpretations.

After some rewriting following NYMF, I felt the work was ready for its first production. It so happened that a team of producers I had been in touch with (John Lant and Tamra Pica of Write Act Rep) also had the time to take on a new project. With the bicentennial of the novel approaching (having been written by Mary Shelley in the summer of 1816 and published in 1818), it was good time to put it on stage.

The production opened at the St. Luke's Theatre, an Off-Broadway venue in the New York City theatre district (a half a block from Hamilton) in October 2017 and ran till the pandemic shut down everything in 2020.

From Stage to Film

Most musicals on film, which had been written for and performed on stage, usually fall into one of two categories.

(1) In a "Video Capture" the production (and the script/score) is identical to that of the live performance, and the actors do exactly what they do in the production, because in most cases it is a recording of a live performance. Often more than a single performance is recorded, allowing the best performance of any given song/scene to be chosen. In addition, it is recorded using 3 (or more) cameras, and the camera angles are chosen during the video editing process. The audio is recorded live. For these recordings there is typically a relatively small amount of "post-production".

One notable example of these is the TOFT archives (Theatre on Film and Tape) - which is housed at the Lincoln Center library. This contains recordings of almost every Broadway show, and can be viewed for free, but only in-person at the library. This is a multi-camera shoot of a live performance, edited in real time. Therefore, there is essentially no post-production.

(2) The other is a "Movie Musical", where the stage musical is ADAPTED for film, often involving significant changes, cuts and additions. It often has the appearance of being filmed "on location" or with realistic looking scene locations, rather than appearing to be on stage. The songs are most often recorded in a studio prior to filming, and "lip synched" by the performers during filming. Filming is done in many individual takes, over a long period of time, as typical of a movie. And with this, there is significant amount of post-production.

FRANKENSTEIN is a unique hybrid. As the stage show was not currently running, the film was re-conceived and re-directed for the film medium, with producer John Lant, working closely with the film director, Joe LoBianco.

The songs were recorded with piano accompaniment in a studio, prior to the filming. The film was shot with the performers singing in sync with their recorded track. The orchestration was then added in post-production.

Filming took place with three cameras, and multiple takes per scene, to allow close ups and shots at different angles. In addition, some sequences were shot with green-screen. This gave the flexibility to create something much more than a capture of the stage production, but also required much more post-production.

Very small changes were made to the script and songs, although some scenes were reordered, and a song that was cut from the staged production during previews, was added back. The parts of the score which were functioning as "scene change music" in the live production were eliminated, while musical underscoring was added to various scenes where there was just dialogue. Part doubling for a few characters in the stage production was eliminated, and a few extras were added, increasing the cast size from 7 to 12. Five of the cast members from the staged production were also in the film.

When the live Off-Broadway production opened in 2017 the score was arranged for piano accompaniment, and a cello was added to the instrumentation the following year. For the filmed version, a fuller orchestration was added by Kent Kim and Kim Jinhyoung.
Some of the scenery, props and costumes were from the staged production.

Adaptation of Frankenstein

Adaptation of Frankenstein, or anything not written for stage, is always challenging. This is especially true when trying to be true to the novel, or as I say, "honor the source material." Logistical limitations on the number of cast members and the number of locations portrayed on stage are obvious choices to be made. But also, a musical needs to be structured in a way that works for theatre.

First, I needed to decide what the musical would be *about*. The musical as I wrote it, is best described as "a sweeping romantic musical about the human need for love and companionship."

There are other themes in the story which are not as emotional. However, the musical theatre medium is best for emotional stories rather than the more intellectual/cerebral which would find homes in plays, rather than musicals.

Who do you think is the main character in this musical? Whose story is it?

For a musical, that is a very important question, as it is necessary to define the character's arc, which becomes the arc of the musical. Very close to the beginning of a musical is usually an "I want" song. The audience then knows who the main character is, and what that character wants. (An example is "Part of Your World" from *The Little Mermaid*). The whole story should follow that character and their want. That is one of the "rules" in creating a musical. While, as it is said, rules are made to be broken, it is clear that doing so is always a risk.

It is generally agreed that Frankenstein is not an easy story to adapt for stage, and one of the most challenging ones to adapt as a musical. Why did I choose it to adapt? When I first decided to write a musical based on Frankenstein, I did not know anything about writing musicals! (My most recent musical "A Good Day" was done very differently. It is an original story which I conceived as a musical, and outlined it in detail, before writing a single song.)

So, who is the main character? My answer: It starts off as Victor; but by the end of Act-I, it becomes the Creature. I suppose I broke the "rules".

How did you frame the story?

"Where is Walton?", you may ask. Mary Shelley framed her novel as letters written by Walton, the ship captain, to his sister. The letters describe the story told to him by Victor Frankenstein. Only on the last pages, after Victor's death, does Walton encounter the Creature.

I decided that the character of Walton was unnecessary in my musical, as the double narration was only a framing device. When asked by audience members, in talkbacks, "Where is Walton?", my answer is "YOU, (the audience), are Walton."

How did you decide what locations would be included in the musical?

One of the important things in writing and staging a musical is determining how many different scene locations there are. The complexity and cost of designing sets for many locations and making scene changes is a concern. That itself can be handled in terms of simple minimalist set design. However, moving the action from one place to another needs to be motivated, and the new location clearly established.

I asked myself if I need all the locations. And the answer was no. I brought Victor back home from school and had him locate his laboratory on the Frankenstein estate.
In the novel, Victor was away from home for many years without even seeing Elizabeth, with only letters exchanged. To make their relationship believable and for the audience to be invested in it, (and for the Creature to see it), it was necessary to get them to the same location. So I have Victor return from school after a year away (and with some sort of degree). (In the novel, he was technically a college dropout.) I chose not to include his professors, and his relationships with them.

In the musical, I do have Victor does state: "I've hunted you across the tundra", referencing tracking him up north. However, I bring the final confrontation back to the laboratory where the Creature was created.

How does Frankenstein create the Creature?

