

A Day in Hollywood, A Night on Broadway
Musicals and the Moving Image

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Upon adapting one of his Broadway shows to film, Bob Fosse stated, “Good or bad, stage direction has certain conventions, certain restrictions. In film, however, the only limitations I’ve discovered are the limitations in the director’s head.”¹ The same concept applies when comparing a staged musical that has been recorded for posterity and the same show when it is adapted for the screen. The script, staging, choreography, music selections, and acting choices can vary widely between the two. And yet contemporary revivals can have a distinctly “cinematic” feel in their transitions between scenes and effects that were not readily available in their first incarnations. For Broadway musicals that made the transition to film and returned to the stage, some absorbed elements such as new music and plot lines from the film version, which made their way into a new version. These changes can produce a conundrum for the historian or artist who wish to recreate the musical in its original form.

Theatrical performances are ephemeral by nature. Each instance of a live performance can vary greatly, even if the same cast performs the same material every night. In a live performance, anything can happen. In cinema, that same performance is recorded, edited and frozen in time. Every time the audience watches a film, they see a fixed consistency that is not found in the theatre. Audiences also experience live performances differently from film. Though both theatre and film can be experienced as a group in an auditorium, in theatre, the audience can choose which action to follow while in film, editing has made the choice for them.

Before 1970, great performances on stage were rarely recorded in their entirety and the legendary performances only existed in memory. All that remained were either snippets of musical numbers performed on television variety shows such as *The Ed Sullivan Show* or grainy

¹ *Bob Fosse: Steam Heat*. Directed by Judy Kinberg. 1990. New York, NY: WNET/Thirteen, 1990. Videocassette.

home movies surreptitiously filmed by an audience member, often without accompanying sound. In 1970, the New York Public Library's Theatre on Film and Tape Archive (TOFT) began recording and preserving and documenting live theatrical productions. The recordings of these performances ensure that future generations of scholars and artists will have access to material that would not have otherwise been available. Comparing these carefully recorded performances to their cinematic twins shows a great deal of differences not only in how they are recorded, but how they are performed, even when the film version hews closely to the staged production. Chapter three contains a fuller examination of TOFT's impact on the preservation of the Broadway musical.

The goal of this thesis is to examine the importance of capturing the ephemeral nature of musical theatre and its great performances to physical formats including film, video, and digital, and to compare the staging of these shows to how they were staged in their Hollywood incarnations. This study analyses these issues and examines what is gained and lost when a Broadway musical is adapted for film and, conversely, when a musical that began its life in film is adapted for the stage. Research will include case studies that highlight the evolution – or in some cases, the devolution – of musicals and their movement from stage to screen and back again. Ultimately, this thesis aims to address the benefits of preserving and archiving moving images of both stage and screen. Preservation is an invaluable tool to artists studying and reviving the staging and choreography of the American musical and historians researching its cultural significance.

The layout of the following chapters examines the scope of the phenomenon that is the American Musical Comedy. Chapter two presents a brief historical overview of musicals from its beginnings in minstrel shows and operettas through to the golden age of musicals where

productions such as *Show Boat* fully integrated music and storyline. It also discusses the birth of Hollywood musicals and how the film industry adapted Broadway musicals, bringing them to a wider audience and preserving the fleeting nature of musical theatre onto the physical format of film.

Chapter three examines the similarities and differences between staging a musical for stage and staging a musical for film. It compares how a musical production with the same dialogue and choreography can either look very similar or very different.

Chapters four through six employ case studies to illustrate the transitions from stage to screen, from screen to stage, and in some cases, making repeated round trips between the two. It examines what was gained and what was lost in terms of plot and musicals numbers when musicals made the transition through what author Thomas Hischak refers to as the “screen door.”

Chapter seven looks at cataloging issues, and focuses on the importance of colocation and linking the various iterations of a musical. Using *Show Boat* as a case study, this chapter employs the Functional Requirements of Bibliographic Records (FRBR) to connect the different variations of the musical including versions from stage, screen and satire.

This thesis concludes with a chapter on the importance of preserving all recorded versions of musicals and why these performances are invaluable tools not only for scholars, but also for artists and enthusiasts who wish to discover what makes the musical a uniquely American art form.

Chapter 2: A Brief History of Musicals

In The Beginning

Most historians agree that the 1866 production of *The Black Crook* was the first known American musical. According to Gerald Mast, this musical came about through a series of fortunate accidents. A French ballet troupe was stranded when a fire destroyed the Academy of Music in New York City. The troupe's impresarios joined forces with the manager of New York's Niblo's garden, a venue that specialized in spectacles that, at the time, was mounting a musical adaptation of the Faust legend. The ballet troupe was shoehorned into the show along with specialty acts and new music. This "leg show" with its chorines displaying plenty of leg in pink tights was considered an outrage. However, the church's condemnation of the show only ensured the show's success.² With a running time of five and a half hours, *The Black Crook* was a hit with an unprecedented run of 475 performances.³ The Broadway musical was born.

The Black Crook was formed from a melting pot of influences dating back to minstrel shows, which had its beginnings in the early nineteenth century and hit the peak of their popularity in the 1830s and 1840s. Minstrelsy lampooned many ethnic groups, but none so much as African-Americans. A white all-male cast in blackface performed in roles with derisive names such as Jim Crow, Tambo and Bones. The minstrel show was a huge success and, in retrospect, was undoubtedly a low point in American theatre history. The music performed in these shows was mostly borrowed from European traditions, as they had no idea what authentic African music sounded like. Songs such as "Dixie" and "My Old Virginia Home," which spoke of blacks

² Thomas S Hischak, *Through the Screen Door: What Happened to the Broadway Musical When It Went to Hollywood* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 106.

³ Gerald Mast, *Cant Help Singin': The American Musical on Stage and Screen* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1987), 8.

yearning to return to the South, and dances such as the Turkey Trot were hugely popular with the mostly white audience. Influences of the minstrel show cast its shadow into twentieth century films including *The Jazz Singer* (1927), *Swing Time* (1936), and *Babes in Arms* (1939).

Several traditions emanated from minstrel shows that became the basis for American entertainment (figure 1). The first of these traditions was the minstrel line, which consisted of actors seated in a semi-circle with the Master of Ceremonies, also known as the Interlocutor, in the middle. The minstrel line later evolved into what later became known as the Revue. The next tradition was known as the Olio in which acts were performed in front of the curtain so the scenery behind could be changed. These acts were mainly song and dance acts, which eventually evolved into Vaudeville. The finale of a minstrel show was a one-act musical that was called a burlesque or an afterpiece. Unlike the burlesque shows of the twentieth century that featured strippers, these shows were satires of myths, literature or contemporary dramas that featured comics and a cast of pretty chorus girls.⁴ The performance style of these burlesques closely resembled Commedia Dell'Arte with its broad and vulgar comic depictions.

⁴ Ethan Mordden, *Ziegfeld: The Man Who Invented Show Business* (New York: St. Martins Press, 2008), 3.

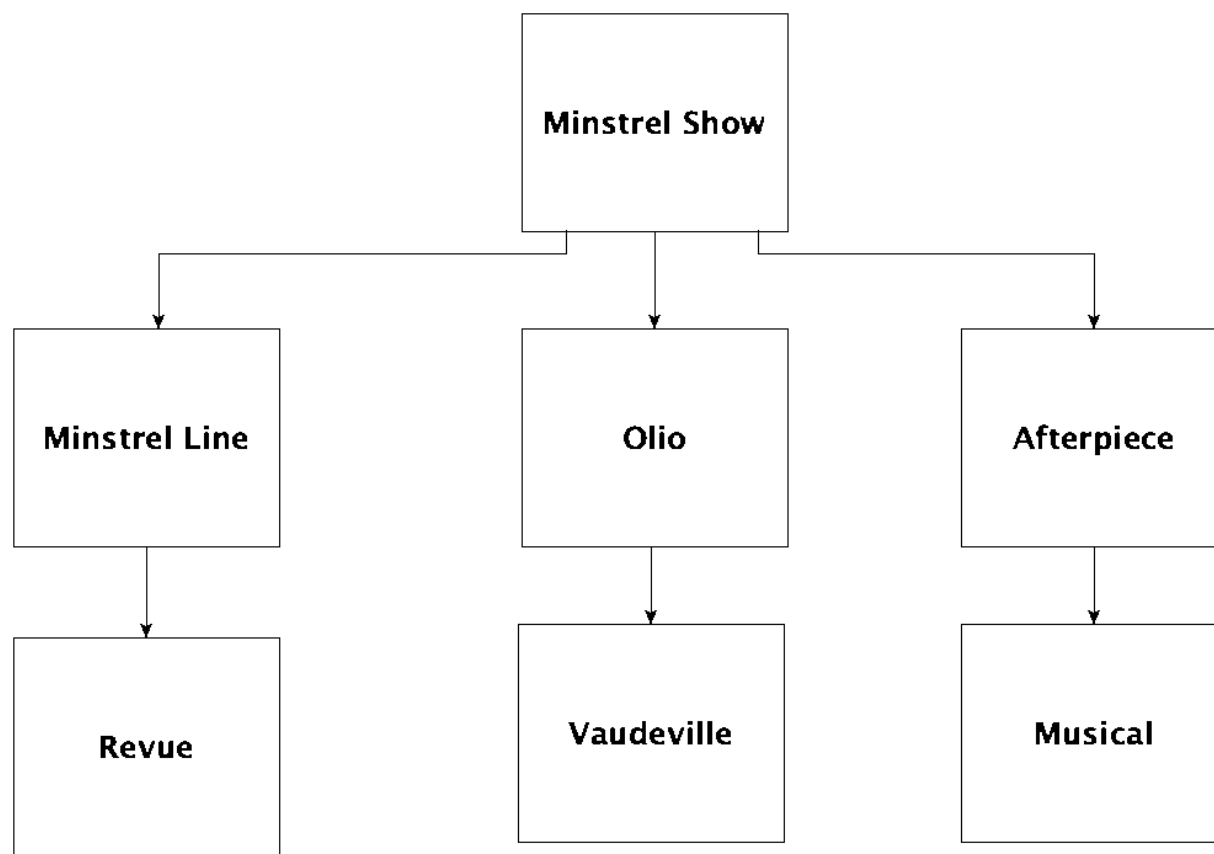


Figure 1

By beginning of the twentieth century, live minstrel shows had run their course and were replaced by Vaudeville. Vaudeville's origins can be traced to the 1840s when little theatres began to spring up around the country, which also included town halls and meetinghouses. The term "Vaudeville" was coined in the 1870s and allegedly came from the French term "voix de ville." Like burlesque, vaudeville's content was originally lewd in nature and performed in saloons as an inducement for its male audience to drink.⁵ During the 1880s, Tony Pastor and B.F. Keith cleaned up vaudeville in order appeal to a family audience.⁶ Vaudeville's variety spanned from comics to acrobats, dancers, jugglers, and singers. George M. Cohan, who sprang from the

⁵ Katherine K. Preston, "American Musical Theatre Before the Twentieth Century," in *The Musical*, ed. William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 26.

⁶ Ibid.

vaudevillian tradition, had a great impact in the evolution of the American musical theatre.

Unlike his musical contemporaries such as Sigmund Romberg and Victor Herbert whose music leaned towards a more classical European style, Cohan's music in such shows as *Little Johnnie Jones* came out of the American vernacular with bouncy rhythms and catchy lyrics.⁷

Operas and operettas were also among the potpourri of influences from which the American musical evolved. Foreign language operas became popular in America towards the end of the nineteenth century, particularly among the upper classes. The entertainment opera provided was a far cry from other musical entertainments like vaudeville and burlesque. Plotlines were melodramatic in nature and the music was sung through with no breaks for dialogue. It was an evening of culture, refinement, and exclusivity performed in elaborate opera houses that were centered in major American cities such as New York, Boston, and San Francisco.

Operetta had its origins in Europe and was introduced to American audiences in the 1860s with the opéras-bouffes of Jacques Offenbach.⁸ Operettas in English, such as *HMS Pinafore* by W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, were highly successful and stoked the desire of American audiences for more of the same. Unlike operas, operettas contain comic storylines with dialogue interspersed between the music. Much of the material, like burlesque, was satirical in nature. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, American composers were inspired to create their own brand of operetta. Even the March King, John Philip Sousa, wrote approximately fifteen operettas.⁹ By turn of the century, operettas were firmly entrenched in the American

⁷ Orly Leah Krasner, "Musical Theatre in New York, 1900-1920," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical*, ed. William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 30.

⁸ Katherine K. Preston, "American Musical Theatre Before the Twentieth Century, in *The Musical*, ed. William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 24.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

theatre. Popular composers such as Victor Herbert, Rudolph Friml and Sigmund Romberg dominated the genre with their original blend of traditional marches and waltzes with comic songs that were more contemporary in nature.¹⁰ Most importantly, operas and operettas melded music and storyline into a cohesive and integrated whole, something that eventually would be echoed in modern musical theatre. One lyricist of note who emerged from operetta was lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II. Operettas that Hammerstein collaborated on including *Rose-Marie* (music by Rudolf Friml) and *The Desert Song* (music by Sigmund Romberg) gave way to *Show Boat*, which is considered to be the prototype of the modern American musical.¹¹

The Musical Comes of Age

Show Boat opened on December 27, 1927 at the Ziegfeld Theatre.¹² On a variety of levels, it was a musical unlike any other that was concurrently playing on Broadway at that time or, indeed, any other that had come before it. It was certainly a departure for the producer, Florenz Ziegfeld, who had made his reputation on producing *The Ziegfeld Follies*. The *Follies* were based on Parisian revues, which had become popular in New York in the 1890s.¹³ In her essay on the American musical theatre before the turn of the century, Katherine Preston describes this type of extravaganza as a combination of “burlesque, satire, specialty acts, minstrelsy, and dance with a scantily-clad female chorus and tableaux vivants.” These tableaux consisted of still, silent nude or nearly nude chorus girls artfully posed and tastefully lit.¹⁴ It was

¹⁰ Gerald Mast, *Cant Help Singin': The American Musical on Stage and Screen* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1987), 24.

¹¹ Ibid., 218.

¹² Stanley Green and Kay Green, *Broadway Musicals Show by Show: Fifth Edition* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1996), 60.

¹³ Katherine K. Preston, “American Musical Theatre Before the Twentieth Century, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical*, ed. William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 27.

¹⁴ Ibid.

these elements that made *The Ziegfeld Follies* an unforgettably grand spectacle, according to Director/Choreographer Tommy Tune, who also commented on the extreme length of the shows. “They were very elaborate and they moved like a Leviathan, but nobody seemed to mind.”¹⁵ The Follies and other revues such as *George White’s Scandals* also influenced musical comedies of the time where songs and specialty numbers were usually hung upon very thin librettos usually with lots of chorines showing lots of leg. It was not unusual in these musicals for a well-known star to stop the show by performing a beloved signature song and dance that had nothing at all to do with the plot.

What made *Show Boat* unique was the epic storyline that followed the fortunes of the Hawks and Ravenal families over three generations from the 1880s through 1927. Unlike the comic operettas and frothy musicals of the era, *Show Boat* dealt with serious issues not normally found in an evening’s entertainment such as unhappy marriages, miscegenation, and racism. It was based on Edna Ferber’s popular novel of the same name published in 1926. What *Show Boat* had in common with its predecessors was that it was what the entertainment industry referred to as a ‘backstager’ – in other words, a show about theatre people, which allowed composer and lyricist Kern and Hammerstein to integrate song and dance numbers that were organic to the story and thus believable when characters spontaneously burst into song.¹⁶ *Broadway Musicals Show by Show* succinctly sums up the plot:

Show Boat is primarily concerned with the fortunes of impressionable Magnolia Hawks – whose father Cap’n Andy Hawks runs the show boat Cotton Blossom – and ne’er-do-well riverboat gambler Gaylord Ravenal. Meeting on the Natchez levee, the couple fall in love at first sight, then become actors on the showboat, marry, and move to Chicago. After

¹⁵ Tommy Tune, interview with Michael Kantor, *Broadway: The American Musical*, raw footage, October 23, 2002.

¹⁶ Lauren Acton, “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Musical: Show Boat in Films and Revivals,” in *From Stage to Screen: Musical Films in Europe and United States (1927-1961)*, ed. Massimiliano Sala (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2012), 1.

they separate when Ravenal loses his money gambling, Magnolia has a tearful meeting with her father while singing at the Trocadero on New Year's Eve. She goes on to become a musical-comedy star, as does her daughter Kim, and years later she and Ravenal are reunited aboard the Cotton Blossom. A secondary plot involves Magnolia's mulatto friend, the tragic Julie La Verne, and her devotion to her man, Steve Baker.¹⁷

Kern and Hammerstein had to convince a skeptical Edna Ferber that their production of *Show Boat* would not be typical of the leg shows of the day. According to Ethan Morrden in his book on Ziegfeld, Kern went to Ferber's apartment and played "Ol' Man River." Overwhelmed by what she heard, she recalled, "My hair stood on end, the tears came to my eyes, I breathed like a heroine in a melodrama."¹⁸

According to legend, the premiere of *Show Boat* left audiences so stunned that they were incapable of applauding and left the theatre in silence. However, the opposite was true – the show received a standing ovation, rare for that era, and it took a long time for the theatre to empty after the final curtain.¹⁹

Meanwhile in Hollywood, musical films had already piqued the interest of the audience in 1926 with the premiere of Warner Bros. *Don Juan*. Gerald Mast writes that before the feature presentation, a Vitaphone program of musical acts with synchronized sound was screened featuring opera selections and the New York Philharmonic. This proved to be so popular that Warner Bros. followed up with another program, this time featuring popular entertainers including George Jessel and Al Jolson, which ultimately led to what is considered to be the first musical feature film the following year.²⁰

¹⁷ Stanley Green and Kay Green, *Broadway Musicals Show by Show: Fifth Edition* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1996), 60.

¹⁸ Ethan Morrden, *Ziegfeld: The Man Who Invented Show Business* (New York: St. Martins Press, 2008), 244.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 250.

²⁰ Gerald Mast, *Cant Help Singin': The American Musical on Stage and Screen* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1987), 87.

The year 1927 was a milestone year; not only had *Show Boat* premiered on Broadway, ushering in what came to be known as Broadway's golden age, but *The Jazz Singer* appeared on screen as well. It was no coincidence that one of the first feature length sound films was a musical. Like *Show Boat*, *The Jazz Singer* was also a backstager, a plot device that worked well as it helped explain the need of the characters to spontaneously burst into song and dance. However, in *Show Boat*, though songs like "After the Ball," and "Bill" were performed as part of a show within a show, there were other musical numbers such as "Make Believe" and "You are Love" that sprang directly from the story line as a means of emotional expression. Conversely, in films like *The Jazz Singer* and *42nd Street*, the musical numbers are separate from the storyline and are only performed as part of a show contained within the plot.

