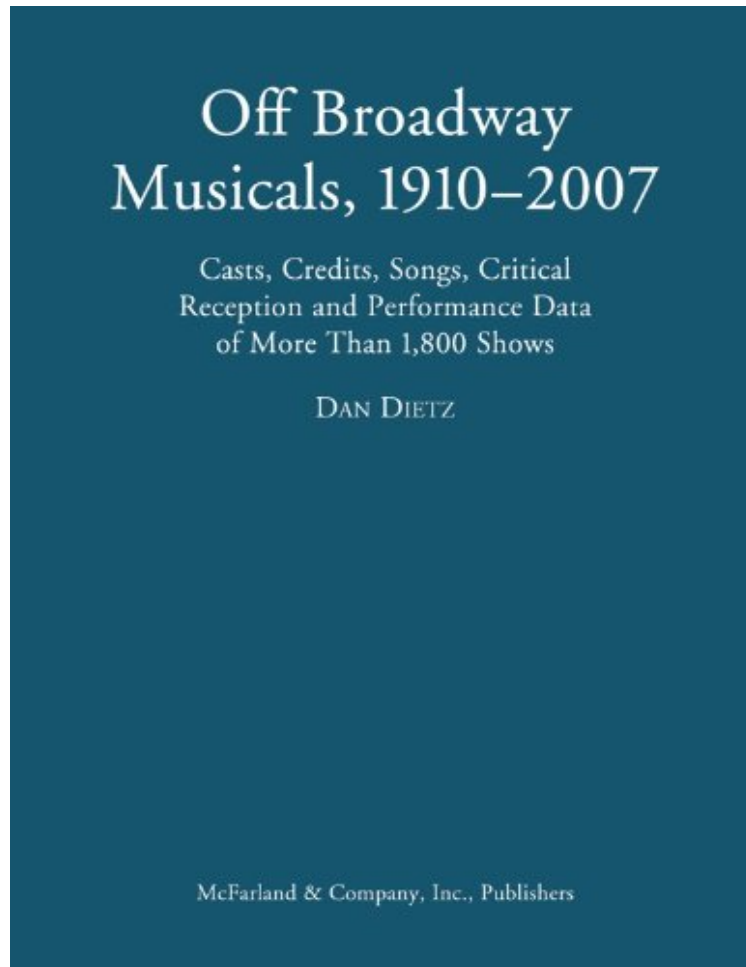



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Off Broadway Musicals, 1910ndash;2007: Casts, Credits, Songs, Critical Reception and Performance Data of More Than 1,800 Shows

Dan Dietz

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Dan Dietz : Off Broadway Musicals, 1910ndash;2007: Casts, Credits, Songs, Critical Reception and Performance Data of More Than 1,800 Shows before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Off Broadway Musicals, 1910ndash;2007: Casts, Credits, Songs, Critical Reception and Performance Data of More Than 1,800 Shows:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. An All-Inclusive listing of shows that played just beyond The Great White WayBy Steve RammCompiler Deitz has done a yeoman's job of compiling the basic information about shows which played in New York City (and, in a few rare cases, in New Jersey or Brooklyn) that either did not have Actor's Equity cast members or played houses with less than 500 seats - a number used to determine if the venue is a

"Broadway Theater". As he states in the three-page Introduction, the first MAJOR Off-Broadway musicals appeared in 1954 with *The Golden Apple* and *The Three Penny Opera*. This may be Dietz's "opinion" but the content of this 736-page volume reflects it as well. Of the more than 1,800 shows listed, only 55 were from the years 1910 through 1953. Of course the heyday of OB was in the 1960s and 70s. For each play he provides the basic facts (Theater, Dates, Composers, Cast and number of performances). Next we get a summary of the songs in order - many taken from either the original Playbill or, if there was a cast album, from that. Then Dietz gets to editorialize about the show. He presents a short narrative for each show where he quotes reviews and provides related trivia. This can make for entertaining reading. He does mention if there was a cast recording but that information is also listed in one of the 21 (!) appendices in the back of the book. These appendices are usually short but gather info such as "Black Musicals", "The Forbidden Broadway series, the Second City series and even one called "Theater Curses". There is a listing of cast albums and a filmography, but these are just by the title of the show. (Often more info is given in the previously mentioned "narrative". This is certainly the first volume to cover this area of American Musical Theater and will be a welcome reference volume as well as bringing back memories for theatergoers in the Metropolitan New York area who may have seen many of these shows during the 1957-2000 period. Steve Ramm "Anything Phonographic"

Despite an often unfair reputation as being less popular, less successful, or less refined than their bona-fide Broadway counterparts, Off Broadway musicals deserve their share of critical acclaim and study. A number of shows originally staged Off Broadway have gone on to their own successful Broadway runs, from the ever-popular *A Chorus Line* and *Rent* to more off-beat productions like *Avenue Q* and *Little Shop of Horrors*. And while it remains to be seen if other popular Off Broadway shows like *Stomp*, *Blue Man Group*, and *Altar Boyz* will make it to the larger Broadway theaters, their Off Broadway runs have been enormously successful in their own right. This book discusses more than 1,800 Off Broadway, Off Off Broadway, showcase, and workshop musical productions. It includes detailed descriptions of Off Broadway musicals that closed in previews or in rehearsal, selected musicals that opened in Brooklyn and in New Jersey, and American operas that opened in New York, along with general overviews of Off Broadway institutions such as the Light Opera of Manhattan. The typical entry includes the name of the host theater or theaters; the opening date and number of performances; the production's cast and creative team; a list of songs; a brief plot synopsis; and general comments and reviews from the New York critics. Besides the individual entries, the book also includes a preface, a bibliography, and 21 appendices including a discography, filmography, a list of published scripts, and lists of musicals categorized by topic and composer.

From Booklist The 1954 off-Broadway productions of *The Threepenny Opera* and *The Golden Apple* led to a fundamental change in the perception of off-Broadway musicals. Although musicals were performed at off-Broadway venues prior to 1954, plays were more prominent, but as author Dietz points out in his preface, these two musicals were "empathetically different from anything previously seen off Broadway and contrasted sharply with the offerings of the 1953-1954 season." Dietz's guide offers historical insights and facts about works that went on to extended runs on Broadway as well as those that were all but forgotten weeks after their opening nights. Most entries include the off-Broadway theater name; opening-night dates; number of performances; cast; synopsis; song titles; names of directors, producers, choreographers, etc.; and informative historical notes. Dietz cites as his sources issues of *Best Plays* as well as playbills, programs, flyers, scripts, recordings, etc., relying primarily on original sources. Of the more than 1,800 entries, most are for musicals whose titles are hardly household names. For many of these works, this volume may be the only easily accessible source of information, and it is certainly the most comprehensive look at off-Broadway musicals. Dietz's attempt to define what qualifies as off-Broadway status is appreciated, although any explanation leaves one a little confused. The designation is only partially related to the location of the theater but is also linked to theater size, numbers of performances, whether Equity actors were used, whether critics were invited, and other criteria. Although there are numerous reference books about Broadway musicals, Dietz's focus on off-Broadway is unique. His song and composer indexes are very useful for researchers, as are his appendixes offering a chronology of the musicals and a discography. Recommended for larger collections. --Steven York About the Author Dan Dietz is a former professor of composition, world literature, and modern drama at Western Carolina University. He lives in Arlington, Virginia.