Mary Shelley, through Victor's narration, does not go into this in detail, because Victor does not want others to follow in his footsteps. I don't have scenes portraying graverobbing or any such thing. Based on Chapter 4 of the novel, I have Victor say (i.e. write in his notebook) *"Parts obtained from dissecting rooms and slaughter houses. First, I built the frame; then attached soft tissue, cauterized with flame."*

As far as bringing the Creature to life, there is no mention of lightning in the novel, in that context. Electricity coming from chemical reactions, which we might think of as a battery, are alluded to in her text. This is indeed something that Victor could create on his own, and can be controlled; while lighting is very uncontrollable. Relating to this, I have Victor say, *"Electricity from chemical cells, stored up in Volta's wells, will flow like rapids of a stream . . ."*

However, in my adaptation, on the night Victor is set to bring the Creature to life, he finds that his electrical cells are insufficiently powerful. Just then, he hears thunder in the distance. He climbs to the roof to connect the weather vane to his apparatus, and with apparent humility calls on the Almighty to assist:
"God in heaven, Lord of power, I need you to strike this hour. I hear your strength; Now hear me calling. Breathe your fire, life installing.
This man made in your own image, can begin, but cannot finish. One day man will have your power; not this moment, not this hour."
But in the middle of the song, as the storm arrives, his attitude changes, and Victor goes from humility to arrogance: *"Now I seize your tyrant power. . . I now create life!"* And it is not the controlled electricity he planned, but an uncontrolled surge of power that ends up animating the Creature.

How did you adapt the Creature's character?

To make the Creature more empathetic, and to make Elizabeth's death more climatic, you will have noticed that I made slight changes regarding the deaths of William, Justine and Henry; making them not so deliberate. Thus, his premeditated killing of Elizabeth becomes so much more powerful.

In the novel, the Creature framed Justine out of jealousy. In the musical, he assumed that she would not be convicted without a witness, believing in the justice of humanity. But then learned that the world is not just, as he saw justice denied to her.

How were the Creature's wanderings presented to the audience?

While most of the novel comprises Victor's telling of his story to Walton, a significant part of that is Victor's relating the Creature's narration to him. My choices were to either show them either at the time they took place chronologically, or at the time Victor was told about them from the Creature's narration. Since it was the Creature's description of those events to Victor, which drives the action to follow, I decided to focus on telling it that way. The director used visual vignettes to show things that were described. But the words were the Creature's, since it is how the Creature describes it, is what is important. I did make sure to shorten it so it isn't 1/3 of the musical.

What books did the Creature read?

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* was very important to Mary Shelley and the other Romanticists. In the novel, it greatly affected the Creature's development, and gave him expectations for how his creator should behave. *Paradise Lost* is not read by quite so many people today. Even back then, one book that would be in most households and translated into most languages is the Bible. I was also very familiar with the Bible, and I chose to make that the main book from which the Creature learned to read and influenced his development and expectations from his creator. I did, however, make reference to *Paradise Lost*, using Milton's quote ("Did I request thee, maker, from my clay to mold me man.") While it did not actually appear within the text of the novel, Mary Shelley had put it on the title page. I gave that line to the Creature, during his final confrontation with Victor.

Another of the books which Mary Shelley had the Creature read and influenced his world-view and emotional development was Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. The Creature learning about human emotions from Goethe's tragic story of unrequited or unattainable love and his reaction to it, was the main point of its inclusion in the novel. In fact, *Werther* was a favorite of Mary Shelley herself, as well as the Romanticists, in general. While I did not mention Werther explicitly in the script, the score for Frankenstein, as is my music writing in general, very much influenced and inspired by Massenet's opera, which was based Goethe's novel. In fact, the way I tell the story reflects this, as it is best described as "a sweeping romantic musical about the human need for love and companionship."

In 1971, when I was twelve years old, a close childhood friend who was in the children's chorus of the Metropolitan Opera, performed in *Werther*. My mother took me to see it. I fell in love with it, and eventually, opera in general. *Werther* influenced my music composition from then on.

I did notice an interesting connection between *Werther* and *Frankenstein*, and I wonder if it was in Mary Shelley's thoughts at the time:

Both Elizabeth Lavenza in *Frankenstein*, and Charlotte in *Werther* had promised a dying mother that they would wed someone particular. In *Werther*, Charlotte is not particularly in love with Albert, but marries him to honor her vow to her mother, (in spite of her feelings towards Werther). In *Frankenstein*, it was his mother's wish that Elizabeth and Victor be married and this was promised to her before she died. But in the novel, we also know that

Elizabeth offered Victor an 'out', suggesting that maybe he had met someone else during his long time away, and it would be okay to break their engagement (which he did not do.)

Mary Shelley's novel does not get into Elizabeth's head at all and the reader only learns what Victor knows (and has chosen to tell Walton). Is it possible that Mary Shelley thought (or considered) that Elizabeth was not truly in love with Victor, and like Charlotte, felt bound by an obligation and promise to his mother, Caroline? (This is just a thought to consider, and note that this musical does not suggest that.)

Language of prayer: Mary Shelley came from a somewhat atheist frame of reference. In replacing the reading of Paradise Lost with the more familiar Bible, I also made use of the language of prayer calling on the almighty. I have always found this both emotionally powerful and dramatic. Also, my own background being exposed liturgical vocabulary, made this flow naturally. (One might compare the ending of Victor's last song before the final confrontation "I Tried to Fly", with Charlotte's aria immediately before Werther's return in Act-III of Massenet's *Werther*.)

How did you work with Elizabeth's character?

Developing Elizabeth's character was one of the hardest things I had to do in this adaptation. Elizabeth (like the other women in the novel) are all almost angelic, and selfless. Besides being the object of Victor's affection, caring for Victor and everyone else, and otherwise perfect, Elizabeth is not given much to say.

When my early drafts of the musical had the main female character have very little to say, except how concerned she was for Victor's well-being, I would 'blame' Mary Shelley's novel. But realizing that I was creating a 21st century work of musical theatre, and I could not use that as an excuse.

I needed to give her some interest, or something for her to do. Furthermore, my early drafts had her only thoughts on her wedding night be worrying for Victor's well-being and concerned with his erratic behavior. What I would eventually write, needed to be non-inconsistent with what was in the novel. However, since the novel contains only what Victor knew, (and chose to tell Walton, who chose to tell his sister), there can be more.

I decided to channel a little of Mary Shelley, and make Elizabeth a writer. From the novel, we know that she wrote a lot to Victor while he was away, and now that I have brought Victor home, her writing evolves to something different. That is revealed slowly through Act-II, to the point where her last solo (Heartbeat Reprise), which in my earlier drafts was merely a reprise of her concern for Victor's well-being, became a major "11 o'clock number".

How does Henry die?

In the novel, the Creature strangled Henry in deliberate and specific revenge after Victor destroyed the Creature's unfinished mate, tearing her to pieces in front of him. In my adaptation, they are in the laboratory, Victor tells the Creature he will not complete his mate and an altercation ensues. Henry enters unexpectedly and attacks the Creature with a gun. The Creature throws him backwards, and Henry falls against Victor's equipment and is electrocuted. While Victor's electricity was not powerful enough and unsuccessful in bringing his Creature to life, it was powerful enough to kill Henry. Destruction is easier than creation.

