Musicals 101: Broadway in the 21st Century

Class 6: Other Original Musicals, Part 1 (2000-2005)

OLLI at Duke • Fall Term 2025 • Alan Teasley, Instructor

Today's Focus

We will continue:

- Our exploration of the 269 musicals that opened on Broadway between 2000 and 2020, focusing on five seasons of original musicals (2000-05)

You will know:

- How we'll define "other original musicals" for this course
- Creative teams, books, and scores of four musicals that opened during this period: *Avenue Q* (2003), *Wicked* (2003), *The Light in the Piazza* (2005) and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (2005)

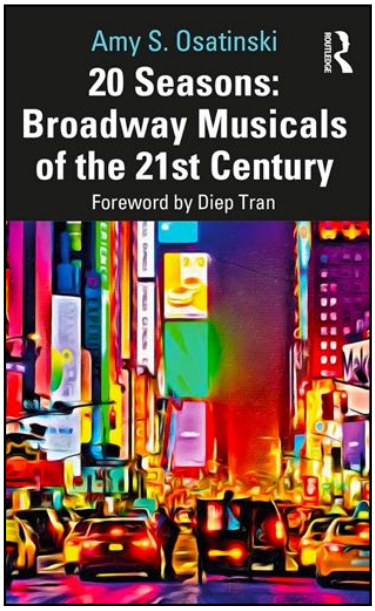
You will appreciate and enjoy:

- Performances from each of the four spotlighted musicals

You will consider:

- Whether these musicals will be among your choices for "Best Musicals of the Century"

Broadway at the Turn of the Century



- The first twenty seasons of the 21st Century were bookended by two major events:
  - 9/11/01: attack on the World Trade Center
  - 3/12/20: Broadway shuts down as the COVID-19 pandemic begins
- 269 musicals opened on Broadway in these seasons:
  - 186 (70%) were original (new) musicals
  - 83 (30%) were revivals (including remounts)
- The main categories of new musicals were:
  - Jukebox Musicals (55)
  - Revues (6)
  - Screen-to-Stage Adaptations (72)
  - "Other original source" (77)

"Other Original Musicals"

[definition for this course]

- "Musicals in this category are original in that they have never before played on Broadway, AND they do not fit into the screen-to-stage or jukebox categories."

PREVALENCE:

- Between 2000 and 2020, 77 (29%) of the 269 musicals that opened on Broadway were in this category.

THESE SHOWS HAD A WIDE VARIETY OF SOURCE MATERIAL:

- Book (24), historical event or person (11), play (5), comic book/graphic novel (3), and myth (1)
- The remaining 33 are considered "newly invented."

—from comments in Amy S. Osatinski, *20 Seasons: Broadway Musicals of the 21st Century* (2024)

"Other Original Musicals"-Examples

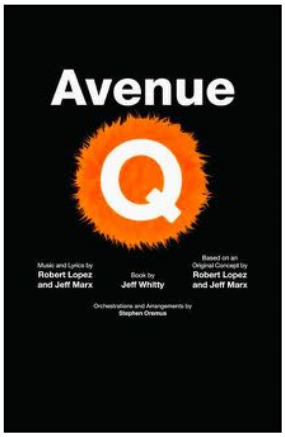
- **Book (24):** ***Wicked*** **(2003),** ***The Light in the Piazza*** **(2005),** ***Matilda*** **(2013),** ***Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812*** **(2016)**
- **Historical event/person (11):** ***The Scottsboro Boys,*** **(2010),** ***Hamilton*** **(2015),** ***Come From Away*** **(2017)**
- **Play (5):** ***Spring Awakening*** **(2006),** ***The Visit*** **(2015)**
- **Comic book/strip or graphic novel (3):** ***The Addams Family*** **(2010),** ***Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*** **(2011),** ***Fun Home*** **(2015)**
- **Myth (1):** ***Hadestown*** **(2019)**
- **"Newly Invented" (33):** ***Avenue Q*** **(2003),** ***The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*** **(2005),** ***The Drowsy Chaperone*** **(2006),** ***In the Heights*** **(2008),** ***Next to Normal*** **(2009),** ***Dear Evan Hansen*** **(2016),** ***The Prom*** **(2018)**

—from comments in Amy S. Osatinski, ***20 Seasons: Broadway Musicals of the 21st Century*** **(2024)**

