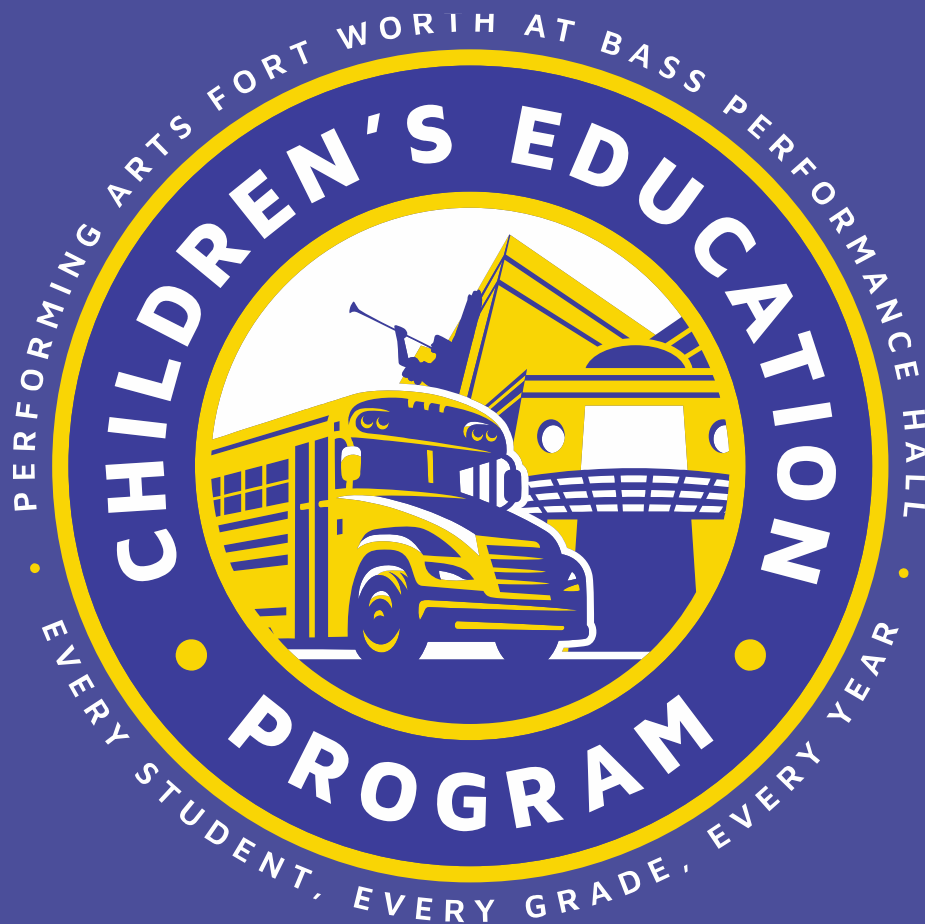




presents

Mark Twain Tonight!

featuring

Richard Thomas as Mark Twain

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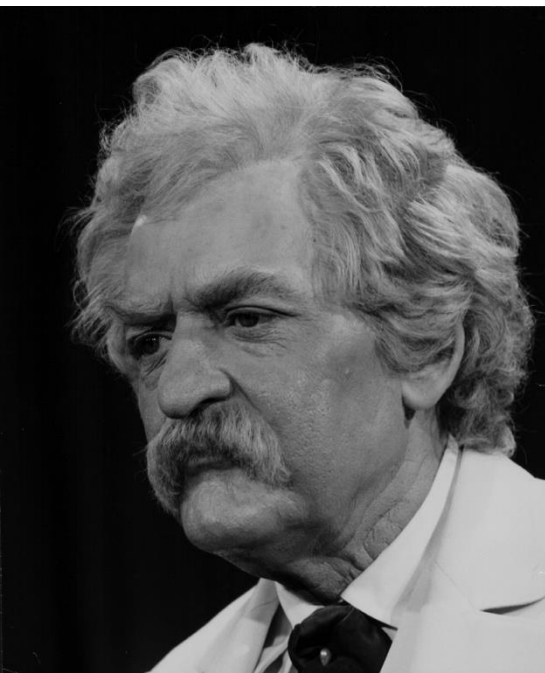