Victor then destroys the unfinished "bride" in front of the Creature, who vows to return on his wedding night. Thus, plot elements that in the novel took place at multiple locations and times, could be combined in a single scene.

Why didn't you include Igor?

Nooo!!! Don't ask that in front of your teacher!

But it is interesting to note that while the assistant (which we know as "Igor") was not part of Mary Shelley's novel, it was also not a 20th century Hollywood invention. Rather it dates back to its first theatrical adaptation 1823, just a few years after Frankenstein was published – the play "Presumption; or, the Fate of Frankenstein" by Richard Brinsley Peake.

In Mary Shelley's novel, Victor Frankenstein works in isolation. He tells no one of his endeavors. He does not share it with Elizabeth, his best friend Henry, nor his teachers, and he has no assistant. This is actually key to the story since Victor's flaw as a scientist, in my opinion, was not "hubris" as is often said, but his lack of collaboration, mentorship and peer review. And in this new adaptation, that was maintained. But Victor's main flaw which led to the tragic outcome, was not about science. I was rather his lack of empathy for his creation, his child. In a sense, it is about bad parenting. And the musical is about the human need for a love and companionship; the heart of Mary Shelley's story.

In popular culture, the character known as Igor, Victor's assistant, has become embedded in people's minds as part of Frankenstein. However, no such character existed or could have existed in Mary Shelley's novel, for the reason described above. Igor was not a 20th century Hollywood invention. The 1823 stage adaptation, *Presumption,* had added a character named Fritz, a bumbling assistant. In fact, in the 1931 Hollywood classic, the assistant was named Fritz. It later evolved into what we now know as Igor, first appearing in *Son of Frankenstein* (1939) where Bela Lugosi played "Ygor". And canonized as "Aiy-gor" in *Young Frankenstein*. Recently the 2015 film, *Victor Frankenstein*, is described as the story told through the eyes of Igor, played by Daniel Radcliffe.

One can understand why such a character would have been created for a stage adaptation. Unless the play was framed as a monologue to Walton (the ship captain who rescued him from the ice in the arctic), as Mary Shelley's novel was, he would have no one to talk to. It clearly makes a play or film easier to write, even if it changes key elements of Mary Shelley's story. Adaptations are just that – adaptations. Being 'true to the story' is a relative thing. The novel was structured and written by Mary Shelley as a work for the printed page. Stage and screen are different mediums. Adaptation is necessary.

Adaptations and Rights

An important consideration when adapting an existing work for musical theatre is to ensure you have the right to do so. When I attended the ASCAP musical theatre workshop in 1992, the guest panelist, Stephen Sondheim, told us about one of his early musicals that never saw the light of day. That was because after he wrote it, he couldn't get the rights to the play on which it was based. His message to us was that one should have the rights before investing too much of oneself in a project.

A work is covered by copyright for a given period of time. During that time, using it requires obtaining (and usually paying for) the right to adapt it. After that time has elapsed, the work enters the public domain and it can be used freely. The purpose of copyright is to give creators (and their heirs) time to profit from the work they created, and control its use.

There are many specifics which depend on the type of work, the country where it was created and the year of creation. As an example, copyright protection lasts for 70 years beyond the life of the author (for works created after 1977). For more information, https://www.copyright.gov/help/faq/faq-duration.html#duration

Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* is in the public domain, and therefore I did not have to acquire rights to adapt it. This applies to the novel itself which was published in 1818. If I had wanted to write a musical based on one of the movie adaptations of Frankenstein, things would have been different, because the more recent movies are not in the public domain. The 1931 Universal film with Boris Karloff will actually enter the public domain in 2027.

Another one of my musicals is *Go, My Child*. It is about leaving one's parents, infertility and the search for truth, set against a background of xenophobia; 3000 years ago. It is an original account of the "missing" early lives of biblical Abraham and Sarah. It is, therefore, based on material from the Book of Genesis, which is in the public domain.

The other way to be free and clear of copyright issues is to create a wholly original work. My musical *Your Name on My Lips* is such an example. I created original characters and a story about a young artist struggling to get into an art institute, while fighting to hold on to the love of his life.

My most recent musical is *A Good Day,* which is also wholly original. I took my own characters and backstory from *Your Name on My Lips* and set it 50 years later. It is about a widowed artist who is thrust back into the life of his childhood girlfriend, his first love, his muse, a musician who spurned him over 50 years ago, and who now suffers from Alzheimer's.

I have been thinking about what my next projects might be, and since writing a musical is a large undertaking in terms of time as well as creative and emotional energy, I want something that is very close to my heart. I had the idea to write a musical based on Frank McCourt's third autobiographical novel, "Teacher Man". (His first novel is Angela's Ashes.) Why "Teacher

Man"? Because I was there. The novel is about his early years as a high school English teacher in New York. And early in his career, he was my teacher for 3 years of high school. I imagined adapting it with the added point of view of his students, of which I was one. Unfortunately, after locating the rightsholder's representative, I learned that at this time, such adaptation rights are not available.

So, for now, I will have to find another musical to work on. However, at the time I am writing this, I am quite busy developing *A Good Day*, and with post-production and preparing for the release of *Frankenstein* - and I'm still working full time as a research physicist.

Science and Frankenstein

Mary Shelley did not specify exactly the details of how Frankenstein went about bringing his Creature to life. Since the novel is framed as Victor's narration to Walton, Victor would never have told him the details because he didn't want anyone to repeat this. Thus, she was "off the hook" in having to put in details. However, the things she did include showed her awareness of the scientific and medical work of the time.

The experiments and demonstrations by Galvani on causing electrically-induced movements in the legs of a dead frog, and by Aldini, on creating movement in a human cadaver, may actually have been observed by her. Volta's creation of electricity through (electro)-chemical means, essentially a battery, was also known then. Also, her understanding of anatomy is obvious from the novel.

Today, there is much more specialization to the point where there is so much technical knowledge in any discipline, that it is hard to for anyone to be aware of it all. At the time of Mary Shelley, a generally educated person would be aware of the important things in most disciplines. While Mary Shelley was not formally educated, she was well read, and in the company of intellectuals who would have discussed such things.

Scientific Literacy: (Eric's personal opinion)

As a scientist myself, I recognize the importance of ensuring that there is scientific literacy in our population.

I do, however, find that the focus on STEM sometimes results in the funding of certain areas of education over others, often at the expense of the arts and humanities. While back in Mary Shelley's day there were serious problems, like the fact that women couldn't get formal higher education, and it was mostly limited by class and means (which I will discuss below), education meant studying the arts, sciences, philosophy and humanities.