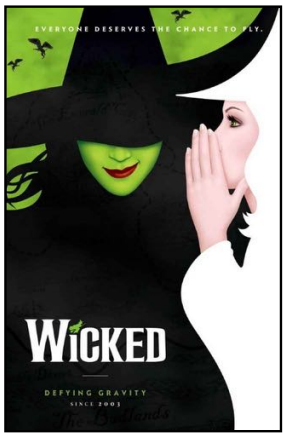
Broadway Musicals (2000-2010)

Season	Jukebox Musicals	Revues	Screen-to-Stage	Revivals	Other Original Musicals
2000-2001		One Mo' Time	The Producers	42nd Street	
2001-2002	Mamma Mia!		Thoroughly Modern Mille	Into the Woods	Urinetown
2002-2003	Movin' Out	The Look of Love	Hairspray	Nine Gypsy (Peters)	
2003-2004	Taboo The Boy from Oz		Dirty Rotten Scoundrels	Assassins	Avenue Q • Wicked Caroline, or Change
2004-2005	All Shook Up		Spamalot	La Cage aux Folles	The Light in the Piazza • The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
2005-2006	Jersey Boys	Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life	Tarzan The Color Purple The Wedding Singer	The Pajama Game Sweeney Todd (Doyle)	
2006-2007			Grey Gardens	Company (Doyle)	
2007-2008			Xanadu Young Frankenstein	South Pacific (Sher) Gypsy (LuPone)	
2008-2009	Rock of Ages		Billy Elliot Shrek the Musical	West Side Story Hair	
2009-2010	American Idiot Come Fly Away Fela! Million Dollar Quartet	Sondheim on Sondheim	The Addams Family Promises, Promises	La Cage aux Folles Finian's Rainbow A Little Night Music Promises, Promises	

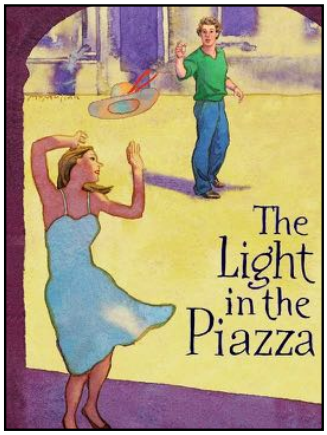
Original Musicals, 2000-2005



2003 • 2,534 perfs
3 Tony wins (Best Musical)
Dir. Jason Moore



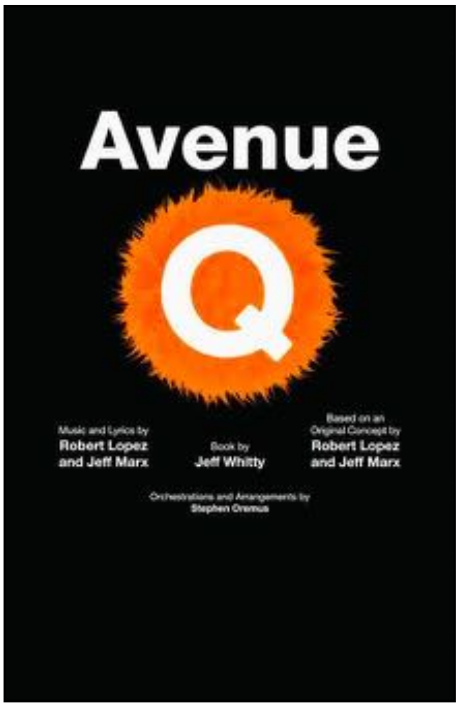
2003 • 8,546 perfs*
3 Tony wins
Dir. Joe Mantello



2005 • 504 perfs
6 Tony wins
Dir. Bartlett Sher

2005 • 1,136 perfs
2 Tony wins
Dir. James Lapine

Avenue Q (2003)



KEY MEMBERS OF THE CREATIVE TEAM:

- Producers: Kevin McCollum, Robyn Goodman, Jeffrey Seller, Vineyard Theatre, The New Group
- Music & Lyrics: Robert Lopez & Jeff Marx
- Book: Jeff Whitty, based on an original concept by Robert Lopez & Jeff Marx
- Direction: Jason Moore
- Choreographer: Ken Roberson
- Puppets Conceived & Designed by: Rick Lyon
- Set Design: Anna Louizos
- Costume Design: Mirena Rada
- Lighting Design: Howell Binkley
- Orchestrations: Stephen Oremus
- CAST: John Tartaglia, Rick Lyon, Stephanie D'Abruzzo, Ann Harada, Natalie Venetia Belcon

