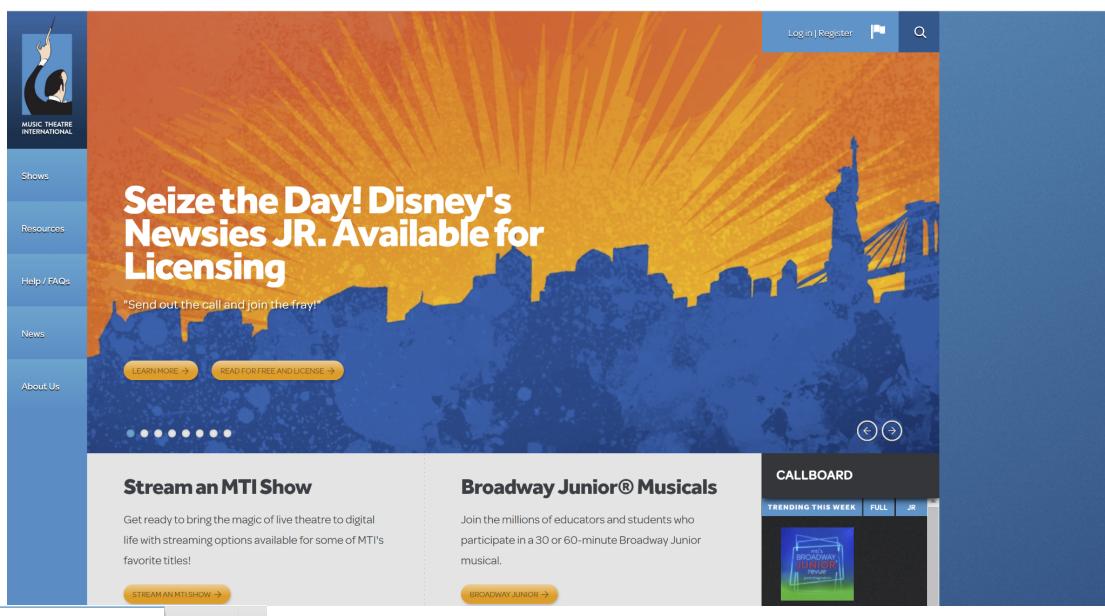


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Comp Sci 130, Sect. 1  
20 April 2022

## Homework 1: Design & Accessibility Analysis

### DESIGN

I analyzed <https://www.mtishows.com/>, which is a licensing service for stage musicals. Interested producers can purchase performance rights from Music Theatre International, which in theory makes it easier to plan a show season. In some cases, MTI is the only way to purchase show rights, as many composers and writers don't offer independent performance rights and require interested parties to go through a licensing company like MTI.



MTI's website is a burst of brightness and color, which makes sense given that their mission statement includes, "MTI is particularly dedicated to educational theatre." Even though about half of the shows available on the site are for adult performers and audiences, the bright blue background color and loud, rotating panels of children's show

#### Raising the Next Generation of Theatre Artists and Audiences

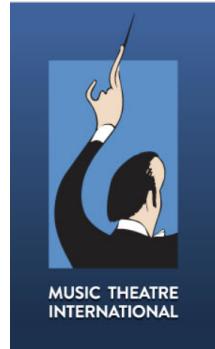
MTI has made every music and drama teacher's life in America easier – including mine. They make it possible to license and produce the show with their materials and incredible educational resources. MTI is the first place anyone who knows goes.