It is clear that someone going into the sciences (or STEM careers) must be exposed to the humanities and arts, to be an educated member of society. By the same token people going into the arts and humanities must be scientifically literate to be educated members of society.

Literacy vs. careers: One place where I believe that focus on STEM is important, is to focus educators and parents and to spur interest in young students who belong to groups which are still underrepresented in the sciences; especially young women and certain minority groups. Giving them additional encouragement, breaking down stereotypes and social barriers and even unconscious bias in parents and educators should be addressed. If we need more trained people in certain disciplines, then doing this will more than double the pool.

But it shouldn't just be about going into STEM careers. Often there is a confusion between assuring that students attain 'scientific literacy' and getting people into 'STEM careers.' And to be sure, the latter does not assure the former. One can learn to do a technical job without being 'scientifically literate'.

Basic mathematics and introductory sciences (chemistry, biology and physics) are only the pre-requisites. But it is not merely learning things that are scientifically established, but rather, understanding the scientific method - i.e. how things are learned - hypothesis; experiments etc. Learning what is known about these areas is one thing; understanding how we know them is scientific literacy.

Logic is not usually a subject specifically taught in schools; but that kind of logical thinking is totally necessary to be scientifically literate. It does, of course, show up in most math curricula under the subject of Geometry. The postulates, theorems and proofs in high school geometry are not about learning to measure angles, but rather about logical thinking. More recently computers have become important.

Knowing how to set up and fix computers will qualify a person to work in an I.T. department. And proficiency using various computer programs/application are necessary for many jobs in almost any business. But do you understand computers? I am not suggesting that one needs to be able to design and program a computer, but does one understand what a computer does? Computer programming is about dividing a task into a series of specific logical steps. The answer, result or action taken by a computer is determined by the logical steps written in the program. An understanding of this will give one the literacy mentioned about. People who like to do this can go into computer science and software engineering; but everyone should understand what it is.

In addition to Logic, an understanding of probability and statistics is needed for scientific literacy. In the progression from arithmetic to algebra to trigonometry and finally calculus, this does not fit in and is often overlooked. But it is essential, not for only for scientists but for any member of society.

People are exposed to data and statistics all the time in news stories and advertising, and an educated person needs to be able to critically evaluate what they are being told in order to function as a citizen in society. In addition, understanding this is critical in making personal financial decisions, medical decisions, or interpreting advice given by others.

Ada Lovelace, the first computer programmer

Returning to Mary Shelley's era, way before there were electronic computers . . .
Lord Byron, Percy Shelley and Mary Shelley were very close. She wrote Frankenstein at Byron's estate. Byron's daughter Ada Lovelace was the first computer programmer! Born Augusta Ada Byron, she became the Countess of Lovelace when she married the Earl of Lovelace. In a field so underpopulated with women, it was a woman who did this first. Charles Babbage designed a mechanical general-purpose computing machine, known as the Analytical Engine. For it to work and do anything, a programming language was needed to make the task a series of logical steps. Ada Lovelace devised such a language. While the machine was never actually completed, she is credited as the first computer programmer.

See for example: Ada's Legacy: Cultures of Computing from the Victorian to the Digital Age
By Robin Hammerman & Andrew L. (Russell Morgan & Claypool, Oct 1, 2015).

Scientific Ethics

While Frankenstein is a good starting point to lead to discussions of scientific ethics, and the possible dangers in technology that could be misused, or "get out of control"; in my opinion this is NOT what Frankenstein is about. It is certainly not about being scared of GMO's, artificial intelligence, vaccines or the like. As you, having actually read the book, know, the Creature did not go out into the world and 'wreak havoc', as people often state. The Creature's victims were specifically and limited to those close to Victor.

Victor Frankenstein's flaw that caused all the bad stuff to happen, was not his hubris, or 'playing god' or going against nature. Humankind has been doing that from the start. We stole fire from the gods. We cure diseases. Cross the oceans. From the day we were 'banished from Eden', the quest to eternal life had been part of human nature. Victor's biggest crime was abandoning his child. So, it is less about 'bad science' and more about bad parenting.

Victor's big flaw as a scientist is often overlooked. The flaw was his lack of collaboration, peer review and mentorship. He did this work without the advice of his professors, got feedback from no-one, and had no collaborators. So, Igor, is a character which does not exist in Mary Shelley's story and CANNOT exist, since Frankenstein's work in isolation is key to the story.

People often say that Frankenstein created a "technology that got out of control." No! No! No! Frankenstein's Creature was not a piece of technology, but rather a living being. And thus, the musical I wrote is about the human need for love and companionship.

The goal of a scientist, is to understand nature. One can go beyond that and use that knowledge to control nature. This is a lofty goal if it is used for good: to cure diseases, feed people, make life better. But to make it clear, these are technological applications of science, and often done by engineers and physicians. A scientist should nevertheless be aware of what can happen with that knowledge, but understanding that all knowledge can be used for good and bad, and humankind will eventually attain that knowledge. Therefore, avoiding attaining knowledge is not an option. We want it to be used for good.

Electricity and Lightning

Electricity in Mary Shelley's time and in her novel:

In Mary Shelley' time, Luigi Galvani observed twitching of a dead frog's legs when a metallic medical instrument, serving as an electrical conductor, completed a circuit through the dead tissue. Galvani thought that this was "animal electricity" coming from the dead tissue. Alessandro Volta in part, made his first "battery", to show that the electricity in Galvani's observation did not come from the tissue, but from an electrochemical effect which can be replicated when a stack of disks of different metals are separated by an electrolyte solution (i.e. brine). This became known as a Voltaic Pile. (The replacement of a liquid electrolyte, with a solid paste, is where the current term "dry cell" comes from.) This is an electro-chemical means of generating electricity (and you might learn about it in a Chemistry class).

The Voltaic Pile became the main method for generating electricity till the late 1800's, after Mary Shelley's time, when the dynamo, or electric generator was developed. The electric generator involves taking energy arising from the forced mechanical motion of coils of wires moving in a magnetic field. (This is something you might learn about in Physics class.)

A third form of electricity is static electricity. Unlike the previous two, static electricity does not create a continuous current. It is caused by the buildup of an electrical charge difference between one object and another. It typically discharges as a single burst of electricity. The most dramatic example of this is lightning.

Mary Shelley doesn't have Victor tell us (i.e. Walton) what he used to bring his creature to life on that dreary night. He had worked to assemble it, and presumably did something to infuse the "spark of being" into it. There is no mention of lightning in this context, nor anything else specifically. And for good reason. Victor did not want anyone to try to duplicate what he did.

