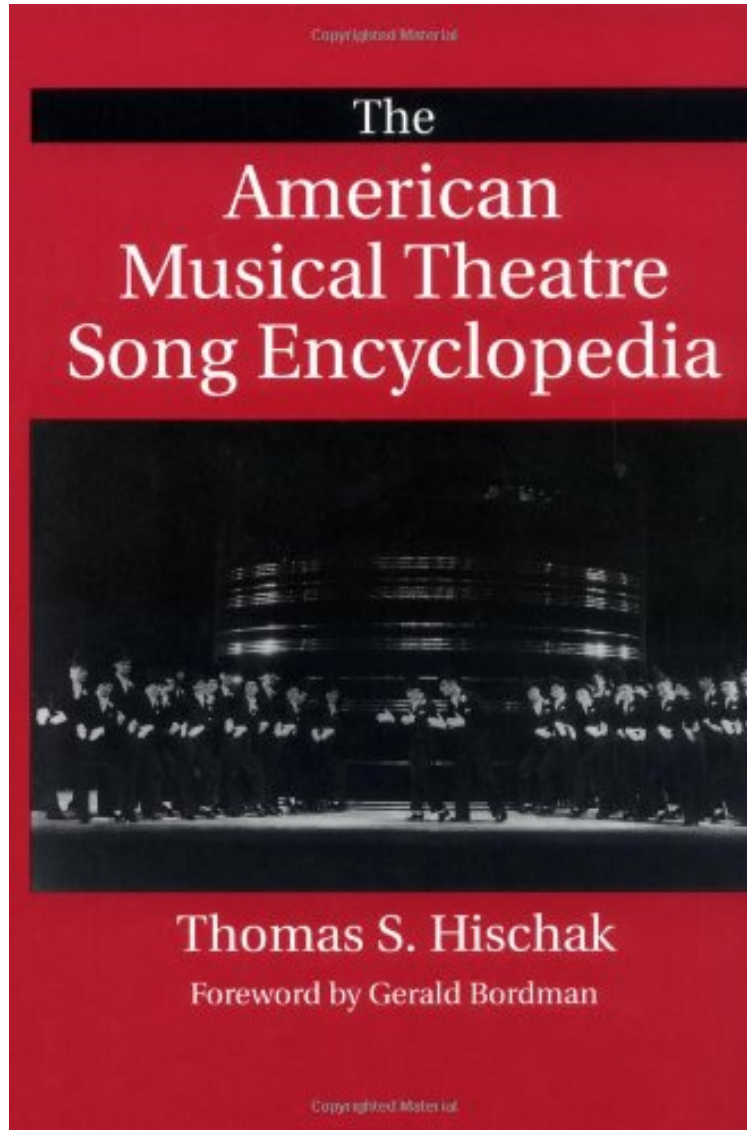


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# The American Musical Theatre Song Encyclopedia

*Thomas S. Hischak*

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**Thomas S. Hischak : The American Musical Theatre Song Encyclopedia** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The American Musical Theatre Song Encyclopedia:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Original, informative, fun-to-read book on American songsBy kwlaschin@afionline.orgMost books with alphabetical lists and brief descriptions of American popular songs are useful for research but rather boring to read - they have zilch personality.I buy and use these books rather than read

them. Hischak's book is different - it is readable and surprisingly original. There is nothing else like it. His descriptions of the songs and how they are used in stage musicals are longer than those used in other such books, very well written, fun to read and genuinely helpful in understanding the songs - even if you have never heard of them before. In other words, his book of songs makes you enjoy them as well as just learn about them. You feel like you are leaving the theater whistling a tune you may never have heard.

The first encyclopedia of theatre songs from Broadway shows ranging from *The Black Crook* (1866) to the 1994 Tony Award-winning *Passion*, this handy guide features over 1,800 songs from over 500 musicals. It gives such information as the songs' authors, original performers, and dates and history of recordings. Each song is described and briefly analyzed, explaining how the song fit in the original production and what is notable about its music, lyrics, and presentation. Thoroughly indexed by song title, show, authors, and performers. Of interest to scholars, students, and fans alike. The musical theatre song is conceived, written, and produced as part of a whole. While it may eventually stand on its own and join the ranks of popular hits, its immediate purpose is clear: it must work in the show. This book is about how hundreds of famous and not-so-famous songs have functioned in the American musical. In addition to identifying the authors and the source of the song, it hopes to explain the song: what kind of song it is, what it is about, what purpose it has in the show, as well as who originally sang it, what the song's history is, and what may be unique about this particular number. It is a book about songs as little pieces of playwriting for the musical theatre. The song entries are presented alphabetically, but the Musicals Listing at the end of the work includes all the songs discussed from a particular show.

