

FINAL PROJECT

Overview

You will focus on a Broadway musical of your choice, becoming familiar with its music and book, and also investigating relevant background material (e.g., its previous incarnation as a book or play, its social context, biographies of the creators or performers, etc.). You will select a particular portion of this show and analyze it in depth. You will convey this research in a relatively informal class presentation and also in a formal written paper.

Suggested works

Although you are welcome to propose any Broadway show that interests you, the following works are suggested. In each case, some combination of score (S), recording (R), book (B), and video (V) is available through FSU's library; you may be able to find other resources on your own. It would be foolish not to consider the practical question of access as you make your selection.

Company (S, B)

1776 (R, B, V)

Mame (S, R, B, V)

The Fantasticks (S, B, V)

Sweeney Todd (S, R, B, V)

Hello, Dolly (S, R, B, V)

Lost in the Stars (S, R, B)

Funny Girl (S, R, V)

Bells are Ringing (S, R, B)

Kiss Me, Kate (S, R)

Porgy and Bess (S, R, V)

Gypsy (S, R, B)

Sunday in the Park with George (B, V)

Fiddler on the Roof (S, R, B, V)

Man of La Mancha (R, B, V)

Camelot (S, R, B)

Oklahoma! (R, S, V)

The Pajama Game (S, R, B, V)

Deadlines

Wednesday, March 6	Let me know which show you have chosen and which date you would prefer for the class presentation
Friday, April 19	Last date to submit a draft of the paper and receive preliminary feedback on the <u>complete</u> paper (optional); after this date, you are still welcome to submit a subsection of the paper (e.g., a page or paragraph of writing, or an annotated score) for corrections and suggestions
Wednesday, May 1	Paper due in my KMU mailbox (or as e-mail attachment) by noon

The in-class presentation

Our last week of classes will be devoted to presentations of your final projects; please let me know if there is a date you would strongly prefer (or wish to avoid) by Friday, March 6. Presentations will be limited to 15 minutes. You should focus on an analytical subset of your paper (likely just one song), but please be sure to provide enough background information about the plot and character(s) singing that we will have a reasonable understanding of the song's context. (Keep in mind that your classmates are not all likely to be familiar with your chosen show.) When you play a song or excerpt, make a concerted effort to set it up clearly (what musical feature do you want us to listen for?), and consider playing it twice if appropriate. You must be well prepared, of course, but this is not a formal presentation. Certainly there is no need to read a written paper, although following some outlined notes would be appropriate.

The written paper

Your paper should be approximately ten pages long (using a standard font with one-inch margins), not counting any musical examples or illustrations you may wish to include. Naturally, you should write with a reasonably formal tone, cite your sources in a bibliography, and use footnotes when appropriate. As long as you use a recognized citation format, I am not concerned with the specific style you prefer.

Basic factual information (1 page)

Names of important people involved: composer and lyricist, of course, but also others if they were important to the show (e.g., the choreographer, lead performers, etc.)

Date of premiere

Source of plot (e.g., novel or play), assuming the story is not original

Synopsis of entire show (1-2 pages)

Identify major characters

Summarize plot

Music analysis (4 pages minimum)

You may focus on a single song, a pair of songs that are either related or are intended to contrast with one another, or an entire scene

Discuss significant aspects of the music: its form and/or phrase structure, its use of prominent motives, interesting aspects of the harmony and/or voice-leading, how the music portrays the meaning of the text or conveys a character's thoughts, etc.

Important note: be sure you are addressing the music itself, not just lyrics or orchestration. If you aren't making use of the knowledge and skills you developed in music theory classes, you aren't fulfilling this component.

Additional elements (optional)

Place the show in a larger cultural context: discuss issues raised in the show, how the plot reflected contemporary society, any controversies associated with a particular production, etc.

Provide a much more detailed explanation of the significance of the song(s) or scene you chose:

how the audience is set up to recognize a pivotal moment, references to earlier songs, foreshadowing of a later plot twist, an approach or technique that would have been considered ground-breaking at the time, how this song was later used in a completely different context, etc.

Compare the staged musical with the original work upon which it was based, or compare it to a later film version

Provide interesting background information: challenges in producing the show, changes made during tryouts, etc.

Your finished paper should be somewhat comparable to a chapter from Geoffrey Block's *Enchanted Evenings* — that is, a blend of information with a strong emphasis on the music itself and what it contributes to the show.

Help is available!

I am more than happy to provide assistance at any point, from helping you select a musical to organizing your presentation to providing feedback on an early draft of your paper. Please don't hesitate to consult me at any point in your work.

I will also help with practical concerns regarding your presentation. Our classroom equipment can play sound from CD, DVD, VHS, iPod, or computer; it can also project from DVD, VHS, computer, or the printed page. The classroom computer can stream audio and video from online sources. You can also plug your own laptop computer into the sound and projection system, although you might need your own adapter. If technology is important to you, be sure to let me know well in advance.