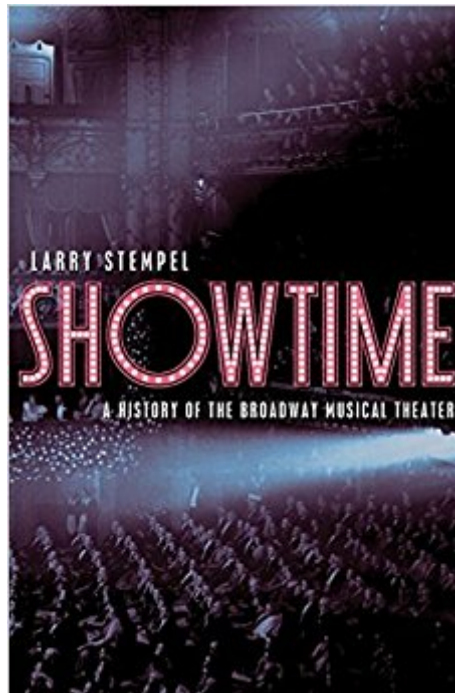




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# Showtime: A History Of The Broadway Musical Theater



## Synopsis

The definitive history of the Broadway musical: the shows, the stars, the movers, and the shakers. Showtime brings the history of Broadway musicals to life in a narrative as engaging as the subject itself. Beginning with the scandalous Astor Place Opera House riot of 1849, Larry Stempel traces the growth of musicals from minstrel shows and burlesques, through the golden age of Show Boat and Oklahoma!, to such groundbreaking works as Company and Rent. Stempel describes the Broadway stage with vivid accounts of the performers drawn to it, and detailed portraits of the creators who wrote the music, lyrics, and stories for its shows, both beloved and less well known. But Stempel travels outside the theater doors as well, to illuminate the wider world of musical theater as a living genre shaped by the forces of American history and culture. He reveals not only how musicals entertain their audiences but also how they serve as barometers of social concerns and bearers of cultural values. Showtime is the culmination of decades of painstaking research on a genre whose forms have changed over the course of two centuries. In covering the expansive subject before him, Stempel combines original research—including a kaleidoscope of primary sources and archival holdings—with deft and insightful analysis. The result is nothing short of the most comprehensive, authoritative history of the Broadway musical yet published. 16 pages of four-color; 105 black-and-white illustrations

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Starred Review. Not just a catalog or reference book, but a highly astute, integrative

cultural history. — Kirkus Reviews — “Throughout, as Stempel traces the evolution with exhaustive archival research, he offers a penetrating and illuminating analysis of various musical forms and influences. Many of the 105 carefully selected black-and-white illustrations are surprising and revelatory. Theater buffs will be delighted to find that this scholarly, definitive work is also a hugely entertaining read. — Publishers Weekly

— “Stempel has hit the trifecta: for academics, it’s a definitive work of scholarship; for students, it’s the perfect textbook; for ordinary lovers of musical theater, it’s a treat to savor at the end of a long day. — Rose Rosengard Subotnik, Brown University — “Showtime is a sumptuous banquet of a book. This richly researched history allows us to be present at the birth of the musical theater and to be enthralled witnesses as it develops and metamorphoses into the wealth of forms we now enjoy. A century and a half of entertainment is a vast amount of ground to cover, but Stempel is the ideal tour guide. This is a book to treasure. — Sheldon Harnick — “Showtime is a substantial work of American music history. Scrupulous but not fussy, learned but not pedantic, Stempel is a fine storyteller who delights in clarity and knows a good joke when he sees one. The precision of his thinking and writing gives the book an aura of authority keenly attuned to the tradition he critiques and celebrates. — Richard Crawford, author of *America’s Musical Life: A History* — “I cannot put Showtime down — and it’s a heavy book! Showtime is my new favorite companion. — John Mauceri, chancellor, University of North Carolina School of the Arts — “This is the book we have been waiting for — thoroughly readable and smart, informative and engaging. — Ted Chapin, president, Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization — “This is by far the best book ever written about Broadway, a magisterial critical history, which will be required reading for anyone interested in musical theater. — Kim H. Kowalke, Eastman School of Music

Best (actually ONLY) textbook on the musical theatre would make this invaluable, but add that it is delightful and readable makes this part of my permanent bedside reading collection. Mr. Stempel’s knowledge and love of the subject is clear throughout the book. The organization and chapter headings make it ideal for teaching and learning the historical development of the genre. I love this book and give it as a gift frequently to fellow lover’s of musical theatre. Congratulations and gratitude for writing this wonderful book, Mr Stempel.

I expected more showbiz, bright lights and fun than this survey provides. Stempel's book is academic, fact-filled and heavy going. Little of the joy of the Broadway musical transcends the pedestrian prose. Nevertheless, it's a worthy catalogue of shows, many of which I'd seen and enjoyed.

This is a very thorough and well-written review of the history of the Broadway musical. It is highly recommended for those interested in the theater.

Still reading it. Great history of the stage and interesting information.

If you're a musical Historian this is the book for you

At this point, there are a few books covering the history of music theater. Some present it as dry statistics, some take a chronological approach, and some take a very editorialized chronological approach (American Musical Theater: A Chronicle comes immediately to mind). I think the only way to get a grasp on the progress of the musical is to read as many of these as possible and synthesize their thoughts. So, add to that pile this excellent book. It uses a conceptual angle. So there is a chapter on Off-Broadway, a chapter on concept musicals, a chapter on post-modern "antimusicals", etc. This is an effective, entertaining, and interesting way to go about it. The reason there are only four stars instead of five is that the book tends to leave out shows that were more obscure or had short runs. But, going back to the beginning of this review, *Strike Up the Band: A New History of Musical Theatre* and *Off-Broadway Musicals Since 1919: From Greenwich Village Follies to the Toxic Avenger* will cover the ground left over and give you a pretty decent comprehensive review.

my little gird did a project on Broadway and this book sure helped

The absolute BEST book I have ever read about Musical Theatre. I grew up reading Stanley Green's *WORLD OF MUSICAL COMEDY* and have read almost every book about Musicals in my 64 years but this book truly stands out as superbly researched, everything is brilliantly discussed and (for a change) I found not one factual error! Also a very thoughtful and intelligent approach to very old musicals and the very new musicals. A sensational job by an excellent writer who I had not know of previously.

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