

History of American Musical Theatre

Musical theatre is considered to be one of the only truly1._____.

For over 2._____ musicals have found a connection with audiences like no other shows.

Pre-Golden Age- the Variety Shows

In the late 1800's, before musicals had storylines, Broadway was a home for the 3._____.

4._____, was known for his variety show – considered by many the largest and most spectacular-

5._____.

It was during through the variety shows that many performers and writers become famous across the country through their performances and records.

6._____ was one of the most popular song and dance men from this period. He helped to make 7._____ –the place where many

subway trains met in New York City- a famous landmark for performers. In fact, the only statue of an actor to exist in New York is that of Cohen in Times Square. Song writers also become famous during this period. One of the most influential writers was

8._____ who made the musical style of

9._____ famous. He became one of the most important creators for Ziegfeld and his Follies. Another popular songwriter was

10._____, who helped to transform the music of ragtime into the sounds of 11._____.

His music became so popular because he wrote to form

“12._____”.

It was also during this time that actors, along with other American working groups, began to seek rights at the workplace. In the early 1900's, the

13._____ was formed after a successful strike against unfair work conditions in the theatre. This marked the first time actors had guidelines to protect them and insure they received

14._____. This organization still exists today and represents a majority of actors and stage managers.

As shows became more and more popular in Times Square and on Broadway, many names were given to the area. “15._____” was a nickname that remains to this day, but another name for the area was taken by the city as its own moniker. It was once said of Broadway that it was “the goal of all ambition, the pot of gold at the end a drab and colorless rainbow.

16._____ we all aim for.”

In 1917 Florence Ziegfeld and 17._____ began to produce a show that actually had a story. This became the musical 18._____. When the show opened to rave reviews it marked a turning point in theatre history that set the groundwork for the 19._____ of musical theatre.

The Great Depression & the Golden Age

Due to the social problems at the time, the period around the 20._____ inspired a new era of creativity on Broadway. For the first time ever there was social commentary – statements of ideas and beliefs about an issue – presented on the Broadway stage.

21._____ (WPA) created the 22._____ during the Great Depression to provide work for performers and entertainment to the citizens. During its time the Federal Theatre performed for over 23._____. Federal Theatre Project 891 was the production of 24._____. According to some WPA authorities the show represented what was happening in the real world to well. On opening night the WPA demanded 25._____.

However, the show lived on. The audience was taken to another theatre and the performers still performed the show in defiance of the WPA and AEA at risk of 26._____. Their performance was seen as a statement of 27._____ and artistic creation. Soon after this incident

the WPA shut down the 28. _____ for good. But it opened the doors for the more creative shows to come.

When Rogers and Hammerstein wrote 29. _____ the groundwork for the Golden Age of musical theatre was built. This was the first show where the 30. _____ was written before the music. *Oklahoma!* established the 31. _____ format, a style in which most musicals since have been created in. To this day, *Oklahoma!* is the most 32. _____, with at least one performance of the show happening each day somewhere in America. Other Golden Age musicals that were created by Rogers and Hammerstein were: 33. _____, easily making them the most influential created of the period. Other shows that were created at this time are: 34. _____.

It was also during this time period that the first 35. _____ were given for excellence in the field of theatre arts on Broadway. While there are awards given for performances and non-musicals plays, the biggest award of the night is always the winner for 36. _____. The Tony Awards are awarded annually each year in early June.

The Rock Opera and the Age of the Producers

The 37. _____ was the next evolution musicals took toward modern musicals. These shows combined 38. _____ of the time period with lyrics, giving the shows a stronger connection to their audience, especially 39. _____. In the 60's and 70's social disarray-brought on by the 40. _____ and the 41. _____ - lead many young people to stand up to the established society by creating a counter culture movement. It was also during this time that the show 42. _____ was first created and performed. This show was created as being the first true rock opera. It was also the first 43. _____, because for the first time the youth felt

a strong connection to a musical and it helped the older audience members develop an understanding of what the youth were going through.

In the late 70's and early 80's Broadway was dying out as a business due to an 44._____. It wasn't until 45._____ and his groundbreaking show 46._____ came to the stage that audience began to return to the theatre. Bennet also revolutionized the creative process for musicals by creating the 47._____ – where actors and creators come together to create a show through experimental rehearsals. *A Chorus Line* had such strong ticket sales that it helped to bring in the tourist trade to Broadway, which is where a majority of the business comes from to this day.

During this period of time, 48._____ became the only person in history to win an Emmy (for television), an Oscar (for film) and a Tony (for theatre) as a 49._____. Bob Fosse was and still is considered one of the greatest 50._____ to this day. His style is still emulated and borrowed by performers around the world. His most enduring creation for Broadway was the musical 51._____, which is still performed around the world to this day.

Another boost to lagging ticket sales was the works of composer 52._____ and producer 53._____. McIntosh brought huge hits from 54._____ to Broadway with huge ticket sales. The first major work he brought was Lloyd Webber's 55._____ which ran for over 18 years on Broadway. This lead to other Lloyd Webber hits such as 56._____, and works by other creators such as 57._____, a lavish musical based on Victor Hugo's novel about the French Revolution. To this day, McIntosh's four highest grossing productions have made more money worldwide than the top five highest grossing films of all time.

The Modern Era-Broadway today

After the success of the 80's and early 90's a movement started to rejuvenate

Times Square to give the area a more “58. _____” reputation. The city government began 59. _____ as an effort to reach their goals. This effort was helped by the 60. _____ producing their first show, 61. _____, which became a huge success with families traveling to the city. More of an effort was made when Walt Disney bought Florence Ziegfeld’s old theatre the 62. _____. After years of reconstruction the theatre was reopened as the 63. _____ with the premiere of 64. _____ directed by Julie Taymor. The refurbished theatre inspired other companies to start projects of their own which eventually lead to the Times Square we know today. Another generational show also appeared at this time with Jonathan Larson’s 65. _____. Based on his own experiences growing up in New York in the 80’s, *RENT* is a rock opera that tells the story of a group of friends struggling and trying to survive during the 66. _____ of the 80s. Larson became an iconic creator instantly connected to his show due to his 67. _____. On the night the show was to open for the first performance, he passed away due to 68. _____. He never got to see the impact and influence his show would have on a generation of theatre audiences.

After the events of 69. _____ the Broadway theaters were closed for the first time in decades. But soon after Broadway and its performers became a source of 70. _____ to the city. Just as after 71. _____, Broadway became a place for escape. Many 72. _____ and popular revivals sold out performances for months in advance.

Shows also have become 73. _____ to produce. Now many shows can cost 74. _____ of dollars. Most are considered risk to investors. One such show, 75. _____-based on an alternative take on the *Wizard of Oz*- was one such risk that paid off. *Wicked* has become one of the most successful shows in recent history thanks to the financial support of a movie studio. This

partnership opened new doors to create larger shows and create new business opportunities to help Broadway thrive for years to come.

Broadway has been around for over 100 years. Even though it has had difficult times to match its successful times, Broadway is and always will be the home of a true American art form and 76._____.

Listening Section

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.