

Song, Stage and Screen Conference History

SSS I: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO THE MUSICAL STAGE

Our annual Song, Stage and Screen conferences began with our very first conference, SSS I: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Musical Stage, held at the University of Portsmouth, April 28 through 30, 2006.

Organized by the School of Creative Arts, Film, and Media, in conjunction with the Centre for Music Theatre, and hosting the Music Theatre Working Group of the International Federation for Theatre Research.

Contributions are invited to the conference, which aims to bring together scholars from all over the world in any discipline, working on the relationship between music and the stage / screen.

The official language of the conference is English. We would be particularly interested in papers, panels, and workshops on the following themes, although these should not be taken as exclusive:

- Problems of Genre: Opera / Music(al) Theatre
- Utopia and Reality: Escapism and the musical stage
- Postcolonial Approaches to the musical stage
- Gender and sexuality and the musical stage
- Performance Practice
- Authenticity
- Ideology and the musical stage
- Culture and Society
- Globalization and the consumption of the musical stage
- Analysis: the fusion of words and music

- Shakespeare in Song

We are also interested in papers that engage with practice as research. Please contact the organizers if you have suggestions for papers that might require performance-based demonstration.

There will be a complementary program of cultural events around the city of Portsmouth, organized in conjunction with the New Theatre Royal, Music in the Round, and Portsmouth Cathedral.

Note: It is anticipated that this conference will act as a catalyst for the publication of the first International Journal of Music Theatre, which is likely to include submissions from delegates.

SSS II

Our 2nd annual Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS II, was held at the School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds, UK, on March 23 through 25, 2007.

Contributions are invited to the above conference, which aims to bring together scholars from all over the world in any discipline, working on the relationship between music and the stage/screen.

The official language of the conference is English. It would be particularly interested in papers, panels and workshops on the following themes, although these should not be taken as exclusive:

- The body performing Music(al) Theatre
- Semiotics of escapism: watching Music(al) Theatre
- Music(al) Theatre as voyeurism
- Contemporary British Music(al) Theatre
- Post-modernism and songs on stage
- Ideology, Politics and the Musical stage

- Globalisation and the consumption of the Musical stage
- Problems of Genre: Opera / Music(al) Theatre
- Utopia and Reality: Escapism and the screen Musical
- Gender and sexuality in Music(al) Theatre
- Analysis: the fusion of words and music
- Paralinguistics and the rhetorical expression of music in song

It is also interested in hosting a small number of small-scale Music(al) Theatre performances (of up to 6 performers). Papers should be designed to last no more than 20 minutes.

SSS III: A CONFERENCE ON AMERICAN MUSICAL THEATER

Our 3rd annual Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS III: A Conference on American Musical Theater, hosted by Music in Gotham, was held at The City College, City University of New York, on April 2 through 5, 2008.

Music in Gotham, in collaboration with Song, Stage and Screen III, invites proposals for presentations on topics in American musical theater, to be held on April 2-5, 2008 at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. We encourage abstracts of up to 250 words on 19th-century musical theater, the musical from 1900 through World War 1, and the musical from 1920 through the present. Proposals on other aspects of musical theater, including the issues of critical editions, revivals, and textual and musical problems are also welcome.

Song, Stage and Screen is the annual conference of the academic journal, *Studies in Musical Theatre*, which is published by Intellect Press. Previous Song, Stage and Screen conferences have been held at the University of Portsmouth, UK (2006) and University of Leeds, UK (2007). We are delighted to be bringing the 2008 conference to the USA, to be hosted in collaboration with Music in Gotham at the Graduate Center of City University of New York. It is expected that a selection of papers from this joint conference will be invited for submission to the journal and publication.

SSS IV: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO THE MUSICAL STAGE

Our 4th annual Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS IV: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Musical Stage, was held at the University of Maryland, College Park, on December 3 through 5, 2009.

The Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities and the Department of Theater at the University of Maryland, College Park invite submissions for the fourth annual international and interdisciplinary conference on musicals and music theatre. Papers on any topic relating to the intersection of music and theatre or film are welcomed. Suggested topics include:

- Collaboration and the creation of the musical
- Musical theatre texts
- Musical theatre archives
- Teaching the musical
- Representations of race and gender in the musical
- Critical and audience reception of the musical

This year's conference is organized by Doug Reside (University of Maryland), Laura Pollard (University of East Anglia), and Tracey Chessum (University of Maryland).

SSS V: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO 'VOICE' IN MUSIC, THEATRE AND FILM

Our 5th annual Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS V: Interdisciplinary Approaches to 'Voice' in Music, Theatre and Film, was held at the University of Winchester in Winchester, UK, on September 3 through 5, 2010.

Contact person: Millie Taylor and Ben Macpherson

The interdisciplinary Song, Stage and Screen conference this year focuses on “voice” in its many forms: from singing, extended voice, narration opera, or speech to the voice of composers, authors, filmmakers in opera, theatre and film.

SSS VI: INNOVATION AND CREATIVE COLLABORATION

Our 12th annual Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS VI: Innovation and Creative Collaboration, was held at the University of Missouri-Kansas City's Conservatory of Music and Dance, on June 20 through 23, 2011.

Hosted by the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance, the international interdisciplinary conference Song, Stage and Screen VI will take place 20-23 June 2011 in Kansas City, Missouri, USA. Proposals on the conference theme, “Innovation and Creative Collaboration,” are especially encouraged, though submissions on any topic related to musical theatre will be considered.

SSS VII: THE MUSICAL'S GLOBAL CONQUEST

Our 7th annual Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS VII: The Musical's Global Conquest, was held at the University of Groningen, Netherlands, July 2 through 5, 2012.

The *New York Times* has frequently reported on the increasingly global musical theatre community. Broadway flops are finding success in Europe and China's economic power is stimulating a musical theatre industry aspiring to enter the global market. This conference invites papers investigating the range of global contexts within which stage and film musicals are created, circulated and consumed. While much growth has occurred in recent decades, musicals have been circulated transnationally for more than a century, and forms such as the American musical developed out of a range of cultural influences. Stage and screen musicals also make the global local, with, for example, Rodgers and

Hammerstein choosing foreign settings for their stage musicals, culturally-specific narratives becoming global commodities (*Les Misérables*, *Billy Elliot*), and Bollywood films bringing exotic locations to domestic film audiences. Globalization is also a story musicals tell, as demonstrated by one of Broadway's newest musicals, *Once*, about an Irish musician and a Czech immigrant. With the explosion of media technologies offering ever more platforms and dimensions, musical theatre and film find new expression and distribution, shrinking the global stage onto our cellphones, laptops and iPads.

Paper topics might include, but are not limited to:

- The American stage and screen musical abroad
- Studies of developing or established domestic musical theatre and film industries
- Intercultural engagement within musical narratives
- International collaborations by musical creators and producers
- American appropriation of foreign styles and narratives
- The global training and circulation of performers
- Domestic reception of foreign musical theatre and films
- The colonial and post-colonial musical
- The musical and national identity
- The global musical marketplace
- Technology's role in the globalization of the musical

SSS VIII: WHAT WE DO WHEN WE DO WHAT WE DO: PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE IN MUSICAL THEATRE

Our 8th annual Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS VIII: What We Do When We Do What We Do: Process and Performance in Musical Theatre, was held at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London, on July 2 through 4, 2013.

We are excited to announce a three-day international conference of papers, talks and practical demonstrations on process and performance in musical theatre—or “what we do when we do what we do.”

This year’s conference participants will be responding to the theme of the conference with a wide range of critical reflections that cover historical and current musical theatre practices in Higher Education and in industry. Uniquely the conference this year will also host “interludes,” which will consist of practical demonstrations and talks from leading practitioners in voice studies, acting through song, directing, musical theatre festivals, black history, and casting.

We are also delighted to have for our keynote speaker, **Phil Willmott**, a multi-award winning British director, playwright, composer, and founding Artistic Director of his award winning theatre company The Steam Industry.