– Holly Stanfield, Theatre Arts Teacher,  
Kenosha, WI

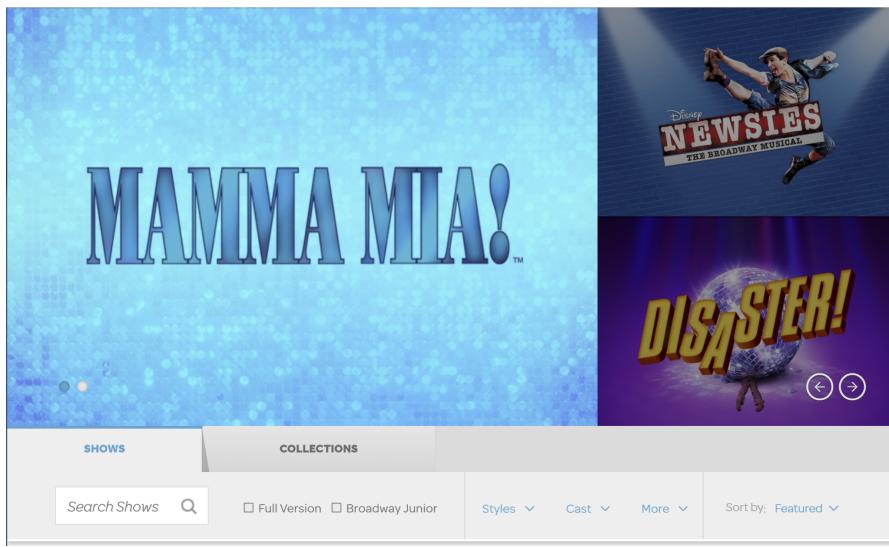
Access to the arts is a right, not a privilege, and MTI is deeply committed to arts education and the positive impact experiencing a musical has on a school and community.

Our special collections of developmentally appropriate musicals for student performers ensure that the arts continue to flourish at all levels. Conceived by MTI CEO, Freddie Gershon, in 1996, *Broadway Junior*® musicals are perfect for teachers or directors who are new to musical theatre and are seeking to introduce students to the joys of participating in a show. *Broadway Junior*™

book covers indicate that MTI's focus is on attracting producers who work with children. MTI's "Education, Advocacy & Inclusion" tab is hidden in their "About Us" section, and although they claim that arts access is a right, not a privilege, they have limited stock of shows that uplift BIPOC performers—and their logo is of an old white man, which doesn't seem very inclusive of the people who would likely be performing their shows.



MTI's biggest strength is its use of bright images to draw attention and make it seem like kids performing these shows will have SO MUCH FUN ONSTAGE!!! It uses



huge photos as headings much bigger than text, so navigating the site is actually pretty entertaining.

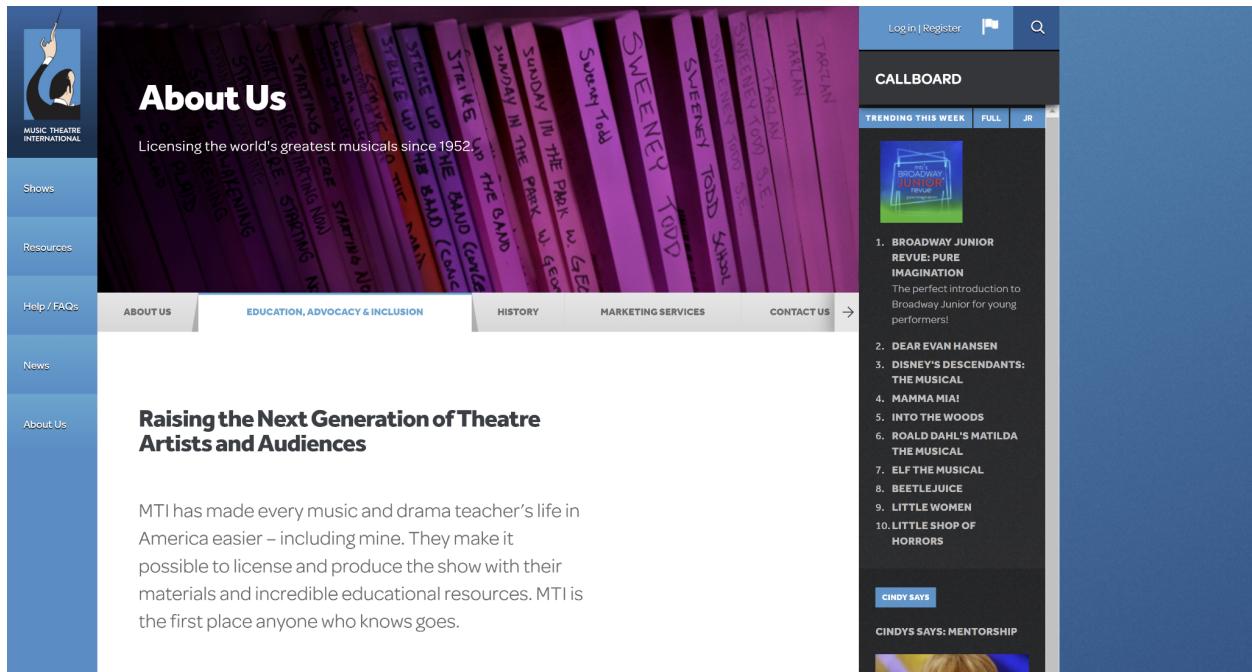
One of the biggest limitations of the site is that it's hard to get started. All of the pictures are pretty overwhelming and