LENGTH OF RUN: 2,534 Performances (6+ years)
OFF-BROADWAY RUN: 2009-19 (9.5 years)

Jeff Marx (b. 1970)

At the 2004 Tony Awards

EARLY LIFE & CAREER:

- Grew up in Hollywood, Florida
- Attended University of Michigan, where he was a member of the Men's Glee Club
- Holds a JD degree—member of the NY State Bar Association (but does not practice law)
- Enrolled in BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theater Workshop to meet clients in the entertainment industry. There he met Robert Lopez
- Their first project together was a proposed Muppet movie: ***Kermit, Prince of Denmark***
- For this they won part of the $150K Kleban Award
- Their next collaboration was ***Avenue Q***, for which they won the 2004 Tony Award for Best Original Score

Robert Lopez (b. 1975)

EDUCATION AND EARLY CAREER:

- Born in Manhattan, of Filipino descent; spent most of his childhood in Greenwich Village
- At 6, he studied piano "as a fluke" since the apartment his family was subletting had a piano.
- Graduated from Yale with a B. A. in English, just like a character in ***Avenue Q***
- In 1998, while participating in the BMI Lehman Engle Musical Theater Workshop he met Jeff Marx.
- They began work on ***Avenue Q*** in 1999—his first professional experience—which opened in July 2003.

Robert Lopez (b. 1975)

Kristen Anderson-Lopez & Robert Lopez

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- Youngest person ever to achieve the EGOT; has won all four awards more than once: 2 Oscars, 3 Tonys, 3 Grammys and 4 Emmys
- Scores for Broadway:
  - 2003 *Avenue Q*—Tony Award for Score
  - 2011 *The Book of Mormon*—with Trey Parker & Matt Stone—Tonys for score and book
  - 2018 *Frozen*—wrote score with his wife, Kristen Anderson-Lopez (KAL)
- Songs and scores for films:
  - 2011 *Winnie the Pooh* (Disney film)-with KAL
  - 2013 *Frozen* (score with KAL)—"Let It Go" won Oscar for Best Original Song
  - 2017 *Coco* (with KAL)—"Remember Me" won Oscar for Best Original Song

Avenue Q (2003): The Story

A group of 20-somethings lead a less-than-fulfilling life on Avenue Q in New York City

Princeton, John Tartaglia, Kate Monster & Stephanie d'Abruzzo

John Tartaglia & Rod

Avenue Q (2003): The Story

Princeton, John Tartaglia, Kate Monster & Stephanie d'Abruzzo

Avenue Q (2003): Songs

ACT I:

- "The Avenue Q Theme"
- "What Do You Do with a B. A. in English?"
- "It Sucks To Be Me"
- "If You Were Gay"
- "Purpose"
- "Everyone's a Little Bit Racist"
- "The Internet Is for Porn"
- "Mix Tape"
- "I'm Not Wearing Underwear Today"
- "Special"
- "You Can Be as Loud as the Hell You Want (When You're Making Love)"

ACT I:

- "Fantasies Come True"
- "My Girlfriend, Who Lives in Canada"
- "There's a Fine, Fine Line"

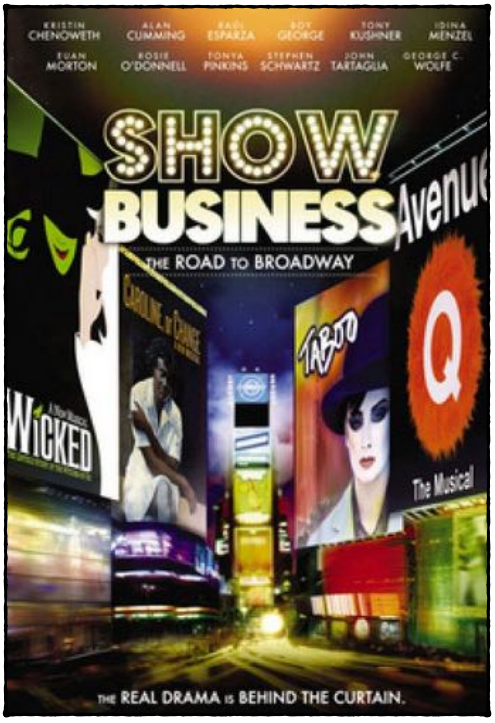
ACT II:

