

comedy monologues from musicals

Comedy monologues from musicals are a delightful aspect of musical theater that bring humor, personality, and memorable moments to the stage. These monologues serve as a showcase for actors to display their comedic timing, acting skills, and character interpretation. Whether used as audition pieces, performance highlights, or simply as entertainment, comedy monologues from musicals are a vital element of theatrical storytelling. In this article, we will explore the significance of comedy monologues in musicals, highlight some of the most iconic examples, provide tips for selecting the perfect monologue, and discuss how these pieces contribute to the overall narrative and entertainment value of musical theater.

The Significance of Comedy Monologues in Musical Theater

Enhancing Character Development

Comedy monologues allow actors to delve into a character's personality, showcasing their wit, humor, and unique traits. These monologues often reveal a character's quirks, insecurities, or cleverness, making them more relatable and engaging for the audience.

Providing Comic Relief

In many musicals, serious or emotional scenes are balanced with moments of humor. Comedy monologues serve as a perfect vehicle for comic relief, lightening the mood and keeping the audience entertained.

Showcasing Acting Skills

Performers have the opportunity to demonstrate their comedic timing, delivery, and physicality through these monologues. A well-executed comedic monologue can leave a lasting impression and even become a defining moment of a performance.

Versatility in Auditions

For actors auditioning for musical theater roles, comedy monologues from musicals are often sought after as audition pieces. They display not only acting ability but also understanding of musical and comedic styles.

Popular Comedy Monologues from Musical

Below are some iconic comedy monologues from well-known musicals that have captivated audiences

and actors alike.

1. "The Wizard and I" from Wicked (Elphaba) - The Humor in Aspiration

While generally a vocal number, this monologue-style section reveals Elphaba's humorous self-awareness and her awkwardness as she dreams big. Her humorous reflections on her own perceived oddities make her relatable and funny.

2. "I'm Not Myself These Days" from The Last Five Years (Cathy) - Witty Self-Deprecation

Cathy's monologue about her struggles with love and her own identity is filled with humor and irony, making it a great comedic piece for performers with a flair for sharp wit.

3. "Always a Bridesmaid" from I Do! I Do! (Agatha) - Comedy in Frustration

This monologue showcases Agatha's humorous take on her perpetual role as a bridesmaid, blending humor with a touch of melancholy, perfect for comedic auditions.

4. "My Name is Sue" from The Marvelous Wonderettes (Sue) - Playful Humor

Sue's energetic and playful monologue about her identity and aspirations captures the fun and upbeat spirit of the show, ideal for showcasing comedic timing.

5. "The Life I Never Led" from Sister Act (Mother Superior) - Witty Reflection

While primarily a heartfelt song, portions of this monologue reveal Mother Superior's humorous reflections on her life choices, demonstrating humor rooted in character development.

Tips for Choosing the Right Comedy Monologue from a Musical

Selecting the perfect comedy monologue requires careful consideration of the performer's strengths and the context of the audition or performance.

1. Know Your Strengths

- Choose a monologue that suits your natural comedic style.
- Ensure the humor aligns with your acting strengths (physical comedy, witty dialogue, slapstick, etc.).

2. Match the Monologue to the Role

- Pick a piece that reflects the character you are auditioning for.
- Consider the tone and style of the musical.

3. Focus on Clarity and Timing

- Comedy relies heavily on timing, so choose a monologue you can deliver with confidence.
- Practice to ensure your comedic beats land effectively.

4. Keep it Concise

- Select a monologue that is engaging but not overly long.
- Aim for a piece that highlights humor early and maintains interest.

5. Understand the Context

- Study the musical and character background to understand the humor's source.
- Add subtlety and authenticity to your delivery.

How Comedy Monologues Enhance Musical Theater Performances

Adding Depth to Characters

Comedy monologues often reveal layers of a character's personality, making them more three-dimensional. Humor can expose vulnerabilities, resilience, or wit, enriching the audience's understanding.

Creating Memorable Moments

A well-performed comedic monologue can become a highlight of a performance, leaving a lasting impression and contributing to the show's overall success.

Engaging the Audience

Humor is a universal language. Comedy monologues help connect performers with audiences,

eliciting laughter and emotional engagement.