> *[from chapter 5] "It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. *** It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs."*

*** This is the big dramatic moment, and nothing is described. We need to fill it in.
What are the "instruments of life"? Victor has repeatedly referred to "chemical instruments". It is reasonable that these included electro-chemical cells, which might deliver the "spark of life".

What about lightning?

> *[from chapter 2 of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein] "...When I was about fifteen years old we had retired to our house near Belrive, when we witnessed a most violent and terrible thunderstorm. It advanced from behind the mountains of Jura, and the thunder burst at once with frightful loudness from various quarters of the heavens. I remained, while the storm lasted, watching its progress with curiosity and delight. As I stood at the door, on a sudden I beheld a stream of fire issue from an old and beautiful oak which stood about twenty yards from our house; and so soon as the dazzling light vanished, the oak had disappeared, and nothing remained but a blasted stump. When we visited it the next morning, we found the tree shattered in a singular manner. It was not splintered by the shock, but entirely reduced to thin ribbons of wood. I never beheld anything so utterly destroyed.*

Before this I was not unacquainted with the more obvious laws of electricity. On this occasion a man of great research in natural philosophy was with us, and excited by this catastrophe, he entered on the explanation of a theory which he had formed on the subject of electricity and galvanism, which was at once new and astonishing to me..."

It is also interesting that the first time (after the night of its creation) that Victor observes the Creature [in chapter 7], he is illuminated by a flash of lightning.

Electricity in my adaptation

Upon noticing a flowing stream in the midst of his song, *Once in a Dream*, Victor has his "aha!" moment, giving him the last idea he needs to complete his creation. He rushes to his lab where he sings *"Electricity from chemical cells, stored us in Volta's wells, will flow like rapids of a stream . . ."* Such chemical cell (i.e. batteries) would give a controlled measured amount of electricity. When Victor energizes it, however, it only makes the Creature jolt, but it is not strong enough to bring him to life. In the moment of apparent failure, Victor hears a rumble of thunder in the distance. He realizes that he still has the chance to animate his creation. He rushes to the roof to connect his instruments to the weathervane. In the song *God in Heaven (*which I have subtitled, *The Modern Prometheus)*, he first calls on the Almighty to assist; but then stealing the fire from the sky, channeling it down through his equipment, he thinks of himself as the creator, equal or greater than God. Lightning strikes delivering a massive, uncontrolled burst of energy routed to the inanimate Creature, whose heartbeat starts and the Creature comes to life.

Henry's death results when Henry attacks the Creature who throws him backwards, falling against Victor's electrical equipment. Victor's electro-chemical cells, unable to create life, could indeed destroy it.

References and examples of Science in Frankenstein:

There has been a lot written by science historians, and experts in the specific areas, on specific examples of the science referred or alluded to in Mary Shelley's novel. I include some links to references here:

https://www.britannica.com/story/the-real-science-behind-frankenstein
https://askabiologist.asu.edu/frankenstein-physiology
https://www.nature.com/articles/535490a
https://www.sciencefocus.com/science/five-experiments-that-might-have-influenced-mary-shelleys-frankenstein/
https://www.mcgill.ca/oss/article/general-science/frankensteins-chemical-roots
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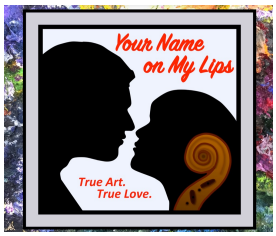
https://www.nisenet.org/sites/default/files/battery_stack_booklet.pdf
https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/id/24cb1da5-a512-4de1-b24c-639b6452dbec/628778.pdf
http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Articles/curran1.html

Eric B. Sirota's Musicals

Frankenstein (book, music & lyrics) is a sweeping romantic musical about the human need for love and companionship based on Mary Shelley's novel. Eric starting writing it in 1981 and it opened Off-Broadway at St. Luke's Theatre in 2017. In 2022, it was adapted as a movie. TheFrankensteinMusical.com



Your Name on My Lips (book, music & lyrics) is an original story about is about following one's passions with obsession and commitment. Without the benefit of art education in high school, a young artist struggles to get into an art institute, while fighting to hold on to the love of his life, as the materialistic world tugs at her. YourNameOnMyLips.com He started writing this in 1991, but put it aside for a couple of decades. It was produced in 2017 by Theater for the New City in NYC.

Go, My Child (book, music & lyrics) is about leaving one's parents, infertility and the search for truth, set against a background of xenophobia; 3000 years ago, but particularly relevant today. Set in ancient Mesopotamia, *Go, My Child* is an original account of the "missing" early lives of biblical Abraham and Sarah. He had a few staged readings of it in 2019.

A Day at the White House (music) is a zany, slapstick, musical comedy with book and lyrics by Vin Morreale, Jr. Imagine the Marx Brothers go to Washington, with a Groucho-like character as president and surrounded by the likes of Abbot and Costello, the 3 Stooges and other early 20th century comics. Eric started working with Vin in 2012 when they met at the West Village Musical Theatre Festival and created a 15-minute version of this. They subsequently turned it into a full-length musical comedy, finished in 2018. In 2020 it was recorded as an audio podcast. Links to the soundtrack can be found here: EricSirota.com/WhiteHouse

A Good Day (book, music & lyrics) - "My father had Alzheimer's, and in his last years, the only way to reach him was through music, singing songs he knew earlier in life. I decided I wanted to write a musical touching on the power of music to rekindle memory and awaken the mind." Eric wrote much of *A Good Day* in 2019, when he received a grant to attend a 2-week artist residency. It is about a widowed artist who is thrust back into the life of his childhood girlfriend, his first love, his muse, a musician who spurned him over 50 years ago, and who now suffers from Alzheimer's.

This is Sirota's latest work. He has been developing it during the pandemic. having demo recordings done remotely, with 5 developmental readings on Zoom. In July 2021, an outdoor concert in Union City, New Jersey (produced in association with the Alzheimer's Association), featured songs from four of his musicals, and highlighted *A Good Day*. It had a developmental production by the Shawnee Playhouse, winning BroadwayWorlds's Best New Play or Musical" regional award. AGoodDayMusical.com

FRANKENSTEIN - Synopsis with song placement:

ACT I

Prologue:

The prologue is a flash forward to the beginning of the final scene. In *Victor's Lament*, he intends to destroy his notebooks so that no one will follow in his footsteps.