According to Thomas Hischak, Hollywood was initially leery of full-length musicals and didn't know what to do with them.²¹ The intimacy and closeness of the camera made the concept of a character launching into a musical number seem unnatural for a narrative-driven film. Films tend to be more "realistic" compared to stage shows and while spontaneous singing might be acceptable on stage, there were worries that audiences would be less accepting of the same convention on film.²² When adapting these early musicals for film, studios felt that some songs were extraneous and the plots overlong. As Hischak rightly points out, there are no first act finales and intermissions in most movie musicals and Broadway musicals tend to be longer on duration and on songs than musicals created in Hollywood. Therefore, before Broadway musicals were given the prestige treatment, especially those by Rogers and Hammerstein, Hollywood had no compunctions about shredding the score and the plot while retaining the title.

²¹ Thomas S. Hischak, *Through the Screen Door: What Happened to the Broadway Musical When It Went to Hollywood*. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 2.

²² Ibid.

For example, the stage production of *On the Town* had an unforgettable score by Leonard Bernstein with a book by Betty Comden and Adolph Green. However, Hollywood producer Arthur Freed didn't like the score, calling it "dissonant and edgy."²³ Only three songs and two ballet numbers from the stage production were kept for the film version ("New York, New York," "I Feel Like I'm Not Out of Bed Yet," and "Come Up to My Place") while new songs by Comden, Green and Roger Edens were added.

Hollywood also freely adapted material from the musical's predecessors including revues (*Broadway Melody of 1929*, *Ziegfeld Follies*), operettas (*Rose Marie*, *Naughty Marietta*), vaudeville (*Gypsy*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*), and minstrelsy (*Show Boat*, *The Jazz Singer*). By harking back to these earlier forms of entertainment, Hollywood played the nostalgia card to great effect and profit. *Show Boat*, a musical that takes place in the era of minstrelsy and melodrama, had three incarnations on screen in 1929, 1936, and 1951. Though the first incarnation of *Show Boat* was initially silent, some dialogue as well as a prologue featuring the original stage cast singing the hit songs from the show was eventually added. Other Broadway shows followed suit in 1929 including the operetta *The Desert Song* and Ziegfeld's all-talking, all-singing, Technicolor extravaganza *Sally*, starring Marilyn Miller from the original New York cast. With the box office success of these and other movie musicals, Hollywood began to lure Broadway talent to the West Coast to adapt their musicals and create original works as well. In fact, the golden age of Broadway musicals closely paralleled the golden age of Hollywood musicals.

Though Hollywood heavily borrowed material from Broadway, it took a long time before musicals created specifically for film were adapted for the Broadway stage. It wasn't until 1961

²³ Ibid., 16.

that *Carnival*, the Broadway adaptation of the 1953 film *Lili* made its debut. The film had only one song, “Hi-Lili, Hi-Lo,” as well as ballet sequences and incidental music. As with most Broadway adaptations of Hollywood films, the score and the plot were expanded to round out what was considered to be a rather thin plot.²⁴ Ultimately, both Broadway and Hollywood benefitted from original material that flowed back and forth between the two coasts.



²⁴ Ibid., 181.

Chapter 3: From Stage to Screen: Technical Differences

Though musicals for stage and film share a close kinship, there are many differences in the way they are produced, staged, and presented to an audience.

As mentioned earlier, musicals that appear on stage are ephemeral in nature. Though a show could run for many years and thousands of performances, no two performances are exactly alike. Different casts, errors, and ad-libs made during a performance lend excitement to a live show where anything can happen. All that lives on of the performance is in the memories of the audience who attended the show. Director/Choreographer Susan Stroman commented that, “A musical can touch someone very differently than any other genre because it has music and music touches the heart. It sends you another level of emotions that you usually don’t get from TV or a movie or even from a play. There’s something about seeing live theatre that affects you that you remember and that you place in your lifetime that no other medium will do.”²⁵ She goes on to state that the memory of a theatrical experience is so strong that people not only remember the show, but they also remember the cast, where they had dinner, and even where they parked.

Great performances became the stuff of legend until 1970, when the New York Public Library’s (NYPL) Theatre on Tape and Film Archive (TOFT) began to record and preserve live theatrical productions.²⁶ These works, which can be accessed at NYPL’s Library for the Performing Arts, freeze performances for posterity and for future generations to enjoy and study. However, these recordings only capture one performance of many. Whatever flaws or flashes of brilliance that occur during the taping of a live performance will be the one performance by which all others from that same production will be judged and remembered. In her interview for

²⁵ Susan Stroman, interview by Michael Kantor, *Broadway: The American Musical*, raw footage, September 30, 2003.

²⁶ “About the Theatre on Film and Tape Archive,” *nypl.org*, last modified October 30, 2015, <http://www.nypl.org/about/divisions/theatre-film-and-tape-archive>.

the PBS documentary series *Broadway: The American Musical*, Stroman compared live theatre to film:

(In a stage production) You're dealing with live performers. It's always live. That's the thing. Once you make a film and it's done, you don't have to deal with anybody any longer. The film goes out and is distributed. But with live theatre, it has a constant change; it has constant breadth of its own. So these producers have to be on it all the time. It's not about handing a can of film somewhere; it's wondering if your lead actor is feeling ok, it's wondering if the understudy is good enough, it's wondering if our press ideas are good enough. It's constant because it is live.²⁷

Broadway and film director Julie Taymor concurs:

What theatre does that film and TV can't do is to surround the audience. It goes to something very ancient. It's also very respectful of the audience because it's not trying to hide the strings and the rods, it's very transparent...that's why theatre will never die because there will always be a place for the human experience. That's going to be the thing that people will crave with their senses."²⁸

This is in stark contrast to film where performances are created to be frozen in time.

Though an audience can take away multiple meanings through repeated viewings, the film (unless recut at a later date) remains exactly the same every time it is viewed. Outtakes may exist consisting of different variations of how a scene or sequence is performed, but they will rarely, if ever, be seen if they have not been lost or destroyed.

Broadway and Hollywood musicals are performed in very different ways. Although in both, the audience experiences scenes and sequences flowing seamlessly, a Broadway musical is performed in a linear fashion from beginning to end, while a Hollywood musical is shot out of sequence. An actor performing a role onstage develops and grows his/her character as the show progresses. On film, an actor, for example, may start by enacting the end of the story on the first

²⁷ Susan Stroman, interview by Michael Kantor, *Broadway: The American Musical*, raw footage, September 30, 2003.

²⁸ Julie Taymor, interview by Michael Kantor, *Broadway: The American Musical*, raw footage, July 16, 2003.

day and shoot sequences from the middle of the screenplay on the last day of production. A film actor must always have a mental through-line of a character in order to keep the portrayal fresh and convincing. It is difficult to play a character piecemeal unless the actor mentally prepares where his character is in the scheme of the story and being in the moment ahead of the day's shooting. Acting coach and author Michael Shurtleff points out that the pace in musicals is quick with tightly written scenes that depend on the actor's talent to "provide a rich subtext."²⁹ In his opinion, continuity is hard to find in a musical as they usually have two plots going on; the romantic leads and the subsidiary characters. While the leads are offstage changing costume, the subsidiary characters are performing their own song and dance. For example, in *Oklahoma!*, the song "It's a Scandal, it's a Outrage," a character song for the peddler Ali Hakim, occurs between two songs sung by romantic leads Laurey and Curly. In a sense, this is where film and stage actors have common ground as "the character line is snapped" and the actor is responsible for carrying it through to a scene that may be several song and dance numbers (or in the case of musical film actors, several days or weeks) away.³⁰

Though the techniques actors employ, such as Method or Meisner, may be the same for stage and film, how they project their characters are quite different. The intensity of feeling may be identical, but a performance on stage tends to be broader whereas the performance of the same character on film is more nuanced and subtle. An actor on a Broadway stage has to project not only his voice, but also his character's emotions to a large audience. Even the audience sitting in the last row of the last balcony must easily read the actor's vocal inflections and physical actions. Many Broadway stars had larger-than-life personalities that, as far as

²⁹ Michael Shurtleff, *Audition* (New York, NY: Walker and Company, 1978), 202.

³⁰ Ibid.

Hollywood was concerned, were probably too large for the intimacy of the screen and didn't have the box office appeal to turn a profit.

Thomas Hischak points to Ethel Merman as an excellent example. Between 1939 and 1966, Merman appeared in eight Broadway shows, seven of which were hits.³¹ Even her weaker shows had respectable runs. As Hischak states, "She was more than a Broadway star; she was an insurance policy."³² And yet Hollywood kept its distance, casting other actresses in Merman roles who were not up to snuff and turned in lackluster performances. For example, Ethel Merman was overlooked to play Mama Rose, her groundbreaking role for the screen adaptation of *Gypsy*. The role went to Rosalind Russell. Though Russell had appeared in a successful Broadway musical of her own (as Ruth Sherwood in *Wonderful Town*), her voice was found to be lacking for the demanding role of Mama Rose and was ultimately dubbed by another singer and mixed with her own voice. Thus, the opportunity to see Merman in this important musical has been irrevocably lost. The only footage that exists of this stage performance is amateur 16mm silent footage surreptitiously shot by Broadway fan Ray Knight. This rare footage is housed at the Institute of the American Musical, a Los Angeles duplex owned solely by Miles Kreuger. The only two Broadway roles originated by Merman which she reprised on screen was as Reno Sweeney in *Anything Goes* and as the matronly Sally Adams in *Call Me Madam*; neither role a romantic lead.

The stage can be very forgiving to an actor. A seasoned actress can easily play the role of a young ingénue, and because the stage puts her at a distance from the audience, any imperfections of age can be easily hidden. Mary Martin was forty-six years old when she played

³¹ Thomas S Hischak, *Through the Screen Door: What Happened to the Broadway Musical When It Went to Hollywood* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 65.

³² *Ibid.*, 66.

the role of Maria von Trapp in *The Sound of Music*. By the time the musical was adapted for the screen in the mid-1960s, she was already in her fifties and it would have shown on a large screen. Instead, the role went to thirty-year-old Julie Andrews. Andrews herself had also been overlooked by Hollywood for a role she had originated on Broadway; Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*. Happily, Walt Disney saw Andrews in *Camelot* (replaced in the screen version by the very nonmusical Vanessa Redgrave) and decided to take a chance on her by casting her as Mary Poppins. Hirschak rightly wonders why Hollywood took a pass on these stars to recreate their Broadway roles. Culprits included the possibility that their faces, visible to the nose-bleed seats in a theatre were too strongly-featured or the fact that Hollywood saw them only as stage stars who would not pull in box office profits.³³ Cast in their place are Hollywood stars with what might be considered to be more regular and attractive facial features with built-in audiences who would come to see them in anything they appeared. As a result, it is very unusual to see a Broadway star reprise on screen the role that defined their careers on Broadway.

More often than not, when a stage performance is captured in a moving image, the actors appear to be overacting, breaking the proverbial fourth wall to deliver lines directly to the audience. The technique of direct address, though usually frowned on in the modern theatre, is used to great effect in a musical. It pulls the audience into the character and into the story. However, even if an actor is facing the audience to deliver lines, it doesn't mean that the actor acknowledges the audience's presence in their onstage "world". This technique doesn't fare as well in the more intimate setting of the cinema. The camera magnifies everything; so even actors in a Hollywood musical must tone down their performances in order to maintain the aura of "reality," naturalness, and believability even when in the middle of bursting into song and dance.

³³ Ibid., 65.

Though film actors will occasionally suspend belief and address the audience directly, it is usually done for comic relief and is performed in such a manner as to take viewers temporarily away from the story and put them at a winking remove. In the 1971 film version of *Fiddler on the Roof*, the character of Tevye repeats this stage convention with the direct address of his dilemmas to the audience. It is used as a contrivance to solve his problems before returning to the action of the story. In the film, as Tevye addresses the audience, the director made the choice to shoot cutaways of the immediate action around Tevye in extreme long shots mixed in with extreme close-ups of his daughters' eyes. The external action is pulled back into medium and full shots only after he has made up his mind. In another example, in the 1968 film *The Producers*, Zero Mostel as crooked producer Max Bialystock thinks nothing of addressing the camera directly to let them know how crazy he thinks the other characters are ("They come here, They all come here. How do they find me?") Even though these stage and cinematic asides could be construed as over-acting, however, according to Stella Adler, there is no such thing as over- or under-acting. "There is only acting. No moment is too big or too small if it has validity for the moment in the play."³⁴

The blocking of a musical number also differs between stage and screen. Onstage, the director has a wider canvas on which to create business and bits for the show's characters. During a live performance, the audience views the entire stage and chooses which action to follow with their eyes. In a film, editing has made the decision for the audience what will be seen. In describing the transition of his musical *Sweet Charity* from stage to screen, Bob Fosse recalled,

The "Big Spender" number was probably the most difficult number to translate to screen time. It played well on stage, I think, because I lined the girls up along the

³⁴ Stella Adler, *Respect for Acting* (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), 204.

rail, staged a lot of movement and staged a lot of business for them and then allowed the audience to decide for themselves where they wanted to look, at which particular girl, at which particular moment. Now, the camera has to choose for them.³⁵

This concept holds true even when a musical number is recorded from a stage production.

Shooting “Big Spender” for the 1998 concert version of *Sweet Charity*, the camera also decided what would be seen for a future audience who was not present at the live performance. It starts with a wide shot and then tracks down the line picking out each individual dancer as well as cutting away to close-ups of stamping feet thus obliterating other choreography and stage business that is simultaneously occurring.

As Broadway shows have become more sophisticated, they have become almost cinematic in scope and style. Lighting, scenery changes and levels of scenic backdrops and scrims direct the audience’s view as to what to look at next. Directors and crews who capture these stage performances on a moving image format evolved their visual vocabulary to strategically cut away to closer shots of the performers making a stage performance more akin to watching a feature film. Though cutaways are necessary to keep visual interest in the plotline, sometimes details of other important action on stage ends up outside the frame and lost to the viewer.

In earlier Hollywood remakes of Broadway musicals, cutaways would be included in musical numbers but often the cuts were between various wide shots at different angles. They might also start on a medium shot and zoom out to a wider angle as well. In *The Gay Divorcee* (the 1934 Hollywood remake of the Fred Astaire Broadway musical *The Gay Divorcee*), the only musical number that made the transition from stage to screen is “Night and Day.” In the film, the

³⁵ *Bob Fosse: Steam Heat*, directed by Judy Kinberg (1990. New York, NY: WNET/Thirteen, 1990), VHS.

song starts with medium two-shots and a close-up of Astaire and Ginger Rogers as the song is sung, but opens up to a wide shot to cover the entire dance from head to toe. Even as the camera switches angles including one shot of the dance through a window blind, it never leaves Astaire and Rogers covering the choreography fully from beginning to end. The same treatment is given to Fosse's choreography for the "Steam Heat" number in the 1957 film *The Pajama Game*. The scene begins with cutaways of the audience in the union hall with a cut to a medium shot of the master of ceremonies announcing the union-themed dance. Once the dance is underway, the edits stay on wide shots of the three dancers for the entirety of the performance. As a result, a permanent record of this dance is preserved. An added bonus is two of the three dancers – Carol Haney and Buzz Miller – recreated their original Broadway roles for the film.

In direct opposition to these films is the 1955 adaptation of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* While the famed Agnes de Mille choreography is kept intact in the dream ballet sequence, there were issues that arose during production. According to her biographer Carol Easton, though de Mille had been raised as a child of the Hollywood film industry, theatre was her medium and she choreographed with the stage in mind and "could not accommodate to the fact that the audience could see only what the camera saw."³⁶ According to Oliver Smith, a famed set designer and future co-director of American Ballet Theatre, "She thought she knew all about it, and she didn't have an eye for the camera at all! And you couldn't instruct Agnes de Mille, at her age of life and with her success – talking about having grown up as Cecil B. De Mille's niece, and her father writing movies – about the camera."³⁷ Agnes de Mille found it difficult to choose between "long shots, which sacrifice detail, and close-ups, which sacrifice the

³⁶ Carol Easton, *No Intermissions: The Life of Agnes de Mille* (Canada: Little, Brown & Company, 1996), 343.

³⁷ Ibid.

overview.”³⁸ She wanted both and her choreography, which had been a revelation on stage, did not translate to the screen as she had wished. James Mitchell, who danced the role of Dream Curly recalled that even though there were amazing runs and lifts, “Agnes never got a shot of us coming together so you could see both our faces. She got Bambi running presumably toward me, then me from the back, running, and then a cut to the lift almost accomplished. So you never saw the whole thing.”³⁹ Bambi Linn, the dancer who portrayed Dream Laurey in the dream ballet sequence, pointed out that de Mille staged the ballet like it was for the stage and it didn’t work. She goes on to say that the ballet was filmed about twenty-five times before they struck upon the final version – a very costly proposition. Though watching the final product can be a wonderful experience, the viewer can’t help but feel that important movement is missing and the choice of some the angles and cutaways removes that movement from the final film. De Mille herself felt that her best work had been “mutilated” and “butchered.”⁴⁰

Revisions of musicals for the screen have had mixed results. On one hand, musicals like *Oklahoma!* and *South Pacific* were adapted for the screen with a view toward complete faithfulness to the original stage show with less than stellar results. On the other hand, there are successful stage musicals like *Cabaret* and *Chicago* that are reimagined and opened up specifically for the screen that are highly inventive and successful. Some of these cinematic inventions have even made their way back to the stage with mixed results. Ultimately, the question facing archivists and scholars is whether each of the differing variations of a musical is the “true” version or whether all adaptations of a musical are valid as their own work of art. The answer is not a simple one.

³⁸ Ibid., 344.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 346.

Chapter 4: From Broadway to Hollywood: Case Studies

As Hollywood began to embrace and adapt the Broadway musical starting in the late 1920s, several things began to occur. More emphasis was put on the plot than the musical numbers, which, according to Thomas Hischak, was rather ironic. In the Broadway theatre of the late 1920s and early 1930s the plot lines were paper-thin and the main attraction was the music.⁴¹ Though popular songs were often retained from stage to screen, many songs were cut along with secondary storylines. The running time of these shows were cut in Hollywood as it was believed that nobody would sit through a musical that ran over two hours. Most of the musical numbers were reduced to being used as “entertaining frosting on the cake.”⁴² Many great composers such as Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hart, and Jerome Kern saw their finest work shredded when they made the transition to Hollywood. Even George and Ira Gershwin couldn’t get any respect from Hollywood. Their musical *Strike Up the Band*, a political satire about America declaring war with Switzerland over chocolate ultimately became a Judy Garland-Mickey Rooney “lets-put-on-a-show” film of the same title in 1940. The only thing both productions had in common was the title tune. Other musicals were given the “prestige” treatment by Hollywood, remaining faithful to the original show. The results have been a mixed bag, which prove to be confusing when trying to reconstruct a musical as it was originally intended. The following case studies illustrate some of what happened when Broadway musicals went Hollywood.

