

Section: Steve Martin – Writing0

Context: In 1993, Martin wrote his first full-length play *Picasso* at the Lapin Agile. The first reading of the play took place in Beverly Hills, California, at Steve Martin's home, with Tom Hanks reading the role of Pablo Picasso and Chris Sarandon reading the role of Albert Einstein. Following this, the play opened at the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago, Illinois, and played from October 1993 to May 1994, then went on to run successfully in Los Angeles, New York City, and several other US cities. In 2009, the school board in La Grande, Oregon, refused to allow the play to be performed after several parents complained about the content. In an open letter in the local *Observer* newspaper, Martin wrote "I have heard that some in your community have characterized the play as 'people drinking in bars, and treating women as sex objects.' With apologies to William Shakespeare, this is like calling *Hamlet* a play about a castle [...] I will finance a non-profit, off-high school campus production [...] so that individuals, outside the jurisdiction of the school board but within the guarantees of freedom of expression provided by the Constitution of the United States can determine whether they will or will not see the play". Throughout the 1990s, Martin wrote various pieces for *The New Yorker*. In 2002, he adapted the Carl Sternheim play *The Underpants*, which ran Off Broadway at Classic Stage Company, and in 2008 co-wrote and produced *Traitor*, starring Don Cheadle. He has also written the novellas *Shopgirl* (2000) and *The Pleasure of My Company* (2003), both more wry in tone than raucous. A story of a 28-year-old woman behind the glove counter at the Saks Fifth Avenue department store in Beverly Hills, *Shopgirl* was made into a film starring Martin and Claire Danes. The film premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in September 2005 and was featured at the Chicago International Film Festival and the Austin Film Festival before going into limited release in the US. In 2007, he published a memoir, *Born Standing Up*, which *Time* magazine named as one of the Top 10 Nonfiction Books of 2007, ranking it at No. 6, and praising it as "a funny, moving, surprisingly frank memoir." In 2010, he published the novel *An Object of Beauty*. Martin's play *Meteor Shower* opened at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre in August 2016, and went on to Connecticut's Long Wharf Theatre later the same year. The play opened on Broadway at the Booth Theater on November 29, 2017. The cast features Amy Schumer, Laura Benanti, Jeremy Shamos and Keegan-Michael Key, with direction by Jerry Zaks. Martin wrote the story for the Disney movie *Magic Camp*, which will be released in 2018. CANNOTANSWER

STUDENT: **When did Martin begin taking an interest in writing?**

TEACHER: \hookrightarrow In 1993, Martin wrote his first full-length play Picasso at the Lapin Agile.

STUDENT: **Did he write for anyone else before writing this play?**

TEACHER: \hookrightarrow CANNOTANSWER

STUDENT: **Did Steve Martin make an impression on the current president?**

TEACHER: \nrightarrow CANNOTANSWER

STUDENT: **What other types of work did Martin write?**

TEACHER: \hookrightarrow Martin's play Meteor Shower

STUDENT: **What year was this?**

TEACHER: \hookrightarrow 2016,

STUDENT: **Is there anything else interesting about his writing?**

TEACHER: \hookrightarrow Yes, opened at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre in August 2016, and went on to Connecticut's Long Wharf Theatre later the same year.

STUDENT: **Did Martin gain an interest while he was in college?**

TEACHER: \nrightarrow CANNOTANSWER