Supporting the Narrative Arc

Strategically placed comedy monologues can serve as pivotal moments in storytelling, providing relief, foreshadowing, or character insight.

Examples of Famous Actors Performing Comedy Monologues from Musicals

Many renowned performers have delivered memorable comedic monologues from musicals, elevating the material with their skillful delivery.

1. Sutton Foster in Thoroughly Modern Millie

Foster's comedic timing in monologues from this show highlights her talent for physical comedy and sharp wit.

2. Hugh Jackman in The Boy From Oz

Jackman's humorous anecdotes and monologues about his Australian roots and show business life showcase his charismatic comedic presence.

3. Idina Menzel in Wicked

Menzel's portrayal of Elphaba combines humor with depth, especially in monologues that reveal her character's quirky nature.

Conclusion: Embracing the Humor in Musical Theater

Comedy monologues from musicals are an integral part of theatrical storytelling, offering performers a chance to showcase their comedic talents and audiences moments of levity and joy. Whether used in auditions, rehearsals, or live performances, these monologues bring characters to life with humor, wit, and personality. When selecting a comedy monologue, actors should consider their strengths, the character's context, and the comedic style of the musical. Ultimately, these pieces enrich the narrative, create memorable moments, and contribute to the timeless appeal of musical theater.

By exploring and mastering comedy monologues from musicals, performers can deepen their craft, entertain audiences, and celebrate the humor that makes musical theater such a vibrant and beloved art form.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are some popular comedic monologues from musicals suitable for auditions?

Some popular comedic monologues include 'The Lady of the Lake' from Monty Python's Spamalot, 'The Drowsy Chaperone' from The Drowsy Chaperone, and 'I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major-General' from The Pirates of Penzance, which are often used for their humor and character showcase.

How can I choose a comedy monologue from a musical that fits my acting style?

Select a monologue that aligns with your comedic timing and delivery style, matches your age and personality, and showcases your strengths. Watching performances and reading the script can help determine if the humor resonates with you.

What are some tips for performing a comedic monologue from a musical effectively?

Focus on timing and rhythm, use expressive facial expressions and physical gestures, and understand the character's comedic intent. Practice delivering lines with confidence and clarity to maximize humor.

Are there any classic musicals known for their humorous monologues?

Yes, musicals like The Book of Mormon, Chicago, and The Producers are renowned for their comedic lines and monologues, often rooted in satirical and witty content.

Can I adapt comedic monologues from musicals for solo performances or auditions?

Absolutely, but ensure the monologue is self-contained, highlights your comedic talent, and fits within the audition or performance context. Practice adapting the timing and delivery to make it engaging.

What are some lesser-known musicals with hilarious monologues worth exploring?

Musicals like 'The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee,' 'A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder,' and 'Something Rotten!' feature humorous monologues that are less mainstream but highly entertaining.

How do I find scripts for comedy monologues from musicals?

You can find scripts in published playbills, licensed script collections, online resources like Samuel French or Dramatists Play Service, or through official musical websites and library archives.

What should I consider regarding the length of a comedic monologue from a musical?

Choose a monologue that is concise enough to hold attention—generally 1-2 minutes—while allowing you to showcase your humor and acting skills without overextending.

Are there specific musical genres that lend themselves better to comedic monologues?

Comedies, satirical musicals, and parodies often contain more humorous monologues. Shows like musical comedies or those with a humorous storyline provide rich material for comedic monologues.

How can I add my own comedic twist to a monologue from a musical?

Interpret the character uniquely, incorporate your personal humor style, and experiment with timing and physicality. Making the monologue relatable and authentic can enhance its comedic impact.

Additional Resources

Comedy Monologues from Musicals: An In-Depth Exploration of Humor, Character, and Performance

The world of musical theatre is often celebrated for its soaring melodies, emotional storytelling, and visually stunning productions. Yet, beneath the grandeur of song and spectacle lies a subtler art form—comedy monologues woven into the fabric of musicals. These monologues serve as comedic interludes, character-defining moments, or narrative devices that bring levity and depth to the story. Understanding their structure, purpose, and impact offers a richer appreciation for musical theatre as a hybrid art form that seamlessly blends music, drama, and comedy.

