

British Musicals on Broadway

Contact Information & Schedule

Instructor: Alan Teasley, alanteasley@yahoo.com, (919) 812-0185

Dates & Times: Ten Thursdays: September 12 - November 21, 2024 (no class on October 3), 9:00-10:15 am, via ZOOM. Note: Class sessions are recorded. The recordings are available within 48 hours after the class ends and remain available for several weeks after the course ends.

Course Website: www.musicals-101.com

For each class meeting, a separate page of the site will provide materials students can use to preview the class content as well as links to the online videos shown in class.

Course Description

The first half of the course will explore important works of the British musical theatre that were performed in New York between the 1880s and the 1960s: Gilbert and Sullivan, Noël Coward, Sandy Wilson, Lionel Bart, and Anthony Newley. Shows will include *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Bitter Sweet*, *Sail Away*, *The Boy Friend*, *Oliver!*, and *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off*. The second part will focus on the “British Invasion” of the 1980s—in particular, the shows of composer Andrew Lloyd Webber: *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Cats*, and *The Phantom of the Opera*. We’ll also consider the influence of *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon*, *Chess*, and *Mamma Mia!*—shows that may not have originated in Britain, but came to Broadway direct from London. Through this survey students will appreciate the unique flavors of these musicals and speculate on their enduring appeal and commercial success. The course is primarily lecture with video and audio clips; students will be able to ask questions and make comments during each class.

Instructor Bio

Alan Teasley began his career as a high school English and drama teacher. After retiring from the Durham Public Schools in 2006, he taught in Duke’s Master of Arts in Teaching Program. A member of the OLLI Advisory Council, he is an avid theatergoer with a particular fondness for American musicals. This is his fifteenth course on musical theater for OLLI. Previous courses have focused on Stephen Sondheim, Rodgers & Hammerstein, Kander & Ebb, Frank Loesser, Lerner & Loewe, Jerry Herman, Bock & Harnick, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Schwartz, the ten musicals that have won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, six “Off-Broadway Classics,” and “The Women of Broadway”—a survey of musicals with book, lyrics, and/or music by women. He has also presented a two-course survey of “Broadway’s Silver Age,” focused on the musicals of Rodgers & Hart, George & Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, and Cole Porter.

Recommended Book

Kantor, Michael, and Laurence Maslon. (2019) [*Broadway: The American Musical, Third Edition*](#). Guilford, CT: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books. ISBN 978-1-4930-4767-3 (paperback) This is the companion book to the PBS documentary film of the same name, a six-part series first broadcast in 2004. The third edition of the book has been updated to include shows that opened in the 2018-19 Broadway season. The book provides a comprehensive treatment of American musicals and hundreds of photos. It’s worth the heft and the cost—a doorstopper of a tome listing on Amazon.com for about \$40.

Class Participation/Expectations

The instructor will provide background about each show, but the bulk of class time will be listening to or watching documentaries about or excerpts from the shows. Since the titles are announced in advance, and most of the scores are readily available on CD, streaming services, or YouTube,

students are free to conduct their own preview of each show using materials on the course website. All participants are expected to abide by the OLLI Code of Conduct.

Session Topics

- Class 1: 9/12/24** **The Beginnings of British Musicals (A Very Brief Overview)**
Introduction to the Course
Types of British Musicals in the 18th & 19th Centuries
The Operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan: *HMS Pinafore* • *The Mikado* • *The Pirates of Penzance*
- Class 2: 9/19/24** **Noël Coward (1920s-60s)**
Bitter Sweet (1929) • *Sail Away* (1961)
The Girl Who Came to Supper (1963)
- Class 3: 9/26/24** **Sandy Wilson & David Heneker (1950s-60s)**
The Boy Friend (1954) • *Half a Sixpence* (1963)
- No class 10/3/24** **OLLI Closed for Rosh Hashanah**
- Class 4: 10/10/24** **Lionel Bart, Anthony Newley, Leslie Bricusse**
Oliver! (1960) • *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off* (1962)
- Class 5: 10/17/24** **Andrew Lloyd Webber I**
Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat (1968)
Jesus Christ Superstar (1971)
- Class 6: 10/24/24** **Andrew Lloyd Webber II**
Evita (1978) • *Requiem* (1985)
- Class 7: 10/31/24** **Andrew Lloyd Webber III**
Cats (1982) • *Song and Dance* (1985)
- Class 8: 11/7/24** **Andrew Lloyd Webber IV**
The Phantom of the Opera (1986))
- Class 9: 11/14/24** **Andrew Lloyd Webber V**
Sunset Boulevard (1993) • *School of Rock* (2015)
- Other British Hits on Broadway in the 21st Century**
A selection from *Spamalot* (2005) to *SIX* (2017)
- Class 10: 11/21/24** **Too Big to Ignore: European Pop Operas that Came to Broadway by way of London’s West End**
Les Misérables (1985) • *Miss Saigon* (1989)
Chess (1986) • *Mamma Mia!* (1999)