Confirmed visiting guest practitioners and speakers include:

- Jane Boston (voice specialist, researcher and poet)
- Deborah Garvey (voice and singing coach)
- Leon Robinson (black theatre archivist, actor, and dancer)
- Paul Harvard (musical director and acting coach)
- Joe Deer (musical theatre professor and director)
- Chris Grady (founder of Musical Theatre Matters, MTM: UK)
- Neil Rutherford (international casting director).

The Conference Curator is **Dr Zachary Dunbar**, senior lecturer in Music Theatre at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

The registration fee is £100 for the 3 days.

SSS IX: THE ART OF COLLABORATION IN MUSICAL THEATRE

Our 9th annual Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS IX: The Art of Collaboration in Musical Theatre, was held at Sheridan College in Oakville, Ontario, Canada, June 24 through 26, 2014.

'The Art of Collaboration in Musical Theatre.' The art of collaboration between individuals is of vital importance within the musical theatre genre. The different dynamics created between directors and actors, choreographer and chorus, songwriting team and book writer, and more, all work toward the ultimate goal of combining specific elements for musical presentations. This can also include: the audience, producers, board of directors, funders, technology, and the varied roles of the performers themselves as actors, singers, and dancers. The conference aims to explore, uncover, and create discussion through paper presentations, lecture demonstrations, and practical workshops.

Paper topics might include, but are not limited to:

- The collaborative process in producing, writing, rehearsal, and performance
- The development of the triple-threat performer
- The praxis of collaboration
- The use of technology to enhance collaboration
- Teaching collaboration

SSS X: THE STAR SYSTEM IN MUSICAL THEATRE AND FILM

Our 10th annual Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS X: The Star System in Musical Theatre and Film, was held at Regent's University in London, June 24 through 26, 2015.

Song, Stage and Screen X will explore the setting up and reinforcing of mechanisms that encourage an audience's emotional affinity and identification with certain performers and their roles.

The entertainment industry has always relied extensively upon the lure and sales potential of star-dom; not for nothing did MGM boast in the 1930s to have “More Stars Than There Are In Heaven”. Yet it seems that the whole concept of the larger-than-life artistic persona is especially potent and relevant when it comes to the stage and film musical:

Certain film cycles are exclusively identified by their stars (Mickey Rooney & Judy Garland; Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers), not by their directors. Certain stage roles (Harold Hill, Mama Rose, Fanny Brice) are always expected to be performed by star actors. There also is a particular fascination with the artist trying to make it in show business (42nd Street; A Star is Born; Funny Girl) and, conversely, with the fading star (A Star is Born; Applause; Follies; Sunset Boulevard).

The producers and artists working on film and stage musicals – whether conscious of doing so or not – are responsible for setting up and reinforcing the mechanisms that encourage an audience’s emotional affinity and identification with certain performers and their roles. Song, Stage and Screen X aims to explore these mechanisms and what they signify.

The keynote speech on “Musical Theatre Today” will be delivered by composer, musical director, lyricist, librettist, translator and director Jeremy Sams.

SSS XI

Our 11th annual Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS XI, hosted by Music in Gotham, was held at The City College, City University of New York, June 27 through 30, 2016.

Song, Stage and Screen celebrates the start of its second decade by joining with Music in Gotham in New York City for its annual conference. The Program Committee encourages submissions from scholars and practitioners for presentations that explore all aspects of the musical, both on stage and on

screen. Submissions might focus on Broadway or West End musicals, musical films and television shows, international and regional musical theater productions, operas or operetta, vaudeville or variety performances, or any other topic related to the musical. All aspects of performance and production are also welcome, including those that highlight particular song or dance techniques and styles, and those that examine the creators and directors of musical works.

The program committee includes George Burrows, John Graziano, Mary Jo Lodge, Dominic Symonds, and Elizabeth Wollman.

SSS XII: MUSICAL MULTIPLICITY

Our 12th annual Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS XII: Musical Multiplicity, was held at the University of Surrey, June 19 through 22, 2017.

In recent years the influence of singer-songwriters, TV shows, jukebox musicals and politics have challenged the perceived homogeneity of musical theatre, showtunes and the Hollywood musical.

