

Historical Musicals

and their relevancy

What is a historical musical?

A historical musical is a genre of musical theatre that focuses on a particular event, person, or period in the past and uses it to tell a story. It uses music and concise storytelling to get its message or moral across.

What MAKES a historical musical?

This genre of theatre all boils down to taking real stories of real people and twisting them on their head. It doesn't just modernize the music, it modernizes the narrative. They aim to add a new perspective to centuries-old events.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Historical musicals add a new layer of introspection to the regular historical narrative. It also makes the general concept of history more appealing to the general mainstream. They encourage people to look back on our past by presenting them as enjoyable musical numbers. By taking more underground events from the past, they present them alongside a relevant lesson.

Les Misérables

Setting: 19th Century France

Historical Context: The Revolutionary Uprisings of 1830 and 1848

Music/Genre: Classic Theatre, Drama, Operatic

Themes and Relevancy

The theme of Les Misérables is particularly focused on the worth of a person's dignity. It discusses how, no matter how much people label or dehumanize us, we can still grow, change, and prove ourselves deserving of love. The story is particularly character-focused, honing in on their hardships and how they fight against their societal reputations. All of the characters struggle in some way with their past or their identities as people, but in the end they learn to accept our worth. Despite being set in Revolutionary France, the concept of accepting ourselves and moving past our prior mistakes is especially relevant today. Many youths struggle to figure out who they are, and Les Misérables offers a beautiful story of figuring out your worth as a human being.



Something Rotten

Setting: England in the Renaissance

Historical Context: The surge of theatre and playwrights such as Shakespeare

Music/Genre: Rock Musical

Themes and Relevancy

Something Rotten is mainly meant to be comedic. While it does succeed in being funny, it also addresses in a weighty (albeit satirically critical) message about fame and what we do to achieve it. One of the two main characters, Nick Bottom, is determined to outdo Shakespeare by writing the most well-renowned play ever. Unfortunately, against his brother Nigel's advice, he attempts to achieve this through deceitful means. The story teaches us that there is no success or honor in glory that is gained through dishonest practices. Being truthful, not only to others, but to yourself is the most important thing regardless of your goal. Being someone who is true to their heart is more important than being someone famous.

