

The Broadway Musical In The 1960s: A Historical Odyssey

The 1960s was a transformative decade not just for society and culture, but also for the world of Broadway musicals. It was a time of great change and innovation, as the genre embraced new themes, styles, and technologies.

In this article, we'll take a trip down memory lane and explore the fascinating history of the Broadway musical in the 1960s. We'll take a look at some of the most iconic shows of the era, as well as the people who created them.



Open a New Window: The Broadway Musical in the 1960s (The History of the Broadway Musical, 5)

by Ethan Mordden

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The Rise of the Concept Musical

One of the most significant developments in the Broadway musical during the 1960s was the rise of the concept musical. Unlike traditional musicals, which typically featured a series of loosely connected songs and dances, concept musicals told a more cohesive and integrated story.

One of the first and most successful concept musicals was "West Side Story" (1957), which told the story of two rival gangs in New York City. The show's score, by Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim, was a groundbreaking blend of classical music and jazz, and its choreography, by Jerome Robbins, was equally innovative.

Other popular concept musicals from the 1960s include "The Fantasticks" (1960), "Hair" (1967), and "Company" (1970). These shows tackled a wide range of themes, from love and loss to race and social justice.

The Influence of Rock and Roll

Another major influence on Broadway musicals in the 1960s was rock and roll. The popularity of rock and roll music led to a number of shows that featured rock-infused scores, such as "Bye Bye Birdie" (1960) and "Hair" (1967).

The influence of rock and roll also extended to the way that Broadway musicals were performed. The use of amplified sound and electric guitars made it possible for shows to be louder and more energetic than ever before.

The Rise of the Mega-Musical

The 1960s also saw the rise of the mega-musical, a lavish and expensive production that featured a large cast, elaborate sets, and spectacular

special effects.

One of the first mega-musicals was "Hello, Dolly!" (1964), which starred Carol Channing in the title role. The show was a huge critical and commercial success, and it ran for over 2,800 performances.

Other popular mega-musicals from the 1960s include "Fiddler on the Roof" (1964), "Funny Girl" (1964), and "Man of La Mancha" (1965).

The Broadway Musical Today

The Broadway musical has come a long way since the 1960s. Today, the genre is more diverse and vibrant than ever before. There are shows that appeal to every taste, from traditional musicals to rock operas to avant-garde pieces.

However, the 1960s remain a pivotal decade in the history of the Broadway musical. The shows that were created during this time helped to redefine the genre and set the stage for its continued success.

The Broadway musical in the 1960s was a time of great change and innovation. The shows that were created during this time helped to redefine the genre and set the stage for its continued success. If you're a fan of Broadway musicals, then you owe it to yourself to explore the rich history of the genre during this transformative decade.



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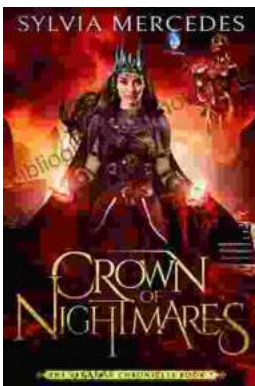
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