

THE IMPACT OF VIRTUAL BROADWAY
ON MUSICAL THEATRE COMPOSITION

DOES ANYBODY
HAVE A MAP?

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“WHAT WAS SO REVOLUTIONARY ABOUT FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE WAS THIS DEMOCRATIZATION OF WHO COULD HAVE ACCESS TO PUTTING STUFF ONLINE... YOU COULD BE IN IOWA OR SINGAPORE, AND YOU COULD SEE YOUR CONTENT IMMEDIATELY WITHOUT HAVING TO GO TO NEW YORK... AS WRITERS, WE DIDN'T HAVE TO GO THROUGH ANY TRADITIONAL MEANS OF GETTING IT OUT THERE—WE JUST PUT IT ONLINE.”

Benj Pasek (2014)

WHAT IS VIRTUAL BROADWAY?

- ▶ A digital space where Musical Theatre composers interact directly with audiences.
- ▶ Democratisation of the mediation process.
- ▶ A convention of contemporary American musical theatre composers.
- ▶ ‘Prosumers’ vs. ‘Consumers’



“THROUGH THE APPROPRIATION AND USE
OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FANS BECOME
AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PRODUCTION
AND CIRCULATION OF VALUES VIS-A-VIS
CULTURAL FLOWS - THEY BECOME
MEDIATORS”

Arriagada and Cruz, 2014, p.159

'YOUTUBE-SICALS' (EVANS, 2014)



#HAM4HAM Schuyler Georges

1.6 Million Views on Youtube!

- ▶ Musical Theatre written specifically for a YouTube Audience.
- ▶ 'Millennials' - average online attention span of 8 seconds (Riecke-Gonzales, 2015).
- ▶ Songs are 'stand-alone'.
- ▶ "cocreative culture" (Vonderau, 2010)
- ▶ "If it clicks, you're able to bring in a whole new demographic to your show," (Jeff Bowen [title of show])

A-Z NOT A-B (PASEK & PAUL, 2015)

- ▶ Book Musical vs. Song Cycle
- ▶ “I wouldn’t necessarily put a song from a book musical on YouTube—an honest-to-goodness book musical should be experienced from start to finish” (Iconis, 2014)
- ▶ “our technologies are always in the process of changing us” (Gere, 2008:8).



DEAR EVAN HANSEN

- ▶ Gatekeepers engaging with ‘prosumers’.
- ▶ ‘Content determines form’
- ▶ Contemporary vs. Traditional Musical Theatre songs.





WAVING
THROUGH A
WINDOW:

A-A?

TO CONCLUDE...

- ▶ “There are no longer subjective gatekeepers controlling who gets let “in”, promoted and exposed”. (Price, 2011)
- ▶ YouTube could be considered the new Tin Pan Alley
- ▶ Will Broadway always be considered a signifier of success?

“ONCE BROADWAY FINDS
OUT ABOUT THE INTERNET,
IT’S GOING TO BE A GAME
CHANGER.”

Matthew Rodin (2016)

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