- "There Is Life Outside Your Apartment"
- "The More You Ruv Someone"
- "Schadenfreude"
- "I Wish I Could Go Back to College"
- "The Money Song"
- "School for Monsters"
- "For Now"

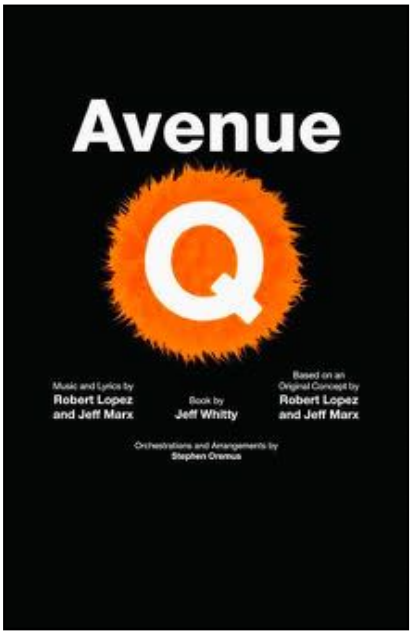
ShowBusiness: The Road to Broadway

Directed by Dori Berinstein (2007)

Scenes about *Avenue Q*

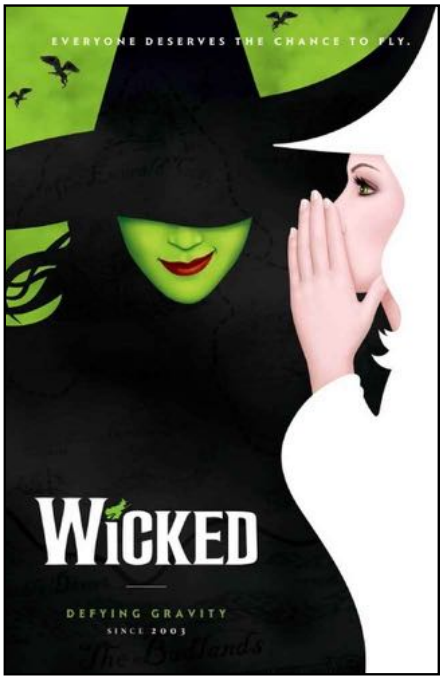


Avenue Q at the 2004 Tony Awards: 6 Nominations & 3 Wins



- **Best Musical**
- **Book (Musical): Jeff Whitty**
- **Original Score: Robert Lopez & Jeff Marx**
- **Actor (Musical): John Tartaglia**
- **Actress (Musical):Stephanie D'Abruzzo**
- **Direction (Musical): Jason Moore**

Wicked (2003)



KEY MEMBERS OF THE CREATIVE TEAM:

- **Producers: Marc Platt (Universal Pictures), The Araca Group, Jon B. Platt, David Stone**
- **Music & Lyrics: Stephen Schwartz**
- **Book: Winnie Holzman, based on the novel by Gregory Maguire**
- **Directed by: Joe Montello**
- **Musical Staging by: Wayne Cilento**
- **Scenic Design: Eugene Lee**
- **Costume Design: Susan Hilferty**
- **Lighting Design: Kenneth Posner**
- **CAST: Idina Menzel, Kristin Chenoweth, Joel Grey, Carole Shelley, Norbert Leo Butz, Christopher Fitzgerald, Michelle Federer**

LENGTH OF RUN: 8,546 Perfs as of 10/19/25

The Musicals of Stephen Schwartz

Godspell · Pippin · The Magic Show · Working
The Baker's Wife · Pocahontas · The Prince of Egypt
Wicked · The Queen of Versailles

Gregory Maguire (1954-)

CAREER:

- Published 8 children's books between 1978 and 1995
- *Wicked* (1995) was his first book for adults
- *Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister* (1999)
- *Mirror, Mirror* (2003)
- 15 more children's books followed
- 3 sequels to *Wicked*
- *Maracoor*—a *Wicked* sequel trilogy appeared in 2021-2023
- *Elphie*—a *Wicked* prequel—is in the works

Winnie Holzman (1954-)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- Television producer and writer:
  - *The Wonder Years*: writer (1990, 1 episode)
  - *Thirtysomething*: writer (1990-91, 10 episodes)
  - *My So-Called Life* (1994-95): creator, writer
  - *Once and Again* (1999-2002): writer, 13 episodes

Joe Mantello (1962-)

EDUCATION AND EARLY CAREER:

