emperor. The first *Sängerfest* (singing festival) was held in Cincinnati in 1849 with five choruses in attendance. The Sängerfest still continues, sponsored by the Nord-Amerikanisher Sängerbund (North American Singer's Association), an organization devoted to preserving the cultural heritage of German songs and customs. Events are regularly scheduled every three years, and the event held in 2007 in Evansville, Indiana, included fifteen hundred singers in sixty-nine choruses.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century women became the majority stakeholders in musical societies. One of the earliest women's clubs was the New England Woman's Club of Boston, founded in 1868. Many historians consider this club one of the most influential of the women's clubs at the time. These groups provided educational outreach to communities, scholarships to aspiring musicians, and financial support for civic organizations. Women's clubs also offered women a chance to perform and study the art of music by attending recitals and lectures. Through the formation of these music clubs, women became pivotal in the patronage of the arts, and they were often the sole organizers for concert events in local communities. Many also were involved in the founding of professional ensembles. In 1898 the National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC) was formed, and over 200,000 members of women's music clubs were part of this organization. NFMC's role was to support American music and composers. It has become one of the world's largest music organizations, and it still supports American composers through its competitions and awards programs.

In the twentieth century focus shifted from musical performance clubs toward societies that focused on the more scholarly side of musical study. In 1934 the American Musicological Society was established to promote scholarly research pertaining to music. Other organizations also formed later in the twentieth century, including the Society for Ethnomusicology (1955), the College Music Society (1960), the Society for American Music (1975), and the Society for Music Theory (1977). These societies hold annual conferences at which their members can showcase original musical research. Although they began as American societies, all of them now have members from a variety of nations.

See also: European Music in America; Women in American Music

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Carla R. Colletti

Musical Theater

Musical theater refers to a theatrical performance that incorporates singing and dancing in its presentation to tell a dramatic story. Although we tend to yolk the term to the Broadway musical, the practice of assimilating vocal and instrumental music, as well as movement, with storytelling has existed since early ritualistic drama was first performed thousands of years ago. Both the Western and Eastern traditions of theatrical development have connected music to drama. We currently use the term *music theater* to denote a form of theatrical expression in which songs are written for specific characters for specific moments in their dramatic journey.

The structure of musical theater has been adjusted, adapted, and enhanced over the past 150 years, but has generally included a musical score for orchestral instruments, lyrics to songs, and a script with dialogue and stage directions called a *libretto.* The libretto, or "book," as it has come to be known, is an important element in the singing theater and contains dialogue that distinguishes between what the characters sing and what they speak. Its growth and development have to some extent reflected the sociocultural underpinnings of American popular culture since the beginning of the twentieth century. Simultaneously, the sound and texture of the musical theater score have been guided by a number of cultural contributions by European immigrants to America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and by enslaved African Americans. Consequently, musical theater as an art form has had a unique connection to American music and popular culture. In many

ways musical theater is regarded as an American invention with roots in Europe, but imbued with a style and spirit that are representative of the American experience, albeit one cultivated in a framework of racism and marginalization.

The Connection Between Music and Drama

Music has always been used to both augment and fortify drama, as is evident in many texts that have survived from ancient plays produced as far back as 550 BCE in Greece. Extant manuscripts include notations for vocal, instrumental, and improvisational dance. Later the Romans adapted many of the comedies of the Greeks and incorporated singing and dancing into their presentation. Throughout the long period of the early Middle Ages, songs and stories were collected and performed by *jongleurs* and *histriones.* In the tenth and eleventh centuries, when the medieval Roman Catholic Church sought to use drama for liturgical instruction, music was used for singing, processions, and a rudimentary form of underscoring. More elaborate forms of presentational performance were developed throughout the fertile period of the European Renaissance. Two of these, the opera and the ballet, became structural building blocks of the foundation of modern musical theater.

Opera in particular exploited the concept of *la dramma per musica,* a serious form of Italian singing theater, which incorporated the use of *recitativo,* sung dialogue, and the *aria,* a form of music with strong melodic content that came to be associated with a stand-alone song. Popular song structures, especially those associated with the early days of the musical theater, referenced these Italian forms, creating songs that had verses and choruses. The other significant Renaissance contribution, the ballet, emerged out of the formalized court culture of European royalty. These were the same courts that produced elaborate pageants and *masques,* performances that were related to themes or stories. The process of the codification of ballet movements, and the association of dancing with storytelling, eventually led to this systematic form of dancing becoming an important component of staged musical performances. In fact, dancing in the musical theater was, with rare exception, exclusively ballet until the late nineteenth century. At that time the influence of emerging forms of popular performance, including vaudeville, burlesque, tap-dancing, and syncopated innovations by seminal music theater writers like George M. Cohan (1878–1942), promoted other forms of dance. These were subsequently assimilated into popular musical theater performances.

