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Candidate session number			
Candidate name			
School name			
Examination session (May or November)	May	Year	2015

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered:

Theatre Arts

(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay:

What influence has the American musical theatre duo, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, and their first production "Oklahoma!" had on revolutionizing the style of American Musical theatre and productions that followed?

Candidate's declaration

This declaration must be signed by the candidate; otherwise a mark of zero will be issued.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

This is the final version of my extended essay.

Candidate's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

18.12.14

## Supervisor's report and declaration

*The supervisor must complete this report, sign the declaration and then give the final version of the extended essay, with this cover attached, to the Diploma Programme coordinator.*

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters) \_\_\_\_\_

*Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.*

showed a keen interest in the topic studied and wished to pursue this area of focus further in her later life. was motivated and eager to start reading and researching. A clear plan was formed at the start of the process and demonstrated a good understanding of the task at hand.

found the process of researching for her Extended Essay challenging. She was very interested in the topic, but was slow in gathering resources, due to problems with time management, and relied too heavily on a few sources. However, she worked hard on redrafting and improving her essay. Her early draft was very narrative in style, so a big challenge was making her approach more analytical. This was something that improved in the final essay but unfortunately I feel that this was too little too late. I would also say that at times did not take on board the feedback received. It was only in the final meetings that we had that she began to realize the improvements that were needed.

In her viva voce, was asked a variety of questions relating both directly to her essay and also more general questions about the process. She was very confident discussing the process needed for the essay and the problems that incurred. commented on the importance of thorough research and commented that she would have a variety of sources next time round. I asked a number of questions relating directly to the essay itself. However, due to lack of extra research / outside knowledge she found it difficult to answer. could clearly identify the areas she needed to improve.

*This declaration must be signed by the supervisor; otherwise a mark of zero will be issued.*

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

*As per the section entitled "Responsibilities of the Supervisor" in the EE guide, the recommended number of hours spent with candidates is between 3 and 5 hours. Schools will be contacted when the number of hours is left blank, or where 0 hours are stated and there lacks an explanation. Schools will also be contacted in the event that number of hours spent is significantly excessive compared to the recommendation.*

I spent 6 hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 12/12/2014

# **Assessment form (for examiner use only)**

Candidate session number		
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Criteria	Achievement level					
	Examiner 1	maximum	Examiner 2	maximum	Examiner 3	
A research question	<div>2</div>	2	<div></div>	2	<div></div>	<div></div>
B introduction	<div>2</div>	2	<div></div>	2	<div></div>	<div></div>
C investigation	<div>3</div>	4	<div></div>	4	<div></div>	<div></div>
D knowledge and understanding	<div>4</div>	4	<div></div>	4	<div></div>	<div></div>
E reasoned argument	<div>3</div>	4	<div></div>	4	<div></div>	<div></div>
F analysis and evaluation	<div>2</div>	4	<div></div>	4	<div></div>	<div></div>
G use of subject language	<div>4</div>	4	<div></div>	4	<div></div>	<div></div>
H conclusion	<div>2</div>	2	<div></div>	2	<div></div>	<div></div>
I formal presentation	<div>2</div>	4	<div></div>	4	<div></div>	<div></div>
J abstract	<div>1</div>	2	<div></div>	2	<div></div>	<div></div>
K holistic judgment	<div>3</div>	4	<div></div>	4	<div></div>	<div></div>
Total out of 36		<div>28</div>	<div></div>		<div></div>	<div></div>

Name of examiner 1: _____ (CAPITAL letters)	Examiner number: _____
Name of examiner 2: _____ (CAPITAL letters)	Examiner number: _____
Name of examiner 3: _____ (CAPITAL letters)	Examiner number: _____

IB Assessment Centre use only: B: \_\_\_\_\_

IB Assessment Centre use only: A: \_\_\_\_\_



It is a shame that the EE stops at superficial analysis as there is enough about the topics of racial inequality, gender inequality, social classes & war / anti-war propaganda that could have been teased out of the discussion.

Structurally, the EE hops from one place to another & while links are made they are not strong enough to pull together loose strands of the argument.

Very good sources list.

Please always attribute images used.

What influence has the influential American musical theatre duo, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, and their first production *Oklahoma!* had on revolutionizing the style of American Musical Theatre and productions that followed?

