

INTRO TO MUSICAL THEATRE

An overview of the genre

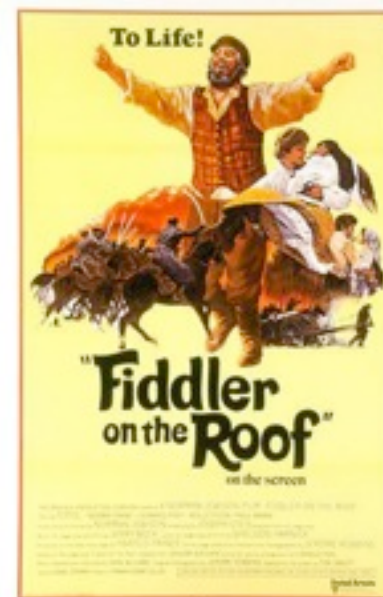
The purpose of this overview

- What is musical theatre?
- What makes it different from other types of theatre?
- What are some things I need to know to be able to talk about musical theater intelligently?



What, exactly, is musical theatre?

- Musical theatre is a theatre genre that contains music, spoken dialogue, and dance.
- Musicals often use popular styles of music, as opposed to art music meant for the concert hall
- The story of a musical is told through all aspects of the performance



What makes musical theatre different from other forms of theatre?

- Differences from opera
 - ▣ Focus on spoken dialogue
 - ▣ Dance is much more important
 - ▣ Generally amplifies the singer
 - ▣ Uses popular styles
 - ▣ Almost always in the same language as the audience
- Differences from “straight” plays that have music
 - ▣ Music drives the plot and characters
 - ▣ Songs are usually outside the normal action

Types of musicals

- Book Musical
 - ▣ Traditional musical with a strong story that drives the music and characters
- Revue
 - ▣ A collection of songs, generally with some common element. May or may not have a plot
- Concept Musical
 - ▣ A musical where the message or metaphor is just as, if not more important, than the actual story
- Jukebox musical
 - ▣ Musical using only songs from an artist or group
- Rock (or Pop) Musical
 - ▣ Musical that uses rock music (or pop music) as the main style of music. If there is little spoken dialogue, it could be called a *rock opera* or *pop opera*

What do I need to know to talk about musicals intelligently

- Every musical has three components: music, lyrics, and book
- The *book* is the story of the show- generally refers to the spoken dialogue
- The book and the lyrics combined are sometimes called the *libretto*
- The lyrics and the music combined are called the *score*



What do I need to know to talk about musicals intelligently

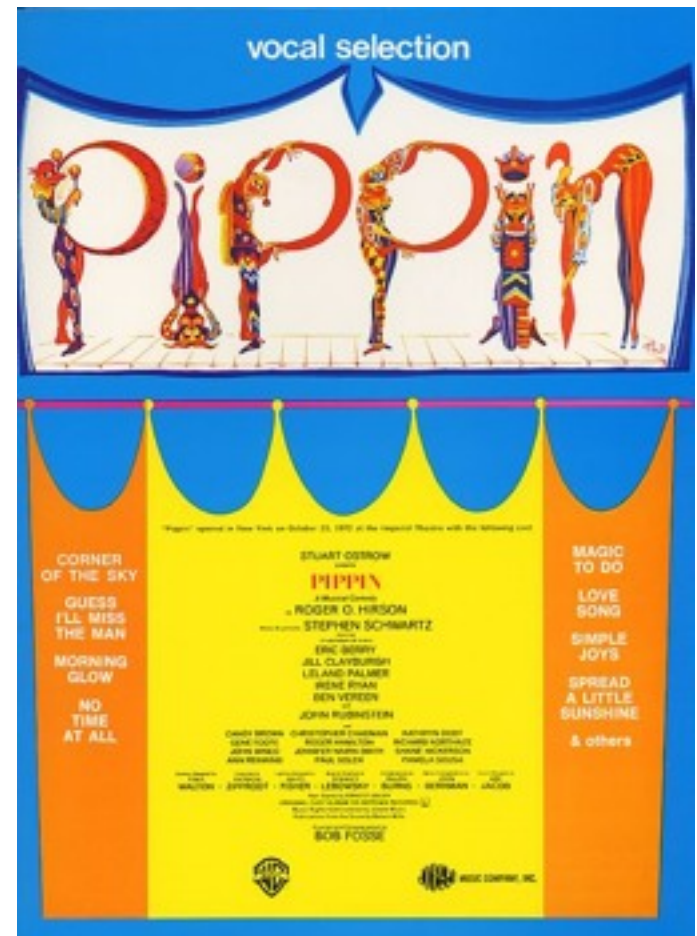
- Every musical production generally has five “major” positions
 - ▣ Director
 - ▣ Musical Director
 - ▣ Choreographer
 - ▣ Producer
 - ▣ Stage Manager



What do I need to know to talk about musicals intelligently

□ Other terms to know:

- ▣ Lead role
- ▣ Featured role
- ▣ Ensemble
- ▣ Swing
- ▣ Pit
- ▣ Understudy
- ▣ Standby



Basic Structure of most musicals

- Overture- Orchestral introduction previewing from the show
- Act I
- Intermission (10-20 minutes)
- Act II
- Curtain Call
- Exit music



List of eras



- ❑ Origins of Musical Theatre
- ❑ The Follies Years
- ❑ The Roaring Twenties
- ❑ Pre WWII
- ❑ The 1940's and 1950's
- ❑ The 1960's
- ❑ The 1970's
- ❑ Contemporary Theatre