Scene 1: *Parlor of the Frankenstein home*

In *Victor's Coming Home*, his father, best friend Henry and sweetheart Elizabeth excitedly anticipate Victor's return, having completed his studies at the university. Offstage, Victor's younger brother William is asleep. Justine, his nanny in whom Henry has some interest, joins them in the parlor. Victor arrives and in *Through the Seasons*, Elizabeth and Victor rapturously express their joy in being reunited, and Victor anticipates setting up his own laboratory to continue his scientific work. Everyone joins in a toast to Victor's return; Victor proposes to Elizabeth, which she accepts.

Scene 2: *Outside in the woods by a stream - A short time later*

Elizabeth has been writing a lot, but she keeps its content secret from Victor. In *Once in a Dream*, Victor starts by explaining to Elizabeth his quest for the secrets of life, but seeing something that gives him the last piece of the puzzle, he leaves her and rushes off to his laboratory.

Scene 3: *Victor's laboratory - minutes later*

Victor completes assembling his creation and using controlled electricity from chemical cells, tries to vitalize it, but is unsuccessful (*Working*). The sound of thunder in the distance gives him another path. He goes to the roof to connect his equipment. In *God in Heaven (The Modern Prometheus)*, he first calls on the Almighty to assist; but then stealing the fire from the sky, thinks of himself as the creator, equal or greater than God. Lightning strikes and as the Creature slowly comes to life, his muscles spasm and Victor sees his creation become hideous looking (*Heartbeat)*. Victor flees his laboratory in horror, leaving the Creature alone.

(We will learn later, that the Creature awakens and ventures out into the world alone. He is either shunned or attacked. By watching a family, he learns the language and how people live. He then returns to his birthplace to seek out his maker. He encounters William and while trying to silence his screams, accidentally kills him. Justine is convicted of William's murder and hanged.)

Scene 4: *Parlor of the Frankenstein home - A year and a half later*

Following the deaths of William and Justine, life has eventually returned to some degree of normalcy for everyone, except for Victor, who does not know what happened to the Creature, and fears the unthinkable. Nevertheless, Victor and Elizabeth have announced their new wedding plans; as the wedding was postponed due to the tragedies. His father enters with the guest list and in a reflective moment (*More Than a Mother*) Elizabeth recalls how, as an orphan, Victor's mother had brought her into their home, and then years later died from an illness caught while tending her. Elizabeth has always felt responsible for Victor's loss. Father exits. Elizabeth sings of her concern over Victor in *Scared, Silent, Scare*. Henry bounds in and notices all the eligible girls on the wedding *Guest List*. Elizabeth exits to find Victor, who then enters, depressed. In *Life Must Go On*, Henry tries to lift his spirits. Then alone, Victor sings of his love for *Elizabeth*.

Scene 5: ***Parlor of the Frankenstein home - That evening***
Night falls. The Creature appears and confronts Victor, relating to him what transpired after being abandoned (*Into the Light & Though the Window*). The duet *Why Have You Created Me* follows, and they are interrupted by Elizabeth at the door. The Creature hides, and in the *Trio*, Victor and Elizabeth sing a love duet, with the Creature contrasting their happiness with his loneliness. After Elizabeth leaves, the Creature entreats Victor to create him a mate (*Day of Wrath)*. Victor, moved by the Creature's supplication, decides to return to his laboratory and create a female.

ACT II
Scene 1: ***A short time later.***
In the parlor, Elizabeth is writing late at night, and Victor's father comes down awaked by a dream. Elizabeth sings about her writing *(I Write by Candlelight)*. Victor is outside and they begin the duet (*Here, In My Heart)* separately; Then Elizabeth hears rustling and goes outside where she finds Victor, and they finish the duet together, as they sing of their love and approaching marriage.

Scene 2: ***Victor's Laboratory***
Victor is working on creating a female companion for the Creature who anticipates his bride awakening (*I Can Dream Too*). Victor weighs his responsibility to his creation versus his responsibility to humankind and fears the creation of a race of monsters. He stops work on the female and an altercation ensues. Henry hears noise from the lab and does not heed Victor's calls to stay out. Upon seeing the Creature, he draws his gun. The Creature pushed him back, and contacting some equipment, Henry is electrocuted. Victor then flings the unfinished bride from the table and orders the Creature to leave. As the Creature departs, he vows to return on Victor's wedding night.

Scene 3: ***Bridal Suite at an Inn - A few months later***
The Innkeeper and his Wife are readying the room as they sing about marriage (*Wedding Night*). Elizabeth and Victor enter and sing a *reprise* of their duet. Victor goes to the changing room, and Elizabeth sings of her excitement (*Heartbeat-reprise*). We learn that she has been writing about passionate and physical love, that she is finally about to experience for herself, and which leads to the creation of life. Then Elizabeth goes to the changing room as Victor, remembering the Creature's threat, leaves to check the surroundings. When Elizabeth comes out, she finds the Creature in the room. Elizabeth is not afraid of him, as she sees her Victor inside of him. In the duet, *Elizabeth Forgive Me* the Creature, though realizing that she has not wronged him, is compelled to kill Elizabeth in order to wreak vengeance on Victor. The Creature leaves and Victor rushes in, throwing himself in despair over Elizabeth's lifeless body.

Scene 4: ***Victor's laboratory - A short time later***
The only thing left is to destroy his creation and evidence of his experiment, even though Victor realizes (*I Tried to Fly*) that the human quest for knowledge and eternal life will one day lead another along the same path. The Creature enters and in the duet, *Evil Fiend*, the Creature mocks Victor's suffering. Victor shoots and wounds the Creature, who strangles him. The Creature first addresses his lifeless creator and then the Almighty in *Creator's Creator*. Not wanting anyone to continue Victor's work, he destroys the lab and himself.

FRANKENSTEIN Musical Numbers

Act I

Prologue - *Victor's Lament*
Victor's Coming Home
Through the Seasons
Once in a Dream
Working
God in Heaven (The Modern Prometheus)
Heartbeat
More Than a Mother
Scared, Silent, Stare
Guest List
Life Must Go On
Elizabeth
Into the Light
Though the Window
Why?
Trio
Day of Wrath

Act II

Vocalise
I Write by Candlelight
Here, In My Heart
I Can Dream Too
Wedding Night
Duet Reprise
Heartbeat - Reprise
Elizabeth Forgive Me
Victor's Lament - Reprise
I Tried to Fly
Evil Fiend
Creator's Creator

The soundtrack (cast recording) can be found at these links:
Spotify
YouTube
Apple
Amazon

Character's from Mary Shelley's novel that are portrayed in the musical

Victor Frankenstein	Scientist
Creature	Victor's creation
Elizabeth Lavenza	Victor's fiance'
Alphonse Frankenstein	Victor's father
Henry Clerval	Close friend of Victor and his family
Justine Moritz	William's nanny
Innkeepers	A couple who run the Inn at Evian
William Frankenstein	Victor's youngest brother
Caroline Frankenstein	Victor's departed mother
DeLacey	Blind man
Agatha	DeLacey's daughter
Felix	DeLacey's son