In this article, we delve into the phenomenon of comedy monologues from musicals, tracing their historical evolution, examining notable examples, analyzing their comedic techniques, and considering their role within the broader context of theatrical storytelling.

The Role of Comedy Monologues in Musical Theatre

Defining Comedy Monologues in the Musical Context

Unlike traditional monologues that may serve as introspective soliloquies or dramatic revelations, comedy monologues in musicals are primarily designed to elicit laughter through witty dialogue, humorous observations, or comic character traits. They often occur in moments of dialogue-driven interaction—either as part of a song or a spoken scene—that showcase a character's humor, eccentricities, or satirical commentary.

These monologues can be classified broadly into three categories:

1. **Character-Driven Comedy:** Monologues that reveal a character's humorous perspective or personality quirks.
2. **Narrative-Driven Comedy:** Moments that humorously advance the plot or provide comic relief within a dramatic context.
3. **Meta-Commentary and Satire:** Monologues that parody theatrical conventions, social norms, or political issues through satire and irony.

Purpose and Function within the Musical

Comedy monologues serve multiple functions in musicals:

- **Character Development:** They offer insights into a character's personality, often highlighting their wit, flaws, or social commentary.
- **Comic Relief:** They provide a breather from emotional or intense scenes, balancing the overall tone.
- **Advancing the Plot:** Sometimes, these monologues reveal crucial information or set up future plot points with humor.
- **Engagement and Audience Connection:** Humor fosters a rapport with the audience, making characters more relatable or memorable.

Historical Evolution of Comedy Monologues in Musicals

Early Examples and Origins

The use of monologues in theatre predates musical theatre, rooted in comedic monologues from Shakespearean and Commedia dell'arte traditions. However, their integration into musical theatre gained prominence in the early 20th century, particularly with the rise of vaudeville and revue-style productions.

In the 1920s and 1930s, comic monologues became a staple in musical comedies, often delivered by comic character actors or as part of vaudeville acts embedded within musicals. These monologues were primarily humorous speeches or stories that showcased performers' comedic talents.

Mid-20th Century Developments

The Golden Age of musical theatre, from the 1940s through the 1960s, saw a refinement of comedic techniques. Shows like *Guys and Dolls* (1950) included humorous monologues and dialogue that defined characters like Nathan Detroit and Sky Masterson. Similarly, in *My Fair Lady* (1956), Professor Higgins's witty asides contributed to the humor and character depth.

Notably, Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* (1973) incorporated witty, character-driven monologues that showcased sharp satire and irony, elevating the form beyond simple comic relief.

Contemporary Trends

Modern musicals continue to feature comedy monologues, often with a more self-aware or meta-theatrical approach. Shows like *The Book of Mormon* (2011) and *Something Rotten!* (2003) employ monologues that parody theatrical conventions and social issues with biting humor.

The advent of musical comedy acts with stand-up influences, such as *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (2005), has blurred the lines between monologue and stand-up, emphasizing humor as a central expressive tool.

Notable Examples of Comedy Monologues from Musicals

Classic and Iconic Monologues

- "The Song That Goes Like This" – *Spamalot*

A humorous take on musical clichés, delivered through witty lyrics that parody traditional musical tropes.

- "A Little Priest" – *Sweeney Todd*

While darkly comic, this monologue/number features two characters humorously discussing their murderous culinary ideas, blending horror and comedy.

- "My Name is (insert character)" – *The Producers*

Several characters deliver humorous monologues introducing their eccentric backgrounds, setting the comedic tone.

Modern and Innovative Examples

- "The I Love You Song" – *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

A humorous monologue that reveals a character's awkwardness and vulnerability through comedic self-deprecation.

- "You Gotta Have Heart" – *Damn Yankees*

A spirited monologue celebrating the joys and absurdities of baseball and life, delivered with exuberance.

- "The History of Wrong Guys" – Kinky Boots (as monologue in some versions)

A witty, humorous reflection on romantic misadventures, showcasing the character's comedic outlook.

