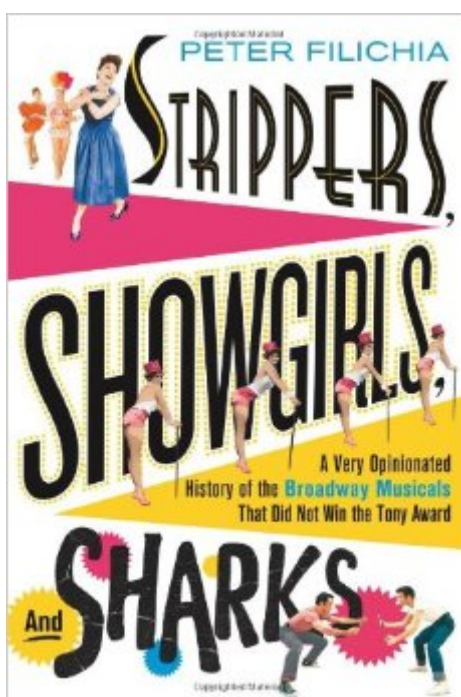


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Strippers, Showgirls, And Sharks: A Very Opinionated History Of The Broadway Musicals That Did Not Win The Tony Award



Synopsis

"Wait..Gypsy didn't win the Tony for Best Musical?"That's a question that gets asked over and over again, every time a new Rose takes to the runway in the Broadway classic "Gypsy". In "Strippers, Showgirls and Sharks", the popular syndicated theatre critic Peter Filichia chronicles the history of the American musical by looking at those shows that did not win the Tony Award for Best Musical. It happens every spring: The American Theatre Wing bestows its annual awards. Only those shows that have reached Broadway are nominated and while all Tony Awards are created equal in height, width and depth, the universally acknowledged biggest prize is the Best Musical Tony. The envelope is opened. The winner is announced and, then, the screeching begins. "Oh no! They gave it to that?" Did the best musical always win the Best Musical prize? Were there other factors that kept a more deserving show from copping the prize? Peter Filichia answers all these questions and more in "Strippers, Showgirls and Sharks" as he looks at many of the 153 previous Best Musical Nominees that didn't win the big prize. What were the biggest omissions? "Gypsy" had the distinct displeasure of not being either the first or second choice of the committee. In 1959 when Ethel Merman and a variety of strippers took the stage, the Tony for Best Musical was a tie between "The Sound of Music" and "Fiorello". In 1971, Stephen Sondheim's "Follies" and its ghostly showgirls lost to a "groovy" re-tuning of "Two Gentlemen of Verona" that hasn't passed the test of time. And, in 1957, "West Side Story", its Jets and Sharks, were bested by the fine people of River City Iowa singing their Americana hearts out in "The Music Man". If you love Broadway, scratch your head on Tony Award night and still can't figure out how a show you loathed won the Tony for Best Musical, you will love riding through the years with Peter Filichia, one of America's most respected and popular theatre critics.

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Customer Reviews

STRIPPERS, SHOWGIRLS AND SHARKS is the kind of book Broadway buffs will want to read, but the kind that interested folk will know many of the answers to already. Why are locks for Best Musical Tonys often eclipsed by less impressive stuff? OBVIOUS: The shows were ahead of their time, so WEST SIDE STORY lost to THE MUSIC MAN. Or the winner is a Juggernaut (ditto). Or the loser is not quite a Juggernaut, as consider GYPSY's many losses to FIORELLO! and THE SOUND OF MUSIC -- this even though GYPSY quickly attained classic status, THE SOUND OF MUSIC is best known for the hit 1965 movie, and people have largely forgotten FIORELLO! Or the loser is an impressive show with an impressive run on its last legs (a "lame duck" author Peter Filichia calls them). BAD: Given some of the compromise and lesser-quality shows that have snagged various Tonys, it's hard not to conclude that some Tony voters, despite having been sworn to see all the shows on which they vote, have missed some promising ones. UGLY: A well-respected show in a dullish year is a lock until something fresh premieres right before Tony consideration closes (usually in March) -- it is essentially a "next year's show" but gets gerrymandered into a less competitive year. I had no idea that such counterprogramming was so common. Early on, I found this book a bit of a grind due to its early concentration on "obvious" topics. Later on, it got kind of fun. We find out why David Merrick, despite having produced many smash hits, was less than universally loved, and why that may have skunked him out of Tonys for some of his best shows and actors. Like fellow critic Ethan Mordden, Filichia deplores the flood of revivals, "revisals" and imports that started to take over in the late 1970s.

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