European Contributions to Musical Theater

Cultural traditions identified with specific European nations, especially those in full bloom during the mid- to latter part of the nineteenth century, exerted strong influences on the development of musical theater. The work of French operetta composers Herve and Offenbach, in particular, paved the way for lighter, comic musical entertainments. These productions often had hackneyed plots, but storytelling wasn't the strongest suit of French operetta. Instead, the overt sexuality of performers, especially the female dancers, was an important characteristic. The French insouciance, particularly about things that were sexual, is a critical factor in the linking of early musical theater with shows that promoted and demonstrated female beauty. Early American impresarios like Florenz Ziegfeld (1867–1932) and George White (1892–1968) were drawn to produce musical theater that, in Ziegfeld's words, "glorified the American girl." Eventually, by the early 1920s, American audiences were accustomed to attending musicals in which the curtain came up on a bevy of beautiful girls dressed in skimpy costumes. Topical and politically satirical material, risqué jokes, and a female chorus are all important components of musical theater that have roots in this type of operetta. Though German and Austrian operetta writers eschewed overt sexuality, they relied on romance and royalty as fundamental components of their stories and scores, and silly, contrived intrigues of love were dominant in popular entertainment. This type of "boy-meets-girl but has to overcome an obstacle that keeps them apart" plot was a staple in early musicals. Operetta was also the trademark of the nineteenth-century British team Sir William Gilbert (1836–1911) and Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900), who authored a series of extraordinary works for the theater. Their operettas, like *The Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado,* and *HMS Pinafore,* may have been set in exotic locations, but their sensibility was Victorian. Like many of the French operettas, they skewered and lampooned nineteenth-century society's manners and morals. The Gilbert and Sullivan scores, which are still performed widely in the twenty-first century, are true antecedents of the contemporary theater song. Finally, whereas in traditional opera the libretto was subordinate to the score, in operetta the libretto became equally important. Though early forms of music theater called "musical comedies" provided continuity in their scripts, the idea of a story sharing prominence with the score is a notion that was developed in America in the late 1930s. By the early 1940s this idea began to drive the form, structure, and development of musicals.

American Contributions to Musical Theater

A number of musical and artistic forms arising from African American traditions and the culture of European immigration began to merge and become absorbed in American popular song. This occurred during a period

of musical abundance in cities such as New York, Memphis, New Orleans, and Chicago. The parlor-type songs, folk songs, and classical art songs that were popularly performed began to be replaced by newer forms, including ragtime and then eventually jazz and blues. The syncopated and improvisational styles of this new music took on distinctive characteristics not only in their structures, but also in the content of their lyrics. Colloquialism, slang, and informality replaced the somewhat exalted and flowery prose of earlier songs. Composers such as Irving Berlin (1888–1989) and George Gershwin (1898–1937) drew on their Jewish roots and assimilated synagogue modes into popular songs. George M. Cohan (1878–1942), also writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, relied on his Irish American heritage and created a subculture of patriotic music and homegrown stories that appealed to working-class audiences. Songwriters such as Richard Rodgers (1902–1979), Lorenz Hart (1895–1943), Jerome Kern (1885–1945), Oscar Hammerstein II (1895–1960), and Cole Porter (1891–1964), individually and in partnership, contributed clever lyrics, jaunty and jazzy melodies, and songs for musical theater that began to have attributes that defined them as "theater songs." These included strong hooks (i.e., a central idea); the "AABA" song structure, which became the standard form for theater songs; use of strophic repetition (a foundational idea in musical theater songwriting); and a distinct style that fused the compositional sounds of ragtime, jazz, and blues. In New York City, long the home of musicians, writers, and performers, an organized system of music publishing venues, songwriters, and "song pluggers" emerged in the late nineteenth century. It was called Tin Pan Alley, both a physical location in New York City and a moniker for the "songwriting business." The early writers of the American musical theater were closely connected to the architecture of the Tin Pan Alley system. These writers and their sheet music publishers were instrumental in influencing legislation that protected copyrights and governed structures for royalties and fees. The increased commercialization and distribution of songs led to increased appetites for what came to be identified as "show music" or "show tunes." The Tin Pan Alley style, and the songs associated with it, eventually became identified as "American" music. Because the popular songs of the early twentieth century, through the late 1950s, were often the same songs that were written for the musical theater, the American songbook of standards is also considered the songbook of musical theater. Popular vocalists, from Ella Fitzgerald (1917–1996), to Frank Sinatra (1915–1998), to Elvis Costello (1954–), to Rod Stewart (1945–) covered and performed such songs by music theater composers and lyricists such as Rodgers and Hart, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Harold Arlen (1905–1986), and George and Ira Gershwin (1896–1983), from the 1930s through the present.