Extended Essay

Word Count: 3.984

## ***Abstract***

The Great Depression acted as a catalyst for Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein as it allowed them to build new boundaries and add a new depth of meaning to musicals. Feeling that musicals should shed away from the shallow means of entertainment, and incorporate current, real-life topics. This Extended Essay investigates the question, **“What influence has the influential American musical theatre duo, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, and their first production *Oklahoma!* had on revolutionising the style of American Musical Theatre and productions that followed?”**. ✓

In preparation for this essay, various sources were demanded in order to analyse and discuss who Rodgers and Hammerstein were, and which influence they had through their production of *Oklahoma!*, on revolutionizing American Musical Theatre. The duo perceived the Great Depression as a turning point, and identified it as the time to break the traditional arrangement of American Musical Theatre.

more specific  
in terms of  
methods

Rodgers and Hammerstein, influenced musicals and playwrights, through the overcoming of the traditional, theatrical boundaries. Through the addressing of subjects such as, class discrimination, racism and sexism, Rodgers and Hammerstein were able to redefine musical theatre conventions. Playwright Stephen Sondheim, was greatly influenced by the duo, which can be seen in the lyrics he composed for, *West Side Story*, as well as the placing of the two perspectives against each other, through the use of dream ballet. Rodgers and Hammerstein greatly influenced musicals, such as *West Side Story* and *Hair* as they brought depth to the meaning to the play through the merging of the song and dance with the spoken dialogue. Rodgers and Hammerstein's theatrical productions ✓

throughout the Golden Age influenced playwrights and producers in the decades that followed. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein influenced American Musical Theatre through their questioning of the boundaries, and the new acting style which was introduced.



Word Count: 299

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## Introduction

"They were roaring. They were howling. People hadn't seen boys and girls dance like this in so long. Of course, they had been dancing like this, but just not where the audience could see them!" (Wilk, 222). Agnes DeMile, introduces through this quote one of the most influential forms of communication; dancing, which began to shape American musical theatre towards how it is presented today. Musicals can be dated back to as early as the 5th Century B.C.E., ancient Greek. In ancient Greece, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes were not only viewed as playwrights, but also as composers and lyricists, incorporating dialogue, song, and dance as a storytelling technique. "The Greeks had a tradition stretching back to prehistoric times of hooting Dionysus with choral performances" (Kenrick, 19), the retelling of mythological tales, in a musical method was known as dithyrambs, which is a wild choral hymn. Thespis of Icaria introduced a new form of dithyrambs, which we refer to as tragedies. Thespis stepped out of a dithyramb chorus and performed particular roles through a mixture of singing and speaking lines. Through this variation, two major essentials to musical theatre originate, being the craft of acting and the tragedy. It is believed that any great musical has to have: brains, heart, and courage (Kenrick, 16). The analytical question of this investigation asks, **"What influence has the influential American musical theatre duo, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, and their first production *Oklahoma!* had on revolutionizing the style of American musical theatre and productions that followed?"**. Musical Theatre has developed its style, and perception greatly throughout the different eras, however one era stands out in particular when analyzing this development, The Golden Age. The Golden Age took place in the early 1940s until the late 1960s, and is therefore relevant to the contribution and development of American Musical Theatre. Rodgers and Hammerstein's influence played a relevant role in the history and development of American Musical Theatre as they influenced proceeding playwrights, and producers. Rodgers and Hammerstein's unique style presented in their production of *Oklahoma!*

do you mean their origin?

✓

acted as an outline for productions that followed. *West Side Story* is a key production to look at, when analysing the influence the duo had, as many techniques were incorporated, particularly dream ballet.

## **Influence on the Strive for Change**

The Great Depression, which took place throughout the 1930s, affected theatre audiences greatly with a few shows running on Broadway and in London's West End. An approximate number of only 500 performances ran throughout the decade, when compared to the performances that aired through the Roaring Twenties. The Great Depression, acted as a catalyst towards the Golden Age as more personal concepts and storyline were introduced, with the strive that the audience number would increase, as it was during the Roaring Twenties. Rodgers and Hammerstein were the influential duo that changed the style of American musical theatre and shaped it into the way that it is continued to perform today. The partnership formed after the Guild Theatre suggested Hammerstein takes, lyricist, Lorenz Hart's place, after Hart refused to collaborate with Rodgers. Both members of the new duo were drawn to the idea of turning stage plays into musicals, the most common being Lynn Riggs' stage play *Green Grow the Lilacs*, which the theatrical duo turned into the hit musical, *Oklahoma!*. The duo is best known for creating a chain of various well-known Broadway musicals, such as *Oklahoma!*, *The King and I*, and *The Sound of Music*, amongst others, in the 1940s and 1950s. Not only did they revolutionise on-stage productions, but they also found great success in their television broadcasts of plays such as, *Cinderella* in 1957. With their productions winning thirty-four Tony Awards, two Grammy Awards, fifteen Academy Award, and the Pulitzer Prize (Hischak, 183), Rodgers and Hammerstein are considered to be the greatest musical theatre writing collaboration in the 20th century. Rodgers and Hammerstein are held responsible for perceiving the