- American actor and director on both stage and screen
- Born in Illinois
- Earned BFA at UNC School of the Arts
- First major role on Broadway was as Louis in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* (1993-94)
- Directed plays:
  - 1995 *Love! Valour! Compassion!*
  - 2001 *Design for Living*
  - 2002 *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*
  - 2003 *Take Me Out* (Tony Award)

Joe Mantello (1962-)

AFTER *WICKED*:

- Director of Musicals:
  - 2003 *Wicked*
  - 2004 *Assassins* (Tony Award)
  - 2008 *Pal Joey*
  - 2009 *9 to 5*
- Director of Plays:
  - 2005 *Glengarry Glen Ross*
  - 2005 *The Odd Couple*
  - 2007 *The Ritz*
  - 2011 *Other Desert Cities*
  - 2016 *The Humans*
  - 2018 *Three Tall Women*
  - 2018 *The Boys in the Band*

"Defying Gravity"

Broadway: The American Musical (PBS, 2004)

from Episode 6:
"Putting It Together (1980-2004)"

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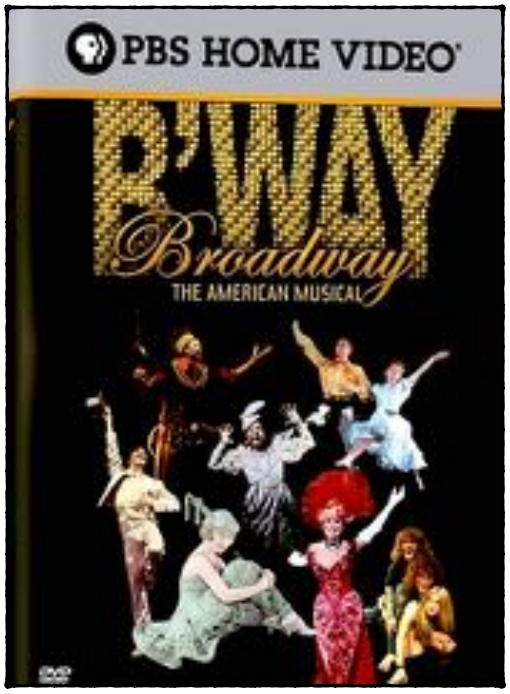


Wicked: The Story

Elphaba & Glinda are roommates at Shiz University. They become friends . . .

Wicked (2003): Songs

ACT I:

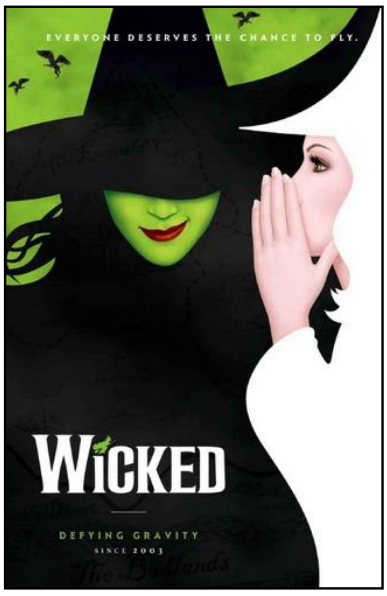
- "No One Mourns the Wicked"
- "Dear Old Shiz"
- "The Wizard and I"
- "What Is This Feeling?"
- "Something Bad"
- "Dancing Through Life"
- "Popular"
- "I'm Not That Girl"
- "One Short Day"
- "A Sentimental Man"
- "Defying Gravity"

ACT II:

- "Thank Goodness"
- "Wonderful"
- "I'm Not That Girl (reprise)"
- "As Long As You're Mine"
- "No Good Deed"
- "March of the Witch Hunters"
- "For Good"
- "Finale"