make it hard to find the lists of shows you're actually looking for. The site basically functions as a giant database, but because there are so many huge images, it takes a while for smaller images to load for the show you're actually trying to access. Also, the side tabs are extensive and confusing, and it's easy to get lost as you try to navigate through the list of hundreds of shows. I also wish the filters



for show searches were more intuitive. Another issue is that in many places on the site they use gray text on a gray background or blue text on a blue background, which is difficult to read.

The site overall is super loud, especially with a side tab with links and a separate one for their “Callboard,” which is full of a lot of small words and makes it hard to focus on anything. And the site’s scale doesn’t fit a full desktop page—there’s a random column of blue to the right with no content. They could spread everything out more to take up that space.



One comparable licensing website is Concord Theatricals (<https://www.concordtheatricals.com/>), whose primary user base is adult artists instead of adults buying rights for children’s shows. This site is objectively more user-friendly because it’s much more liberal with white space and in my opinion makes it easier to find the shows you’re looking for. It’s also much more visually appealing and less overwhelming than MTI. I also like how they curate their own collections of shows for producers to look through.

SEARCH BY TITLE, AUTHOR, KEYWORD

[Advanced Search](#)



US ▾ HELP SIGN IN ▾ [CART](#)

PERFORM ▾ SHOP ▾ AUTHORS ▾ MUSIC PUBLISHING RECORDINGS RESOURCES

**PLEASE NOTE:**  
Our US warehouse will close at 5 pm EST Thursday, April 21st and remain closed until 9am EST Tuesday, April 26th. Any orders placed during this time will ship out on Tuesday, April 26th in the order they were received.

Filter by:

- TYPE OF SHOW
- GENRE
- PERFORMANCE GROUP
- CAST SIZE

[ADVANCED SEARCH](#)

**FUN HOME**  
Explore Jeanine Tesori and Lisa Kron's Tony Award-winning musical about seeing your parents through grown-up eyes.  
[License Now](#)

Image: 2015 Broadway Production of *Fun Home* (Joan Marcus)

**THE ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER COLLECTION**

**THE RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN COLLECTION**

**THE SARAH RUHL COLLECTION (SAMUEL FRENCH)**

**THE TAMS-WITMARK COLLECTION**

[FEEDBACK](#)

#### FEATURED COLLECTIONS

**MUSICALS ABOUT UNREQUITED LOVE**  
  
Image: Chicago (Jeremy Daniel)

**MUSICALS CELEBRATING THE BLACK EXPERIENCE**  
  
Image: Pippin (Joan Marcus)

**FAMILY LOVE MUSICALS**  
  
Image: Show Boat (Tristram Kenton)

Concord also features these gorgeous spotlight series that make great use of clear fonts and contrasting colors.