Golden Age as a turning point in musical theatre history, giving into the audiences' love for shows which contained minimal to sometimes no spoken dialogue, massive picturesque effects, and soaring reviews that were being placed in the limelight.

*Oklahoma!* provided the duo with their record breaking debut and has been returning onto stages world-wide ever since. The Golden Age is said to have begun with *Oklahoma!*, in 1943, and have ended with *Hair*, in 1968 (Kenrick, 238), which also contributes to the historical relevance of musicals, as the Golden Age took place over a long period of time, those supporting the development, and experimentations which took place throughout the theatre industry. Not only did the musicals that made their debut throughout the Golden Age, change in their presentation style and the overall meaning that they portrayed, but the Golden Age also marks the beginning of the careers of actors such as Julia Andrews, Alfred Drake, Joan Roberts, and Howard Da Silva, as well as theatre composers and producers, such as Stephen Sondheim and Jerome Kern. Rodgers and Hammerstein greatly influenced the method in which musicals were portrayed on stage, dream ballet and the merge of sung and spoken text, as well as the depth on the plot, and the incorporation of serious and current topics. ✓

Rodgers and Hammerstein redefined everything the audiences' knew about musical theatre, thus completely changing the idea of building a musical around a well-known star. Unknown, newcomers to the industry were casted. Rodgers and Hammerstein brought a new age of musical theatre by developing a new framework for narrative storytelling, being the collision of the three elements of musical theatre — singing, dancing, and the spoken dialogue. Rodgers and Hammerstein's productions contained joyful songs, however they turned away from the comedic tone that was present throughout musicals in the early 20th century. After the Great Depression, the style of musical thea-

ready? crawling?

tre could be rewritten, as the people were vulnerable for a new, more intimate concept. Through the addressing of subjects such as, class discrimination, racism and sexism, Rodgers and Hammerstein began to influence the industry. Not only was the audience affected more greatly as a link was built up between the stories portrayed onstage, and current events, but Rodgers and Hammerstein were able to make these musicals revolutionary, by drawing from the musical *Show Boat*, which had already incorporated techniques which they strived towards.

### ***Show Boat***

The musical, *Show Boat* can be perceived as the starting point for those musicals which followed throughout the Golden Age. The music was written by Jerome Kern, and the lyrics and script was written by Oscar Hammerstein. *Show Boat* acted as a catalyst for Hammerstein as he would, later on in his career, become one of the most influential writers in the industry. The musical is based off of Edna Ferber's bestselling novel, *Show Boat*, and follows the lives of the dockworkers, stagehands, and performers that worked on a show boat on the Mississippi River for an average of around 40 years, from 1887 to 1927 (Kenrick, 208).

The musical, *Show Boat* is perceived as a turning point in musical history, as it obtains the status of being one of the earliest musicals, which was not identified as an opera or operetta. Rodgers and Hammerstein drew from the transformation that *Show Boat* set on stage, by fully unifying song and dance into the storyline. *Show Boat* was the first play that included music and lyrics that aided to the emphasis of the characters emotions, and supported the development of the plot. Before the first performance of *Show Boat* on December 27, 1927, musical theatre productions were seen as light operas, which consisted of a series of unconnected scenes, that in no way contributed to the development and the message. Additionally, to *Show Boat*, the Gilbert and Sullivan model, of writing the

words first and then adding the music, influenced Rodgers and Hammerstein greatly as it encouraged them to apply the songs as a further method of storytelling. The Golden Age built upon these changes that started to form in the production of *Show Boat*, and the changes continued to flourish throughout the era of the Golden Age. The Golden Age is perceived as an era of luck, theatric development and that it occurred at a good time.