On the Town

On the Town started life as a ballet choreographed by Jerome Robbins for Ballet Theatre. *Fancy Free* is a ballet that tells the tale of three sailors on leave in New York during the war. At

⁴¹ Thomas S. Hischak, *Through the Screen Door: What Happened to the Broadway Musical When It Went to Hollywood*. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 3.

⁴² Ibid.

a bar, they compete for the affections of two women over whom they come to blows. The end of the ballet finds the three servicemen dusting themselves off, having a drink, and getting along until another woman happens by and they take off in pursuit. The ballet marked the first successful collaboration between Robbins and Leonard Bernstein. It inspired them to expand the ballet into a full-length musical that had its premiere on December 28, 1944, a little over half a year after the ballet had its debut.⁴³ Librettists Adolph Green and Betty Comden contributed the book and lyrics as well as appearing in the original cast in the roles of Ozzie and Claire. The plot of the show concerns a trio of sailors on 24-hour leave in New York City and the three women they meet and fall in love with – a female cabdriver, an anthropologist, and Miss Turnstiles for the month of June. The plot is bright, bouncy, and filled with earthy double-entendres that appear in songs such as “I Can Cook Too” and “I Get Carried Away.” The sailors – Gabey, Chip, and Ozzie – can’t seem to stay out of trouble. They steal a sign from a subway, knock over a dinosaur at the Museum of Natural History while Hildy, the cabdriver, fails to return her cab after she’s been fired from her job. The number of people and police chasing them grow larger as the show progresses. Like most musicals, there are the main romantic leads, Gabey and Ivy (Miss Turnstiles). What makes this musical unusual, however, is that instead of one secondary comic couple, there are two. There are also peripheral characters including the anthropologist’s overly understanding fiancé and Lucy, Hildy’s nasal and nebbishy roommate. Each of their stories are as important as the romantic leads and they are given their own songs, most memorably “Some Other Time.”

On the Town also included six dance sequences, with a symphonic score written by Bernstein, which, according to the *Cambridge Companion of the Musical*, was unusual for the

⁴³ Stanley Green and Kay Green, *Broadway Musicals Show by Show: Fifth Edition* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1996), 126.

time as dance numbers were usually orchestrated by a dance arranger.⁴⁴ The dance sequences were integrated into the plot of the show and moved the story along, reminiscent of the style of the Dream Ballet in *Oklahoma!*, which had opened the previous season.⁴⁵ Bernstein's score was modern and dissonant with hints of blues and jazz. In an interesting departure for a musical, the overture is a rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner." During the Second World War, the national anthem was played before Broadway shows and *On the Town* kept it as its overture in subsequent productions.

What set this musical apart, especially for its era, was its use of an interracial cast and complete lack of stereotyping. Ballerina Sono Osato was cast as Ivy Smith and there were African-American dancers and singers in the cast as well as the first African-American conductor leading an all-white orchestra.⁴⁶ This casting continued in all revivals of the show.

What didn't continue in any of the revivals, however, was the Jerome Robbins choreography. Each revival had its own choreographer ranging from Joe Layton to Ron Field to Joshua Bergasse. The only time the original Robbins choreography was recreated for the Broadway stage was for the 1989 revue *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, which was choreographed by Robbins himself. Thus, no extant film or video of the complete Robbins choreography for *On the Town* exists, except for the excerpts of the show from *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* and the rehearsal tapes of that production. The two surviving, complete recordings of the show were from the 1998 and 2014 revivals – neither of which has the original choreography.

⁴⁴ Bruce D. McLung and Paul R. Laird, "Musical Sophistication on Broadway: Kurt Weill and Leonard Bernstein," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical*, ed. William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 175.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁴⁶ Carol Oja, *Bernstein Meets Broadway: Collaborative Art in a Time of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), Oxford Scholarship Online, 2014, 2.
<http://ezproxy.library.nyu.edu:2623/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199862092.001.0001/acprof-9780199862092>.

The recording of the 2014 revival used three cameras to capture the show. For the most part, the shots stay fairly wide and coverage of the staging is fairly complete. All musical numbers are captured in mostly wide or full shots from different angles. The cameras stay with the main action on stage and what it doesn't capture of the choreography and staging are mostly movements of background chorus. The use of multiple cameras combined with scene changes that do not take advantage of *olios* (musical numbers taking place in front of a curtain or drop while the scenery behind is changed) give this revival a cinematic feel. The only musical number that comes close to the concept of the *olio* is the "Carnegie Hall Pavane (Do-Do-Re-Do)" number where a wall of doors to rehearsal studios in Carnegie Hall descends and the actors perform in front of the wall while darting in and out of the doors. However, watching this performance doesn't entirely give a researcher a clue as to what the original staging would have been. Though much of the choreography is based on the concepts originated by Robbins (for example, the boxing match *pas de deux* between Gabey and Ivy in "The Great Lover Displays Himself" ballet in act two), this recording will not give the researcher an accurate account of how the original show was presented. The same can be said for the film version.

One of the backers for the original Broadway production was MGM who obtained the film rights in exchange for their patronage.⁴⁷ The film version was released at the end of 1949 and was co-directed by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the MGM executives were not thrilled with the Bernstein score and threw out the majority of the music, retaining only "I Feel Like I'm Not Out of Bed Yet," "New York, New York," and "Come Up to My Place" as well as some of Bernstein's orchestrations for the ballet sequences. There is no credit for choreographer on the film version though several sources claim that

⁴⁷ William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to The Musical*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 174.

Jerome Robbins created the choreography for the film. However, it is most likely that Donen and Kelly created the choreography for *On the Town* as they had for their other films, the most famous example being *Singin' in the Rain*. Adolph Green and Betty Comden, the lyricists and authors of the Broadway version of *On the Town*, collaborated on the new score with Roger Edens who also co-produced the film with Arthur Freed.

Besides the change in music, most of the characters from the Broadway show remained intact with the exception of Claire's fiancé, Judge Pitkin W. Bridgework, whose role was cut from the film. It is possible that the censors felt that the idea of Claire falling for Ozzie while engaged to marry another was a little too racy, not to mention that the overly understanding Judge ends up picking up the bill for Claire's indiscretions. Instead, Claire refers to a guardian in the film version only once – he is never mentioned again. Hildy's roommate Lucy also puts in an appearance in the film version as well, but ends up alone in the film version as opposed to the Broadway version where she ends up romantically involved with Judge Bridgework. As on Broadway, Alice Pearce reprised her role of Lucy. She is the only original cast member who made the transition to the film version. There is also the character of Madame Dilly, the drunken voice teacher from the stage version, who was transformed into Madame Dilyovska, a slightly tipsy dance teacher. In both the stage and screen versions, Madame pimps Ivy out as a cooch dancer in Coney Island while threatening blackmail if she doesn't do as she's told. Unlike the Broadway show, Ivy does show up for her date with Gabey in the film before disappearing to Coney Island.

There are other minor plot changes in the film, but the storyline remains basically the same and, much like the Broadway production, gives equal time to all three couples. Like most Hollywood adaptations of Broadway musicals, there are less musical numbers in the film than

there were on Broadway. The original Broadway show had 29 musical numbers including reprises, recitatives, and encores. The film version contains only 11 songs with reprises of “I Feel Like I’m Not Out of Bed Yet” and “New York, New York.”

Like the Broadway version, the film gives the viewer a whirlwind tour of New York City, but unlike a stage-bound musical, the film was able to open up from the stage with on-location shooting, a first for a Hollywood musical film.

Though the film version differed from the stage, it was as successful as the Broadway show. Despite the butchered Broadway score, the film is still highly enjoyable even though the revised score falls flat in comparison to the original songs included in the film.⁴⁸

Ultimately, if a researcher or artist wants to view something close to the original staging of *On the Town*, they would have to content themselves with looking at the rehearsal footage as well as a video recording of the New York cast of *Jerome Robbins’ Broadway*, which only features four musical numbers from the show staged by Robbins.

Sweet Charity

On the opposite end of the spectrum is *Sweet Charity*. Both stage and screen versions were conceived, directed, and choreographed by Bob Fosse. Viewing both versions of the musical will give the researcher a fairly good idea of the original staging and choreography that, with a few minor differences, stay the same from stage to film.

Sweet Charity was based on the Fellini film *Nights of Cabiria*. After seeing the film, Fosse felt that it would be a perfect musical vehicle for his wife and muse, Gwen Verdon. The adaptation of the screenplay for the stage was by Neil Simon with music and lyrics by Cy Coleman and Dorothy Fields.

⁴⁸ Thomas S. Hischak, *Through the Screen Door: What Happened to the Broadway Musical When It Went to Hollywood*. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 18.

Instead of having their lead character as a prostitute as in *Nights of Cabiria*, Charity Hope Valentine is a dance hall hostess, a profession that was probably deemed to be palatable to the theatre-going crowd of the mid-1960s. *Broadway Show by Show* tidily sums up the plot:

Charity Hope Valentine – with her heart not only on her sleeve but tattooed on her arm – is a New York taxi dancer who knows there’s gotta be something better to do than work at the Fan-Dango Ballroom. She gets innocently involved with an Italian movie star, then seriously involved with straight-laced Oscar Lindquist after they meet in a stuck elevator at the 92nd Street “Y.” Though Oscar eventually asks Charity to be his wife, the revelation of her employment makes the union impossible and when last seen Charity is still a girl who lives “hopefully ever after.”⁴⁹

The documentary, *Bob Fosse: Steam Heat*, described *Sweet Charity* as Fosse’s valentine to Gwen Verdon. It was her return to the stage three years after giving birth to their daughter Nicole.⁵⁰ The musical was very dance-centric and the choreography contained all the Fosse stylizations that Verdon knew how to do well.⁵¹ *Sweet Charity* opened on Broadway in 1966 at the end of January.

The only full recording of the stage show known to exist is a 1998 Lincoln Center concert version. This “charity” concert to fight AIDS not only had cast members from the original show including Gwen Verdon and John McMartin, but an all-star line-up of other Charity Hope Valentines from the show’s revivals including Chita Rivera, Debbie Allen, and Donna McKechnie. The composer, Cy Coleman, played the overture on piano and the concert was performed with the orchestra onstage and minimal sets. As it is a concert, all roles were played broadly before an appreciative audience who was in on each in-joke of the show. Most of the shots stay fairly wide. In the “Big Spender” number the camera pans

⁴⁹Stanley Green and Kay Green, *Broadway Musicals Show by Show: Fifth Edition* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1996), 216.

⁵⁰ *Bob Fosse: Steam Heat*, directed by Judy Kinberg, 1990, New York, NY: WNET/Thirteen, 1990.

⁵¹ Ibid.

down the line of girls, zooms out wide and then zooms into the characters of Nickie and Helene, played by Bebe Neuwirth and Chita Rivera. Before the number starts, an olio consisting of a curtain descends as a scene transition from the locker room of the Fandango Ballroom and Charity reprises the song “You Should See Yourself,” a song that was cut from the film and replaced by “My Personal Property.” As Charity exits the stage, the curtain rises to reveal the girls and the railing in the ballroom. In the film version, an olio for a scene change is unnecessary as the camera can dissolve from the locker room to various shots of the ballroom as a customer enters. The concert version and the film version from 1969 have the same choreography making them both an invaluable tool to dance historians wishing to recreate the staging. The wider shots in the concert version gives the viewer an excellent, if less detailed, view of the staging, while the film version uses an overabundance of dissolves from wide shots framed by an anonymous customer sitting at a table in the foreground to medium shots alternating between groups of the girls at the railing. There are also close ups of feet stamping on the floor. Viewed back to back, a researcher gets a good idea of how the number was originally staged.

This holds true for some of the musical numbers in the film, except that it seemed that Fosse, in his first outing as a feature film director, didn’t seem to have enough confidence in his material.⁵² His use of dissolves, freeze frames, slow motion, and jumpy cutaways is a nod to a popular style of film editing in the 1960s but it distracts from the plot and emphasizes Shirley MacLaine’s inherent weaknesses as a singer and dancer. These drawbacks are readily apparent when she dances with Chita Rivera and Paula Kelly, two veteran dancers of the Broadway stage. Vincent Canby, in his review of the film notes

⁵² Thomas G. Aylesworth, *Broadway to Hollywood: Musicals from Stage to Screen* (New York, NY: Gallery Books, 1985), 212.

that the stage version was “a triumph of theatrical style over content, a star vehicle assembled from bright objects, found and borrowed.”⁵³ He notes that the stage version was a fantasy and a fable that could have been an imaginative film but the film version ultimately fell flat as a result of trying to literally hew to the staging conventions of the Broadway show while trying to employ flashy, “self-conscious cinematic” trends.⁵⁴

The original Broadway show rested mainly on the shoulders of Gwen Verdon who had, in Hollywood’s estimation, off-kilter looks and, in her mid-forties, was considered to be too old to recreate the role of Charity on screen. Comparing footage of Verdon and MacLaine in “If My Friends Could See Me Now” the viewer notices that the film version goes on longer than the stage version as Fosse cuts away numerous times from full shots of MacLaine’s dancing and adds in extraneous cutaways that take away from the energy and the charm of the song. In fact, the best musical numbers in the film are ones that MacLaine doesn’t dance in: “Big Spender,” “Rich Man’s Frug,” and “The Rhythm of Life.” This is borne out in the concert version, which captures the original intent Fosse had in staging these songs. Both “Rich Man’s Frug” and “Big Spender” capture the grotesqueness of the Fellini film in the exaggerated hair, makeup, and costumes of the dancers along with the jerky and awkward, yet sensual, movements that made these dances witty and fun to watch.

Many songs from the stage were cut from the film including “You Should See Yourself,” “Charity’s Soliloquy,” “Too Many Tomorrows,” “I’m the Bravest Individual,” and “Baby, Dream Your Dream.” Some of these songs were expository songs that summed up a character, which would have slowed the film further. “My Personal Property” replaced “You

⁵³ Vincent Canby, “Screen: A Blow-Up of Sweet Charity,” *nytimes.com*, April 2, 1969, <http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9801E5DA153AEE34BC4A53DFB2668382679ED> E.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Should See Yourself" in the film version and "I'm the Bravest Individual" was replaced with "It's a Nice Face." The placement of the song "Where Am I Going?" was also changed for the film and was used more effectively in the scene where Oscar abandons Charity at the marriage bureau. Thus, there are only thirteen songs in the film version instead of the sixteen from stage – unusual for a Hollywood adaptation of a musical where plot usually outweighed musical numbers. Like the Hollywood adaptations of Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals, *Sweet Charity* was given the "prestige" treatment. As a result, the film, though fairly faithful, is overlong at two hours and twenty-nine minutes including a musical intermission in between. And like most of the Hollywood adaptations of Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals, it didn't succeed in capturing what made the Broadway show special. It took three more years for Fosse to regain his credibility in Hollywood with his adaptation of *Cabaret*.

Chapter 5: From Hollywood to Broadway: Case Studies

It took a long time before musicals that had been written expressly for the screen made their journey to Broadway. As mentioned in a previous chapter, the first movie musical to be adapted for Broadway was the 1961 musical *Carnival*, which was based on the 1953 film *Lili*. The show ran for a respectable 719 performances.⁵⁵ Its success paved the way for more adaptations of Hollywood musicals to come to Broadway. However, the musicals that immediately followed did not succeed as well (think of the lackluster 1973 adaptation of *Gigi* and its equally disappointing revival in 2015). This chapter, however, will focus on two musicals that made the transition successfully, even though at first glance, it would seem impossible to translate their distinctly cinematic, spectacular musical numbers to the confines of a proscenium arch.

42nd Street

Carnival was not the only Hollywood musical adaptation directed and choreographed by Gower Champion. In 1980, after a string of successful Broadway hits including *Bye Bye Birdie* and *Hello, Dolly!*, Champion directed and choreographed the stage adaptation of the 1933 Warner Brothers film, *42nd Street*. Unfortunately, he would not live to see the show's opening night or enjoy its successful eight-year run and subsequent revival. The visual remains of this Broadway production was recorded by the TOFT division of NYPL's Library for the Performing Arts in July of 1981.

The film version was a pre-code, fast-talking backstager about a Broadway show that was in the process of being staged during the depths of the depression and about Peggy Sawyer, a newly minted chorus girl, who has to step into the starring role on opening night when the

⁵⁵Stanley Green and Kay Green, *Broadway Musicals Show by Show: Fifth Edition* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1996), 195.

leading lady breaks her ankle. The film was heavy on plot and light on musical numbers containing only five songs including “It Must be June,” “You’re Getting to be a Habit With Me,” “Shuffle Off to Buffalo,” “Young and Healthy,” and the title song.

What set this film apart from all other musicals of the time was the inventive choreography of Busby Berkeley. According to Gerald Mast, to understand the charms and excesses of Berkeley, one has to understand Ziegfeld as well.⁵⁶ Though many theatre historians point to Berkeley’s stint in the army as a drill sergeant as a major influence in his choreography, it was Berkeley’s apprenticeship to *Ziegfeld Follies* choreographer Sammy Lee that honed his choreographic skills. Berkeley was able to successfully transfer and transform these skills in staging spectacles from stage to screen and revolutionized the Hollywood musical. In 1929, Berkeley choreographed Ziegfeld’s production of *Whoopee* starring Eddie Cantor. In turn, Cantor brought Berkeley to Hollywood with him to direct the musical numbers for the film version.⁵⁷ From Ziegfeld (and Sammy Lee), Berkeley borrowed the convention of the scantily clad showgirl descending a staircase. What Berkeley learned in Hollywood, according to Mast, was that the showgirls didn’t really have to move all that much. “The staircase could descend – or rise, twirl, and glide – while the girls smiled and stood stock still.”⁵⁸ These *tableaux vivants* translated well to the screen and Berkeley incorporated overhead shots beginning with *Whoopee* converting ten-gallon hats into geometric patterns while shots from the floor allowed the chorus girls to peek out from under the large brims. Berkeley repeats these geometric patterns in *42nd Street*, especially in the “Young and Healthy” number that, according to Mast, is based on “the

⁵⁶ Gerald Mast, *Cant Help Singin’: The American Musical on Stage and Screen* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1987), 116.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

pure contrast of back-white and circle-line.”⁵⁹ These innovations had a deep impact on the movie musical – an impact that produced original and adventurous filmmaking in the musical genre that lasted for decades.⁶⁰

In contrast to the film, the Broadway version of *42nd Street* expanded the score to twenty musical numbers by borrowing music from other Warner Brothers backstage musicals such as *Dames* (1934) and *Gold Diggers of 1933* (1933). The addition of the songs “Go into Your Dance” and “About a Quarter to Nine” was Broadway’s knowing wink to the 1935 film *Go into Your Dance* starring Ruby Keeler (the original Peggy Sawyer in *42nd Street*) and Al Jolson, who was her husband at the time.

