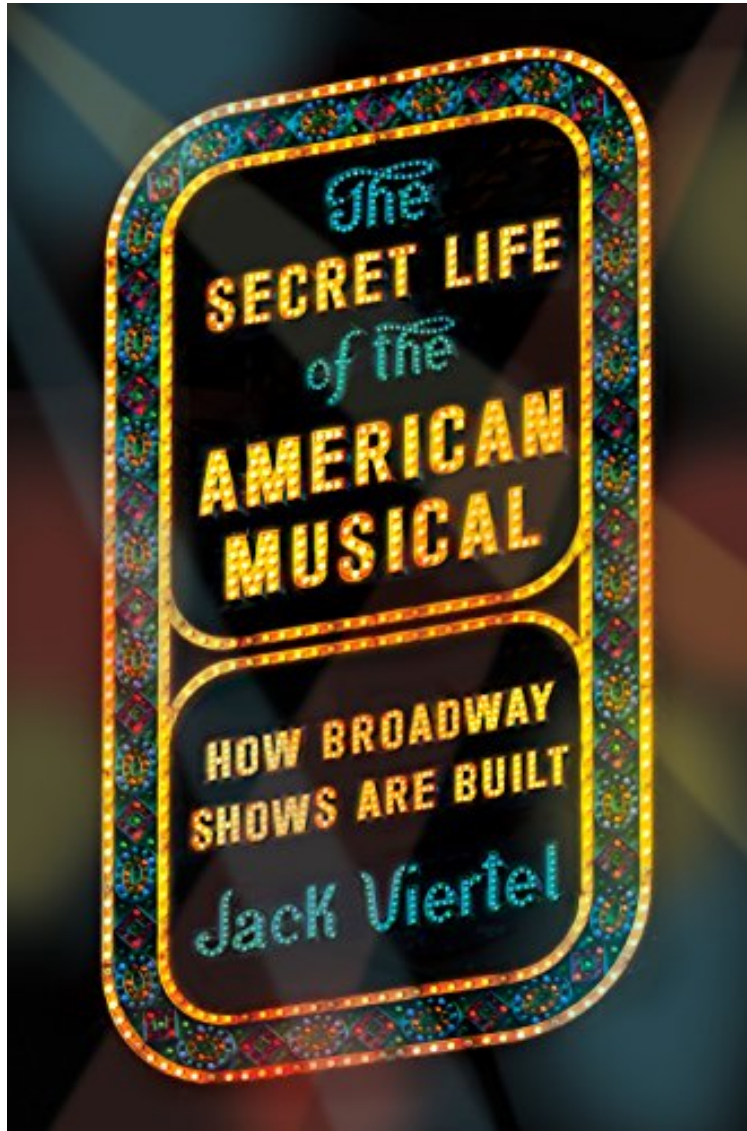


# The Secret Life of the American Musical: How Broadway Shows Are Built

Jack Viertel

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**Jack Viertel : The Secret Life of the American Musical: How Broadway Shows Are Built** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Secret Life of the American Musical: How Broadway Shows Are Built:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Really good read and very informativeBy Justin WoulardExcellent book, a really nice companion piece to Razzle Dazzle: The Battle for Broadway that I finished last week. Whereas the earlier book made me want to read more about theatre history. The Secret Life.. made me want to listen to and/or go

see some shows that I have missed. There were a few places where I felt that the conceit fell apart a little bit (the book is structured like the musical structure it is teaching), but overall it works. This is a textbook, and at times it reads like one, but overall a fun read and very informative. I really loved the recommend cast albums section at the end. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An excellent guide to how musicals are made By Ellis H. Pines and insights on how all entertainment works. Although the American musical theater tends to lack the heritage of throwing tomatoes, there is always the threat of rustling programs and distracted coughs. This book shows how structure and inventiveness work together to keep that from happening as they move audiences and bring them to their feet. It is an enjoyable magical book by a practitioner who knows how to teach. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Have fun, learn a lot! By Writer/Reader Viertel's love of the musical theater comes across loud and clear. A more in-depth analysis of the actual music would have been helpful because he is after all, discussing musicals. I appreciated the sections on Frank Loesser, a major lyricist/composer (Guys and Dolls, Most Happy Fella and more) who should never be forgotten.

A New York Times Bestseller For almost a century, Americans have been losing their hearts and losing their minds in an insatiable love affair with the American musical. It often begins in childhood in a darkened theater, grows into something more serious for high school actors, and reaches its passionate zenith when it comes time for love, marriage, and children, who will start the cycle all over again. Americans love musicals. Americans invented musicals. Americans perfected musicals. But what, exactly, is a musical? In *The Secret Life of the American Musical*, Jack Viertel takes them apart, puts them back together, sings their praises, marvels at their unflagging inventiveness, and occasionally despairs over their more embarrassing shortcomings. In the process, he invites us to fall in love all over again by showing us how musicals happen, what makes them work, how they captivate audiences, and how one landmark show leads to the next—by design or by accident, by emulation or by rebellion—from *Oklahoma!* to *Hamilton* and onward. Structured like a musical, *The Secret Life of the American Musical* begins with an overture and concludes with a curtain call, with stops in between for “I Want” songs, “conditional” love songs, production numbers, star turns, and finales. The ultimate insider, Viertel has spent three decades on Broadway, working on dozens of shows old and new as a conceiver, producer, dramaturg, and general creative force; he has his own unique way of looking at the process and at the people who collaborate to make musicals a reality. He shows us patterns in the architecture of classic shows and charts the inevitable evolution that has taken place in musical theater as America itself has evolved socially and politically. *The Secret Life of the American Musical* makes you feel as though you've been there in the rehearsal room, in the front row of the theater, and in the working offices of theater owners and producers as they pursue their own love affair with that rare and elusive beast—the Broadway hit.

"An enlightening trip for lovers of musicals." ---Kirkus About the Author Jack Viertel is the senior vice president of Jujamcyn Theaters, which owns and operates five Broadway theaters. He has been involved in dozens of productions presented by Jujamcyn since 1987, including multiple Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winners, from *City of Angels* to *Angels in America*. David Pittu is an award-winning actor, writer, and director whose career spans theater, film, and television. A two-time Tony Award nominee, he is also a veteran audiobook performer whose credits include Donna Tartt's *The Goldfinch*, for which he received the 2014 Audie Award for Best Male Solo Performance.