*Show Boat* was the play that contributed most towards the rewriting of American musical theatre, that Rodgers and Hammerstein fulfilled. The play contributed in the way that it introduced new themes that have never been explored and presented on stage to an audience. These themes include love, tragedy, and the racial prejudgment that was present throughout the late 19th century and early 20th century, in the southern states of the United States of America. *Show Boat* being the first racially integrated musical that seriously represented interracial marriage on stage. Oscar Hammerstein was in partnership with Jerome Kern style of communication resulted a great amount of controversy due to their use of the word “niggers” throughout the production in songs and spoken dialogue. The duo hoped that through the incorporation and repetition of the word that awareness would be created, or increased within the audience that they would see how hard it was to have been black in the South of the United States at the time of slavery

### ***Oklahoma!***

“*Oklahoma!* came along at precisely the right moment, when a war-torn world was particularly susceptible to its reassuring images of home and young love, and songs that spoke to millions of hearts.” (Kenrick, 248). Rodgers and Hammerstein began their musical revolution by tightly interrogating musical motifs. A relationship was set between the music and the story in *Oklahoma!*, more effectively than any other musical. In 1943, Rodgers and Hammerstein’s, *Oklahoma!*, eleva-

ted and built upon the change that *Show Boat* set onto stages, by successfully uniting, the plot, the music, the dance, and the concept in such means that had not been done before. *Oklahoma!* first took the stage on March 31, 1943 on Broadway, and ran for 2,212 performances, West End productions and an Academy Award winning motion picture resulted from it (10 Musicals That Changed Broadway).

In order to give the production an unfamiliar dream sequence, to portray the characters emotions in more depth, ballet choreographer Agnes DeMille was hired to choreograph the production. Agnes DeMille is credited for giving the show one of its most notable qualities and one of the most used of present day musical theatre, dream ballet. Dream ballet, is a production number that consists of all dance, and no song. The significance of dream ballet is that it allows the reflection of major themes that reoccur throughout the production. Through the merging of classical and modern ballet, a depth was added in the emotions of the characters, and the enrichment of the characters emotions, DeMille strongly influenced musicals that would follow. "*Oklahoma!* is not only one of the American theatre's most beloved shows, it is also one of its most influential." (Hischak, 185). Although, *Oklahoma!* was not the first musical with an emotional depth within the plot, it was the first musical which introduced new techniques, to support this emotional depth and build a strong relationship with the audience. This relationship was possible through the successfully interrogated song and dance.








Figure A. The above picture, from the production of *Oklahoma!* from the year 1945, shows the outrages costumes that started to become incorporated in the productions and it is also an example of the dream ballet. This can be seen through the dream ballet, portraying Dream Laurey, and Dream Curly, and the conflict of who should take her to the local dance. (The Huffington Post)

An example of the emotional depth which was added was a 18-minute dream ballet finale, integrated at the end of the first act of *Oklahoma!*, used to portray the farm girl, Laurey's, conflict of who should take her to the local dance, Jud or Curly. Through the incorporation of dream ballet in Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1943 production of *Oklahoma!*, the duo influenced theatre practitioners, for example Stephen Sondheim. Although not directly influenced by the duos introduction of dream ballet, he was influenced by their "highly experimental show[s]" (Sondheim), and the incorporation of song to portray various different emotions and situations.

The picture above, Figure A, shows how dream ballet was incorporated to portray the true feelings, in a deeper style. Additionally, dream ballet is added so that the audience can build their own opinion towards the storyline, and the characters portrayed. This is another quality, which Rodgers and Hammerstein brought forth, as before the Golden Age, the audience did not think about what they

saw, musicals were more about entertainment and escaping from the war. "After *Oklahoma!*, Rodgers and Hammerstein were the most important contributors to the musical-play form — with such masterworks as *Carousel* (1945), *The King and I* (1956) and *South Pacific* (1949). The examples they set in creating vital plays, often rich with social thought, provided the necessary encouragement for other gifted writers to create musical plays of their own"(Lubbock, 753). Rodgers and Hammerstein became "the most important contributors"(Lubbock, 754) due to their groundbreaking risks taken to create meaningful plays. Stephen Sondheim was greatly influenced by their experimental practices, and through their strong variation of what was portrayed onstage, which was strongly criticised for their uplifting songs, supported by the addressing of serious subjects (Cozby). Before the Golden Age, musicals were referred to as operettas, or light operas. Many continuing to stage the 1920s style of light-hearted song and dance, rarely taking risks until the creative production of *Show Boat*, where experiments with musical satire, topic based books and operatic scope began. Rodgers and Hammerstein decided to take the beginning of the style change to the next level by incorporating outrageous costumes, music, and dream ballet into their first production as the influential duo. The production, *Carousel* (1945), which followed *Oklahoma!*, was significant as it was the first musical to portray a tragic plot on stage regarding an antihero. With this it can be seen that ✓ Rodgers and Hammerstein influenced their own musicals with each show, as they continued to introduced new, tragic plots on stage with every production that followed. *Oklahoma!* is in this way a catalyst for the musicals of the Golden Age as it was, along with *Show Boat* one of the first musicals to introduce a new method of entertaining as well as more serious topics (10 Musicals That Changed Broadway).