Introduction

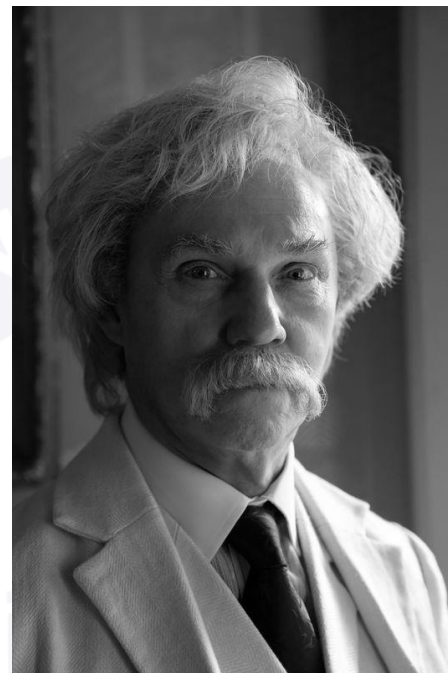
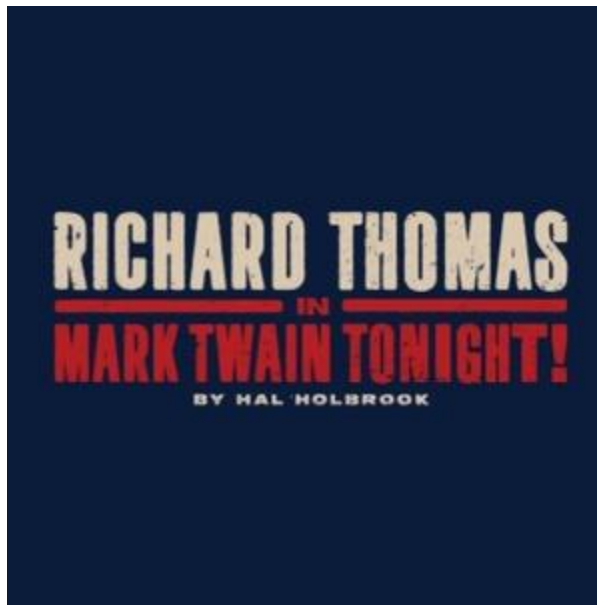


About the Show

Mark Twain Tonight! is a legendary one-man show that brings the wit, humor, and wisdom of Mark Twain to life on stage. Originally created and performed by Hal Holbrook, the play features Twain's sharp observations on politics, society, and human nature-remarkably relevant today. It could be said that Hal Holbrook came as close to the early American touring actor as anyone on the modern-day stage. After 63 consecutive years and over 2300 performances of Mark Twain Tonight! it may be the longest running show in theatre history. It was developed in a Greenwich Village nightclub in 1956 and landed on the Ed Sullivan show; he opened off-Broadway in 1959 to rave reviews; and in 1960 The State Department sent his Mark Twain to Europe. In 1966 he won a Tony Award and in 1967 CBS aired a 90-minute special of the show which was seen by 30 million people. Holbrook decided to retire the show in 2017. Richard Thomas is the first and only actor authorized to perform the play.



Hal Holbrook as Mark Twain



Richard Thomas as Mark Twain

Richard Thomas

At 8 years old, Richard Thomas debuted on Broadway in *Sunrise at Campobello* and began a decades-long acting career. His performances on the stage have earned him numerous accolades and awards, including nominations for a Tony Award and a Drama Desk Award. Before stepping into the role of Mark Twain, Thomas completed a 3-year tour as “Atticus Finch” in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.



On film, Thomas became a household name as “John-Boy Walton” in the television series *The Waltons*. Over the course of six seasons on the CBS drama, Thomas earned an Emmy award and multiple Golden Globe award nominations. Contemporary audiences may recognize him as a series regular in shows such as *Ozark* and *The Americans*, or in feature films like *The Unforgivable* and *Taking Woodstock*.