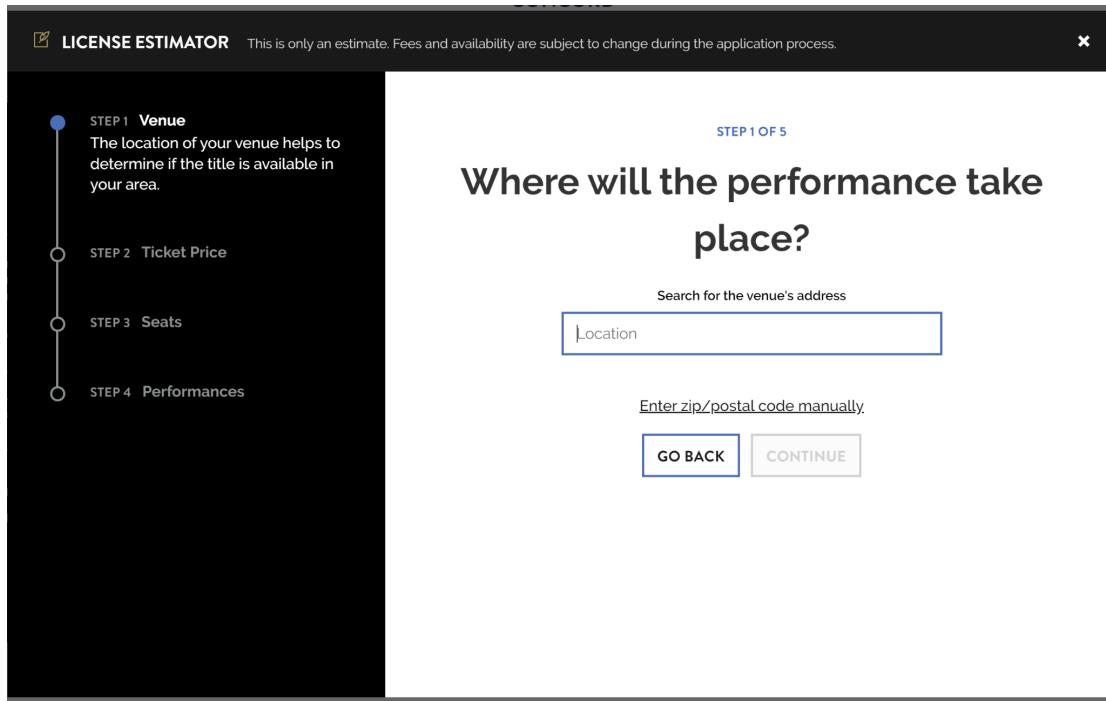
ON BREAKING CHARACTER  
**WOMEN IN THE SPOTLIGHT SERIES**

From Tony and Pulitzer winners to undiscovered gems, explore these shows featuring complex and compelling roles for women of varied ages, backgrounds and positions.

[Discover More](#)

[FEEDBACK](#)

My favorite part of the site is their super simple and interactive “Get an Estimate” feature:

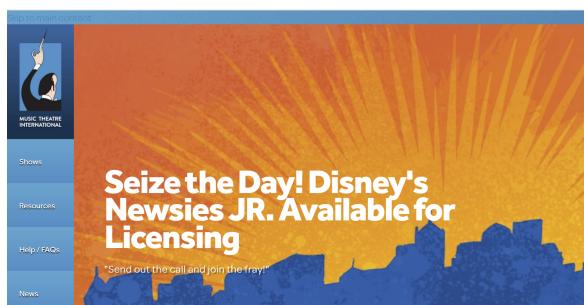


The screenshot shows a dark-themed user interface for the MTI License Estimator. At the top, a banner reads "LICENSE ESTIMATOR" with a small icon, followed by the note "This is only an estimate. Fees and availability are subject to change during the application process." Below this is a vertical navigation menu on the left with four steps: "STEP 1 Venue" (selected, indicated by a blue dot), "STEP 2 Ticket Price", "STEP 3 Seats", and "STEP 4 Performances". The main content area is titled "STEP 1 OF 5" and asks "Where will the performance take place?". It features a search bar labeled "Search for the venue's address" with the placeholder "Location" and an alternative input field "Enter zip/postal code manually". At the bottom are "GO BACK" and "CONTINUE" buttons.