Not only did Rodgers and Hammerstein rewrite the way in which musicals were staged, but they kept the casting open, as they did not write characters with an idea in mind, of which well-known

actor could play the character (New York Times, Atkinson). Instead, they opted to use unknown actors in the original cast of *Oklahoma!*. Actors such as, Alfred Drake, Joan Roberts, and Howard Da Silva, amongst others hereby made their acting debut. This shows that the duo did not only influence practitioners which followed, and the themes and techniques that they incorporated but that they also influenced the actors within the play. Throughout their careers, Rodgers and Hammerstein looked for new stars which they could put onstage, and who could present topics in a different way, as unknown actors were not yet influenced by the previous style.

*Oklahoma!* influenced musical conventions, through the raising of its first act curtain to the visual representation of a women beating butter, and auditory perception of an offstage voice singing the opening lines of the song, *Oh, What a Beautiful Morning* (Riddle, 247). These first few minutes of the play immediately draw in the audience's attention onto the stage, increasing their interest to see where the voice is coming from and what happens next. American theatre critic, Brooks Atkinson, wrote "After a verse like that, sung to a buoyant melody, the banalities of the old musical stage became intolerable." (New York Times, Atkinson) in The New York Times stating that *Oklahoma!*'s opening number reinvented the history of musical theatre, and the old traditions were no longer called upon. Rodgers and Hammerstein brought forth new methods, of intriguing the audience through the use of different perspectives, which influenced musicals which followed for example, *West Side Story*.

### ***South Pacific***

On April 7, 1949 Rodgers and Hammerstein newly composed record breaking musical, *South Pacific*, made its Broadway debut, and ran for over five years with a total of 1,925 performances. As in Rodgers and Hammerstein's fashion, they branched the production off of James A. Michener's

1947, Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Tales of the South Pacific* (10 Musicals That Changed Broadway). The duo hoped that they could successfully adapt the work of Michener, and maintain the strong message of how an American nurse, during World War II, based in the South Pacific struggles to accept the love she feels for a French plantation owner. For Rodgers and Hammerstein to successfully stage the works of Michener, and to maintain a credible emotion, Michener worked closely with Hammerstein on the lyrics, and with Rodgers on the music stating that the only instruments that the natives used were unfilled tanks of gasoline. After the successful staging of *South Pacific* Rodgers and Hammerstein became more confident with the idea of portraying <sup>the poor?</sup> a poor society, through the topic of racial prejudgment, onstage in a tender and awareness grasping method, with the audience taking the practicality to heart. *South Pacific* obtained the element of dream ballet to help progress and emphasize the plot (Kenrick, 166). This technique is important to their influence as it was a new style which was brought about to help bring meaning to the play in an indirect way. Thus, they opted to include the romances between, Nellie and Emile, and Cable and Liat, into the musical production, which portrayed both a lighthearted and serious romance, but both focusing on racial prejudgment. With this Rodgers and Hammerstein introduced the subject of working two story lines into one production, which is something that had not appeared before. *Oklahoma!* can be perceived as having an influence on this through the dimensions that were added, especially in the opening act with the offstage singing of, *Oh, What a Beautiful Morning* (Riddle, 247). This addition of different dimensions is directly portrayed in the opening scene of *West Side Story*, when the two gangs are interacting with each other through the incorporation of dream ballet.

### ***West Side Story***

*Oklahoma!*, and the newly rewritten style that Rodgers and Hammerstein set onto stages, inspired many other plays, one of them being *West Side Story*, for which Sondheim wrote the lyrics, this took

to the stage in 1957. *West Side Story*, in itself inspired by William Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet* (Riddle, 284). Rodgers and Hammerstein's influence can be seen in *West Side Story*. The combination of the elements, of song and dance which *Oklahoma!* popularized, and integrated it in a present-day, built-up setting. Hammerstein often took traditional stories, and modernised them, adding depth to the production, making it more relatable to the audience. This modernisation of traditional plays, is something that the duo started, in *Oklahoma!*, and is still present today.