The plot of *42nd Street*, considered to be one of the most imitated and hackneyed story lines, was kept to a minimum while the spectacle of the musical numbers was maximized. The one noticeable change in the script, however, is Peggy Sawyer’s relationship to the producer, Julian Marsh and to the juvenile lead, Billy Lawlor. In a sense, the endings of both stage and screen reflected the times in which they were made. In the 1980 Broadway show, Peggy becomes romantically involved with both men but ultimately commits to neither one and focuses on her budding career. In the 1933 film version, she ends up with Lawlor when he whispers a question in her ear – presumably a marriage proposal – and she nods her acceptance in the final medium shot.

The unforgettable Busby Berkeley dance sequences with its proscenium-busting camera angles and sets that couldn’t possibly fit on a real stage also had to be adapted and limited to a finite space without feeling cramped and stagey. Director-choreographer Gower Champion not

⁵⁹ Ibid., 123.

⁶⁰ Thomas S. Hischak, *Through the Screen Door: What Happened to the Broadway Musical When It Went to Hollywood* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 184.

only had an excellent grasp of using every inch of the stage space to produce spectacular musical numbers, he also had a solid background of performing as a dancer in Hollywood musicals (including MGM's 1951 remake of *Show Boat*), making him uniquely qualified to reinvent Berkeley's extravagant choreography to fit the Broadway stage. Champion modified most of the original dances from the film and scaled back a few of the numbers to make them more intimate. For example, the visual vocabulary of "Young and Healthy," employed high camera angles and geometric dance patterns including shots through the legs of a long line of chorus girls. This would have been a difficult feat to recreate on the stage. In the film, "Young and Healthy" appeared at the end of the film as part of the performance of *Pretty Lady*, the show within the film. In the Broadway musical, Champion shifts the song to the top of the show as Billy encourages Peggy to join him in a duet at the piano for an impromptu audition. Champion was also a genius at creating outsized musical numbers. An excellent example of Champion's choreographic style is the waiter's gallop in *Hello Dolly!* that precedes Dolly's grand entrance down the large staircase at the Harmonia Gardens. This love of spectacle and staircases is very much in evidence in much of his choreography for *42nd Street*. Large staircases make multiple appearances during the production including the double-staircase for the song "Lullaby of Broadway" and the large staircase that appears in the "42nd Street" number at the end of the show. Each staircase is filled with a larger-than-usual chorus of dancers tapping out time-steps. In contrast, the film has Keeler performing the only real dancing backed up by hundreds of dancers who perform minimal steps in tight formation.⁶¹ Champion also created unique takes of Berkeley-style choreography, most notably in the "Shadow Waltz" number. The scene is set up as an audition number for leading lady Dorothy Brock, who morphs the backstage number into a

⁶¹ Ibid., 185.

full production number by playing shadow puppets with her hands. A scrim descends as dancing silhouettes of chorus girls create bold shadows. In “There’s a Sunny Side to Every Situation,” a song originally from the 1938 film *Hard to Get*, Champion once again tips his hat to Berkeley by placing a myriad of chorus girls behind rows of lighted mirrors blinking on and off that extends onstage from floor to ceiling. However, his most direct homage to Berkeley occurs during “We’re in the Money,” which visually recreates the look and feel of the original number as it appeared in *The Gold Diggers of 1933*.

The video recording of the stage show was one of the earlier recordings produced by TOFT and its age is quite apparent. There are audio problems at the head of the tape as well as heavy video dropout throughout. There are plenty of full and wide shots, which effectively capture the performances, staging, and choreography, but not wide enough to lose the detail and nuance of the performance. All the original cast is present, making this recording a unique record of how the Broadway incarnation of a popular film might have looked to the audience experiencing the show live in 1981.

There would not be another successful adaptation of an original Hollywood musical for Broadway until Disney’s 1994 Broadway adaptation of its popular 1991 film *Beauty and the Beast*.⁶² What the film versions of *Beauty and the Beast* and *42nd Street* had in common was its lavish musical numbers. Where *Beauty and the Beast* departed from other musicals that transitioned from Hollywood to Broadway was the fact that it was an animated film.

Beauty and the Beast

Beauty and the Beast, the 1991 Disney film, was the first animated film to be adapted for the stage. The original success of the film was due in no small part to a Broadway-caliber

⁶² Ibid., 187.

musical score composed by Alan Menken and Howard Ashman. To further bolster its Broadway credentials, the film also used the voices of Broadway veterans including Jerry Orbach, Angela Lansbury and Paige O'Hara. *Beauty and the Beast* became the first animated film to be nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture and won two Oscars for Best Original Song and Best Original Score. The film contained about ten musical numbers including a prologue and reprises, an average that was consistent with the amount of musical numbers that appeared in most of Disney's animated films.

What made the film version of *Beauty and the Beast* appealing to audiences of all ages was its use of pastiche. According to Robert Stam, pastiche "constitutes a blank, neutral practice of mimicry, without any satiric agenda or sense of alternatives, nor, for that matter, any mystique of 'originality' beyond the ironic orchestration of dead styles."⁶³ Though Stam refers to the postmodernist use of pastiche as ironic, *Beauty and the Beast* tends to employ it more along the lines of adoration with a wink towards viewers who might understand its cultural references. The film visually cites many older films and actors from Lumiere's vocal tribute to Maurice Chevalier replete with a boater hat and Belle running up a hillside reminiscent of the opening number in the film version of *The Sound of Music* to musical numbers that recalled the Busby Berkeley style of choreography.

Beauty and the Beast paid homage to Berkeley with a chorus of (animated) thousands in "Be Our Guest" and high, swooping (animated) camera angles in the song "Beauty and the Beast." Not only was the choreography of these numbers reminiscent of Berkeley's earlier Warner Brothers backstager films, but they also paid loving tribute to Berkeley's later work in MGM musicals including a send-up of Esther Williams films with synchronized dancing spoons

⁶³ Robert Stam, *Literature Through Film: Realism, Magic, and the Art of Adaptation* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 58.

in a tureen of soup. The animation in *Beauty and the Beast* could expand and go where Busby Berkeley couldn't, using dancing flatware, china, and candlesticks to pump up movement and background scenery to unbelievable proportions. Where Berkeley limited the dance steps of his chorus girls, the animators could make their characters move in the geometric patterns reminiscent of Berkeley, yet move far beyond what he physically was able to create with the resources he had. What both of these Hollywood musicals had was the freedom of movement with cameras creating extreme angles and patterns as well as the ability to shoot or animate a variety of locations – a feat that would be a challenge to recreate on stage.

The Broadway version of *Beauty and the Beast* debuted in April of 1994.⁶⁴ It received a decidedly lukewarm critical reception but proved to be popular with audiences and ran until 2007 making it the ninth longest running Broadway show to date.⁶⁵ What set this musical apart from other spectacles that had come before was its use of sets, lighting, and visual effects to create a show that was cinematic in nature. Lighting and staging directs the audience's gaze to look where the immediate action is taking place instead of giving them the choice to look elsewhere on the stage. For example, in the stage version of "Be Our Guest," director Robert Jess Roth employs an olio at the top of the number in the form of a draped curtain in front of which the character of Belle sits at a dinner table. While the song and dance is performed in front of the olio, the scenery behind has a chance to move into place without calling attention to any unwanted noise. When the curtain finally rises, the scenery and the staging come very close in look and feel to the animated film version complete with popping champagne bottles and a large chorus. The onstage use of pyrotechnics and strobe lighting, especially in the final

⁶⁴ Stanley Green and Kay Green, *Broadway Musicals Show by Show: Fifth Edition* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1996), 297.

⁶⁵ Joe Viagas, "Long Runs on Broadway," *playbill.com*, October 19, 2015.
<http://www.playbill.com/article/long-runs-on-broadway-com-109864>.

transformation scene, also serves to deflect the eye to create an illusion similar to what an audience would experience in a magic show. These effects are easier to create in an animated film. The difference between film and stage, however, is the three-dimensional immediateness that envelops an audience in the theatre as opposed to what they experience in a cinema. As Julie Taymor observed regarding her direction of another Disney Broadway musical, *The Lion King*:

I think that's what makes theatre so exciting. When you come to a stage and you know you're not going to see a stampede of 150 wildebeests on the stage, how does the artist create that? What is the illusion, the theatrical illusion and the audience is there to suspend their disbelief. That's the very important, beautiful part of theatre as opposed to film. Film, you have to make it believable. Theatre, you don't – you can be suggestive... That is the biggest joy of creating theatre is how do you abstract the essence of an idea, a landscape, an emotion and put it out in a suggestive way and let the audience fill in the blanks.⁶⁶

Like other Broadway adaptations of Hollywood musicals, the score of *Beauty and the Beast* was expanded from ten to twenty-four songs including an overture, an entr'acte, and reprises. Though most Broadway shows make cuts and additions to script and score in out of town tryouts and previews before opening on Broadway, there are instances like *Show Boat* where changes are made in each revival of the show. Changes were also made to *Beauty and the Beast*, but in this instance, some of the changes were made during its long run. An additional song, "A Change in Me," was added in 1998 to showcase its star and was kept in the show until it closed. TOFT's 1999 recording of the show features Andrea McArdle (who, as a child, originated the title role in *Annie*) performing this newer song. If the show had been recorded earlier with the original cast, this song would not have been in the show. If a researcher went to look for it on the original cast album, it wouldn't be found there. There was also another song that had been cut from the film due to time constraints, but resurrected for Broadway.

⁶⁶ Julie Taymor, interview by Michael Kantor, *Broadway: The American Musical*, raw footage, July 16, 2003.

“Human Again,” the song that was cut from the film, found success in its Broadway incarnation. Due to the commercial success of the stage version, the original creators of the film decided to create a new animated sequence and add the song back into the 2002 IMAX Special Edition.⁶⁷ The recut version was released for the home video market in October of the same year and it is the now the version that most viewers will see. This is an unusual instance where a film musical was not frozen into a final cut, but like a live, ever-changing stage show, was able to expand and change. However, adding a new sequence to *Beauty and the Beast* was comparatively simple since it was an animated feature and its creators were able to redraw their characters and rerecord the voices of the original characters. This would not have been possible if the film had been shot as a live-action film where there was no surviving outtake of a sequence to cut into the film. Reshooting would be unthinkable as the actors would be over a decade older from the time the original production was shot.

For *Beauty and the Beast*, the “screen door” that allowed the flow of musical material between Hollywood and Broadway became a revolving door where, in this instance, a song was cut from the film, added to the Broadway version, and finally found its way back to the recut film. The next chapter will look at this phenomenon of the “revolving door” between Broadway and Hollywood.

⁶⁷ Joe Tracy, “Digital Media FX Review of Beauty and the Beast Special Edition (IMAX),” *digitalmediafx.com*, accessed March 19, 2016. <http://www.digitalmediafx.com/Beauty/beauty-beast-review.html>.

Chapter 6: The Revolving Door: Transitioning from Broadway to Hollywood and Back Again

In the previous chapter, an example was given of a song that was cut from a Hollywood musical that found its way into the Broadway adaptation, which then made its way back into a recut edition of the film. As any musical theatre aficionado knows, there are many musicals that have had many iterations. Scripts and scores have been adapted and changed over time and occasionally, when they return to the original format to be revived (as in the instance of a stage show) or remade (as in the instance of a film), though they have the same title, the same basic plot and even some of the same music, they are fundamentally different works. The two case studies profiled in this chapter, *Cabaret* and *The Producers*, are both examples of musicals that boomeranged back and forth between Broadway and Hollywood. *Cabaret* was a 1966 musical loosely based on John Van Druten's 1951 play *I am a Camera*, which in turn was based on the Christopher Isherwood's novels *Berlin Stories* and *Goodbye to Berlin*. The 1966 musical was adapted for the screen in 1972. Some of the songs that were created for the film version made their way back into the 1998 stage revival where they have remained for subsequent productions. *The Producers* was a 1968 film comedy with music that was adapted as a stage musical in 2001. In turn, the Broadway version of this film was adapted for the screen and released in 2005. In each instance, plotlines were changed, songs were dropped, and new ones were created. If a viewer were to watch all the film and stage variations side by side, their experience of each would be quite different. Exploring the variations of both underlines how each production and film version is a reflection of the times in which they were produced and what was acceptable to audiences attending a Broadway show or film.

Cabaret

Before *Cabaret* opened on Broadway on November 20, 1966, another Broadway show mining the same material had been produced on Broadway in 1951 as well as a subsequent film adaptation produced in England in 1955.⁶⁸ A daring play for the times in which it first appeared, the plot deals with issues such as homosexuality, abortion, and the rise of the Nazi party. *I Am a Camera* concerns a young British writer named Christopher Isherwood and his relationship with fellow Brit Sally Bowles, a nightclub singer and aspiring actress in 1930 Berlin. Chris is swept up in Sally's bohemian lifestyle and remains a steady friend despite her outrageous behavior.⁶⁹ Both become involved with a wealthy American playboy who ends up deserting them. At this point with their relationship irrevocably strained, Chris decides to return to England to write and Sally finds herself another lover. The secondary romantic plot involves Natalia Landauer, a rich Jewish department store heiress and Fritz Wendel, a "closet" Jew and fortune hunter.⁷⁰ In this version, there is no Kit Kat Klub. Instead, there is a club called Lady Windermere's where Sally briefly works. The club is never seen in the stage version and only mentioned once.⁷¹ In the 1955 film adaptation, however, the initial meeting between Chris and Sally takes place in Lady Windemere's on New Year's Eve instead of meeting at the boarding house where they both live. This version of the nightclub is in a small basement decorated with plain wooden tables, a far cry from the sleazy, decadent nightclub that was later portrayed in the musical.⁷² When Sally and Chris leave the club, they never return. In both the stage and screen version of the play, the

⁶⁸Stanley Green and Kay Green, *Broadway Musicals Show by Show: Fifth Edition* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1996), 219.

⁶⁹ Lawrence Bommer, "I Am a Camera," *chicagoreader.com*, November 9, 1989, <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/i-am-a-camera/Content?oid=874704>

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Linda K. Brengle, "Divine Decadence, Darling! The Sixty-Year History of the Kit Kat Klub," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 34, Issue 2 (Fall 2000): 148.

⁷² Ibid.

relationship between Chris and Sally is platonic instead of romantic. The film skirts the issues of Cliff's homosexuality and Sally's pregnancy (it's a false alarm), making the subject matter more palatable to a movie-going public in the mid-1950s. The plot of the film also adds a street altercation between Chris and a group of Nazis. Though some of these plot elements found their way into the 1966 Broadway musical, other elements did not reappear until the 1972 film adaptation.

Because the nightclub is barely seen or mentioned in both versions of *I Am a Camera*, the unifying character of the Master of Ceremonies who is so prominent in *Cabaret* is also missing. However, this character never existed either in Isherwood's novel or in Van Druten's play or film. The Master of Ceremonies was the invention created by director Harold Prince for the 1966 Broadway musical and was based upon a performer he had seen in Stuttgart when he was stationed in the army:

There was a dwarf MC, hair parted in the middle and lacquered down with brilliantine, his mouth made into a bright-red cupid's bow, who wore heavy false eyelashes and sang, danced, goosed, tickled, and pawed four lumpen Valkyries waving diaphanous butterfly wings.⁷³

Collaborating with writer Joe Masteroff and the musical team of John Kander and Fred Ebb, Prince decided to depart from the earlier play and film.⁷⁴ Masteroff made sweeping changes to the plot most notably by making the cabaret, now known as the Kit Kat Klub, a focal point of the musical.⁷⁵ Other noticeable differences included changing Isherwood's character to an American named Clifford Bradshaw as well as changing the secondary romantic couple from Natalia Landauer and Fritz Wendl to Cliff's middle-aged gentile landlady Fraulein Schneider and her

⁷³ Ibid., 149.

⁷⁴ Robert Matthew-Walker, *From Broadway to Hollywood: The Musical and the Cinema* (London, UK: Sanctuary Publishing, Ltd., 1996), 59.

⁷⁵ Thomas S. Hischak, *Through the Screen Door: What Happened to the Broadway Musical When It Went to Hollywood* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 33.

suitor, the Jewish fruit merchant Herr Schultz. The hapless American playboy is gone and is replaced by Ernst Ludwig, a young German whom Cliff meets on the train to Berlin. It is Ludwig who recommends Fraulein Schneider's boarding house to Cliff. In this version as in the stage play, Sally moves in with Cliff after she loses her job at the Kit Kat Klub. When Sally discovers she is pregnant, she accepts a smuggling job from Ernst for Cliff. In need of extra money, Cliff accepts not realizing that he is smuggling money for the Nazi party. He discovers this at the engagement party for Schneider and Schultz when Ernst arrives wearing a swastika armband. Ernst warns Fraulein Schneider not to marry a Jew, whereupon she breaks her engagement to Herr Schultz. Fearing the political climate in Berlin, Cliff wants to take Sally away from Berlin, but she doesn't wish to leave her career at the Kit Kat Klub. Cliff encounters Ernst on his way to fetch Sally and an argument ensues culminating in an attack on Cliff by Nazi thugs.⁷⁶ The following day, Cliff is preparing to leave Berlin when Sally arrives and informs him she's aborted their child. Cliff leaves Berlin without her.

What set *Cabaret* apart from most musicals of the time was the unhappy plot resolutions and, most importantly, the move away from the integration of musical numbers that directly advanced the storyline⁷⁷. In Randy Clark's article about the stage and screen version of *Cabaret*, he notes that the Broadway version retained an outward semblance to a traditional musical where the lead and secondary couples sang about their feelings and situations.⁷⁸ In this sense, *Cabaret* is can be considered to be a backstager as the main plot revolves around the life of performer Sally Bowles. Where *Cabaret* departed from the norm, however, was in its use of musical

⁷⁶ ⁷⁶ Robert Matthew-Walker, *From Broadway to Hollywood: The Musical and the Cinema* (London, UK: Sanctuary Publishing, Ltd., 1996), 63.

