

Histories of the Musical: A Journey Through the Golden Age

The musical theatre genre has captivated audiences for over a century, transporting them to worlds of enchantment, romance, and adventure. From the grand spectacle of Broadway to the intimate charm of the West End, musicals have become a beloved form of entertainment, leaving an indelible mark on popular culture.



Histories of the Musical: An Oxford Handbook of the American Musical, Volume 1 (Oxford Handbooks)

by Kadejja Bond

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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In *Histories of the Musical*, renowned theatre historian and critic Ethan Mordden takes readers on a captivating journey through the golden age of musical theatre, exploring its origins, evolution, and enduring legacy.

The Birth of the Musical

The roots of the musical can be traced back to the early 19th century, when vaudeville and minstrel shows began to incorporate music and dance into their performances. In the 1860s, Offenbach's operettas gained immense popularity in Europe, inspiring a wave of imitators in America and England.



The first true musical comedies emerged in the early 20th century, such as *The Black Crook* (1866) and *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878). These shows combined catchy tunes, witty dialogue, and elaborate stagecraft to create a new form of entertainment that captivated audiences.

The Golden Age of Broadway

The 1920s and 1930s marked the golden age of Broadway musicals, a period of extraordinary creativity and innovation. Composers such as Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, and Cole Porter wrote timeless melodies that are still beloved today, while lyricists like Oscar Hammerstein II and Lorenz Hart crafted clever and witty rhymes.



Iconic musicals from this era include *Show Boat* (1927), *Oklahoma!* (1943), and *My Fair Lady* (1956), all of which showcased the genre's ability to combine entertainment with social commentary.

The Rise of the Concept Musical

In the 1960s and 1970s, a new wave of musicals emerged, known as concept musicals. These shows explored complex themes and ideas through innovative storytelling and musical styles, often departing from traditional plot structures.



Notable examples of concept musicals include *Hair* (1967), *A Chorus Line* (1975), and *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (1979), all of which challenged conventions and pushed the boundaries of musical theatre.

The Modern Era

The modern era of musical theatre has witnessed a resurgence of classic musicals, as well as the emergence of new and innovative works.

Composers such as Andrew Lloyd Webber, Stephen Sondheim, and Lin-Manuel Miranda have created musicals that have captivated audiences around the world.



From the epic spectacle of *Les Misérables* (1980) to the intimate storytelling of *Hamilton* (2015), modern musicals continue to explore a wide range of themes and styles, reflecting the ever-changing world around us.

Histories of the Musical is an essential read for anyone who loves musical theatre or is interested in the history of this beloved genre. Ethan Mordden's engaging writing style and deep knowledge of the subject make this book an indispensable resource for anyone who wants to delve deeper into the world of musicals.

Whether you are a seasoned theatregoer or new to the world of musical theatre, *Histories of the Musical* will transport you on a captivating journey through the golden age of this unforgettable art form.

Free Download your copy today and experience the magic of musical theatre history!

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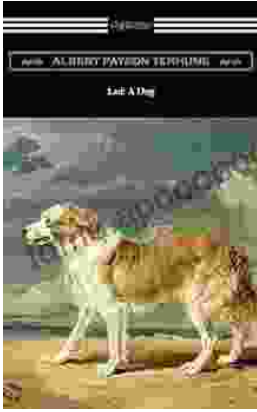
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