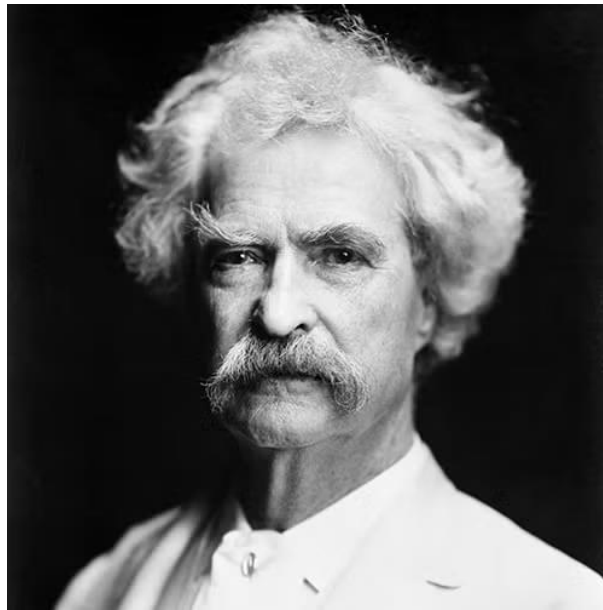
On November 17th, 2025, Richard Thomas was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame.

Richard Thomas in the Mark Twain house

Mark Twain

Born in November 1835, Samuel Langhorne Clemens was raised on the banks of the Mississippi River in Hannibal, Missouri.

As a young man, Clemens was no stranger to adventure and failure. After losing his position as a riverboat pilot, quitting the Confederate army, and coming up broke at silver prospecting, Clemens finally found his calling as a writer. In 1865, Samuel Langhorne Clemens had a new job at the Territorial Enterprise and a new name: Mark Twain. Twain's employment as a journalist sent him travelling across the globe for the next six years, inspiring his novel *The Innocents Abroad* and bringing him to his wife, Olivia Langdon. In 1871, the Clemenses settled down in Hartford, Connecticut. Over the next 20 years, they built a home and raised three daughters, and Twain wrote his most famous novels.



Drawing from his childhood (*Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*), travels across the American frontier (*Roughing It*), and observations of society (*The Gilded Age*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*), Twain used his wry humor to express his criticisms on the evolution of America. This amusing yet unflinching honesty is what established Mark Twain's legacy in American literature.

Notable Works by Mark Twain

In 1867, Mark Twain's short story *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* became the first of many published works by the author. Twain's writings varied in length from essays to novel series; the titles listed below are widely regarded as his most famous books.

Travelogues and Non-Fiction:

The Innocents Abroad (1869)

Roughing It (1872)

A Tramp Abroad (1880)

Life on the Mississippi (1883)

Following the Equator (1897)

Novels:

The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today (1873)

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876)

The Prince and the Pauper (1881)

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884)

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1889)

The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson (1894)

Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc (1896)

The Mysterious Stranger (1916)

Short Stories:

Extracts from Adam's Diary (1893)

Eve's Diary (1905)

Additional Study Materials

Catching Up with the Clemenses:

Virtual tours of the Mark Twain house, additional information about their family life, and classroom discussion prompts.

<https://marktwainhouse.org/edu/catching-up-with-the-clemenses/>

High School Lesson Plans and Discussion Prompts created by the Mark Twain House

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kSxQTJuFICUIhWhA62hDS1MoyVrtbly4>





Resources

Sources

- Mark Twain Tonight! – <https://twainplay.com/>
- Mark Twain House – <https://marktwainhouse.org/>





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Angels In The Wings

Angels in the Wings support the Children's Education Program of Performing Arts Fort Worth at the Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Performance Hall with gifts of \$1,000 and above. The Children's Education Program is an integral part of Bass Performance Hall but maintains its own support independent of Performing Arts Fort Worth. Each year, 70,000 students from Fort Worth ISD and North Texas experience high-quality curriculum-related performing arts programs at Bass Performance Hall that are free of charge to all participants because of the generosity of our Angels in the Wings. Visit www.basshall.com or call (817) 212-4311 for more information.

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