⁷⁷ Randy Clark, "Bending the Genre: The Stage and Screen Versions of Cabaret," *Literature Film Quarterly*, 19, Issue 1 (1991): 51.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

numbers performed within the environs of the Kit Kat Klub. The cabaret performances are interspersed throughout the show and pointedly comment on the action happening in the world outside the club. Joel Grey, who originated the role of the Master of Ceremonies, recalled, “Five cabaret songs were supposed to be in act two...and thank heavens, just before rehearsal, they got the idea of spacing them throughout the show and having them either comment on the action or let us know what was coming or what had just passed. No one had ever seen anything quite like that before.”⁷⁹ The Kander and Ebb score is ironic, detached, and strongly reminiscent in style of the Kurt Weill – Bertolt Brecht musicals such as *The Threepenny Opera* that was prominent in Germany during that era.⁸⁰

In *Cabaret*, the Kit Kat Klub serves a dual purpose in the show’s plot: as an escape hatch from the harsh realities of 1930s Berlin (“In here, life is beautiful,” trills the Master of Ceremonies) that at the same time wickedly comments on social and sexual politics that were occurring in the world outside the club. Songs such as “If You Could See Her,” a love song between a man and gorilla, is a plea for tolerance while at the same time, subscribing to the Nazi view of Jews as subhuman.⁸¹ There are other musical numbers that contain the same duality as well. A production number called “Kick Line” starts out as a fun can-can romp with the Master of Ceremonies in drag joining and blending in with the Kit Kat girls that quickly turns sinister as the kick line becomes a goose step.

⁷⁹ Joel Grey, interview with Michael Kantor, *Broadway: The American Musical*, raw footage, September 30, 2003.

⁸⁰ Thomas L. Riis and Ann Sears, “The Successors of Rogers and Hammerstein from the 1940s to the 1960s,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical*, ed. William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 30.

⁸¹ Gerald Mast, *Cant Help Singin’: The American Musical on Stage and Screen* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1987), 321.

As *Show Boat* had done forty years before, *Cabaret* stunned and delighted audiences with its unapologetic depiction of Germany at a desperate crossroad between the wars. It garnered the New York Drama Critics Award and the Tony for Best Musical.⁸² However groundbreaking *Cabaret* was as a musical, it did end up skirting around major themes that was dealt with in its earlier iterations.

Though *Cabaret* dealt with serious subject matter such as the rise of the Nazi party and the decadence of Weimar Berlin, the show's creators ultimately bowed to the mores of the mid-1960s and completely erased the issue of Cliff's homosexuality, which had been prominent in both the novel and play. When the film went into production in the early 1970s, however, there was a sea change in attitude due in no small part to the Stonewall Riots in 1969. From that point on, and through each Broadway revival, the sexual preferences of the leading man was never in question.

When it was decided that *Cabaret* would be made into a feature film, the last director that ABC Pictures/Allied Artists wanted was Bob Fosse. After the financial fiasco of *Sweet Charity*, his first feature film, Hollywood was not willing to take another chance with him and offered *Cabaret* to other musical film directors with better track records including Gene Kelly. When the other directors turned down the opportunity to direct the film, the producers finally turned to Fosse, who had campaigned heavily for the chance to direct *Cabaret*. In the opinion of this author, Fosse was the perfect choice. Whereas he was more heavily invested as a creator in the stage and screen versions of *Sweet Charity*, he had no prior involvement with the stage version of *Cabaret*. This allowed him to view the musical more as a cinematic piece instead of a stage show, changing the trajectory of the plot, adding and dropping musical numbers, and

⁸² Thomas G.Aylesworth, *Broadway to Hollywood: Musicals from Stage to Screen* (New York, NY: Gallery Books, 1985), 230.

thematically using every song in the film as a political, social and sexual metaphor.⁸³ Gwen Verdon commented, “Bob cut between the political turmoil in the streets and the escapist fantasy of the cabaret to draw a connection between them. Like much of Bob’s work, *Cabaret* used show business to comment on society.”⁸⁴ Fosse’s past career as a young performer in sleazy nightclubs allowed him to handle these themes with a unique insight and integrity.

Though the themes are similar between the Broadway show and Hollywood musical, Fosse and his writers made major changes to the story and cut musical numbers from twenty down to twelve, as well as including three new songs from Kander and Ebb. In adapting the screenplay, Fosse decided to return to elements that were present in the play *I Am a Camera*. The most noticeable was the replacement of the middle-aged and world-weary Fraulein Schneider and Herr Schultz with the younger department store heiress Natalia Landauer and her gigolo suitor Fritz Wendl. The plotline of Fritz finally “coming out” as a Jew because he has fallen in love is slightly more optimistic than the stage version. However, Fosse places the song “If You Could See Her” directly following Fritz’s declaration of love. Whereas the original stage version was wary of upsetting their audiences, substituting the word “meeskite,” the Yiddish word for ugly, Fosse replaced it with the lyric as originally written: “She wouldn’t look Jewish at all.” As Randy Clark states, “This blunter language particularizes the kind of oppression being parodied.”⁸⁵

Other changes to the script included changing the characters of American writer Clifford Bradshaw to the British Brian Roberts and the British Sally Bowles into an American. The

⁸³ Gerald Mast, *Cant Help Singin’: The American Musical on Stage and Screen* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1987), 322.

⁸⁴ *Bob Fosse: Steam Heat*, directed by Judy Kinberg. 1990, New York, NY: WNET/Thirteen, 1990.

⁸⁵ Randy Clark, “Bending the Genre: The Stage and Screen Versions of *Cabaret*,” *Literature Film Quarterly*, 19, Issue 1 (1991): 55.

wealthy American playboy whom both Sally and Chris become involved with in *I Am a Camera* is substituted with a bisexual German baron who serves the plot in much the same way by abandoning both Sally and Brian, putting a final strain on their relationship. Fraulein Schneider is reduced to a small role in the film and Herr Schultz is non-existent.

The other major difference between stage and screen was how musical numbers were employed. Though the Broadway show had songs that commented on the lives of the characters performed from the stage of the cabaret, it still straddled the more traditional tropes of a musical by including duets between the lovers (“It Couldn’t Please Me More,” “Married,” and “Perfectly Marvelous”) and songs reflecting the inner feelings of the characters (“Why Should I Wake Up?” and “So What?”). The film version, however, dispensed with these expository songs and kept only the musical numbers from the Kit Kat Klub. As a result, the film version appears to be more “realistic” as the songs are performed within the context of a staged performance, yet more alienating and metaphoric as they serve as a commentary on the world outside of the cabaret.⁸⁶ In a sly wink to fans of the stage musical, Fosse did retain some of the songs mentioned above but they appear diagetically in the film emanating from a gramophone or a radio. Fosse employs these songs to comment on the action as well. Sally dances to a recorded version of “It Couldn’t Please Me More” in an attempt to seduce Brian. “Married,” originally a duet between Fraulein Schneider and Herr Schultz, is repurposed and translated to the German “Heiraten” and broadcast over a radio alternating with news of the insurgent Nazi Party. The only song in the film version that is not performed from the stage of the Kit Kat Klub is “Tomorrow Belongs to Me.” In the Broadway version, this song is sung at the Kit Kat Klub by a small group of waiters after hours. What starts out as a sweet a capella song becomes menacing and sinister as the song

⁸⁶ Gerald Mast, *Cant Help Singin’: The American Musical on Stage and Screen* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1987), 322.

progresses.⁸⁷ The interpretation of the song in the film is similar, but instead of a group of waiters, Fosse has a clean-cut young man singing in the garden of a Gasthaus. The patrons of the Gasthaus enthusiastically join in. Gerald Mast sums up the scene succinctly:

What begins as a serene German folksong chanted by a cherubic youth evolves, like “Deutschland Über Alles,” into a ferocious Nazi anthem by an Aryan Hitlerjunge. Sung outdoors by a cross-section of ordinary German citizens during the day, rather than indoors at night [at the Kit Kat Klub], building in confidence and intensity, line by line, chorus by chorus, cut by cut, like the Nazi movement itself, “Tomorrow Belongs to Me”...reveals the German social reality in response to the Kit Kat escape, Germany’s actual tomorrow as opposed to the Kit Kat Klub’s here and now and tonight.⁸⁸

Fosse’s cuts of the patrons contains the same severe low angles and unflattering, uncomfortable close-ups that parallels the camera angles employed in the scenes at the Kit Kat Klub.

In *Sweet Charity*, Fosse stayed faithful to his original choreography and staging much to the detriment of the film version. In *Cabaret*, Fosse was able to see beyond the conventions of Broadway staging and bring a more cinematic eye to the way sequences were shot. The dance numbers in the film rarely move beyond a full shot and cut away rhythmically on the downbeat to emphasize the movements of the performers. He continues to use low camera angles on the dancers as well to emphasize the surreal atmosphere in the club and to make his choreography appear more kinetic. It would be difficult to fully and faithfully restore Fosse’s film choreography for the stage. It wouldn’t have the allure and the energy that the camerawork and editing bring to it. Fosse was also able to bring a sense of intimacy and smallness to the Kit Kat Klub, a feat that would have been difficult to reproduce on a larger Broadway stage. One of the

⁸⁷ Thomas G. Aylesworth, *Broadway to Hollywood: Musicals from Stage to Screen* (New York, NY: Gallery Books, 1985), 230.

⁸⁸ Gerald Mast, *Cant Help Singin’: The American Musical on Stage and Screen* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1987), 324.

most important elements in the film version of *Cabaret* that was harder to reproduce onstage was Fosse's decision to cutaway from the middle of a musical number to related incidents going on outside the club that take place at different times from when the performance is occurring.⁸⁹ For example, early on in the film, a scene occurs where the bouncer of the Kit Kat Klub is seen tossing a Nazi out of the club and onto the streets. Later on, Sally eggs on Brian to scream underneath a railway trestle. As his mouth opens as if to scream, the film cuts to the bouncer being set upon by Nazis. At this moment, the film cuts back to the interior of the club where the Master of Ceremonies is performing a Bavarian Slap Dance. Intercut with the beating going on outside the club, the dance parodies the horror of the bouncer being beaten to death.

The most striking commonality that the stage and film versions both possess is how the audience itself is perceived. On Broadway, set designer Boris Aronson erected a giant mirror to open the show. Its presence was to reflect the audience back on itself implying their complicity with what was about to happen. The film version also opened with a mirror in the club reflecting the distorted images of the patrons of the Kit Kat Klub who have given themselves over to the pleasures of the cabaret while willfully blinding themselves to the harsh political realities as Weimar Germany teetered on the brink of collapse. At the end of the film, Fosse returns to the mirror again to reflect a new and more frightening audience who has taken over the club wearing swastika armbands and uniforms.

In the 1998 Broadway revival of the stage show, however, that was all about to change. This adaptation was an import from a 1993 production presented at Donmar Warehouse in London. It was vastly different in look and feel than any prior iteration. Whereas the stage and screen version used a mirror as a device to reflect the audience's morals, this production placed

⁸⁹ Linda K. Brengle, "Divine Decadence, Darling! The Sixty-Year History of the Kit Kat Klub," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 34, Issue 2 (Fall 2000): 151.

the audience in the middle of the action, alluding not only to their complicity, but also to their active participation. Instead of a traditional Broadway theatre, the 1998 revival was moved to Studio 54, a former disco and nightclub that, much like the Kit Kat Klub, was known for its extravagance and decadence. The set on the small stage had two levels – the upper level contained the Kit Kat Klub Orchestra and the lower level contained no set with minimal props. Sets, props, and costumes belied the decadence implicit in the plot by illustrating a more threadbare and desperate existence. Tiny, uncomfortable bistro tables were placed in the theatre as seating where the audience was able to interact with the performers. The dapper, rouged, and androgynous Master of Ceremonies indelibly portrayed by Joel Grey in both the stage and screen versions was replaced by Alan Cumming's raunchy, pansexual, and shirtless Emcee dressed in a black leather trench coat and pants held up by suspenders wrapped around his crotch. Sally Bowles, whom Liza Minelli portrayed in the film as a very talented nightclub performer, reverted back to a Sally Bowles whom Isherwood described in his novel as an untalented singer. To that end, the production cast nonmusical film actresses such as Natasha Richardson, Jennifer Jason Leigh, and Lea Thompson. Cliff is portrayed as decidedly homosexual and his relationship with Sally is undoubtedly the first and last heterosexual relationship he will ever have.

The plot of this iteration of *Cabaret* returns to the 1966 show instead of the 1972 film bringing back the budding romance between Fraulein Schneider and Herr Schultz as well as the character of Ernst Ludwig and the money smuggling scheme. The musical numbers, however, changed as three of the songs from the film version found their way to the stage. In the original Broadway musical, Sally sings "Don't Tell Mama," a song that comments on her bohemian lifestyle:

Mama thinks I'm living in a convent/a secluded little convent in the southern part of France/Mama doesn't even have an inkling/That I'm working in a nightclub/in a pair of lacy pants.⁹⁰

In the film version, “Mein Herr” replaced “Don’t Tell Mama” and the lyrics also reflected the way Sally has chosen to live. In the 1998 revival, however, both songs function as musical numbers Sally performs onstage at the Kit Kat Klub. “Don’t Tell Mama” is still used as a metaphor to describe Sally’s lifestyle, but “Mein Herr” is used to reflect the point in the plot where her manager boyfriend fires her and throws her out of the club.

Other songs are also employed to differing effects. “Two Ladies” is a musical number that was performed in the 1966, 1972, and 1998 versions of *Cabaret*. The Master of Ceremonies and two of the Kit Kat Girls sing, dance, and extoll the virtues of living together as a threesome. However, the interpretation of the song in each version differs and reflects the mores of the era in which they were performed. In 1966, “Two Ladies” was a comment on the decision of Cliff and Sally to live together, an unusual lifestyle choice for an unmarried couple at that time. By 1972, the same song was used to reflect the ménage à trois occurring between Sally, Brian, and the bisexual baron. “Two Ladies” was turned on its head once again in the 1998 version as a metaphor for Cliff’s lifestyle where a man in drag who was presumably one of Cliff’s former lovers replaces one of the girls in the number. If a researcher were to play these three variations side by side, they would hear the same song, view various choreography styles that range from cute to sexually explicit, and yet take away three very different interpretations.

These three iterations of *Cabaret* reflected the sensibilities of the directors and how they interpreted the material. Though the film is unchangeable, each theatrical revival in the past, present, and future shifts its tone in staging, and meaning. Though loosely linked by plot and

⁹⁰ Fred Ebb and John Kander, *Cabaret*, Natasha Richardson, RCA Victor 090266317325, 1998.

music, all three interpretations of *Cabaret* stand on their own as individual works of art. The interpretation of the material differs, but the themes remain the same.

The Producers

Whereas the rise of the third Reich is treated seriously in *Cabaret*, it is fodder for ridicule in Mel Brooks' film, *The Producers*. Mel Brooks commented in a 2001 interview for *U.S. News and World Report*, "If you stand on a soapbox and trade rhetoric with a dictator you never win. That's what they do so well; they seduce people. But if you ridicule them, bring them down with laughter – they can't win. You show how crazy they are."⁹¹

There had been precedence in the past for films mocking Hitler and the Third Reich, most notably Charlie Chaplin's film *The Great Dictator* (1940). What both comedies had in common was the notion of Jewish producers (*The Producers*) and a Jewish Barber (*The Great Dictator*) getting the upper hand on a ruthless dictator. However, whereas Chaplin's film is a plea for tolerance, *The Producers* cheerfully mocks everything and everyone that comes into its crosshairs. Though there appears to be no written accounts of complaints from the Jewish community when both films were released, many Hollywood studios at the time took a pass at filming *The Producers* and Chaplin had to invest his own money to make *The Great Dictator*. Though the critical reception of both films couldn't be more different, both films are now equally revered as classic comedies.

The Producers was a 1968 film written and directed by Mel Brooks. The plot revolves around Max Bialystock, a Broadway producer who hasn't had a hit show in years and Leo Bloom, a mild-mannered, neurotic accountant who is hired to do Max's books. Max currently

⁹¹ Nancy Shute, 2001, "Mel Brooks. (Cover story)." *U.S. News & World Report* 131, no. 7: 71, *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 10, 2016).

makes a living by seducing little old ladies into investing in a show he euphemistically refers to as “Cash.” While examining his books, Leo discovers a discrepancy in Max’s last flop where he raised too much money. Max begs Leo to hide the fraud and Leo postulates that since the IRS isn’t interested in failures, a producer could make more money producing a flop instead of a hit. Knowing a great idea when he sees one, Max cons Leo into co-producing the worst, “guaranteed to close on page three” Broadway show and abscond to Rio with the extra cash.⁹² The play they choose to produce is “Springtime for Hitler: A Gay Romp with Adolph and Eva at Berchtesgaden” authored by Franz Liebkind, a rabid Nazi living in Greenwich Village. Bialystock sells 25,000% of the show to his elderly lady backers and goes about choosing the wrong cast (including a zonked out hippie named LSD to portray Hitler) and the wrong director. When the show is a hit, Bialystock and Bloom, desperate to avoid jail time, conspire with Liebkind to blow up the theatre. All three are arrested and convicted and as the film ends, they are seen producing a show with prisoners at Sing Sing, once again overselling shares of the show.

Though the film had musical numbers including “Springtime for Hitler,” “Prisoners of Love,” and “Love Power,” *The Producers* was never considered to be a movie musical even though it borrowed heavily from the well-worn tropes of the backstage musical genre. Jane Feuer refers to this phenomenon as “quotation” in her book on Hollywood musicals. “Almost every post-studio film which itself relies on entertainment values must in some way affirm the old,” Feuer states and adds, “Quotation in the late-studio and post-studio musicals didn’t necessarily mean a deconstruction of the genre. Most of the time, it represented a mere borrowing from

⁹² *The Producers*, directed by Mel Brooks (1968, Los Angeles, CA: Embassy Home Entertainment, 1987) VHS.

already existing sources.”⁹³ In *The Producers*, Brooks appropriated every Hollywood musical cliché in the book from the stormtrooper kick line and the Busby Berkeley-style dancing swastika in “Springtime for Hitler” to the chaotic audition sequence where the director barks, “Will the dancing Hitlers please wait offstage? We’re only seeing the singing Hitlers.”⁹⁴ Brooks also quoted from the theatrical and literary canon as well. The *Ziegfeld Follies* is represented by simpering, scantily clad chorus girls descending a staircase while a juvenile tenor serenades them and Zero Mostel’s direct asides to the camera samples and parodies everything from Kafka to Dostoyevsky.

Though the film was critically reviled when it was released in 1968, it won an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay and over the years, garnered a large cult following beginning with comedian Peter Sellers’ written endorsement of the film in *Variety*.⁹⁵ By 1996, *The Producers* was selected by the Library of Congress for preservation in the National Film Registry as it met the Registry’s qualifications as “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant.” In 2001, this celebration of bad taste was adapted as a Broadway musical.