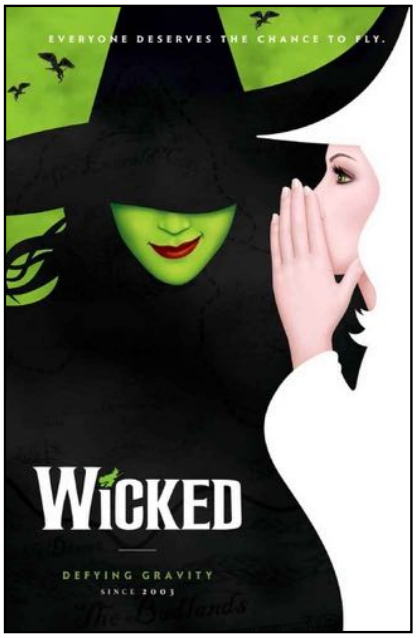
Wicked: Performances

Wicked at the 2004 Tony Awards: 10 Nominations & 3 Wins



- Best Musical
- Book of a Musical: Winnie Holzman
- Original Score: Stephen Schwartz
- Actress (Musical): Kristin Chenoweth, Idina Menzel
- Choreography: Wayne Cilento
- Scenic Design: Eugene Lee
- Costume Design: Susan Hilferty
- Lighting Design: Kenneth Posner
- Orchestrations: William David Brohn

Wicked (2003): Accomplishments



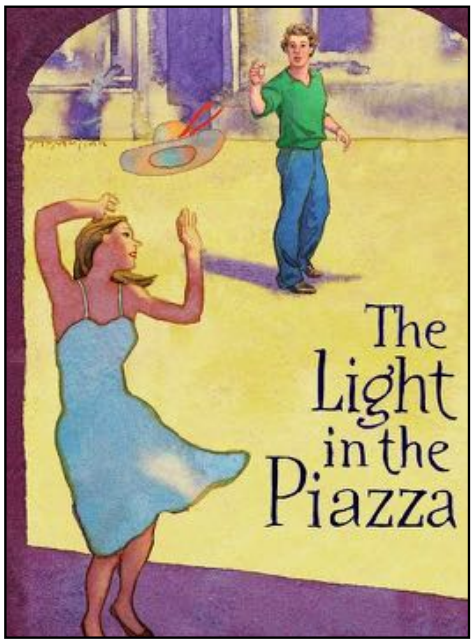
AWARDS:

- 3 Tony Awards: Best Actress (Musical), Scenic Design, Costume Design
- 6 Drama Desk Awards: Outstanding New Musical, Book of a Musical, Director of a Musical, Lyrics, Set Design, Costume Design
- Original cast album received 2005 Grammy for Best Musical Show Album

FINANCIAL REWARDS:

- Recouped its $14M cost in 14 months (December 2004)
- Still regularly grosses >$1.8M per week
- 4th longest-running musical in Broadway history

The Light in the Piazza (2005)



KEY MEMBERS OF THE CREATIVE TEAM:

- **Producer: Lincoln Center Theater**
- **Music & Lyrics: Adam Guettel**
- **Book: Craig Lucas, based on the novel by Elizabeth Spencer**
- **Directed by: Bartlett Sher**
- **Musical Staging by: Jonathan Butterell**
- **Scenic Design: Michael Yeargan**
- **Costume Design: Catherine Zuber**
- **Lighting Design: Christopher Akerlind**
- **CAST: Victoria Clark, Kelli O'Hara, Matthew Morrison, Sarah Uriarte Berry**

LENGTH OF RUN: 504 Performances (>1 year)

Adam Guettel (b. 1964)

EDUCATION AND EARLY CAREER:

- **Son of writer/composer Mary Rodgers; grandson of composer Richard Rodgers**
- **Performed as a boy soprano soloists in operas at the Metropolitan Opera and the New York City Opera**
- **When he started composing as a teenager, his mother often offered harsh criticism.**
- **Attended Yale University, where he met Tina Landau, a frequent collaborator**
- **Worked as a rock and jazz musician in his early 20s before realizing he really wanted to tell stories through music**
- **Mentored by Stephen Sondheim, who could be blunt but was encouraging as well**

Adam Guettel (b. 1964)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

Composer/Lyricist of:

- 1996 *Floyd Collins* (off-Broadway)
- 1998 *Saturn Returns (Myths and Hymns*), a song cycle, performed off-Broadway
- 2005 *The Light in the Piazza*-Tony Awards for Best Original Score & Orchestrations
- 2005-07 Composed score for an adaptation of *The Princess Bride,* but a conflict with author William Goldman resulted in the show being cancelled
- 2024 *Days of Wine and Roses*-Tony nom
- 2025 *Floyd Collins* (Broadway)

The Light in the Piazza (2005): The Story

Margaret Johnson (Victoria Clark) is visiting Florence with her daughter Clara (Kelli O'Hara). A conflict arises when Clara meets young Fabrizio (Matthew Morrison).