Every aspect of the site uses contrast and intuitive alignment to its benefit and provides a much better user experience overall.

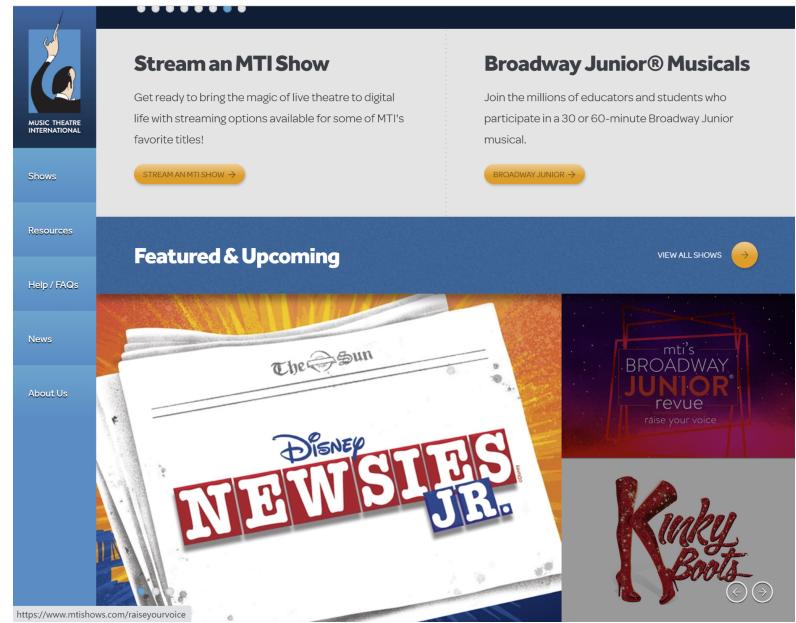
## ACCESSIBILITY

I performed several accessibility tests on the MTI website. When testing how functional the site was without using a mouse or trackpad, I quickly became frustrated. I even had trouble finding the skip link at first because the blue text was barely visible against the blue background. (It's in the top left hand corner of the image if you're also having trouble seeing it.) There also



weren't any visible focus rings on any elements of the page as you tab, so it's hard to tell where your cursor is. I also had trouble figuring out how to jump back and forth between the sidebar content and the main content, and was wholly

unsuccessful in accessing the right sidebar with just my keyboard. Beyond that, the link at the bottom of the page indicated what I'd actually clicked on, but it was often an element that wasn't even on the page. For example, the site says I have tabbed to a link on "Raise Your Voice," but the actual link or image to "Raise Your Voice" isn't visible anywhere on the page. (It was in a slideshow that was displaying a different image at the time.) I also discovered that shrinking the page eventually makes both sidebars disappear, but doesn't disable offscreen interactive content.



The next accessibility test I conducted used a screenreader, which mixed the names of the sidebar headers in with a bunch of HTML jargon. For example, the screenreader says "Ain't Misbehaving Music Theatre International Tab Item" when you click on "Ain't Misbehaving" on the list of available musicals. It doesn't include any of the actual text of the page or sidebars. It also lists a bunch of h tags with little rhyme or reason.

I tried removing images, which left the site with very little content, but it was still possible to search for shows. I wish there were more image descriptions!

I then tested out high contrast mode. The site in high contrast, besides being much less visually appealing, was mostly a jumble of different black squares, and it was really hard to tell them apart. The blue background color, oddly, didn't change to black.

I tried analyzing both MTI and Concord with axe DevTools, but it didn't work:

We're sorry, but axe DevTools was unable to analyze the current tab.

One of the following may be the issue:

- The url is a `file://` url and you have not granted access via *Allow Access to File URLs*.
- The url is not in the accepted list of sites in extension settings under *Site Access*.
- The tab is on a restricted page (about:blank, internal browser pages)
- Organizational policies restrict extensions from running against this url.

Please check your settings and try again.

I was able to use the extension with the DevTools site, so it seems like an issue with the licensing sites, but regardless it doesn't seem like a good sign for accessibility.