Mel Brooks wrote the music and lyrics for the Broadway adaptation as well as collaborating on the book with Thomas Meehan. As with many other musical adaptations, changes had to be made. The most obvious change was made to the era in which the story takes place. In the film version, the year is 1968 and the film makes pointed allusions to flower power, psychedelic drugs, and zoned out ex-con hippies. The stage version was set a decade earlier in

⁹³ Jane Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical: Second Edition* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 103-104.

⁹⁴ *The Producers*, directed by Mel Brooks (1968, Los Angeles, CA: Embassy Home Entertainment, 1987) VHS.

⁹⁵ Alex Symons, Alex. 2006. "Mel Brooks's THE PRODUCERS." *Journal Of Popular Film & Television* 34, no. 1 (2006): 29, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://ezproxy.library.nyu.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=21864446&site=ehost-live>.

1959 during the height of the golden age of musical comedy. As a result, the pivotal yet anachronistic character of Lorenzo St. DuBois (LSD) was dropped. In his place, Franz Liebkind and subsequently the cross-dressing director Roger DeBris portray Hitler in “Springtime for Hitler,” the show-within-the-show. Other plot changes include Leo Bloom’s secret lifelong desire to become a producer – a career goal he did not have in the film. The role of Ulla was also expanded for the stage by making her an aspiring actress with a heavy Swedish accent as well as a love interest for Leo Bloom. In the film, Ulla is merely a “toy” for Bialystock who hires her to be his secretary. In this version, her English is practically nonexistent and her idea of work is to turn on a record player and dance suggestively for her boss. In a departure from most Broadway musicals, the main love story – as in the film – is the deep friendship that develops between Bialystock and Bloom. According to the show’s director and choreographer Susan Stroman, “the emotional hook is that we really root not only for Max Bialystock and Leo Bloom to become great producers, but we root for their friendship.”⁹⁶

The musical score was expanded to twenty-eight songs including the overture, act one finale, and reprises. Stroman came up with inventive staging including a chorus line of seniors using walkers to tap dance and the use of a high-angled tilted mirror to capture the dancing swastika during the opening number of “Springtime for Hitler.” Both she and Mel Brooks took the notion of pastiche and quotation far beyond where the film had gone and turned *The Producers* into a love letter to past musicals of the stage and screen by fully embracing the conventions of the genre. The 42nd Street cliché of the star breaking a leg and the understudy going on is referenced and twisted as the cross-dressing director assumes the role of Hitler from the injured Nazi playwright. In the opening number of “Springtime for Hitler” Brooks pays

⁹⁶ Susan Stroman, interview by Michael Kantor, *Broadway: The American Musical*, raw footage, September 30, 2003.

homage everything from Ethel Merman to Judy Garland's "Born in a Trunk" number from *A Star is Born*. Even the Bavarian slap dance from the film version of *Cabaret* is satirized in "Der Guten Tag Hop-Clop" number when Franz Liebkind knocks Leo Bloom off his feet several times during their own version of the slap dance.

Brooks also added a scene to the Broadway production that was cut from the original film. In the scene, Liebkind pressures Bialystock and Bloom to take the Siegfried Oath before he signs the agreement for the show to be produced. According to Ralph Rosenblum, who edited the 1968 film, he advised Brooks that he needed not only to cut the Siegfried Oath but also the Wagner music and the blood-ritual with all three characters wearing Wagnerian helmets with horns.⁹⁷ "[Brooks] behaved as if he were losing a relative," recalled Rosenblum, "like an hysterical aunt at a Jewish funeral who throws herself onto the coffin as it's going into the hole."⁹⁸ Not only did the Oath (minus the blood ritual and helmets) make it back into the Broadway show, it also found its way back in to the film version of the musical.

While *The Producers* was still running on Broadway, a film version of the show was released in 2005. Susan Stroman, the director and choreographer of the Broadway show, also directed the film. Much like Fosse when he directed the stage and screen versions of *Sweet Charity*, this was Stroman's first time out as a film director and both she and Brooks were determined to stay faithful to the stage show. Unfortunately, like *Sweet Charity*, this iteration of *The Producers* had the same amusing material as the Broadway show but was overly stagey in its execution. In her review for salon.com, Stephanie Zacharek wrote:

The Producers is essentially a filmed version of a stage play, in which none of the characters' expressions or line readings have been scaled down to make sense on-

⁹⁷ Ralph Rosenblum and Robert Karen, *When the Shooting Stops...the Cutting Begins* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1980), 207.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

screen. Every gesture is played out as if the actors were 20 feet (or more) away in real life, which means that, by the time the performers are magnified on the big screen, they're practically sitting in your lap. The effect is something like watching a 3-D Imax movie without the special glasses.⁹⁹

This version of the producers contained a hefty twenty-two songs, which included two songs over the end credits including "Goodbye!," a curtain call song from the stage for those audience members willing to sit through the credits. Instead of thinking cinematically, Stroman chose to reprise the original Broadway staging. Eschewing shooting all exteriors on location in New York, Stroman and Brooks choose to alternate live shots with obvious exterior sets. Instead of taking advantage of using cutaways to various flashbacks to illustrate the story being told in the song "Betrayed," the camera stayed with Nathan Lane delivering the song as he did on stage making the number feel a lot longer than it actually was. It appears that both Stroman and Brooks crammed everything they could into this film version without benefit of a wise editor to rein them in and tell them when to cut.

If the stage play was referential and reflexive, the film version was even more so. Brooks feeds fans in the know dialogue from his 1974 film "Blazing Saddles" leaving the uninitiated to miss the humor. Dance metaphors are also mixed, for example, in the musical number "Along Came Bialy." In the film version, Bialystock leads a long line of lusty old ladies on walkers as if he's Professor Hill from "The Music Man." The number finishes with the ladies falling backwards like a line of dominoes in an obvious homage to the Rockettes' "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers." Whereas this conceit worked on the stage because of its placement within the confines of a proscenium, it got lost in translation in film where, once again, location shots mixed with movie set shots called too much attention to the theatrical tricks that made this

⁹⁹ Stephanie Zacharek, "The Producers," *salon.com*, December 16, 2005, <http://www.salon.com/2005/12/16/producers/>.

number a hit on stage. Recalling Hollywood's initial nervousness about the artificiality of spontaneously bursting into song and dance in a musical during the early days of the talking pictures is unfortunately given credence in this film.

Viewing the 2005 film musical in order to reconstruct how the Broadway version of *The Producers* was originally staged, theatre historians would get a good approximation. However, if the 2005 film were to be compared with the 1968 original, two different films would emerge. Though the plots of both films are similar in theme and are broadly played, the 1968 version has more of a cinematic subtlety that the 2005 musical lacks. Shooting on location in New York made the 1968 film appear to be more realistic despite the implausible plot. The 2005 version, however, never allows the audience to suspend their disbelief in order to imagine that they are anywhere else but in a theatre.

Chapter 7: FRBR and Ferber

There are many iterations of *Show Boat* from Edna Ferber's novel from stage and screen to cast albums and satires. The question facing archivists is how best to keep them connected making research easier on all things *Show Boat*. In order to accomplish this task, this chapter seeks to use a reference model to pull these similar yet disparate elements together to create an in-depth and accurate research tool. This chapter will examine the similarities and differences of the many stage and screen versions of *Show Boat* by exploring in detail the plot and music employed in each, as well as the need to recognize the importance of linking outliers such as satires to the original work. Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) will be employed in an attempt to pull together these elements, which on the surface, may require the creation of a new record, but in fact should be attached to the original work. Separation of these variations on a theme only serves to make research more challenging on what is essentially the same musical. This can include many tangents including the correct spelling of the musical as well as the addition, deletion, and shifting of musical numbers between revivals of the stage and screen versions.

Variations on a Theme

Compiling metadata on *Show Boat* is a Herculean task. One of the first items of contention is how it should be categorized. According to musicologist Lauren Acton, there is some discrepancy among scholars whether *Show Boat* is a musical or an operetta.¹⁰⁰ Some scholars point to the epic sweep of the plot as well as the romantic music that appears to link it to a more European tradition. They also point to Oscar Hammerstein's prior collaboration with

¹⁰⁰ Lauren Acton, "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Musical: Show Boat in Films and Revivals," in *From Stage to Screen: Musical Films in Europe and United States (1927-1961)*, ed. Massimiliano Sala. Turnhout (Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2012), 7.

operetta composers Rudolph Friml and Sigmund Romberg to bolster their arguments. However, there were also elements of a distinctly American style of music that moves this work closer to categorization as a musical. Originally, *Show Boat* was subtitled “An American Musical Comedy,” but by opening night, it was referred to as “An American Musical Play.”¹⁰¹

Other issues that plague the easy categorization of this musical includes changes in songs as well as changes in plot, many of which were done by Kern and Hammerstein. In the earlier incarnations of *Show Boat*, it was not unusual for them to alter the score to suit the cast they were working with.¹⁰² Revisions with plot and score continued well after the deaths of Kern and Hammerstein. For example, in Hal Prince’s 1994 Broadway revival, the song “Why do I Love You?” was not a second act duet between romantic leads Magnolia Hawks and Gaylord Ravenal as was originally performed in 1927, but a lullaby sung to their newborn daughter Kim by her grandmother, Parthy Hawks. Yet Prince claims his version was “as the authors intended.”¹⁰³ If he was referencing Kern’s and Hammerstein’s constant changes to the score he would be right. However, his version of *Show Boat* was not an exact replica of the 1927 original.

There is also the issue of linking related material as well. For example, the 1946 Jerome Kern biopic *Till the Clouds Roll By* opens with musical selections from *Show Boat* and ends with a rather odd reprise of “Ol’ Man River” by Frank Sinatra. Parody and comedy recordings also exist including Stan Freberg’s “Elderly Man River,” also titled on other albums as “Tweedley the Censor.” This spoof was an early take on political correctness from 1957 featuring an uptight censor from “The Citizen’s Radio Board” who consistently interrupts Freberg to correct his

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 8.

¹⁰² Bruce Kirle, *Unfinished Show Business: Broadway Musicals as Works-in-Process* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), 18-19.

¹⁰³ Lauren Acton, “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Musical: Show Boat in Films and Revivals,” in *From Stage to Screen: Musical Films in Europe and United States (1927-1961)*, ed. Massimiliano Sala. Turnhout (Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2012), 15.

grammar and to criticize the appropriateness of the lyrics. Even satirist Tom Lehrer decided to put his two cents in by creating a parody inspired by two songs from *Show Boat* (“Bill” and “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man”), but from the male point of view. As Lehrer would have it: “Sharks gotta swim, and bats gotta fly.”¹⁰⁴

Narrowing the field down for this exercise, only the original Broadway show and its four revivals (not including the 1948 and 1954 revivals at City Center or the 1966 revival at Lincoln Center), the three film versions, and the three related adaptations and parodies will be examined and separated into three appendices. Appendix I focuses on stage productions, Appendix II on film productions, and Appendix III on related productions and parodies.

Reviewing the list of songs and storylines in each production of the show illustrates how different they are from each other. In some instances, the differences are minor such as when a musical number appeared in the original production but was discontinued in some revivals and reinstated in others. For example, “Till Good Luck Comes My Way,” a song that was originally performed in the 1927 and 1932 productions to buy time while a scenery change took place was eliminated in the 1946 and 1983 productions then found its way back into the 1994 revival (Appendix I). Another obvious difference in the score from stage to screen included musical numbers that appeared in the film that did not originate on the stage. For example, “Gallivantin’ Aroun’,” “Ah Still Suits Me,” and “I Have the Room Above Her” were written specifically for the 1936 film by Kern and Hammerstein. Even more subtle differences occur when lyrics are changed to reflect evolving racial sensitivity. For example, the opening lines to “Cotton Blossom,” the first song performed in *Show Boat*, were changed to reflect the times. “Colored

¹⁰⁴ Tom Lehrer, “She’s My Girl,” in *An Evening Wasted with Tom Lehrer* (Reprise/Warner Brothers Records, 1959).

folk work on the Mississippi/Colored folk work while the white man play” became “Here we all work on the Mississippi/Here we all work while the white man play.”

The plot of *Show Boat* veered widely between the three film versions. Whereas the 1929 silent film’s story closely followed the original Ferber novel, the 1936 version came closest to paralleling the storyline of the original 1927 musical. Yet if you compared these film versions to their origins, there are still differences. The original musical and the 1951 film end with Magnolia and Ravenal reuniting on her parent’s show boat, the Cotton Blossom, though the plot of the former spans forty years and the latter less than a decade. The 1936 film version ends with Magnolia and Ravenal reuniting in a Broadway theatre on the opening night of their daughter’s show (Appendix II). Though all these variations in music and plot differ from one another as well as differ from the novel upon which it is based, they are all still *Show Boat* and the basic plot, themes, and songs that consistently appear in every iteration of the show would be instantly recognizable to any audience.

FRBR Overview

Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) is a conceptual reference model that this author hoped would be helpful when attempting to link all the different variations of *Show Boat*. On the surface, its strength appears to be its ability to assist the cataloguer in assessing the relationships between each version listed above and how they could possibly link to each other. The drawback, however, is that FRBR is a reference model, not a data model. According to the FRBR website, it “can be implemented, but it first has to be translated into a data model and a format.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵Agnese Galese, ed. “FRBR Review Group” in *ifla.org*. Last updated April 1, 2014. <http://www.ifla.org/node/949>.

FRBR was originally designed to cope with the issue of multiple versions and to help the user to understand the differences as well as the similarities between sources that have the same intellectual content.¹⁰⁶ Problems arise when trying to apply FRBR to a performance that was not recorded to a physical carrier. For example, the original 1927 production was not recorded either on film or on vinyl. The only remains of the original 1927 production are limited including one page of the Playbill found online in the Playbill Vault, still photos, a script, and several copies of the sheet music in NYPL's LPA collection. Yet all of these could be viewed as a mode of recording the event on a type of media – in this instance, mostly paper-based – and therefore, in the absence of an audiovisual recording, should be considered a manifestation, especially in the case of the libretto. To confuse matters more, a further relationship also exists between this production and the 1929 film. This film features a prologue of the original cast performing highlighted songs from the show. Technically, this is the only surviving audiovisual content from the original show with the original cast. No cast album exists even though hit songs from musicals were recorded at that time.

It wasn't until the 1930s that original cast albums were produced. There are extant recordings of the 1932 and 1946 revivals, however, they are far from a complete rendering of all musical numbers from the show. The 1932 album was a 78 rpm disk with only eight selections while the 1946 album is a 33 1/3 rpm recording with ten selections. Items from these years also include complete playbills, but neither production was recorded as a moving image. The videotape that exists for the 1983 revival also comes up short offering the user short excerpts from the show. Though the Library for the Performing Arts was already recording Broadway musicals in the 1980s, only a thirteen-minute tape of highlights from this production can be

¹⁰⁶ Rebecca Guenther, email to author, March 27, 2016.

found in its collection. Only the 1936 Hollywood film version and the video recording of the 1994 revival gives an inkling of how the show might have originally been presented.

Unfortunately, each of these iterations is quite different from each other in terms of songs and plot. It is impossible to try to recreate the staging and choreography of the original. All that is left is adaptations and scraps of memorabilia that only give a vague sense of how the original production was experienced by an audience in 1927. It is the ephemera of the ephemeral.

How would one establish the relationships amongst these various productions and catalog them to present them as a unified whole to a researcher? The goal of FRBR is to assist the user to “find, select, identify, and obtain.” And yet it appears to this author that the rules governing the application of the FRBR model fall short of what it hopes to achieve.

FRBR Group 1

However, this author was willing to give it a try. To borrow the lyrics from another Hammerstein musical, “let’s start at the very beginning, a very good place to start.” Using the model described in the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) report on the FRBR model, the chart below focuses on the relationships between the items listed in the appendix with a view toward the end-user and the “systematic way that the user expects to find information and how the information is used.”¹⁰⁷ There are three groups of entities in FRBR:

- Group 1 – work, expression, manifestation, and item.
- Group 2 – person, corporate body.
- Group 3 – concept, object, event, and place

¹⁰⁷ IFLA, “Functional Requirements For Bibliographic Records: Final Report,” *ifla.org*, last modified February 2009. http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/frbr/frbr_2008.pdf. 3.

Figure 1 attempts to illustrate the Group 1 entities and primary relationships. And it fails. Though the novel and the musical could be separated into individual works based on the differences in plot, it doesn't make sense. Both the novel and the musical are expressions of the same artistic idea. Neither would exist if the general idea and theme of the piece hadn't germinated in the mind of Edna Ferber who not only wrote the novel (expression of the work), but also collaborated on the musical version as well (another expression of the work). The libretto effectively captured the epic sweep of the novel, and though not completely identical to the novel, the musical version can also be considered to be an expression of the work. A manifestation of the musical can include scripts, screenplays and scores. Could it stand to reason that the items produced from the scripts and scores might include release prints of the film, DVDs, photos, and sound recordings? Or are each of these physical items actually different manifestations of an expression? It would also be difficult to include performances of the stage unless there was a surviving physical representation such as a playbill or an audiovisual recording of the performance. Would a recording of a staged performance be a manifestation of an expression of *Show Boat* or just an item that was the physical result of an interpretation of the script?

