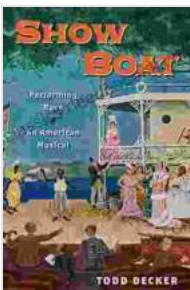


Performing Race In An American Musical: Broadway Legacies and Contemporary Conversations

American musical theater has a long and complex history with race. From the minstrel shows of the 19th century to the contemporary Broadway landscape, race has been performed, represented, and contested on Broadway in a variety of ways. These performances have shaped our understanding of race and identity in America, and they continue to spark important conversations about race and representation in the arts.



Show Boat: Performing Race in an American Musical (Broadway Legacies) by Denise Gilmore

★★★★☆ 4.9 out of 5

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Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 328 pages
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Screen Reader : Supported



The Minstrel Show Era

The minstrel show was a form of American entertainment that emerged in the early 19th century. Minstrel shows featured white performers in blackface, who would perform songs, dances, and skits that stereotyped

and ridiculed African Americans. These shows were immensely popular and helped to shape the way that white Americans viewed black people.

The minstrel show era had a lasting impact on American musical theater. Many of the conventions of the minstrel show, such as the use of blackface, stereotyped characters, and exaggerated dialect, were adopted by other forms of musical theater, including vaudeville and burlesque.

The Early 20th Century

The early 20th century saw the emergence of a number of African American musical theater performers who challenged the stereotypes of the minstrel show era. These performers, such as Bert Williams, Aida Overton Walker, and Florence Mills, created their own shows that celebrated African American culture and identity.

Despite the success of these performers, racism continued to be a major barrier for African Americans in musical theater. Black performers were often relegated to playing stereotypical roles, and they were rarely given the opportunity to star in leading roles.

The Post-Civil Rights Era

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s brought about major changes in American society, and these changes were reflected in Broadway musicals. A number of musicals that dealt with racial themes were produced during this era, such as "Hair" (1967), "The Wiz" (1975), and "Dreamgirls" (1981).

These musicals helped to raise awareness of racial issues and to challenge the stereotypes that had been perpetuated by the minstrel show era.

However, they also reflected the continued challenges that African Americans faced in the theater industry.

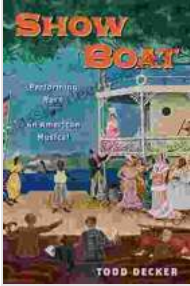
Contemporary Broadway

In recent years, there has been a growing movement towards diversity and inclusion on Broadway. A number of contemporary musicals have featured casts that are racially diverse, and these shows have been praised for their groundbreaking work.

Some of the most notable examples of contemporary Broadway musicals that have dealt with racial themes include "Hamilton" (2015), "The Color Purple" (2015), and "Dear Evan Hansen" (2016). These shows have helped to spark important conversations about race and identity, and they have also helped to create a more inclusive and representative American theater.

The history of race in American musical theater is a complex and multifaceted one. From the minstrel shows of the 19th century to the contemporary Broadway landscape, race has been performed, represented, and contested in a variety of ways. These performances have shaped our understanding of race and identity in America, and they continue to spark important conversations about race and representation in the arts.

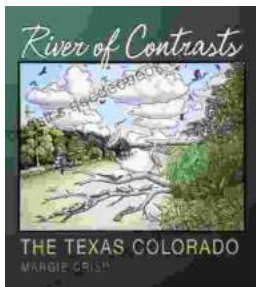
The contemporary Broadway landscape is a more diverse and inclusive place than ever before. A number of contemporary musicals have featured casts that are racially diverse, and these shows have been praised for their groundbreaking work. These shows have helped to spark important conversations about race and identity, and they have also helped to create a more inclusive and representative American theater.



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