Creature's imagined bride

Also portrayed:

A young woman who is one of Elizabeth's friends, and her brother.
Assorted townspeople

Eric B. Sirota (Book, Music and Lyrics)

Eric B. Sirota is a composer/playwright, having written 5 full-length musicals. He studied musical composition at Brown University. He is also a highly published research scientist with a PhD in Physics. His musical, *Frankenstein*, played Off-Broadway at St. Luke's Theatre for 3 years, following earlier development at NYMF. His musical *Your Name on My Lips*, an original love story, had two productions at the award-winning venue Theater for the New City, where Sirota was a resident playwright. Go, My Child had staged readings at the Actor's Temple Theatre in NYC. In 2019, he was the recipient of the Denis Diderot grant to attend the Chateau Orquevaux residency where he wrote A *Good Day* (Music, memory, an old flame, and Alzheimer's) which is currently in development. As composer (with librettist Vin Morreale, Jr.), he wrote *A Day at the White House*, which was recently recorded as a radio podcast. Other major works include *The Flemington Oratorio* and a dramatic musical setting of Unetane Tokef. Eric is married to the artist Cara London, and were featured in the New York Times. (https://EricSirota.com)

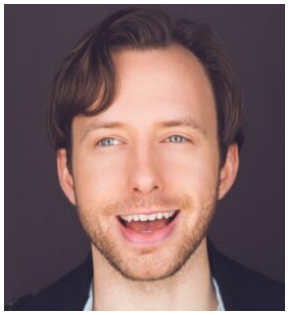
Joe LoBianco (Director)

Joe is an award winning film Director and Director of Photography for feature and short films. As a director of film and music Joe started his career working for commercial clients such as the NY Jets, Bloomingdales and IBM. Joe's photography has also been featured throughout the world and has circulated to millions. Joe directed the full-length feature film 3 Doors From Paradise now in worldwide distribution, the short films Quality Control and multiple award winning Dinner For Two. TV shows include The Toronto ArtHouse Film Festival Awards, the MMA show ChokeHold. He is also the director of photography for the children's show Funikijam and Art Garfunkel music videos and promos as well as Off-Broadway plays such as Ximer. Joe was also the editor on the multiple award-winning documentary Keeping Christmas.

John Lant (Executive Producer)

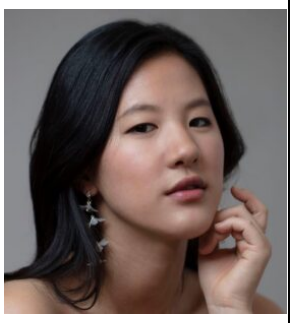
John is a 40-year veteran in the entertainment industry and has been involved in over 700 television, film, music tours, and theatrical productions as a creative producer / director, consultant, and showrunner. An award-winning producer, director, writer, lighting and set designer, John has mounted productions at Cal Arts, Ricardo Montalban, Powerhouse, Long Beach Playhouse, Glendale Center, Hollywood Playhouse, LATC, Ivy Substation, the Jewel Box Theatres and Write Act Repertory in LA. His work and productions garnered Drama-Logue, Diamond, ADA, NAACP Awards, LA Weekly and Backstage Picks of the Week, Garland, Valley Theatre (LA) nominations and receiving the California Service Award from the State Legislature for his Community Outreach and Service to the Arts in 2000, 2001, 2008 and 2009. He has produced 17 Off-Broadway Plays and is currently the Producing Artistic Director of Write Act Repertory and is a TRU Board, APAP Presenter, and Associate SDC Member. He currently lives in New York, worked at Carnegie Hall for 13 years pre-COVID, and out of producing offices in NY and LA.

DANIEL ROBERT BURNS (Victor Frankenstein)
Daniel Robert Burns is ecstatic to be making his film debut with Frankenstein. Daniel has a degree from Cornell University with a Major in Theatre, has since studied at the William Esper Studio, and subsequently with Terry Knickerbocker at his new studio. Favorite roles include The Mad Hatter, (The Mad Hatter's G&T Party), Trigorin (Mr. Chekhov & Mr. Porter, Medicine Show Theater), Miles Gloriosus (A Funny Thing… Forum, Church Hill Theater- Edinburgh Fringe), Oleg Bayan (The Bedbug, Medicine Show Theater), Master Ford (Merry Wives of Windsor, TUTS NH), Francis (La Cage Aux Folles, Orlando Repertory Theatre), Jean Valjean (Les Miserables, Cornell University), and Felix Ungar (The Odd Couple, Risley Theatre). Find him at @danielrobertburns or danielrobertburns.com!



MARC CHRISTOPHER (Creature)
Marc Christopher is very excited to revisit the Creature in the film adaptation of Frankenstein. He was the Creature, Off Broadway, prior to the pandemic at St. Luke's Theatre NYC. He has recently been seen in the Midwest performing in Just Desserts (Lou Battaglia), White Christmas (Sheldrake/Ezekiel) and the Regional Premiere of We Will Rock You (Khashoggi) at Circa 21 Dinner Playhouse. Other Regional Theatre credits include Assassins (John Hinckley), Bright Star (Daddy Cane), I Love You, You're Perfect Now Change (Man 2), Damn Yankees (Mr. VanBuren), The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Panch), Singin in the Rain (Production Tenor), and the Regional Premiere of Hands on a Hardbody (Frank Nugent) at Playhouse Stage Company ; Guys and Dolls (Big Jule/US Nicely Nicely) with Prather Productions. TikTok/ Insta: @marcittymarcmarc– Marcchristopher.net

GRACE HWOANG (Elizabeth Lavenza)
Grace Hwoang earned her Bachelor's degree in Opera Performance at the Aaron Copland School of Music. During her time there, her performance highlights include performing the role of the Queen of the Night in Mozart's Die Zauberflöte and singing as the soprano soloist in Bernstein's Chichester Psalms with the QC Orchestra, QC Choir and Nassau Community College Choir. She was chosen as the finalist for the 2018 NY Lyric Opera Competition and placed 2nd in the Five Towns Competition. Her most recent ventures include writing the music for and performing as Amiens in Theater 315's production of Shakespeare's As You Like It and releasing her first pop single "Heaviness". She regularly shares her works on her Instagram, YouTube under the name "Grace Juhe".