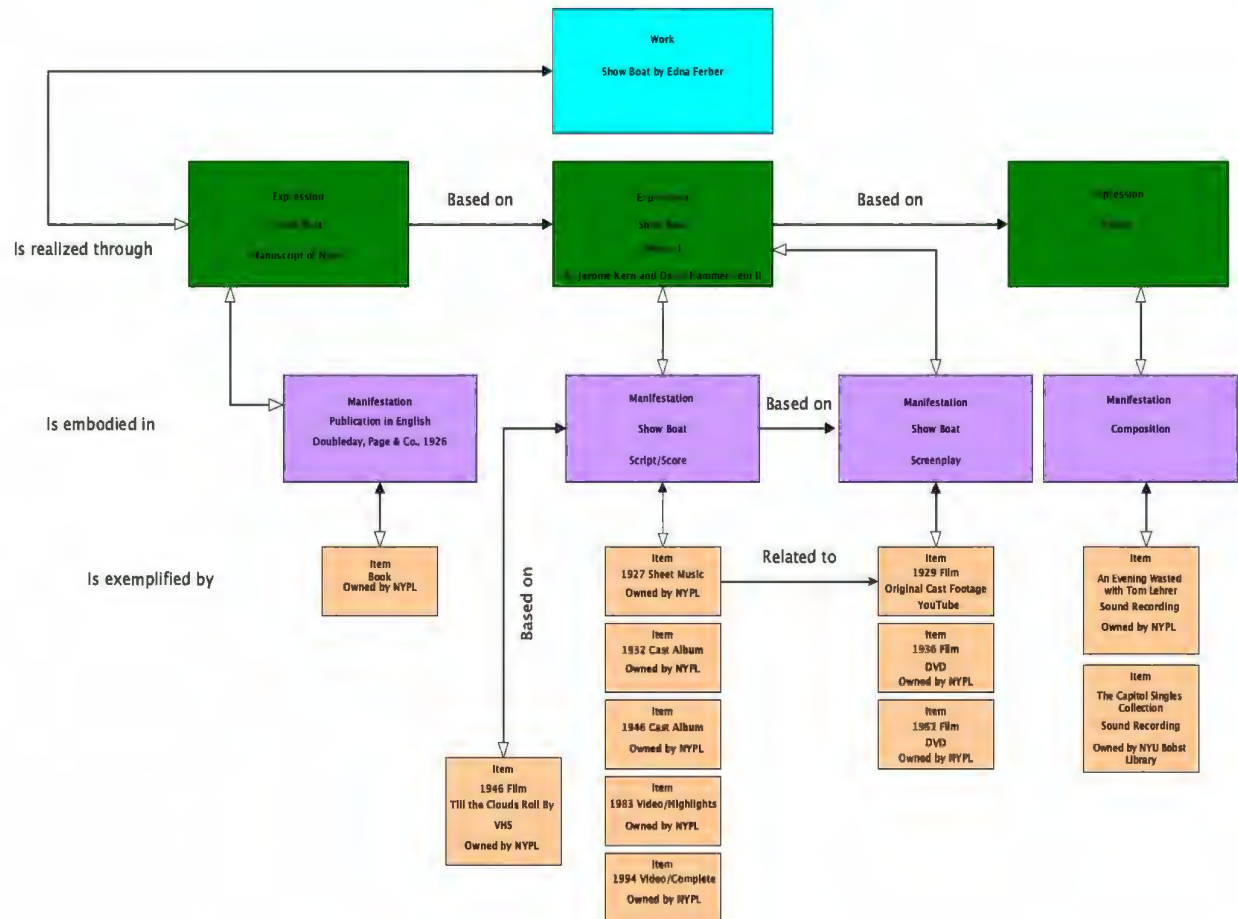


Figure 2 - FRBR Group 1

According to the IFLA's 2008 final report on FRBR,

A work may be realized through one or more than one expression (hence the clear arrow on the line that links work to expression). An expression, on the other hand, is the realization of one and only one work (hence the single arrow on the reverse direction of that line linking expression to work). An expression may be embodied in one or more than one manifestation; likewise a manifestation may embody one or more than one expression. A manifestation, in turn, may be exemplified by one or more than one item; but an item may exemplify one and only one manifestation.¹⁰⁸

The clear arrows between the manifestation and the items indicate that more than one item of *Show Boat* exists, and in the case of the Jerome Kern biopic *Till the Clouds Roll By*, an item where musical numbers from *Show Boat* were recreated from the Broadway musical. The

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 13-14.

decision to put *Till the Clouds Roll By* as a product of the stage version instead of the film musical was due to the presentation of the material in the film. Though the musical numbers are presented out of sequence (“Life Upon the Wicked Stage” and “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” are performed before “Ol’ Man River”), the sequence still hews closer to the stage version. It was also filmed to appear as a stage show that was occurring within the film as an event in the life of Jerome Kern.

As a work, *Show Boat* is the title given to Edna Ferber’s concept of the lives of the Hawks – Ravenal families from their Mississippi show boat in the 1880s, their lives away from the show boat, and their return to the same show boat four decades later.

Show Boat was expressed in a 1926 published novel. Another expression of the work is the musical of the same title written by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II. The musical could also be construed as a separate work as it is closely based on Ferber’s novel as opposed to a slavish reproduction of it. All the resulting stage and screen versions of the musical differ in terms of variations on the plot and songs included in the production. These variations can be considered to be revisions as opposed to adaptations as they are all closely related to the concept of *Show Boat*. But to say that each production of *Show Boat* is a completely different work would be tantamount to saying that each staging and filming of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* should be considered to be differing and original works because the Baz Luhrmann’s 1997 film adaptation had stylistic differences from Zefferelli’s 1968 film.

Crossing the Line into Satire and Other Issues

Parodies such as “She’s My Girl” are a little harder to categorize. On one hand, these parodies are based on the concept of *Show Boat*, but according to Barbara Tillet’s publication *What is FRBR?*, these parodies have a derivative relationship to the original work. In this

context, parodies “move along the continuum across a magic line where they become a new work yet are still related to some original work (see figure 3).”¹⁰⁹

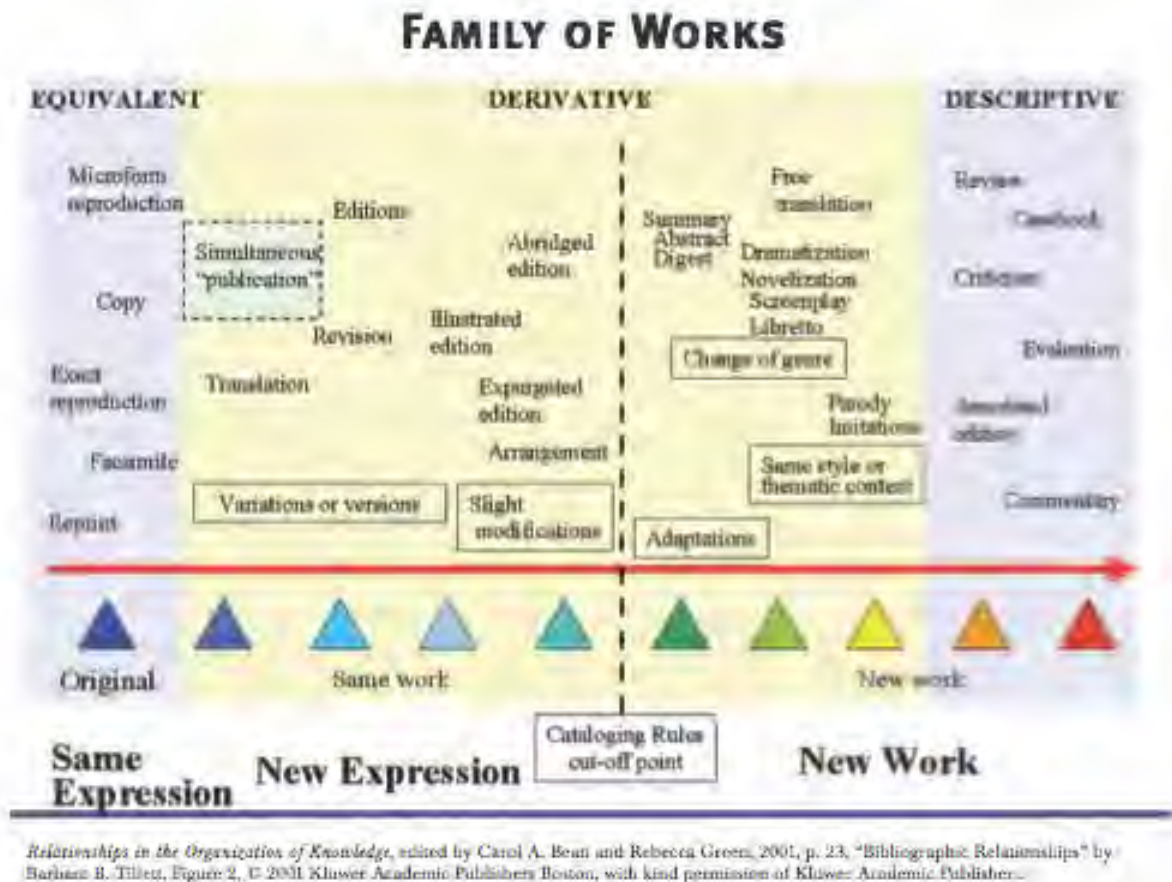


Figure 3 - Family of Works

However, if parodies were spun off into a new work, how would a cataloguer connect them to the original for easier reference for the end user? For example, when searching for these compositions within the Bobst catalog using keywords such as “show boat,” “musical,” and “parody” there is only one item listed. The item in question was a recording of the 1996 edition of *Forbidden Broadway*, which included a parody of *Show Boat*. The LCSH subjects listed are “Musicals” and “Humorous Music.” Both the Stan Freberg and Tom Lehrer parodies share the LCSH subject listing of Humorous Music, yet there is no additional connection to musicals or

¹⁰⁹Barbara Tillet, *What is FRBR?*, last modified December 5, 2007.
<https://www.loc.gov/cds/downloads/FRBR.PDF>. 4.

Show Boat. NYPL also lists *An Evening Wasted with Tom Lehrer* as Humorous Music. This makes it impossible for a researcher to find the connection of these compositions to *Show Boat* unless the researcher had prior knowledge of their existence. Thus the rules for the cut-off point in cataloging makes the search for all items related to *Show Boat* less granular.

Comparing the search for a relationship between parodies of *Show Boat* in a library catalog to a Google search using and combining variations of the words “Show Boat,” “musical,” “satire,” and “parody” turned up useless information. Yet if the same procedure is used to search for a more recent parody such as “Eat It” by Weird Al Yankovic, different results occur. In a Google search, inputting the words “Michael Jackson,” and “Beat It,” and “Parody” results in a listing of various send-ups including “Eat It” listed at the top of the search results. However, trying to run the same search in a library catalog turns up zero results.

Another bone of contention is how *Show Boat* is spelled. Though a researcher may conduct a search for “Show Boat” (two words) or “Showboat” (one word), each will come up with different results. Items that match the two-worded version of the title include cast recordings and film versions whereas the one-word version only includes items such as the 1966 cast album from the Lincoln Center revival. The user also gets unreliable data mixed in with other items that only bear a relationship through use of the words “show boat.” Whereas the two word catalog search will be fairly reliable in giving the end user a list of all recordings, performances, films and ephemera such as sheet music and scripts, the one word search will broaden the results to histories about life on a showboat. If the same search parameters are applied to Google, both the two word and one word title consistently comes up with listings that relate reliably to the musical for both stage and film.

FRBR – Group 2

Still not ready to give up on FRBR, other entities can be added. Figure 4 illustrates what occurs if we add to the mix those “responsible” for creating a work. The resulting flowchart differs from figure 2. In this version, the work *Show Boat* has three creators; Ferber for the expression of the novel and Kern and Hammerstein for the expression of the musical based on her work. Creators of the 1936 and 1951 film versions are also attached to the original work of *Show Boat*, however, both films differ in terms of plot, dialogue, and music from the 1927 musical play. In this chart, the 1929 film version was separated from the other musical versions because the plot was based more closely upon the novel instead of the musical. Where it is related to the original musical is the inclusion of a tacked on prologue with the original Broadway cast. This is where it gets messy. It becomes clear when dealing with multiple variations on a work that the FRBR rulebook appears to go out the window. If an expression can only stem from a work, how does one explain an expression that is based on or related to another expression? The figure below has each expression stem from the original work while noting that the individual expressions are based on other expressions. For example, the 1936 film version is based upon the stage play, but the plot between the original work and the 1936 film are quite different. In the original novel, Cap’n Andy drowns and Parthy eventually dies leaving the Cotton Blossom to Magnolia. Only in the 1929 film version do these events take place, which is why it is situated next to the novel in the flowchart. The 1927 stage musical aimed for a happier ending reconciling Ravenal and Magnolia on the Cotton Blossom with Parthy and Cap’n Andy very much alive. Both the 1936 and 1951 film versions have the same happy ending but the plots are quite different. In the 1936 version, the end of the film takes place in a theatre in 1927 with all characters in old age and Kim (Magnolia and Ravenal’s grown-up daughter) appearing onstage as a Broadway star. In the 1951

version, it is still the 1800s when Ravenal returns to Magnolia and their five-year-old daughter Kim on the Cotton Blossom after discovering he had walked out on his wife while she was pregnant. These two film versions are situated next to the Kern/Hammerstein musical in figure 3 as they are more closely based on the Broadway musical than the novel.

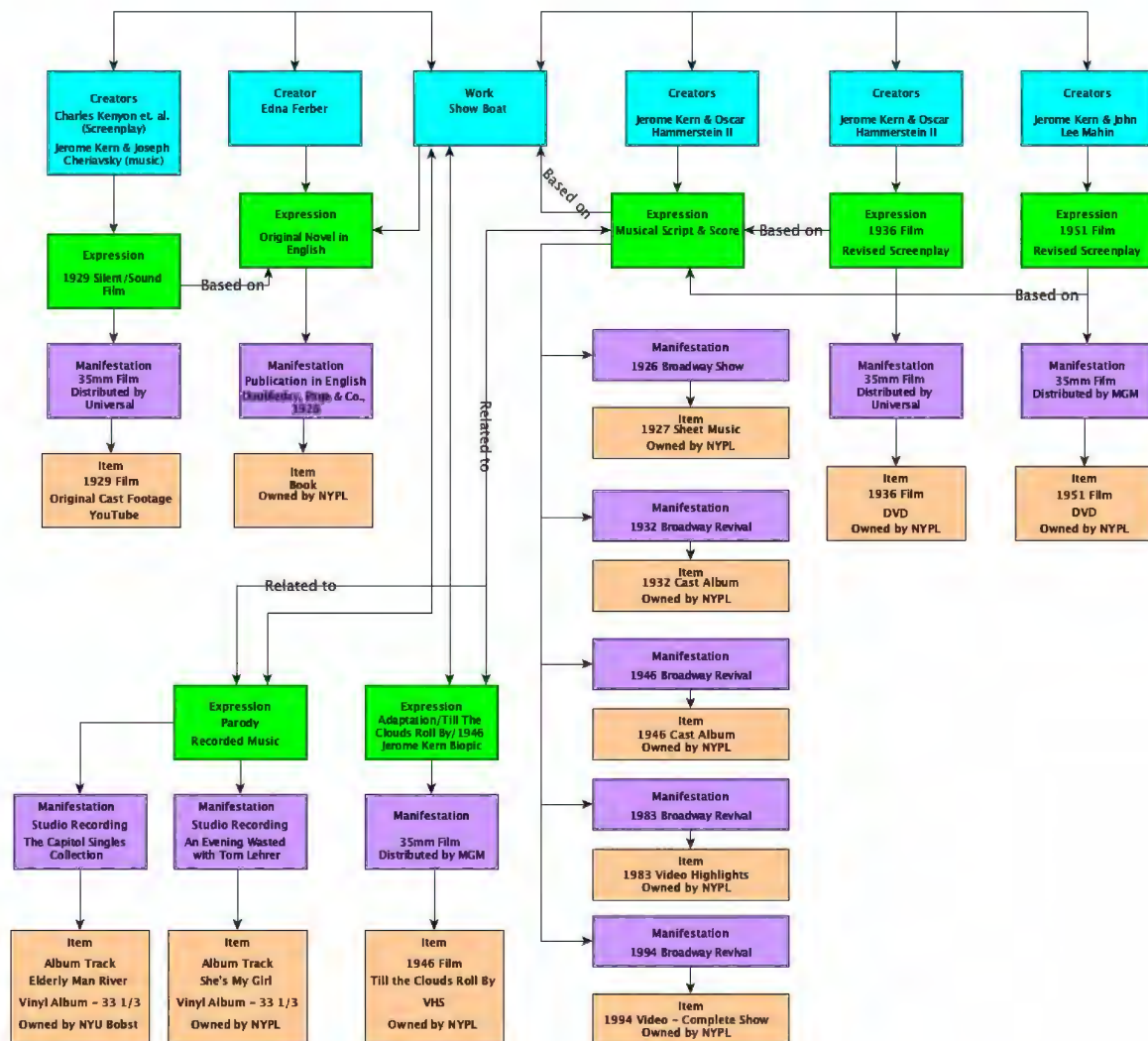


Figure 4 - Group 2 Relationships

Where FRBR gets bogged down is in the areas of parody and adaptation. In order to fit the Jerome Kern biopic *Till the Clouds Roll By* into FRBR while avoiding creating a new work of the film, it has to spring from the original work as an expression as well as relate to the 1927

Broadway show, which the opening of the movie recreates. The two parodies are also related to the Broadway musical as both songs satirize songs from the show.

FRBR – Final Observations

Perhaps FRBR needs to be re-examined through the lens of how it can be applied to the arts. The challenge that arises is in the very natures of art and cataloguing. The performing arts are ephemeral and messy with generations of creative minds wishing to put their own stamp on a classic work. The strict methodology which cataloging imposes to create order from chaos is at odds with an art form that is in constant flux. With so many variations of plays and films, FRBR should be more flexible in addressing these differences making it easier for the end user to “find, select, identify, and obtain.”

Where FRBR could be most useful as a means of plotting out intricate relationships between musicals, their revivals, and their parodies is in its inherent nature of developing relationships between an original work and its many expressions and manifestations. Where FRBR falls short is that it doesn’t go as far as it could in recognizing that the many variations that exist (though they may stem from the original work) can also be directly based on expressions and manifestations that already exist within a grouping. *Show Boat* and its many incarnations best exemplifies the derivative relationships that can occur within the FRBR framework. The best example of this is in the derivative relationship between an expression of an original work and a satire. Satires of *Show Boat*, such as the ones illustrated in Appendix III of this chapter, would never have existed if there had been no musical expression of the original novel. A satire should be thought of as an expression that is based on the expression of the musical. In turn, the musical is an expression of the original work.

Drilling down further to manifestations, the screenplay of *Show Boat* is a derivation of the script and score of the stage musical, which is itself a manifestation of the expression of the musical. Thus, the screenplay would be a manifestation based on the manifestation of the original staged musical. This author also believes that items can also be derived from existing items. One only has to look at the variety of cast album recordings to realize that a later release of the album, whether it was rereleased on a newer format or previously unreleased material was added, is in essence the same recording. There are also compilation albums of *Show Boat* that exist containing recordings from various casts. It is important to link these compilations (or items) to the original recordings (or items) from where the original material was copied.

It would be useful to think of FRBR as a family tree, a tree that can bend in either direction without completely breaking some basic hierarchy. More often than one would suspect, these hierarchies could bend back on themselves – think of siblings that are also first cousins or the old childhood song “I’m My Own Grandpa”. Although acknowledging differences is important, it is more important to recognize the similar threads that hold disparate versions together. It is acceptable to create new works in the FRBR hierarchy when the differences warrant it yet there must be connections established, especially between different versions of the same show. There is no reason why an expression (such as a parody) cannot emanate from another expression or why a manifestation (such as a screen adaptation) cannot be based on another manifestation (i.e. the original script of the play).

