

Ruth: The Musical

Musical Themes Discussion Guide

WELCOME! Thank you for choosing the Ruth: The Musical Musical Themes Discussion Guide, in conjunction with Midwest Food Bank's Kapu Africa. We hope that this brief study will help you to see a glimpse of God's plan for our redemption and how God loves to use His people to work out that plan.

Midwest Food Bank has eleven locations, nine in the United States, and one each in East Africa and Haiti. Its mission is to share the love of Christ, by alleviating hunger and malnutrition locally and throughout the world and providing disaster relief; all without discrimination. More information is available at midwestfoodbank.org

Ruth: The Musical is an original work of musical theater written by David Getz in 2018. Ruth received its world premiere at Grace Church in Morton, IL, on June 16, 2018.

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Musical Themes Discussion

- ❖ What was your favorite song from the musical? Why?
- ❖ How would you describe the genre of this musical? What songs or elements in the show influenced your answer?
- ❖ Getz was heavily influenced by the musicals *Les Misérables*, *Chess*, and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* as he wrote *Ruth*. Do you hear elements of any of these musicals in the show? Did you hear influences from other shows?
- ❖ There is no dialogue in this show other than the spoken poetry sections. Did you feel this worked? Were there places you wish there had been dialogue?
- ❖ What was the first melody heard at the very beginning of the overture? (Go back and listen if you don't remember.) What thematic purpose do you think this melody serves in beginning the show?
- ❖ What song do you feel defined each character throughout the show? You may have a different answer for Act 1 and Act 2.



Musical Trivia

- ❖ Getz began writing Ruth in November of 2011. The first song sketched was “Elimelech’s Song” from the beginning of Act 1. The song was originally written as a solo. Getz added Naomi and the two sons to the song after the first rehearsal in March of 2018.
- ❖ In Naomi’s song “Bitter,” when she says the word for the first time, it is accompanied by a major chord. This is to symbolize that good outcomes will result from her current despair.
- ❖ Getz finished the finale number just two months before the world premiere in June of 2018.
- ❖ Most songs took Getz awhile to compose, but not “The Harvest.” Getz wrote that in one afternoon; it was the only song he started and finished in the same day.
- ❖ “The Bargain” went through the most rewrites. It began as an upbeat rock-style tune (think “You Can’t Stop the Beat” from Hairspray), but that version quickly got scrapped. Getz ended up varying the melody from “Timeless” into a waltz feel for the final version.
- ❖ Doug Habegger, who reads the lines of poetry in the world premiere production and sings in the chorus, was the pastor at Grace Church who was preaching on the book of Ruth when Getz first had the idea for the musical.
- ❖ Getz recycled many of his own compositions to complete Ruth. “Shadow of Your Wings” was originally Piano Nocturne in D Minor, “Wherever You Go” was originally Danzon No. 1, and “Ruth & Naomi’s Conversation” was a melody Getz wrote for a composition assignment in college.



Eager to learn more about Ruth: The Musical directly from the composer and main cast members and share your thoughts?

An exclusive “**Composer’s Q & A**” forum will take place on Saturday, September 12 for a donation of \$20. Participants will have the opportunity to talk with Getz and lead performers from the show via Zoom. The forum will include a discussion of the making of the show over several years, its meaning, and the performers experiences in the arts.

Buy your ticket now before it’s sold out: <https://events.idonate.com/ruth>



For more about this event, visit www.midwestfoodbank.org/ruth

For more about **Ruth: The Musical** and David Getz, visit www.theruthmusical.com

For more about Midwest Food Bank Kapu Africa, visit www.midwestfoodbank.org/kapuafrica

More resources, such as the Discussion Guide, can be found at www.midwestfoodbank.org/ruth