Techniques and Elements of Effective Comedy Monologues

Humor Styles and Devices

Effective comedy monologues leverage various humor styles and devices:

- Wordplay and Puns: Clever use of language to create humor.
- Exaggeration and Hyperbole: Amplifying traits or situations for comic effect.
- Irony and Sarcasm: Contradictory statements that highlight character flaws or social satire.
- Parody and Satire: Imitating or mocking genres, societal norms, or political issues.
- Timing and Delivery: The rhythm and pacing are crucial—pause, emphasis, and facial expressions enhance comedic impact.

Character and Voice

A successful comedy monologue hinges on authentic character voice. The humor should arise naturally from the character's perspective, personality, and circumstances. Distinctive speech patterns, catchphrases, or idiosyncrasies contribute to memorable and relatable comic moments.

Context and Placement

Timing within the narrative is vital. A monologue that appears too early or too late can diminish its comedic effect. Well-placed monologues often serve as a climax of character humor or as comic relief before a serious scene.

The Impact of Comedy Monologues on Audience Engagement

Comedy monologues create a shared experience that fosters audience laughter, empathy, and reflection. They humanize characters, making their flaws and follies more relatable. Moreover, they can challenge societal norms through satire, prompting audiences to reconsider their perspectives.

Effective monologues also contribute to the musical's overall rhythm—balancing tension and release—helping to sustain audience interest over lengthy performances.

Challenges and Considerations in Writing and Performing Comedy Monologues

While comedy monologues are powerful tools, they pose unique challenges:

- Balancing Humor and Story: Ensuring the monologue supports the narrative without overshadowing it.
- Avoiding Stereotypes: Crafting humor that is clever rather than offensive.
- Performing with Authenticity: Delivery requires comedic timing, facial expressions, and vocal nuances.
- Cultural Sensitivity: Humor should resonate across diverse audiences without alienation.

Conclusion: The Enduring Charm of Comedy Monologues in Musicals

Comedy monologues from musicals exemplify the artful blend of humor and storytelling that defines musical theatre. From classic shows to contemporary hits, these monologues serve as vital tools to develop characters, entertain audiences, and provide social commentary—all wrapped in the engaging package of song and performance.

As musical theatre continues to evolve, the tradition of crafting memorable, witty, and insightful comedy monologues persists, demonstrating the enduring power of humor to illuminate the human experience on stage. Whether as a quick-witted character reveal or a satirical commentary, these monologues remind us that laughter remains a universal language—an essential ingredient in the magic of musical theatre.

Comedy Monologues From Musicals

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These seven imaginative short theatre pieces by one of America's most inventive and highly regarded playwrights range widely in content, mood and style. The plays offer a stimulating challenge in terms of selecting, arranging, and mounting the diverse com

comedy monologues from musicals: The Complete Book of 1990s Broadway Musicals Dan Dietz, 2016-09-29
Musicals of the 1990s felt the impact of key developments that forever changed the landscape of Broadway. While the onslaught of British imports slowed down, the so-called

Disneyfication of Broadway began, a trend that continues today. *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King* became long-running hits, followed by more family-friendly musicals. The decade was also distinguished by a new look at revivals—instead of slavishly reproducing old shows or updating them with campy values, Broadway saw a stream of fresh and sometimes provocative reinventions, including major productions of *My Fair Lady*, *Damn Yankees*, *Carousel*, *Show Boat*, and *Chicago*. In *The Complete Book of 1990s Broadway Musicals*, Dan Dietz examines in detail every musical that opened on Broadway during the 1990s. This book discusses the era's major hits (*Miss Saigon*, *Crazy for You*, *Rent*), notorious flops (*Shogun*, *Nick & Nora*, *The Red Shoes*), controversial shows (*Passion*, *The Capeman*), and musicals that closed during their pre-Broadway tryouts (*Annie 2: Miss Hannigan's Revenge*, *Whistle Down the Wind*). In addition to including every hit and flop that debuted during the decade, this book highlights revivals and personal-appearance revues with such performers as Sandra Bernhard, Michael Feinstein, Patti LuPone, Liza Minnelli, and Mandy Patinkin. Each entry contains the following information: Plot summary, Cast members, Names of all important personnel, including writers, composers, directors, choreographers, producers, and musical directors, Opening and closing dates, Number of performances, Critical commentary, Musical numbers and the performers who introduced the songs, Production data, including information about tryouts, Source material, Tony awards and nominations, Details about London and other foreign productions. Besides separate entries for each production, the book offers numerous appendixes, including a discography, filmography, and published scripts, as well as lists of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, black-themed shows, and Jewish-themed productions. A treasure trove of information, *The Complete Book of 1990s Broadway Musicals* provides a comprehensive view of each show. This significant resource will be of use to scholars, historians, and casual fans of one of the greatest decades in musical theatre history.

