

the oxford companion to the american musical thomas s hischak

the oxford companion to the american musical thomas s hischak stands as an essential resource for scholars, students, and enthusiasts of American musical theater. This comprehensive reference work meticulously explores the rich history, influential figures, and cultural impact of the American musical genre. Edited by Thomas S. Hischak, the companion offers detailed entries that span from early origins to contemporary developments, providing critical insights into composers, lyricists, productions, and thematic elements. It serves as both a scholarly tool and an engaging guide, highlighting the evolution of musical theater within the broader context of American culture. This article delves into the background of the companion, its editorial approach, key features, and its significance in theater studies. The following sections outline the structure and content of this authoritative volume.

- Overview and Editorial Background
- Content and Structure of the Companion
- Key Contributors and Notable Entries
- Importance in American Musical Theater Scholarship
- Using the Companion for Research and Study

Overview and Editorial Background

The oxford companion to the american musical thomas s hischak was developed to fill a critical gap in reference literature on American musical theater. Thomas S. Hischak, a distinguished scholar in the field, spearheaded this project to create an authoritative and accessible compendium. The companion reflects decades of research and expertise, compiling entries that document the genre's origins, evolution, and major contributors.

Published by Oxford University Press, the volume benefits from rigorous editorial standards and a commitment to scholarly accuracy. Hischak's editorial vision emphasizes clarity, comprehensiveness, and the inclusion of both historical and contemporary perspectives. The companion is designed to serve a broad audience, including academics, practitioners, and general readers interested in the American musical's cultural significance.

Thomas S. Hischak's Editorial Role

As editor, Thomas S. Hischak brought extensive knowledge of musical theater history and production to the project. His background includes numerous publications and teaching positions focused on theater and performance studies. Hischak's expertise ensured that entries were not only factually accurate but also contextualized within the wider narrative of American performing arts.

Publication and Reception

Since its release, the companion has been widely praised for its depth and clarity. It is regarded as a definitive source for information on American musicals, cited frequently in academic research and theatrical scholarship. The publication's reception highlights its role in advancing understanding of the genre and supporting educational endeavors.

Content and Structure of the Companion

The oxford companion to the american musical thomas s hischak is organized to facilitate easy navigation and comprehensive study. It contains thousands of entries covering a wide range of topics related to American musical theater, from individual productions to broader thematic discussions.

Types of Entries Included

The companion features diverse entry types, including biographies, show summaries, technical terms, and analyses of musical styles. This multifaceted approach allows readers to explore the genre from multiple angles, enhancing both academic and practical understanding.

Organization and Accessibility

Entries are alphabetically arranged and supplemented by cross-references, enabling efficient research. Clear definitions and concise explanations make the content accessible to readers with varying levels of prior knowledge. Additionally, the companion includes an index and bibliography to guide further exploration.

- Biographical sketches of composers, lyricists, and performers
- Descriptions of landmark musicals and productions
- Explanations of musical and theatrical terminology
- Historical context regarding the development of the American musical
- Discussion of cultural and social influences on the genre

Key Contributors and Notable Entries

While Thomas S. Hischak served as the primary editor, the companion also features contributions from leading scholars and experts in musical theater. These contributors bring specialized knowledge that enriches the depth and accuracy of the content.

Profiles of Influential Figures

The companion provides detailed profiles of pioneering artists such as George Gershwin, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Stephen Sondheim, and Lin-Manuel Miranda. These entries explore their careers, signature works, and lasting impact on the American musical landscape.

Landmark Musicals and Their Significance

Entries highlight seminal productions including "Oklahoma!," "West Side Story," and "Hamilton," analyzing their innovations in storytelling, music, and choreography. The companion also addresses lesser-known but culturally important works that have shaped the genre's trajectory.

Importance in American Musical Theater Scholarship

The Oxford Companion to the American Musical, Thomas S. Hischak, has become an indispensable tool in the field of musical theater studies. Its comprehensive coverage supports scholarly research, curriculum development, and critical analysis.

Academic and Educational Uses

Universities and conservatories utilize the companion as a reference in courses on musical theater history, performance, and production. It aids students and researchers in understanding the complex interplay of artistic, cultural, and historical factors that define American musicals.

Enhancing Critical Discourse

The companion's detailed entries contribute to informed criticism and appreciation of the genre. By providing context and factual grounding, it enables critics and historians to engage more deeply with musical theater's artistic and societal dimensions.