The Light in the Piazza (2005): The Story

Victoria Clark

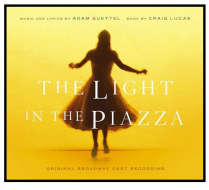
The Light in the Piazza (2005): Songs

ACT I:

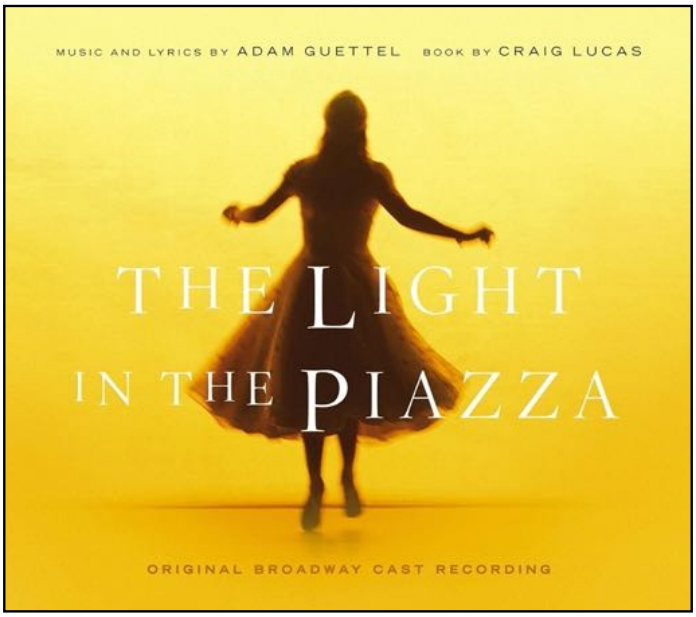
- "Overture"
- "Statues and Stories"
- "The Beauty Is"
- "Il Mondo Era Vuoto
- "American Dancing"
- "Passeggiata"
- "The Joy You Feel"
- "Dividing Day"
- "Hysteria"
- "Say It Somehow"

ACT II:

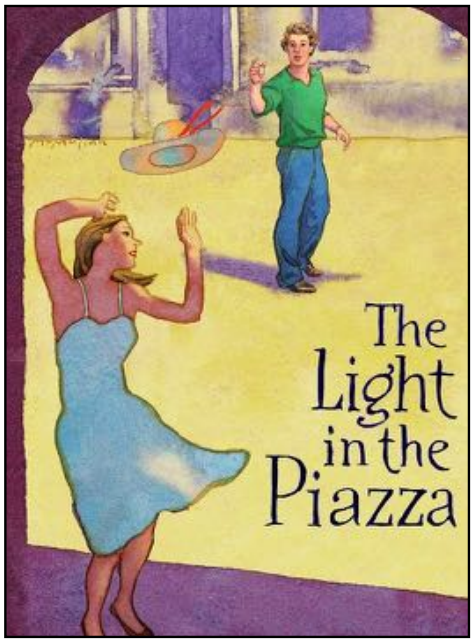
- "Aiutami"
- "The Light in the Piazza"
- "Octet"
- "The Beauty Is (Reprise)"
- "Let's Walk"
- "Clara's Interlude"
- "Love to Me"
- "Fable"



The Light in the Piazza (2005): Performances



The Light in the Piazza at the 2005 Tony Awards: 11 Nominations & 6 Wins



- Best Musical
- Book (Musical): Craig Lucas
- Original Score: Adam Guettel
- Actress (Musical): Victoria Clark
- Featured Actor (Musical): Matthew Morrison
- Featured Actress (Musical): Kelli O'Hara
- Direction (Musical): Bartlett Sher
- Scenic Design (Musical): Michael Yeargan
- Costume Design (Musical): Catherine Zuber
- Lighting Design (Musical): Christopher Akerlind
- Orchestrations: Ted Sperling & Adam Guettel

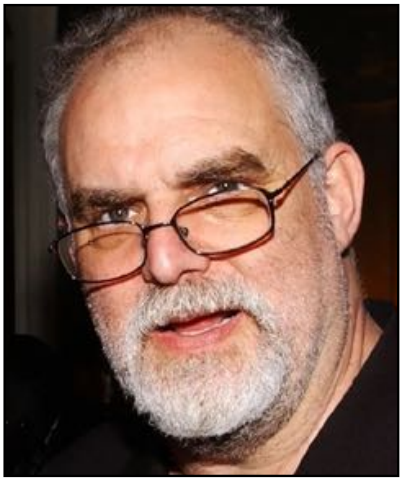
The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (2005)

