

Title:

The Early History Of Broadway Musicals

Word Count:

541

Summary:

Broadway as a symbol

Broadway is the street in New York that has come to symbolize live theater entertainment and musicals throughout the world. Today the area, known to tourists and theater-goers, stretches from W.41st Street, where the Netherlander Theater is located, up to W. 53rd Street's Broadway Theater. Only four theaters are located physically on Broadway, the Marquis at 46th Street, the Palace at 47th Street, the Winter Garden at 50th Street and the Broadway at 53...

Keywords:

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Article Body:

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Broadway is the street in New York that has come to symbolize live theater entertainment and musicals throughout the world. Today the area, known to tourists and theater-goers, stretches from W.41st Street, where the Netherlander Theater is located, up to W. 53rd Street's Broadway Theater. Only four theaters are located physically on Broadway, the Marquis at 46th Street, the Palace at 47th Street, the Winter Garden at 50th Street and the Broadway at 53rd. All the other legitimate houses are located east or west of this twelve block stretch.

Broadway Stars.

By the 1830's America was exporting stars to Europe. The first notable American actor to make a successful tour was Edwin Forrest, who at nineteen, had played Iago to Edmond Kean's Othello. Forrest's second tour of Great Britain, in the following decade didn't fare as well. He was hissed off stage. Though the disruption of his tour was a personal feud with a British actor, its results were well publicized in the American Press and his return to the American stage was received with populist fervor. This "personal feud" became an international incident and demonstration of class struggle in 1849, when the British actor in question was scheduled to perform at the Astor Place Opera House in New York. A

riot ensued on the night of May 10th which was put down with troops and cannon.

Broadways first marquis.

In 1891, the first electric marquis was lit on Broadway. The theater was on Madison Square at the intersection of Broadway and Fifth Avenue at W. 23rd Street. The Flatiron Building now occupies the site. By midway through the following decade, the street blazed with electric signs as each theater announced its shows and stars in white lights. By the turn of the 20th Century the street had an entirely different look, with as many as sixteen theaters on Broadway itself and many others located on the side streets or other avenues. Broadway was much more than a mere twelve blocks. It started at 13th Street and wound its way a mile and a half up the Avenue to 45th Street, ending in the heart of Long acre Square. This first decade of the century also saw the construction of many theaters, most notably the New Amsterdam on 42nd Street in 1903, along with four others in that same year, that are still standing today.

Our Broadway.

The first decade of the 20th Century was both boring and transformational in the history of our Broadway Musicals. The seeds of that transformation go back to 1882, and the construction of The Madison Square Theater at 24th Street. The Mallory's, who had built the theater, had employed a young actor-manager from San Francisco along with two brothers from the lower Eastside to help manage the theater. David Belasco, who had the distinction of appearing on stage with another unknown child, Maude Adams, in San Francisco in 1877, was soon to become a playwright, theater owner and builder. The two brothers from the lower Eastside were, of course, Charles and Daniel Frohman. The first sign of the transformation occurred when producer Rudolf Aronson decided to build a theatre of his own. At the time, theatres were concentrated between Union Square and 24th Street.