Using the Companion for Research and Study

Researchers and enthusiasts can leverage the oxford companion to the american musical thomas s hischak in various ways to deepen their knowledge and support creative work.

Research Strategies

The alphabetical organization and extensive cross-referencing allow for targeted research on specific topics or comprehensive study of broader themes. Users can trace connections between artists, productions, and historical periods through linked entries.

Practical Applications

The companion is also valuable for theater practitioners, including directors, performers, and educators. It provides historical context, biographical information, and technical definitions that inform production choices and interpretive decisions.

1. Identify key figures or works relevant to your research topic.
2. Use cross-references to explore related entries and themes.
3. Consult the bibliography for additional scholarly sources.

4. Apply contextual insights to enhance production or study of musicals.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'The Oxford Companion to the American Musical' by Thomas S. Hischak?

It is a comprehensive reference book that provides detailed information on the history, creators, and works of American musical theatre, compiled and edited by Thomas S. Hischak.

Who is Thomas S. Hischak, the author of 'The Oxford Companion to the American Musical'?

Thomas S. Hischak is a noted scholar and author specializing in theatre, film, and musical theatre history, known for his extensive research and publications in these fields.

What kind of information can readers expect to find in 'The Oxford Companion to the American Musical'?

Readers can find entries on composers, lyricists, performers, productions, songs, and historical context related to American musicals, making it an essential resource for students, scholars, and fans.

How is 'The Oxford Companion to the American Musical' useful for musical theatre studies?

The book serves as an authoritative and accessible reference that helps students and researchers understand the development of American musical theatre, its key figures, and significant works.

When was 'The Oxford Companion to the American Musical' by Thomas S. Hischak published?

The book was published in 2008 by Oxford University Press, and it remains a widely cited resource in musical theatre scholarship.

Additional Resources

1. *The Oxford Companion to the American Musical* by Thomas S. Hischak
This comprehensive reference book offers an extensive overview of the

American musical theater tradition. It includes detailed entries on composers, lyricists, performers, productions, and the evolution of the genre. The book is an essential resource for scholars, students, and fans seeking to understand the history and impact of American musicals.

2. *The Complete Book of 1920s Broadway Musicals* by Dan Dietz

Focused on a pivotal decade in American musical theater, this book provides detailed descriptions, production histories, and analyses of musicals from the 1920s. It contextualizes the social and cultural influences that shaped the Broadway stage during this era. The book is valuable for those interested in the roots of the American musical.

3. *The Musical Theatre Encyclopedia* by Thomas S. Hischak

This encyclopedia offers a broad look at musical theater worldwide, with an emphasis on American works. It contains entries on composers, shows, terminology, and historical developments. The volume serves as a useful companion to Hischak's other works, providing quick reference and insightful commentary.

4. *American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle* by Gerald Bordman

Gerald Bordman's chronicle traces the development of American musical theater from its early beginnings to the late 20th century. The book highlights major productions, influential figures, and shifts in style and content. It is well-regarded for its narrative style and thorough research.

5. *Broadway Musicals: Show by Show* by Stanley Green

This book offers detailed synopses, production information, and song lists for hundreds of Broadway musicals. It covers the history of the genre with an emphasis on key shows and their creative teams. The work is a valuable resource for enthusiasts and researchers of Broadway history.

6. *Show Boat: Performing Race in an American Musical* by Shirley A. Jones

This scholarly book explores the themes of race and representation in the landmark musical "Show Boat." It examines the social and historical contexts that influenced the production and reception of the show. The analysis provides insight into the complexities of race relations in American musical theater.

7. *Stephen Sondheim: A Life* by Meryle Secrest

This biography delves into the life and career of Stephen Sondheim, one of the most influential figures in American musical theater. It explores his creative process, major works, and impact on the genre. The book offers a detailed portrait of a groundbreaking composer and lyricist.

8. *The Sound of Broadway Music: A Book of Orchestrators and Orchestrations* by Steven Suskin

Focusing on the orchestration aspect of musicals, this book sheds light on the unsung heroes who shape the sound of Broadway shows. It includes interviews and profiles of prominent orchestrators, illustrating their contributions to musical theater. The work enriches the understanding of musical production.

9. *Theatre in America: 1910-1960* by Thomas S. Hischak

This volume surveys the development of American theater, including musical theater, across five decades. It covers significant plays, musicals, and theatrical movements that influenced the American stage. The book provides context for the evolution of musical theater within the broader theatrical landscape.

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