KEY MEMBERS OF THE CREATIVE TEAM:

- **Producers: David Stone, James L. Nederlander, Second Stage Theater**
- **Music & Lyrics: William Finn**
- **Book: Rachel Sheinkin. based on "C-R-E-P-U-S-C-U-L-E," a play by The Farm**
- **Directed by: James Lapine**
- **Choreography: Dan Knechtges**
- **Scenic Design: Beowulf Boritt**
- **Costume Design: Jennifer Caprio**
- **Lighting Design: Natasha Katz**
- **CAST: Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Dan Fogler, Celia Keenan-Bolger, Jose Llana, Sarah Saltzberg**

LENGTH OF RUN: 1,136 Performances

William Finn (1952-2025)



EDUCATION & CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Born in Boston, raised in a conservative Jewish family**
- **Wrote his first play in Hebrew school—in Hebrew; got a guitar for his bar mitzvah**
- **Majored in music at Williams College**
- **Composer & lyricist for these musicals:**
  - ***Falsettos*** **(1992) won Tony Awards for Best Original Score and Best Book of a Musical (with James Lapine_**
  - ***A New Brain*** **(1998, Off-Broadway)**
  - ***The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*** **(2005)**
- **There are three revues of his songs: *Infinite Joy* (2000), *Elegies: A Song Cycle* (2003), & *Make Me a Song* (2006)**

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (2005): The Story

Middle school students compete in a Spelling Bee:
L to R: William Barfée (Dan Fogler), Marcy Park (Deborah H. Craig), Olive Ostrovsky (Celia Keenan-Bolger), Leaf Coneybear (Jesse Tyler Ferguson) & Logainne Schwartzandgrubenenierre (Sarah Saltzberg)

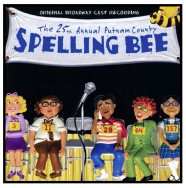
The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (2005): Songs

ACT I:

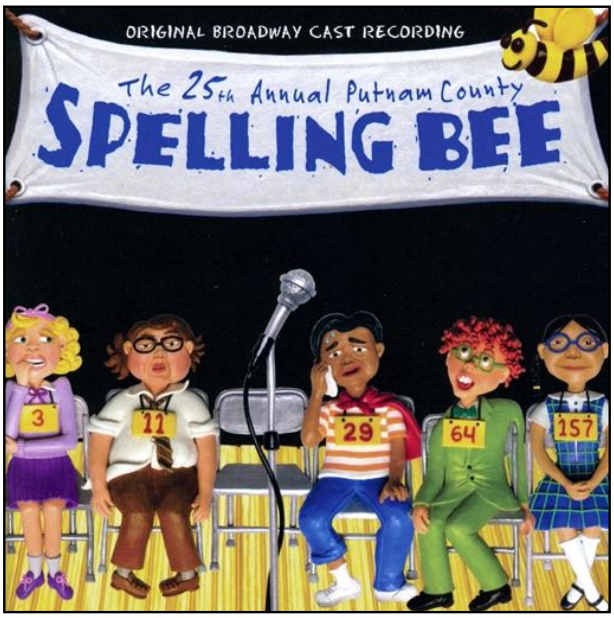
- "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee"
- "The Spelling Rules"/"My Favorite Moment of the Bee 1"
- "My Friend, the Dictionary"
- "The First Goodbye"
- "Pandemonium"
- "I'm Not That Smart"
- "The Second Goodbye"
- "Magic Foot"
- "Pandemonium (Reprise)"/"My Favorite Moment of the Bee 2"
- "Why We Like Spelling"
- "Prayer of the Comfort Counselor"

ACT II:

- "My Unfortunate Erection (Chip's Lament)"
- "Woe Is Me"
- "I'm Not That Smart (Reprise)"
- "I Speak Six Languages"
- "The I Love You Song"
- "Woe Is Me (Reprise)"
- "My Favorite Moment of the Bee 3"
- "Second"
- "Finale"
- "The Last Goodbye"



The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (2005): Performances



Spelling Bee at the 2005 Tony Awards: 6 Nominations & 2 Wins

- Best Musical
- Book (Musical): Rachel Sheinkin
- Original Score: William Finn
- Featured Actress (Musical): Celia Keenan-Bolger
- Featured Actor (Musical): Dan Fogler
- Direction (Musical): James Lapine