"By far, the most useful aspect of this resource is in tis summary of each song. ... Hischak's use of colorful adjectives in describing each song makes for fun reading, and the insight and history detailed herein will hold an expert's interest. ... this is an especially facinating quick-reference source. ... Finally, on a personal note, the one problem found with the book is that it is so full of interesting tidbits and pieces of information, readers will find themselves meandering through the pages-completely forgetting what they wanted to look up! The American Musical theatre Song Encyclopedia is an excellent resource, and libraries, teachers, and theaters alike should invest precious dollars in it. They will not be disappointed."-ARBA "It's an engaging distinctive work for anyone interested in popular music."-High Performance "A basic guide that extensive music reference collection should find a worthwhile purchase."-Reference Book "An invaluable reference book that answers all the questions of the American musical theatre. The author has painstakingly assembled numerous highlights of hundreds of songs that can only whet your appetite. Theatre lovers beware! Besides being an enjoyable read, the book will become very useful as a reference guide to some of the great and not so great Broadway musicals of all time. Thoroughly indexed by song title, show, writer and performers."-RPM "Hischak follows his superb *Stage It with Music: An Encyclopedic Guide to the American Musical Theatre* with this excellent guide that ventures to explain the context of some 1,800 songs representing all major shows, genres, authors, and eras of the American stage. What separates this work from earlier useful editions, is the quality of each individual entry, which not only puts each song in context but also verifies the original performer (most of the time), provides a brief recording history (including noncast album covers), and explains the song's uniqueness in theater history. For its breadth, scope, and pure readability, this volume is highly recommended for all theater collections, large or small."-Choice "It's an engaging distinctive work for anyone interested in popular music."-High Performance "A basic guide that extensive music reference collection should find a worthwhile purchase."-Reference Book "What show is that song from?" How often has that question driven you crazy? No more with [this book]... Frustration, fini! -The Big Reel "An invaluable reference book that answers all the questions of the American musical theatre. The author has painstakingly assembled numerous highlights of hundreds of songs that can only whet your appetite. Theatre lovers beware! Besides being an enjoyable read, the book will become very useful as a reference guide to some of the great and not so great Broadway musicals of all time. Thoroughly indexed by song title, show, writer and performers."-RPM "Hischak follows his superb *Stage It with Music: An Encyclopedic Guide to the American Musical Theatre* with this excellent guide that ventures to explain the context of some 1,800 songs representing all major shows, genres, authors, and eras of the American stage. What separates this work from earlier useful editions, is the quality of each individual entry, which not only puts each song in context but also verifies the original performer (most of the time), provides a brief recording history (including noncast album covers), and explains the song's uniqueness in theater history. For its breadth, scope, and pure readability, this volume is highly recommended for all theater collections, large or small."-Choice "By far, the most useful aspect of this resource is in tis summary of each song. ... Hischak's use of colorful adjectives in describing each song makes for fun reading, and the insight and history detailed herein will hold an expert's interest. ... this is an especially facinating quick-reference source. ... Finally, on a personal note, the one problem found with the book is that it is so full of interesting tidbits and pieces of information, readers will find themselves meandering through the pages-completely forgetting what they wanted to look up! The American Musical theatre Song Encyclopedia is an excellent resource, and libraries, teachers, and theaters alike should invest precious dollars in it. They will not be disappointed."-ARBA "Three things quickly

jump out at the reader when this volume is perused. One, this is a comprehensive reference book, covering over 1800 songs from over 500 musicals in a long time span...Two, it is very well done....Three, this work is very much needed, because there is no work even faintly similar to it. It will probably become a reference classic or at least a much used standard of American musical theater literature....This is a splendid addition to the literature of musicals, and this reviewer, ...found it difficult to put down....highly recommended for all libraries collecting material on music to much extent. Any sizeable library will regret not buying this."-Music Reference Services Quarterly" "What show is that song from?" How often has that question driven you crazy? No more with [this book]...Frustration, fini!"-The Big Reel" Three things quickly jump out at the reader when this volume is perused. One, this is a comprehensive reference book, covering over 1800 songs from over 500 musicals in a long time span...Two, it is very well done....Three, this work is very much needed, because there is no work even faintly similar to it. It will probably become a reference classic or at least a much used standard of American musical theater literature....This is a splendid addition to the literature of musicals, and this reviewer, ...found it difficult to put down....highly recommended for all libraries collecting material on music to much extent. Any sizeable library will regret not buying this."-Music Reference Services Quarterly

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About the Author  
THOMAS S. HISCHAK is Professor of Theatre History and Criticism at the State University of New York College at Cortland. He is the author of *Word Crazy: Broadway Lyricists from Cohan to Sondheim* (Praeger, 1991), *Stage It with Music: An Encyclopedic Guide to the American Musical Theatre* (Greenwood, 1993), and 12 plays.