The screenshot shows the deque DevTools interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'axe Tools', 'Services & Training', 'News & Resources', 'Compliance', 'Company', 'Search' (with a magnifying glass icon), and 'Contact Us'. Below the header, a blue banner reads 'Free Accessibility Browser Extensions'. A cookie consent message is visible, stating: 'This website uses cookies. In order to work as intended, this site stores cookies on your device. Accepting improves our site and provides you with personalized service. Declining results in one cookie being placed on your device so we remember your choice. To learn more about the cookies we use, please read our Privacy Policy.' There are 'Decline' and 'Accept' buttons. The main content area displays an audit report for 'axe-core 4.4.1'. It shows a total of 28 issues: 24 automatic and 4 guided. Under 'AUTOMATIC ISSUES', 'NEEDS REVIEW' has 24 issues, while 'GUIDED ISSUES' has 0. Under 'CRITICAL' and 'MODERATE', there are 2 and 0 issues respectively. A 'Best Practices' button is turned 'ON'. On the right, there's a 'tablist' element with the following code: `<div class="tablist" aria-orientation="horizontal">`. Below this, instructions say 'To solve this issue, you need to...' and 'Fix the following: ARIA attribute is not allowed: aria-orientation="horizontal"'. The interface has a dark theme with light-colored text and icons.

Compared to MTI, Concord doesn't look pretty in high contrast, but the color is super clear, and the black background on the text means it's easily distinguishable from the photo behind it.

SEARCH BY TITLE, AUTHOR, KEYWORD

Advanced Search



US ▾ HELP SIGN IN ▾ CART

PERFORM ▾ SHOP ▾ AUTHORS ▾ MUSIC PUBLISHING RECORDINGS RESOURCES

A CONCORD THEATRICALS TITLE

# AMÉLIE: TEEN EDITION

*Full-Length Musical, Comedy / 5f, 7m, 1girl(s)*

Book by [Craig Lucas](#)  
 Music by [Daniel Messé](#)  
 Lyrics by [Nathan Tysen & Daniel Messé](#)

Based on the motion picture *Amélie* written by Jean-Pierre Jeunet & Guillaume Laurant

In this whimsical musical adaptation of the romantic comedy film, designed specifically for high school performers, an extraordinary young woman improvises small but surprising acts of kindness.

Image 2019 Palmyra Area High School Production (Hung Nguyen)

REQUEST LICENSE  
[GET THE SCRIPT](#)  
[GET AN ESTIMATE](#)

FEEDBACK

Also unlike MTI, Concord uses focus rings and allows you to jump between sections using the keyboard.

E, AUTHOR, KEYWORD

Advanced Search



PERFORM ▾ SHOP ▾ AUTHORS ▾ MUSIC PUBLISHING RECORDINGS RESOURCES

A CONCORD THEATRICALS TITLE

# SMILE (AS IF IT'S YOUR LAST)

*Full-Length Musical, Comedy / 10f, 6m, 2boy(s)*

Book and Lyrics by Howard Ashman

- MUSICALS
- PLAYS
- CONCERTS
- [NEW SHOWS](#)
- YOUTH & TEEN EDITIONS
- A-Z

Although its visual accessibility is better, Concord also fails the screenreader test. The reader only recognizes the headings of articles and never gets to the actual content even when it's highlighted.

Based on the accessibility checks I did, Concord is more accessible in general. My biggest takeaway from doing these checks on the MTI site is that visual accessibility issues seem to correlate with bigger issues. If a website is challenging to use with a mouse and keyboard, it's almost impossible to use it with a disability that prevents the use of one of those.

What it seems like MTI desperately needs is a page restructuring. I found the Concord site much easier to navigate simply because the navigation bar was at the top of the page rather than the side. Also, MTI fills its pages with lots and lots of small text that isn't accessible via screenreader. It could benefit from minimalism and much more whitespace. It's no wonder that theatre professionals are so often overwhelmed with the prospect of show selection and the general mess that is licensing for performance rights.