The 18-minute dream ballet, at the end of the first scene of *Oklahoma!*, strongly influenced the incorporation of dream ballet found in the opening scene of the production. The incorporation of basketball, in the dream ballet, as a common medium, allows the interaction of the two gangs. Due to American gang culture, not only does the concept of Shakespeare's work become reflected in the new production, but the timeless of the plot is also shown. Thus being able to state, that the production of *West Side Story* is a prime example of a musical whose storyline evolved throughout the eras, and has become one of the most timeless, and relatable ones. This is because of how Rodgers and Hammerstein influenced musical theatre, and through their incorporation of dream ballet, and controversial topics.

The controversy presented in *Oklahoma!*, influenced *West Side Story* as a new genre of music was incorporated into the performance, which extended the transformation of musical theatre further, leading the way towards more rock musicals. (Lubbock, 756)



Figure B. As, *West Side Story*, discusses serious topics such as sexual assault, which can be seen in the scene pictured above, dance is incorporated to emphasise it. (The Huffington Post)

Through the expansion of dream ballet a greater focus was placed upon the social issues presented between the Jets and Sharks. The highly developed music, obscured scenes, and prolonged dance numbers, incorporated in *West Side Story* contributed towards the turning point that marked American musical theatre.

## ***Hair***

The 1968 musical, *Hair*, contributed to the rewriting of American musicals, that Rodgers and Hammerstein began (10 Musicals That Changed Broadway). *Hair*, portrays a different setting and style than *Show Boat* and *Oklahoma!*, since it is held responsible for developing rock musicals.

*West Side Story*, in a way patched the way for *Hair*, as the production included the new genre of music and dance, 'Rock 'n' Roll'. This coupled with the element of ballet being mixed with rock and roll. The new genre and style, effected audiences worldwide, due to the element of incorpora-

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ting racially unified cast. The issues could not have been raised if it had not been for Rodgers and Hammerstein, pushing the boundaries with the incorporation of more serious, and current issues, making it more relatable to the audiences. Created by the sexual revolution and hippie counter-culture of the 1960s, rock musicals originated, and are still continuing to evolve on stages today.

*Vietnam war*


Frank Rich is an American essayist, and writer, who commented on the production of *Hair* in the *New York Times*, stating, "*Hair* succeeds at all levels—as lowdown fun, as affecting drama, as exhilarating spectacle and as provocative social observation. It achieves its goals by rigorously obeying the rules of classic American musical comedy: dialogue, plot, song and dance blend seamlessly to create a juggernaut of excitement." (New York Times, Rich). These were all the qualities, that Rodgers and Hammerstein redefined, showing that they truly had a massive influence as their method of presentation became the outline of what an American musical comedy should include. Much controversy was brought to the musical through its portrayal of illegal drug use, sexuality, disrespect towards the American flag, and nudity. *Show Boat* was the first musical with a racially integrated cast, which influenced *Hair* greatly, causing to be perceived as diverse and open to a new audience.

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## Conclusion

The Great Depression acted as a catalyst for Rodgers and Hammerstein as it allowed them to build new boundaries and add a new depth of meaning to musicals. The duo believed that musicals should shed away from the shallow means of entertainment, and incorporate current, real-life topics. Through the incorporation of song and dance, *Oklahoma!* sets a new boundary in how the message is brought across. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein are the two men that are responsible for pushing the boundaries, and incorporating new, more relatable messages onstage. They additionally, brought forth new actors, and playwrights, that later became known world wide. The

shows that became influenced by *Oklahoma!* did not only take on what was presented, but they expanded the new techniques. One reoccurring technique brought forth by the duo, was the incorporation of dream ballet to aid towards the emphasise of the emotions portrayed by the different characters. The use of dream ballet also influenced the audiences perception, as they were able to build a relationship towards the issues dominant at the time, which were presented on stage. Rodgers and Hammerstein's influence expanded, as they were the first who brought about the two storylines together, and the addition of different dimensions. A strong link can be seen between the first acts of, *Oklahoma!* and *West Side Story*, where the two dimensions of the stages, on- and offstage, influenced the meaning of the play. A great development can be seen, especially in those musicals that followed *Oklahoma!*, for example, *West Side Story* and *Hair*, as they incorporated racial discrimination, and placed contrast against each other, through elements such as dream ballet, which was first introduced in *Oklahoma!*. The majority of musicals that made their debut in the Golden Age started to become revised into motion picture movies, and revived on the stages in the West End, on Broadway, and tours around the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.



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