The American cultural landscape, which was a hodgepodge of musical entertainment styles in the mid- to late nineteenth century, also made room for a number of native forms that were mixed into the jumble and led the way to modern musical theater. These forms included honky-tonk, minstrelsy, and ethnic theaters. Curiously, each of these had a special appeal to working-class or lower socioeconomic audiences. The honky-tonk was a type of variety show prevalent in the South and Southwest United States in which bawdy songs and dance were performed for a largely male clientele. Distantly related to the British music hall, these saloon-like venues relied on the tack piano to provide percussive accompaniment to cowboy songs and stories, which were often preludes to drinking, prostitution, and generally disreputable behavior.

In the minstrel show, popular in both the North and South, white performers blackened their faces with burnt cork and performed songs and skits sentimentalizing life on the southern plantation. Racist and pernicious in catering to stereotypes cherished by white audiences, the minstrel show portrayed African Americans, both slaves and freed, as shufflers, buffoons, and goblins. Ironically, African Americans were present in the audiences as well and eventually became performers themselves, "blacking-up" their already darkened skin to submit to the performance conventions. Many so-called coon songs, ragtime numbers with lyrics that supposedly reflected black culture, were in fact composed and penned by African American writers such as Bob Cole (1868–1911), Ernest Hogan (1865–1909), and the prominent poet Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906). The minstrel show contributed to the structure of modern musicals by organizing the system of presentation for variety shows, vaudeville, burlesque, and the revue—all early forms of musical theater. It offered cross-dressing, recognizable stock characters, and tap-dancing.

Elsewhere ethnic theaters arose in cities where large populations of immigrants settled, including New York, Chicago, and Boston. While modern manifestations of musical theater are designed to appeal to a wide array of audiences, these theaters specifically targeted populations of Germans, Irish, Poles, Italians, Greeks, and other immigrant minorities. The material was often politically satirical and nostalgic. One of the most popular and influential ethnic theaters was the Yiddish Theatre in New York City, which in its heyday numbered fifteen separate theater companies on the lower east side of Manhattan. Because a majority of the early writers of musical theater in America were of Jewish origin, there is a natural association with the sound and style of the songs, stories, and people who worked as writers and

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Opera in particular exploited the concept of *la dramma per musica,* a serious form of Italian singing theater, which incorporated the use of *recitativo,* sung dialogue, and the *aria,* a form of music with strong melodic content that came to be associated with a stand-alone song. Popular song structures, especially those associated with the early days of the musical theater, referenced these Italian forms, creating songs that had verses and choruses. The other significant Renaissance contribution, the ballet, emerged out of the formalized court culture of European royalty. These were the same courts that produced elaborate pageants and *masques,* performances that were related to themes or stories. The process of the codification of ballet movements, and the association of dancing with storytelling, eventually led to this systematic form of dancing becoming an important component of staged musical performances. In fact, dancing in the musical theater was, with rare exception, exclusively ballet until the late nineteenth century. At that time the influence of emerging forms of popular performance, including vaudeville, burlesque, tap-dancing, and syncopated innovations by seminal music theater writers like George M. Cohan (1878–1942), promoted other forms of dance. These were subsequently assimilated into popular musical theater performances.

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American Contributions to Musical Theater

A number of musical and artistic forms arising from African American traditions and the culture of European immigration began to merge and become absorbed in American popular song. This occurred during a period

Rita Moreno plays Anita in a scene from *West Side Story*, 1961. Moreno is one of the most recognized entertainers of all time, and among the few performers to have won at least one Emmy, Oscar, Tony, Golden Globe, and Grammy award. (AP Photo)