comedy monologues from musicals: *The Complete Book of 1980s Broadway Musicals* Dan Dietz, 2016-02-18 For Broadway audiences of the 1980s, the decade was perhaps most notable for the so-called "British invasion." While concept musicals such as *Nine* and Stephen Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George* continued to be produced, several London hits came to New York. In addition to shows like *Chess*, *Me and My Girl*, and *Les Misérables*, the decade's most successful composer, Andrew Lloyd Webber, was also well represented by *Cats*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Song & Dance*, and *Starlight Express*. There were also many revivals (such as *Show Boat* and *Gypsy*), surprise hits (*The Pirates of Penzance*), huge hits (*42nd Street*), and notorious flops (*Into the Light*, *Carrie*, and *Annie 2: Miss Hannigan's Revenge*). In *The Complete Book of 1980s Broadway Musicals*, Dan Dietz examines in detail every musical that opened on Broadway during the 1980s. In addition to including every hit and flop that debuted during the decade, this book highlights revivals and personal-appearance revues with such performers as Sid Caesar, Barry Manilow, Jackie Mason, and Shirley MacLaine. Each entry includes the following information: Opening and closing dates, Plot summaries, Cast members, Number of performances, Names of all important personnel including writers, composers, directors, choreographers, producers, and musical directors, Musical numbers and the names of performers who introduced the songs, Production data, including information about tryouts, Source material, Critical commentary, Tony awards and nominations, Details about London and other foreign productions. Besides separate entries for each production, the book offers numerous appendixes, including a discography, filmography, and published scripts, as well as lists of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, black-themed shows, and Jewish-themed productions. A treasure trove of information, *The Complete Book of 1980s Broadway Musicals* provides readers with a comprehensive view of each show. This significant resource will be of use to scholars, historians, and casual fans of one of the greatest decades in musical theatre history.

comedy monologues from musicals: *The Complete Book of 2000s Broadway Musicals* Dan Dietz, 2017-04-06 In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Broadway was notable for old-fashioned, feel-good shows (*Hairspray*, *Jersey Boys*), a number of family-friendly musicals (*Little Women*, *Mary Poppins*), plenty of revivals (*Follies*, *Oklahoma!*, *Wonderful Town*), a couple of off-the-wall hits (*Avenue Q*, *Urinetown*), several gargantuan flops (*Dance of the Vampires*, *Lestat*),

and a few serious productions that garnered critical acclaim (*The Light in the Piazza*, *Next to Normal*). Unlike earlier decades which were dominated by specific composers, by a new form of musical theatre, or by numerous British imports, the decade is perhaps most notable for the rise of shows which poked fun at the musical comedy form, such as *The Producers* and *Spamalot*. In *The Complete Book of 2000s Broadway Musicals*, Dan Dietz examines in detail every musical that opened on Broadway from 2000 through the end of 2009. This book discusses the era's major successes, notorious failures, and musicals that closed during their pre-Broadway tryouts. In addition to including every hit and flop that debuted during the decade, this book highlights revivals and personal-appearance revues with such performers as Patti LuPone, Chita Rivera, and Martin Short. Each entry contains the following information: Plot summary Cast members Names of all important personnel, including writers, composers, directors, choreographers, producers, and musical directors Opening and closing dates Number of performances Critical commentary Musical numbers and the performers who introduced the songs Production data, including information about tryouts Source material Tony awards and nominations Details about London and other foreign productions Besides separate entries for each production, the book offers numerous appendixes, including a discography, filmography, and published scripts, as well as lists of black-themed shows and Jewish-themed productions. This comprehensive book contains a wealth of information and provides a comprehensive view of each show. *The Complete Book of 2000s Broadway Musicals* will be of use to scholars, historians, and casual fans of one of the greatest decades in musical theatre history.