In choices of subject matter, modes of storytelling, musical and choreographic styles, musical theatre and film exhibits new multiplicities in a period in which societal diversities are under threat. Simultaneously, artists with varied backgrounds from singer-songwriters to practitioners in verbatim or physical theatre are creating musical theatre which challenges accepted methodologies for creating musicals, and rejects adaptation theories. Additionally, digital media allows for new platforms for the performance, delivery and marketing of musical theatre; raising the question of the very nature of the artform.

This conference considers and celebrates all facets of multiplicity in musical theatre and musical film; from staging concepts challenging the traditional proscenium, to musical styles, to casting and socio-economic impacts.

SSS XIII: THE MUSICAL AND ITS OTHERS

*Our 13th Annual Song, Stage and Screen conference, **SSS XIII: The Musical and Its Others, Then and Now**, was held at the University of California in Los Angeles, May 31 through June 3, 2018.*

We invite papers that centrally address the conference's theme, considered broadly. We are especially interested in papers that bring a diversity of disciplinary perspectives to bear on musicals, whether on stage or screen, representing not only performance based disciplines (Theatre Studies, Cinema Studies, Musicology, Dance Studies, Performance Studies), but also disciplines centered around issues of diversity, such as (but not limited to) Ethnic Studies (including African American Studies, Chicana/o Studies, Latinx Studies, Asian American Studies, among others), Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, LGBTQ Studies, and Disability Studies.

We encourage papers that advance discussions of diversity, inclusivity, and intersectionality across the range of practices that inform the production and performance of musicals on stage and screen, including but not limited to the following kinds of questions:

1. How have diverse populations—including those historically marginalized because of race, ethnicity, nationality, cultural background, beliefs, gender, orientation, disability, age, body type, etc.—been represented in musicals on stage and screen, and how has that changed (or not) over time?
2. How and when have such populations been active participants, or been denied that opportunity, in the creation, development, production, and performance of musicals on stage and screen?
3. How and when have musicals sought to be more inclusive regarding such populations, regarding both what is most visible (audience, marketing, and casting

demographics) and those less so? How (when and why) have such efforts been embraced or resisted?

4. When and why have musicals adopted styles of performance that have been understood as representative of specific marginalized populations, and how has that been managed regarding issues of inclusion and appropriation?

This conference and its associated events is co-sponsored by "Song, Stage and Screen" and the Center for Musical Humanities in the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music. "Song, Stage and Screen" is the official conference of *Studies in Musical Theatre*, and has been held annually in international locations since 2006. The [UCLA Center for Musical Humanities](#) was established in 2017 and is in its inaugural year.

SSS XIV: (Re-)Inventions: Adaptations and New Directions in Musicalson and between Stage and Screen

Our 14th Annual Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS XIV: (Re-)Inventions: Adaptations and New Directions in Musicalson and between Stage and Screen, was held at the University of Leeds, UK June 26 through June 29, 2019.

The international Song, Stage and Screen XIV conference is co-organised by Dr Ian Sapiro and Dr George Rodosthenous and hosted by the School of Music and the School of Performance and Cultural Industries at the University of Leeds, UK, and this year takes as its theme (Re-)Inventions: Adaptations and New Directions in Musicalson and between Stage and Screen.

Musicals on stage and screen continue to take novel and diverse forms, sometimes challenging the apparent boundaries and established understanding of what a musical is. Adaptation is often at the centre of new works, whether in the form of the subject matter – be that *Hamilton's* interpretation of American history, or the adaptation of personal lives at the core of *Fun Home* and *The*

Greatest Showman – or the process of creation – from stage to screen or, in increasing numbers, screen to stage. Indeed, there is a trend in the latter category of making stage musicals out of non-musical films that appears to be on the rise. This conference explores all aspects of adaptation and new directions in stage and screen musicals, to considering how (re-)invention is changing what musicals are, and how they are created, produced, consumed and engaged with.

We are particularly excited to announce that our keynote speakers will be Dr Demetris Zavros (University of Wolverhampton) and Dr Elizabeth Wollman (Baruch College, City University of New York).

