The show opens with Anna, a prim and proper young schoolteacher from Wales, being escorted to the palace where she is to instruct the royal children. She soon becomes involved in helping the King, as he tries to prove to the western world that he is a modern and scientific ruler and not a barbarian. Through the clash of eastern and western values, Anna and the King find themselves constantly frustrated with each other, and at the same time falling in love. The play ends with the King dying, some months after Anna had broken his spirit by undermining too many of the values he had grown up with. He leaves behind a woman who, through the teachings of Anna, will bring many aspects of western culture to the rule of Siam, thus accomplishing what his father would have wanted to do, but found himself unable.

Although set against a background of song and dance, the characters maintain a sense of reality, and express a powerful amount of emotion, especially during the songs. With the exception of Justin Triman, a ten-year-old playing the part of Anna's son, all of the singing is superb. It is a pity that the sound system used, coupled with the acoustics of the theater, is not able to do the singers justice. This is most noticeable on long, drawn-out notes, which give rise to some distortion. It was also annoying when Brynner accidentally stepped on one of the stage mikes. The set was fairly simple, but through well handled lighting, it became the final ingredient in a very well presented play.

Unlike Brynner, who dominates the stage in this manner, Kate Hunter Brown, playing the part of Anna, holds the audience with the beauty of her voice. She plays the part well, though some of her mannerisms seem a bit childish. Surely at that time no school teacher would let herself be found sitting on the floor, her hoop-skirts arranged about herself with students sitting on the fringes. These issues seem to add to the performance, joining with the music to twit the plot slightly away from reality and the problems it confronts. Together, Anna and the King work a kind of magic on the stage. They seem almost as two children battling with responsibility in an adult world, and always just missing their goals.