



Showtime: A History of the Broadway Musical Theater

By Larry Stempel

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Showtime: A History of the Broadway Musical Theater By Larry Stempel

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

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Editorial Review

Review

“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)

From the Back Cover

“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

About the Author

Larry Stempel, an associate professor of music at Fordham University and a recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, was a member of Lehman Engel’s BMI Musical Theater Workshop. He lives in Mount Vernon, New York.

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