JAY LUCAS CHACON (Innkeeper – husband) Jay Lucas Chacon recently had a great 2022 year with Write Act Repertory. In October, Jay made his Off-Broadway debut with Write Act in Markus Ferraro's techno-superhero musical. Following that, Jay played the role of Paul in a staged reading with Write Act of Eric Sirota's new musical A Good Day. Founder of the ViOp Productions, Jay produced and performed in a film version of La Bohème Act 3 by Leoncavallo singing Rodolfo and The CHESS Project featuring music from the musical Chess, where Jay sang the role of Anatoly. Having been an opera singer for 16 years, Jay recently debuted with On Site Opera in their production of Gianni Schicchi. Numerous shows Jay has performed across the globe are La Bohème (St. Pete, Montreal), Man of La Mancha (Cedar Rapids), The Marriage of Figaro (NYC, Austria), the Barber of Seville (NYC), Cavalleria Rusticana (NYC, Austin), La Traviata (NYC, Jersey Shore), and Orpheus in the Underworld (France).	
REN KING (Innkeeper- wife) Ren King (they/them) is an actor and theatre maker hailing from Lilburn, GA. They've been involved in non-profit theatres large and small for 7 years, working in marketing, arts administration, and production. Upon obtaining two Bachelor's of Arts in Theatre and Advertising from the University of Georgia ('19), Ren joined the North American tour of "PAW Patrol Live! The Great Pirate Adventure" as Mayor Goodway. Coming up, you can see them in "sleeper" directed by Samantha Estrella at The Tank NYC from March 2 through March 26. Ren is also excited to make their Los Angeles debut in the spring in A Transparent Musical directed by Tina Landau with Center Theatre Group. Past credits include: Twelfth Night (Sebastian) with Match:Lit Theatre Co., As I Was, Not As I Am (Jeanine) with Queens Theatre, and Jesus 2.0 (Probably God) with The Workshop Theatre. OFF-BROADWAY: The Importance of Being Earnest (Miss Prism) with Gatehouse Entertainment & Write Act Rep. Ren King is currently represented by the Alexander White Agency.	

TIM BACSKAI (Henry Clerval) Tim is originally from Stuttgart, Germany and is a recent graduate of The New School University (BFA) and The American Musical and Dramatic Academy. He is very excited to be a part of this wonderful cast of Frankenstein. His other credits include Beauty and The Beast (Chance DuSaunt) at The Players Theater Off-Broadway, Carrie (Tommy Ross), Into the Woods (Jack), Our Town (George Gibb), and Fiddler on the Roof (Motel) at the Stuttgart Theater Center. As a proud Army Brat who is fluent in both English and German, Tim enjoyed the distinct honor of singing both national anthems at various military functions. When he is not on stage, Tim enjoys travelling to different countries and screenwriting. You can find Tim at www.timbacskai.com or follow him on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram at tim.bacskai He would like to thank his family and friends for their endless love and support.	
DARYL GLENN (Alphonse Frankenstein) Daryl Glenn is a multi award winning cabaret artist and actor. He is best known (with co-star Jo Lynn Burks) for his loving tribute to the Robert Altman film Nashville (2009 Mac, Bistro and NiteLife Awards) which has played such esteemed venues as 54 Below and Feinsteins at The Regency Hotel. He has toured internationally in musicals such as Annie and Ken Hill's Phantom of the Opera. Other credits include Daryl Sings Steve: Songs by Sondheim (Mac Award nominee 2019) and Daryl Glenn & Nellie McKay sing Robert Altman's Popeye.	
LAUREN COCCARO (Justine Moritz) Lauren is very excited to be a part of this amazing Frankenstein cast as Justine in the movie adaptation! Lauren is a graduate of Five Towns College with her BFA in Theatre Arts. She was the Justine/Clair/Elizabeth swing prior to the pandemic at St. Luke's Theatre NYC. She has recently been seen working with Maria Torres as an emerging artist and she performed at 555 theatre and LATEA. Her past credits include Little Shop of Horrors(Audrey) Hairspray(Tracey Turnblad), Les Miserables(Eponine), Winter Wonderettes(Betty Jean Reynolds's). She has been working on her poetry videos that can been seen on her website! Insta:Lauren_Coccaro – Laurencoccaro.wixsite.com	

JULIE MCNAMARA (Elizabeth's friend) Julie McNamara is glad to return to WriteAct Rep after performing in "Swing" and "It Came From Beyond". Julie is an actor, singer, comedian, and millennial based in NYC, who holds a degree in Voice Performance from Westminster Choir College. Favorite roles include Amy in Company, Fairy Godmother in Shrek the Musical, Aymens in As You Like It, and Blue Fairy in Pinocchio. She is also an actor with both the Magnet Theater Sketch house team and BoogieManja Sketch Collective. Proudly represented by Dream Maker Talent Management. Follow @juliemcnamaraartist on Instagram and @juliemcnamara on YouTube.	
ISAIAH DELGADO (Young man) Isaiah Delgado: Credits Include – The Importance of Being Earnestly LGBTQ+ OFF BROADWAY! (Production Team), Featured Actor in The Production Shot of Frankenstein, the musical at the Park Theatre, Professional Photographer for Various Theatrical Shows in NYC, In The Heights**** (Benny), A Chorus Line "I hope I get it" (Acted and Directed) MHS P.A.A, SNL Skit, Abbott & Costello Who's On First (Costello), Broken Short Motivational Film (written and directed), Cancer Research Commercial Motta Film's Lima Cares Be Super to a Hero, Coke-a-Cola, Commercial for Motta Film's (Played Young Boy). He has a personal camera and can be seen shooting all around the greater NYC area for his small business. When not shooting, he can be seen acting with various Off-Broadway theatrical repertoires. He attends Memorial High School in NJ, and is a proud member of Memorial High School's Performing Arts Academy, and Write Act Repertory. Member of the International Honor Thespian Society. For All Inquiries please view Isaiah's website listed in his Instagram. @_Isaiahdelgadoo	
REBECCA PONTICELLO (Caroline Frankenstein) Rebecca Ponticello is happy to be back in NYC after working for Disney Parks as a member of the Disney College Program for the past few months. Past credits include: Tours: Funikijam (Agent Harmony), Jurassic Quest (Performer), AIT's Murder Mystery Company (Actor), NYC: Nuclear Winter (Kris) and The Frogs (Richard Nixon/Chorus) at The Chain Theater, Off Broadway: The Importance of Being Earnest(ly) LGBTQ+ (Assistant Director/Casting Associate), Swan Lake Rock Opera (Production Stage Manager), Little Christmas Miracles (Co-Production Stage Manager), The Trial of the Potomac (Crew Chief), Educational: Everybody (Love) at Rider University.	