

10. Show Biz (April 22)

Two musicals by Jule Styne: *Gypsy* (1959) and *Funny Girl* (1964), both continuing Broadway's long fascination with its own business—but by no means the only such shows in this course.*



11. Europe Back When (April 29)

American realism did not entirely leave Europe behind. We look at two 1960s musicals that treat dark periods of history in quite different ways: *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964) and *Cabaret* (1966).



12. Two Concept Shows (May 6)

The later 1960s saw a shift away from the "book musical" towards one driven by the development of an idea rather than following a linear narrative. *Hair* (1968) and *Company* (1970) are two examples.

For more detail, color illustrations, artist bios, and suggestions for further reading, see the class website:

<http://www.brunyate.com/BirthBroadway/>

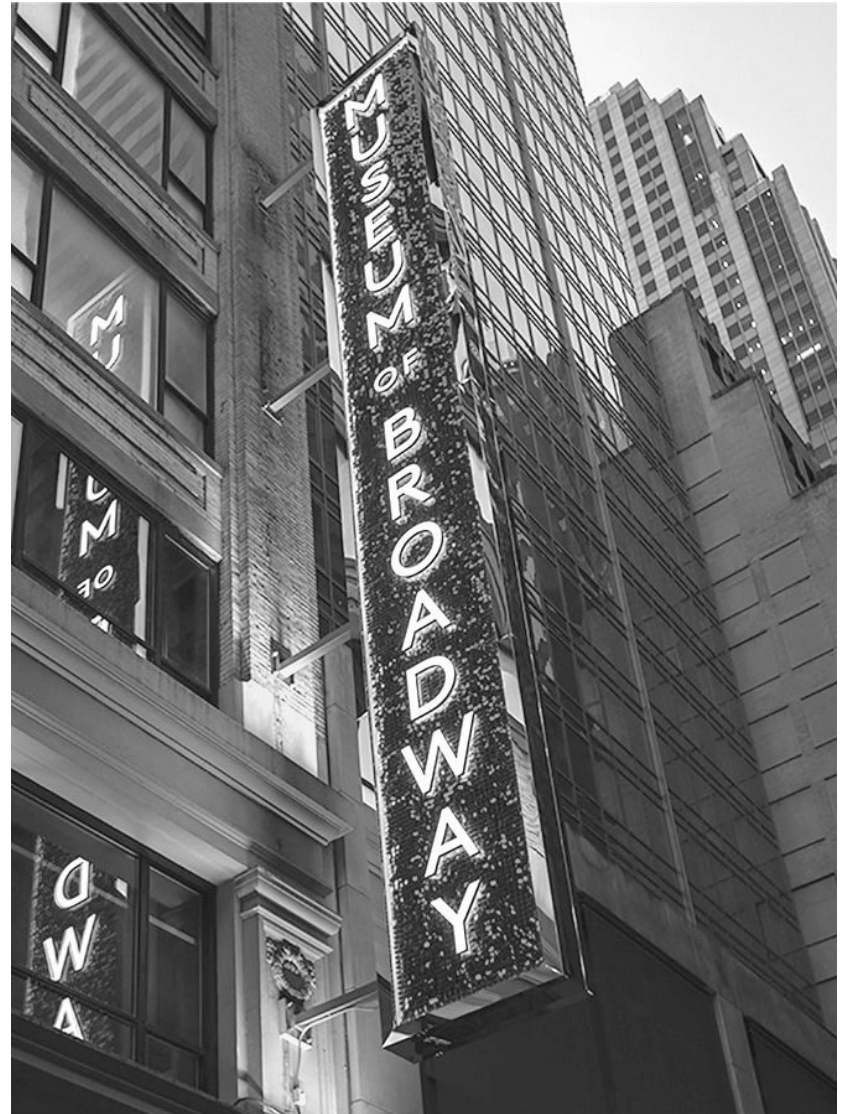
I will always answer eMail to:
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Illustrations: 1. *Merry Widow*; 2. *Student Prince*; 3. *Show Boat*; 4. *Anything Goes*; 5. *Porgy and Bess*; 6. *Carousel*; 7. *Kiss Me, Kate*; 8. *The Music Man*; 9. *West Side Story*; 10. *Gypsy*; 11. *Fiddler on the Roof*; 12. *Hair*.

The illustrations are not necessarily from the production shown in class.

*Other examples include *Show Boat*, *Kiss Me Kate*, and *Cabaret*.

The Birth of Broadway



Carnegie, Rockville

Tuesday Mornings, Spring 2025

The Birth of Broadway

EUROPEAN FANTASY TO AMERICAN REALISM

The Broadway musical is many things, and many stories may be told about it. I have chosen to trace the development from European operettas, which mainly dealt in romantic fantasy, to American subjects portrayed with an increasing amount of realism as the Twentieth Century moved forward.

Ideally I would illustrate our classes with videos of the original stage productions, but this is not possible in a course that ends in 1970. So I have to rely on movies from the period and later stage revivals—but the movie musical is really a different medium, and with revivals one has to take into account both shifts in audience expectations and changes in the theater itself. I hope to address both topics as the course proceeds. *Roger Brunyate*.



1. European Visitors (February 18)

The Broadway hits in the later 19th century were often the operettas of Offenbach, Strauss, Gilbert and Sullivan, and—biggest hit of all—Lehar, whose *Merry Widow* ran for 416 performances.

2. Americans Old and New (February 25)

The top Broadway composers of the early 20th century—Herbert, Friml, and Romberg—were European immigrants who mostly (though not always) continued their native operetta tradition



3. A Watershed Work (March 4)

Oscar Hammerstein and Jerome Kern's *Show Boat* of 1927 was a watershed in subordinating individual numbers to its book (by Edna Ferber) and in attempting a serious treatment of race.

4. Anti-Depressants (March 11)

Most Broadway musicals in the Depression were feel-good affairs such as the *Ziegfeld Follies* and Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*, but a very few addressed the political situation [almost] head-on.



5. Opera on Broadway (March 18)

The class focuses on two quasi-operatic works: *Carmen Jones* (1943), Oscar Hammerstein's reworking of the Bizet opera, and *Porgy and Bess* (1935) by George Gershwin and DuBose Heyward.

6. Ballet on Broadway (March 25)

Two pioneering Rodgers and Hammerstein shows, *Oklahoma!* (1943) and *Carousel* (1945), contain extended dream-ballets by Agnes DeMille that explore character and drama in dance terms.



7. Stage and Screen (April 1)

Besides being a peak in the Broadway repertoire, Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate* (1948) offers a unique chance to explore the differences between the iconic 1953 film and a fine stage revival of 1999.

8. Middle America (April 8)

The Pajama Game (1954) by Adler and Ross and *The Music Man* (1957) by Meredith Willson, two shows set in Iowa that address Middle American lives and values—and its concern with commerce.



9. Two Views of the West Side (April 15)

Bernstein's *West Side Story*, which hit the stage in 1957, was made into a movie twice: by the original director Jerome Robbins in 1961 and by Steven Spielberg in 2021. We compare them.