The 2020 meeting was canceled.

SSS XV: Mobilities – Stage and Film Musical in Motion

Our 15th Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS XV: Stage and Film Musical in Motion, was held online and hosted by Salzburg University (PLUS) and Anton Bruckner Private University Linz (ABPU), Austria from

The Paris-Lodron-Universität Salzburg (PLUS) and the Anton Bruckner Privat Universität Linz (ABPU) were delighted to co-organize Song, Stage and Screen XV: Mobilities–Stage and Film Musical in Motion. This year's conference scrutinizes the stage and film musical through the notion of mobility, seeking new ways to analyze production, performance, composition, dance, artistic conception, and the political territorialization of the genre.

Keynote speakers for the conference include Shana Redmond (University of California, Los Angeles), Derek B. Scott (University of Leeds), and Lydia Goehr (Columbia University, New York).

We invite papers that scrutinize the stage and film musical through the notion of mobility. We are interested in contributions that approach the topic from diverse angles but with a constant focus on the mobility paradigm in the humanities. We aim to find new ways to analyze production, performance, composition, dance, artistic conception, and the political territorialization of the genre. We particularly encourage paper proposals that focus on the following research questions:

- How flexible/mobile are musical production systems? (repertoire, institutional forms, production)
- How do musicals achieve mobility? (translation, cultural transcription, transfer)
- How do musicals address issues of mobility, nomadism and migration?
- What is the role of fixity (as opposed to mobility) in the ideology and practice of musicals – in regard to race, class, gender and sexual identity? In how far are the representations of the musical framed by methodological nationalism? How do systemic racism and discourses of inclusion, exclusion, identity politics and othering mould the political and cultural subtext of the musical?
- How does a greater awareness of mobility in relation to Black Lives Matter affect the production, reception, and representation of the genre?
- How does mobility relate to ability or disability?
- How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the production, reception, and representation of the genre?
- How do musicals utilize dance as a medium for structuring stage and screen space through movement?
- What is the impact of cinema in making the genre more mobile?

Presentations will be scheduled for thirty minutes each, twenty minutes for the paper and ten minutes for discussion.

The SSS XV conference will be organized in collaboration by the Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg (PLUS) and the Anton Bruckner Privat-Universität Linz (ABPU). Conference language is English.

SSS XV KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

- Shana Redmond (University of California, Los Angeles)
 - Derek B. Scott (University of Leeds)
-

SSS XVI: Pluralities: Performances, Practices and Participatory Cultures

Our 16th Song, Stage and Screen conference, SSS XVI: Pluralities: Performances, Practices and Participatory Cultures, was held online and hosted by the University of Portsmouth, UK from June 29 to July 1, 2022.

The conference will ask how we experience or approach the multiple layers of performance in embodied, digital and hybrid spaces; how we curate or document such experiences as audiences, scholars, fans, consumers, collectors or archivists, and how we engage in participatory cultures beyond consumerism.

How has the recent reliance on, or innovations in, digital platforms altered or informed our approaches or understanding of performance? In what ways do communities and events such as BroadwayCon, annual performance events such as WestEnd Live, and initiatives on social media and other online platforms distribute, decentre or define contemporary musical theatre participatory practices? What challenges does the plurality of media involved in musical theatre pose for the scholar and archive? What might digital and material archives reveal about contemporary pluralities in musical theatre?

Who is visible – or allowed to be such – in these various and varied pluralities in and of performance? Who has agency in the accumulation or access to musical theatre culture? What can material cultures or recorded artifacts tell us about the pluralities of performance, and how can we promote enhanced participation in the creating, sharing and experiencing of performance and all its related artifacts?

Responding to these questions, some sample lines of enquiry or topics may include (but are not limited to):

- Equality, diversity and inclusivity in musical theatre (onstage and off);
- Disabilities (visible and invisible);
- Viralities, hybridities and virtualities;
- Pluralities and multiplicities of performance (e.g., revivals, revisals, touring and casting practices);
- Paraphernalia and memorabilia as paratexts;
- Archives, collections and histories.