For example, imagine if all 947 performances of the 1994 revival of *Show Boat* had been recorded to tape. Take into account the cast changes that occurred during the length of the show’s run including understudies and the possibility that choreography may have been adjusted to accommodate the strengths and weaknesses of featured dancers or a song was added or

dropped as we have seen with *Beauty and the Beast* in an earlier chapter. It is a good bet that the final performance looks quite different from opening night. The dilemma to the archivist employing FRBR would be whether to group these disparate performances together under the umbrella of the 1994 revival or to separate them as new works. It can be argued that each of these performances are all manifestations based on the original 1994 manifestation of the musical staged by Harold Prince, which in turn emanates from the expression of the original 1927 musical, which in its own turn is based on the book by Edna Ferber. In this author's opinion, it would make more sense to keep all 947 performances grouped together to assist the researcher in easily ascertaining how they're all interrelated as well as their differences. Though it can be argued that the third group in FRBR might be more helpful in connecting concept, object, event, and place when examining the different iterations of a musical, one can still run into trouble. Suppose the event premiered in one theatre and was eventually moved to another theatre (for example, *The Lion King* had its 1997 Broadway premiere at the New Amsterdam but moved to the Minskoff theatre in 2006). Assuming there were cast changes during those years before the move, would that mean that this continuous run in two different venues is essentially two different works under FRBR?

It has been suggested that the lack of connections found in various catalogs have more to do with incomplete cataloging or perhaps an oversight on the cataloger's behalf. Unfortunately, this oversight not only occurs within libraries such as NYU Bobst but also occur in larger catalogs such as WorldCat. Perhaps the popular concept in the archival world of "more product, less process" may end up doing more harm than good. Where it might be considered more efficient to make collections quickly accessible to the user, in the end, it will not make FRBR's concept of finding, selecting, identifying, and obtaining items an easy task.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Musical theatre is an ephemeral and ever-changing art form. To capture and preserve it on a physical media format is like trying to capture lightning in a bottle. Each live performance of a show will differ in subtle and obvious ways from the show that was performed the night before. Choosing to record only one performance of a show is to decide which performance will best represent all the prior and subsequent performances that will be lost to time. This is also true, in some sense, with a film. Only one take will be chosen for inclusion in the film thus sealing one performance into the memory of the audience. The difference between theatre and film is in audience perception. While both allow the viewer to take away multiple meanings with each viewing, only live theatrical performances can offer variation and nuance. With each staged revival and remake of a film, new directors, choreographers, and actors bring their own interpretations to the same material, providing new experiences to new audiences. In addition to preserving these recorded performances, it is also imperative to capture on media interviews of those who create musicals to instruct and inform artists and historians on the creative process of producing a musical.

The issues of linking related yet differing material can also be a challenge to the archivist seeking not only to preserve these performances but to make them easily accessible as well. The fashionable concept of “more product, less process” may be suitable to cutting down on backlog that most collections possess, but it may not be in the best interest of musical collections where the process of relating the myriad of variations is key. A compromise might be achieved by returning again and again to sift through processed collections to tease out new connections to other materials attaining a richer and more meaningful experience to benefit those who wish to research the cultural significance of this uniquely American art form.

Glossary

Afterpiece	In a minstrel show, the afterpiece is the final act, usually one-act musicals that satirized myths, literary works, or contemporary dramas.
Aside	A speech delivered directly to the audience conveying a character's inner thoughts or plot mechanisms. Other characters on stage do not overhear this monologue.
Backers	People who invest in a theatrical production.
Backstager	Any play, novel, or film whose plot revolves around the lives of people who work in the theatrical profession.
Blocking	The process where a director plans movement and positions actors onstage and onscreen.
Burlesque	See Afterpiece.
Business	Staged actions such as reading a paper or pouring a drink that are used to create character as well as create more realism by employing everyday, naturalistic movement.
Choreography	The art of grouping dance steps together to create a dance piece.
Chorine	An old-fashioned term for a chorus girl.
Commedia Dell'Arte	A popular form of Italian comedy prevalent from the 16 th to 18 th centuries. Stock characters perform in masks lampooning fixed social archetypes.
Continuity	The consistency of continuous and clear movement in a film without errors in detail or mismatched edits.
Cooch Dancer	A form of exotic dancing performed by women usually seen at fairs and carnivals. The performers bump, grind, and shimmy suggestively wearing outfits reminiscent of bellydancers.
Cutaway	An edited interruption of a filmed scene where a different shot is inserted. The shot is usually related to the action and is used to break up a longer scene or allows the editor to follow the cutaway with a different take of the scene. For example, cutting away from an anxious parent in a hospital waiting room to a clock to indicate that time has passed.
Direct Address	When a character speaks directly to the audience.

Fourth Wall	The imaginary “wall” that separates the audience and the action that takes place upon the stage.
Kick Line	A line of dancers that perform dances that highlight leg kicks. Examples include the Cancan or a precision kick line as performed by the Rockettes.
Minstrel Line	The Minstrel Line is the first act of a minstrel show consisting of actors seated in a semi-circle with the Master of Ceremonies (also known as the Interlocutor) seated in the middle. These performances included songs and jokes.
Minstrelsy	The performance of a minstrel show.
Olio	A specialty act, usually a song and dance performance, that is performed downstage in front of an “olio” curtain while the scenery is changed upstage behind the curtain.
Operetta	A form of light opera that is sentimental and comic in nature, which is interspersed with dance and spoken dialogue.
Pas de Deux	French for “steps for two.” A partnered dance.
Proscenium	A style of theatre where the audience sits in front of a stage that contains an arched opening.
Revue	A theatrical performance consisting of songs, dances, and skits that is usually satirical in nature.
Scrim	An opaque theatre drop that can create illusions of a solid wall or a transparent backdrop depending on how it is lit.
Soliloquy	A speech where a character appears to be speaking to himself, revealing his inner thoughts.
Spectacular	A show that contains elaborate staging, sets, costumes, and performers. A sensational and lavish display.
Staging	The process of presenting a play on stage. Staging also refers to the placement and movement of actors on stage and on screen.
Tableaux Vivants	French for “living pictures.” It refers to actors standing motionless and silent on stage, usually representing an historical scene or a work of art.
TOFT	The Theatre On Film and Tape (or TOFT) is a division of the Library for the Performing Arts located at Lincoln Center in New York, which

produces, records, and archives a collection of live theatrical performances on and off Broadway.

Vaudeville

Live entertainment that was popular from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Vaudeville contained a variety of short acts such as song and dance routines, acrobats and performing animals.

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Appendix 1: *Show Boat* Broadway Productions
 Blue - Cast member appeared in more than one production
 Red - Indicates changes in score

Year	Theatre	Director	Producer	Cast	Length of Run	Musical Numbers	Differences
1927	Ziegfeld	Zeke Colvan Oscar Hammerstein II	Florenz Ziegfeld	Joe – Jules Bledsoe Queenie – Tess Gardella Gaylord Ravenal – Howard Marsh Magnolia/Kim -Norma Terris Cap'n Andy – Charles Winninger Parthy Ann Hawks – Edna May Oliver Julie LaVerne – Helen Morgan Steve Baker – Charles Ellis Ellie – Eva Puck Frank – Sam White	572	Cotton Blossom Show Boat Parade and Ballyhoo Where's the Mate for Me? Make Believe Ol' Man River Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man Life Upon the Wicked Stage Till Good Luck Comes My Way I Might Fall Back on You C'mon Folks Olio Dance You Are Love Act I Finale At the Fair Why Do I Love You? In Dahomey Bill Nun's Processional Goodbye, My Lady Love After The Ball	The "Olio Dance" was a song and dance in front of a drop to cover up a scene change. This number was only used in the original production.
1932	Casino	Oscar Hammerstein II	Florenz Ziegfeld	Joe – Paul Robeson Queenie – Tess Gardella Gaylord Ravenal – Dennis King Magnolia/Kim - Norma Terris Cap'n Andy – Charles Winninger Parthy Ann Hawks – Edna May Oliver Julie– Helen Morgan Steve – Charles Ellis Ellie – Eva Puck Frank – Sam White	181	Cotton Blossom § Where's the Mate for Me? Only Make Believe** Ol' Man River Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man Life On the Wicked Stage** Till Good Luck Comes My Way I Might Fall Back On You C'mon Folks You Are Love Act I Finale At the Fair Why Do I Love You? In Dahomey Bill Service and scene music, St. Agatha's Convent** Goodbye, My Lady Love After the Ball	

1946	Ziegfeld	Hassard Short Oscar Hammerstein II	Jerome Kern Oscar Hammerstein II	<p>Joe – Kenneth Spencer Queenie – Helen Dowdy Gaylord Ravenal – Charles Fredericks Magnolia/Kim – Jan Clayton Cap'n Andy – Ralph Dumke Parthy Ann Hawks – Ethel Owen Julie– Carol Bruce Steve– Robert Allen Ellie – Colette Lyons Frank – Buddy Ebsen</p>	418	<p>Cotton Blossom Show Boat Parade and Ballyhoo Only Make Believe** Ol' Man River Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man Life Upon the Wicked Stage C'mon Folks (Queenie's Ballyhoo) You Are Love Act I Finale At the Fair Why Do I Love You? In Dahomey Bill Service and Scene Music, St. Agatha's Convent** Goodbye, My Lady Love After The Ball</p>	<p>"Hey Feller" and "Till Good Luck Comes my Way," songs that were originally written to cover scene changes were cut from this production. Kim's song "Nobody Else but Me" was written specifically for this production replacing her reprise of "Why Do I Love You?" It was the last song composed by Jerome Kern who passed away shortly thereafter.</p>
1983	Uris	Michael Kahn	James M. Nederlander The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts	<p>Joe – Bruce Hubbard Queenie – Karla Burns Gaylord Ravenal – Ron Raines Magnolia – Sheryl Woods Kim – Karen Culliver* Cap'n Andy – Donald O'Connor Parthy Ann Hawkes – Avril Gentles Julie – Lonette McKee Steve – Wayne Turnage Ellie – Paige O'Hara Frank – Paul Keith</p>	73	<p>Cotton Blossom Show Boat Parade and Ballyhoo Only Make Believe Ol' Man River Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man Life Upon the Wicked Stage I Might Fall Back on You Queenie's Ballyhoo** You Are Love Act I Finale At the Fair Why Do I Love You? Bill Service and Scene Music, St. Agatha's Convent** Goodbye, My Lady Love After the Ball</p>	<p>"In Dahomey" was cut after 1946 and all subsequent revivals due to the offensive nature of the song.</p>

Appendix II: *Show Boat* Hollywood Productions

Blue - Indicates cast member who appeared in both stage and screen productions

Red - Indicates songs that were not in the original stage production

Year	Producer/Studio	Director	Cast	Musical Numbers	Plot Changes
1929	Carl Laemmle/Universal	Harry A. Pollard Arch Heath (uncredited)	Joe – Stepin Fetchit Queenie – Gertrude Howard Gaylord Ravenal – Joseph Schildkraut Magnolia – Laura La Plante Kim/Magnolia as a Child – Jane La Verne Cap'n Andy/Master of Ceremonies – Otis Harlan Parthy Ann Hawks – Emily Fitzroy Julie Dozier – Alma Rubens Elly – Elise Bartlet Schultzy – Neely Edwards (Featuring Helen Morgan , Jules Bledsoe , Tess Gardella and the Jubilee Singers singing selections from the show in the prologue)	Ol' Man River Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man Bill C'mon Folks Hey, Feller Deep River Coon Coon Coon I Got Shoes The Lonesome Road	Closer in plot to the original novel. Magnolia Hawks, daughter of show boat owners Cap'n Andy and Parthy Hawks falls in love at first sight with riverboat gambler Gaylord Ravenal. They elope. Magnolia, Ravenal, and their daughter Kim continue to live on the showboat until Cap'n Andy's death from drowning. Magnolia, Ravenal, and Kim move to Chicago and live off Ravenal's gambling. They eventually lose all. Parthy decides to visit Chicago. Ravenal abandons Magnolia and Kim in order to avoid Parthy's anger. Magnolia finds work singing at a club and becomes famous. Parthy eventually dies leaving the showboat to Magnolia who has been estranged from her mother due to her disapproval of Ravenal. Magnolia and Ravenal are reunited on the show boat.
1936	Carl Laemmle/Universal	James Whale	Joe – Paul Robeson Queenie – Hattie McDaniel Gaylord Ravenal – Allan Jones Magnolia Hawks – Irene Dunne Kim – Sunnie O'Dea Cap'n Andy Hawks – Charles Winninger Parthy Ann Hawkes – Helen Westley Julie – Helen Morgan Steve Baker – Donald Cook Ellie May Chipley – Queenie Smith Frank Schultz – Sammy White	Cotton Blossom Cap'n Andy's Ballyhoo Where's the Mate for Me? Only Make Believe Ol' Man River Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man I Have the Room Above Her Gallivantin' Aroun' You Are Love; Ah Still Suits Me Nun's Processional Bill Goodbye, My Lady Love After the Ball (Instrumentals – Life Upon the Wicked Stage; At the Fair; Why Do I Love You?; After the Ball	Closer in plot to the 1927 Broadway musical. Magnolia Hawks, daughter of show boat owners Cap'n Andy and Parthy Hawks falls in love at first sight with riverboat gambler Gaylord Ravenal. Julie LaVerne, the leading actress on the show boat, is passing for white and is married to Steve Baker, her white leading man. A spurned lover informs on Julie and Steve, accusing them of miscegenation and they are forced to quit their jobs and leave the show boat. Forced to leave town due to his gambling, Ravenal hitches a ride on the show boat and fills in as leading man with Magnolia as leading lady. They eventually marry. After the birth of their daughter Kim, Magnolia and Ravenal leave the show boat and move to Chicago where they live off Ravenal's gambling. Ten years later Ravenal's winning streak comes to an end and he abandons Magnolia because he feels he can't support her or their daughter. He visits Kim who is in a convent school to say goodbye. Desperate for work, Magnolia auditions as a nightclub singer with encouragement from friends Frank and Ellie who had also worked on the show boat. Julie LaVerne, who has become an alcoholic after she was abandoned by her own husband, is the featured singer at the club. She hears Magnolia audition and remembering Magnolia's past kindness to her, goes on a bender gets herself fired. Magnolia goes on in her stead. Cap'n Andy happens into the nightclub and helps assure his daughter's success. She becomes a famous Broadway star. Twenty-three years later, Ravenal is the stagedoor manager at the theatre where his daughter Kim is following in Magnolia's footsteps. The family are reunited on the opening night of Kim's show.

1951	Arthur Freed/MGM	George Sidney	<p>Joe – William Warfield Queenie – Frances E. Williams (uncredited) Gaylord Ravenal – Howard Keel Magnolia Hawks – Kathryn Grayson Kim – Sheila Clark (uncredited) Cap'n Andy Hawks – Joe E. Brown Parthy Hawks – Agnes Moorehead Julie LaVerne – Ava Gardner Steve Baker – Robert Sterling Ellie Mae Shipley – Marge Champion Frank Shultz – Gower Champion</p>	<p>Cotton Blossom Cap'n Andy's Ballyhoo Where's the Mate for Me? Only Make Believe Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man I Might Fall Back on You Ol' Man River; You Are Love Why Do I Love You? Bill Life Upon the Wicked Stage After the Ball (Instrumental – Mis'ry's Comin' Round; Cakewalk)</p>	<p>Producer Arthur Freed felt the film was too epic in sweep and decided to limit the time span (from 1880 to 1927) to the 1880s. Magnolia Hawks, daughter of show boat owners Cap'n Andy and Parthy Hawks falls in love at first sight with riverboat gambler Gaylord Ravenal. Julie LaVerne, the leading actress on the show boat, is passing for white and is married to Steve Baker, her white leading man. A spurned lover informs on Julie and Steve, accusing them of miscegenation and they are forced to quit their jobs and leave the show boat. Forced to leave town due to his gambling, Ravenal hitches a ride on the show boat and fills in as leading man with Magnolia as leading lady. They eventually marry and move to Chicago where they live off Ravenal's gambling. When Ravenal's winning streak comes to an end, Magnolia upbraids him for being overly obsessed with gambling. Unable to support Magnolia, Ravenal abandons her. Desperate for work, Magnolia auditions as a nightclub singer with encouragement from friends Frank and Ellie who had also worked on the show boat. Julie LaVerne, who has become an alcoholic after she was abandoned by her own husband, is the featured singer at the club. She hears Magnolia audition and remembering Magnolia's past kindness to her, goes on a bender gets herself fired. Magnolia goes on in her stead. Cap'n Andy happens into the nightclub and helps assure his daughter's success. After the show, she tells her father that Ravenal has left her and she is pregnant with his child. She doesn't want to tell Ravenal because they are broke and decides to return to the show boat where she gives birth to their daughter Kim.</p>
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Appendix III: *Show Boat* Related Productions

Year	Media Format	Title	Producer	Director	Cast	Musical Numbers	Relationship to <i>Show Boat</i>
1946	Film	Till the Clouds Roll By	Arthur Freed/MGM	Richard Whorf Vincente Minnelli (uncredited) George Sidney (uncredited)	Joe – Caleb Peterson Gaylord Ravenal – Tony Martin Magnolia Hawks – Kathryn Grayson Julie LaVerne – Lena Horne Ellie May Shipley – Virginia O'Brien	Cotton Blossom Where's the Mate for Me? Make Believe Life Upon the Wicked Stage Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man Ol' Man River	<i>Till the Clouds Roll By</i> is a biopic about the life of Jerome Kern, composer of <i>Show Boat</i> . The film's story starts on the opening night of <i>Show Boat</i> . In an interesting twist, the numbers are performed out of sequence from the original play with "Ol' Man River" switching places with "Life Upon the Wicked Stage."
2009 (Originally released in 1957)	Audio Recording	The Capitol Singles Collection	DRG/EMI	N/A	Stan Freberg Daws Butler	Elderly Man River (aka "Tweedley the Censor")	"Elderly Man River" is Stan Freberg's parody on censorship and political correctness. Tweedly, a persnickety censor is sent to CBS to monitor the performance of "Ol' Man River." He hits his buzzer with great frequency correcting the song's grammar (i.e. double negatives and dropped g's) and the appropriateness of the lyrics (the word 'old' would offend senior citizens).
1959	Audio Recording	An Evening Wasted with Tom Lehrer	Reprise/Warner Bros. Records	N/A	Tom Lehrer	She's My Girl	Tom Lehrer's parody posits the question of why men are always portrayed as ne'er-do-wells in popular songs such as "Bill" and "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man." What would happen if a song existed about a woman who's lacks appeal? "She's My Girl" uses an inverted melodic pattern based on "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" and satirizes the first line of the song. Instead of "fish gotta swim and birds gotta fly," Lehrer sings, "sharks gotta swim and bats gotta fly."