characters with the songs they performed, incorporating underscoring and leitmotif, and using the musical score to serve the story. Jerome Kern and George Gershwin were interested in pushing the story forward though the use of the score. In the *integrated musical* the format and structure of songs is principally guided by character and plot. The placement and style of songs is essential to achieve a well-balanced product, with appropriate arcs for the major characters, which uses theater songs to explain, express, amplify, and narrate where words unsung would be insufficient. Generally speaking, when a specific moment in musical theater requires a heightened sense of emotion or explanation, words alone are insufficient; each character must have a reason to sing. One of the tenacious advocates of the "musical drama" was Oscar Hammerstein II, who worked arduously throughout his career as a lyricist and librettist to elevate musical theater to be a highly respected art form. His work with Richard Rodgers on *Oklahoma!* (1943), *Carousel* (1945), and *South Pacific* (1949), each adapted from serious source material, challenged the expectations of theater audiences. Many of the foundational ideas about lyric and libretto writing for the theater were developed and expanded by Hammerstein. Writers who were his contemporaries, as well as later writers, were influenced by many of the innovations and techniques he launched for musical storytelling. Frank Loesser (1910–1969), Alan Jay Lerner (1918–1986), Fred Ebb (1928–2004), Sheldon Harnick (1924–), and Stephen Sondheim (1930–) were all beneficiaries of his pioneering work.

One notable development, an outgrowth of the integrated musical, was the defining of a new type of musical theater structure called, among other things, *the concept musical*. In this kind of musical, storytelling can be nonlinear, non-narrative, thematic, or fragmented. These types of musicals employ theatrical devices that were promulgated by such twentieth-century theatrical visionaries as Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956), Peter Brook (1925–), and Samuel Beckett (1906–1989). Although elements of interpolation and integration may both be present, the unifying factor is not plot or character driven. Songs employed may be diegetic, metaphoric, or allegorical and are often used to comment on action. Though there may be many aspects of a conventional

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and their individual themes or leitmotifs are linked. "Lily's Eyes" from *The Secret Garden* (1991) reveals dark secrets being sung by two brothers who are in separate rooms but reminiscing about the same woman. But this type of song can also be sung by characters who *are* aware of each other (but not certain if the awareness is reciprocal) and use the same hook to express a sentiment about a situation. "Impossible" from *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1964) uses this to comic effect when a father and son are debating about whether a young slave girl is attracted to one of them.

Finally, the eleven o'clock number is that last showstopper that galvanizes or energizes the audience and prepares it for the resolution of the story and the arrival of the principal character at his destination, as articulated in the wanting song. It is often the penultimate song in the show, but it was called "eleven o'clock" because of its position in a musical when the curtain came up at 8:30PM. Both ballads and snappy dance numbers have filled the bill, depending upon what the collaborators have wanted to achieve. "Sit Down You're Rockin' the Boat" from *Guys & Dolls* (1950), "The Brotherhood of Man" from *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (1961), and "Being Alive" from *Company* (1970) are considered classic eleven o'clock numbers.

Musical theater responds to emerging art forms and reflects characters, situations, and stories through a sociocultural lens. It has a rich and detailed heritage in European forms of musical storytelling, but its development in the twentieth century gave it a sound and style that is uniquely American.

See also: African American influences on American music; Audiences; Berlin, Irving; Broadway; Fitzgerald, Ella; Gershwin, George; Gershwin, Ira; Honky-Tonk Music; Jewish American Music and Musicians; Kern, Jerome; Opera in America; Porter, Cole; Presley, Elvis; Ragtime; Rodgers and Hammerstein; Sinatra, Frank; Sondheim, Stephen; Tin Pan Alley

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Stephen Kitsakos

Musicians as Actors

Since the advent of film, numerous celebrities from other fields (singers, dancers, musicians, artists) have been drawn to acting. Ever since sound film became dominant in the late 1920s, numerous musicians have acted in films, including some who proved to be quite adept at acting, such as Bing Crosby (1903–1977), Frank Sinatra (1915–1998), Cher (1946–), Eminem (1972–), Mark Wahlberg (1971–) and his brother Donnie (1969–), and Justin Timberlake (1981–). Others have played off their own personas to sometimes shine, such as Elvis Presley (1935–1977), The Beatles (active 1960–1970), Rick Nelson (1940–1985), Al Jolson (1886–1950), David Bowie (1947–), Ice Cube (1969–) and Beyoncé (1981–). Yet others, to put it charitably, may have had one well-acted role, but for the most part should have stayed on tour, such as Mariah Carey (1970–), Glen Campbell (1936–), Madonna (1958–), and Whitney Houston (1963–2012). There are also many actors who have tried musical careers, with varying degrees of success. Marilyn Monroe (1926–1962), for example, parlayed her persona and breathy vocals into a string of novelty hits. For the most part, however, because musicians have to be charismatic to hold an audience when they perform onstage, and they are already well-known commodities with a built-in fan base, it is more natural for a musician to make a foray into acting than the other way around.