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detail every musical and revue which opened on Broadway during the 1950s. In addition to providing details on every hit and flop that debuted during the decade, this book includes revivals, and one-man and one-woman shows. Each entry contains the following information: Opening and closing dates Plot summary Cast members Number of performances Names of all important personnel including writers, composers, directors, choreographers, producers, and musical directors Musical numbers and the names of performers who introduced the songs Production data, including information about tryouts Source material Critical commentary Tony awards and nominations Details about London and other foreign productions Besides separate entries for each production, the book offers numerous appendices, such as a discography, film and television versions, published scripts, Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, and lists of productions by the New York City Center Light Opera Company, and the New York City Opera Company. A treasure trove of information, *The Complete Book of 1950s Broadway Musicals* provides readers with a complete view of each show. This significant resource will be of use to scholars, historians, and casual fans of one of the greatest decades in musical theatre history.

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Arranged by subgenre (backstagers, operettas, college films, and stage-derived musical comedies), the entries include studio, release date, cast and credits, running time, a complete song list, any recordings spawned by the film, Academy Award nominations and winners, and availability on video or laserdisc. These data are followed by a plot synopsis, including analysis of the film's place in the genre's history. Includes over 90 photographs.

comedy monologues from musicals: The Complete Book of 1920s Broadway Musicals

Dan Dietz, 2019-04-10 During the Twenties, the Great White Way roared with nearly 300 book musicals. Luminaries who wrote for Broadway during this decade included Irving Berlin, George M. Cohan, Rudolf Friml, George Gershwin, Oscar Hammerstein II, Lorenz Hart, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, Richard Rodgers, Sigmund Romberg, and Vincent Youmans, and the era's stars included Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson, Ruby Keeler, and Marilyn Miller. Light-hearted Cinderella musicals dominated these years with such hits as Kern's long-running *Sally*, along with romantic operettas that dealt with princes and princesses in disguise. Plots about bootleggers and Prohibition abounded, but there were also serious musicals, including Kern and Hammerstein's masterpiece *Show Boat*. In *The Complete Book of 1920s Broadway Musicals*, Dan Dietz examines in detail every book musical that opened on Broadway during the years 1920-1929. The book discusses the era's major successes as well as its forgotten failures. The hits include *A Connecticut Yankee*; *Hit the Deck!*; *No, No, Nanette*; *Rose-Marie*; *Show Boat*; *The Student Prince*; *The Vagabond King*; and *Whoopee*, as well as ambitious failures, including *Deep River*; *Rainbow*; and Rodgers' daring *Chee-Chee*. Each entry contains the following information: Plot summary Cast members Names of creative personnel, including book writers, lyricists, composers, directors, choreographers, producers, and musical directors Opening and closing dates Number of performances Plot summary Critical commentary Musical numbers and names of the performers who introduced the songs Production data, including information about tryouts Source material Details about London productions Besides separate entries for each production, the book offers numerous appendixes, including ones which cover other shows produced during the decade (revues, plays with music, miscellaneous musical presentations, and a selected list of pre-Broadway closings). Other appendixes include a discography, filmography, a list of published scripts, and a list of black-themed musicals. This book contains a wealth of information and provides a comprehensive view of each show. *The Complete Book of 1920s Broadway Musicals* will be of use to scholars, historians, and casual fans of one of the greatest decades in the history of musical theatre.

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French, Inc, 1997

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2009-04-22 New York City's Broadway district is by far the most prestigious and lucrative venue for American performers, playwrights, entertainers and technicians. While there are many reference works and critical studies of selected Broadway plays or musicals and even more works about the highlights of the American theater, this is the first single-volume book to cover all of the activities on Broadway between 1919 and 2007. More than 14,000 productions are briefly described, including hundreds of plays, musicals, revivals, and specialty programs. Entries include famous and forgotten works, designed to give a complete picture of Broadway's history and development, its evolution since the early twentieth century, and its rise to unparalleled prominence in the world of American theater. The productions are identified in terms of plot, cast, personnel, critical reaction, and significance in the history of New York theater and culture. In addition to a chronological list of all Broadway productions between 1919 and 2007, the book also includes approximately 600 important productions performed on Broadway before 1919.

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