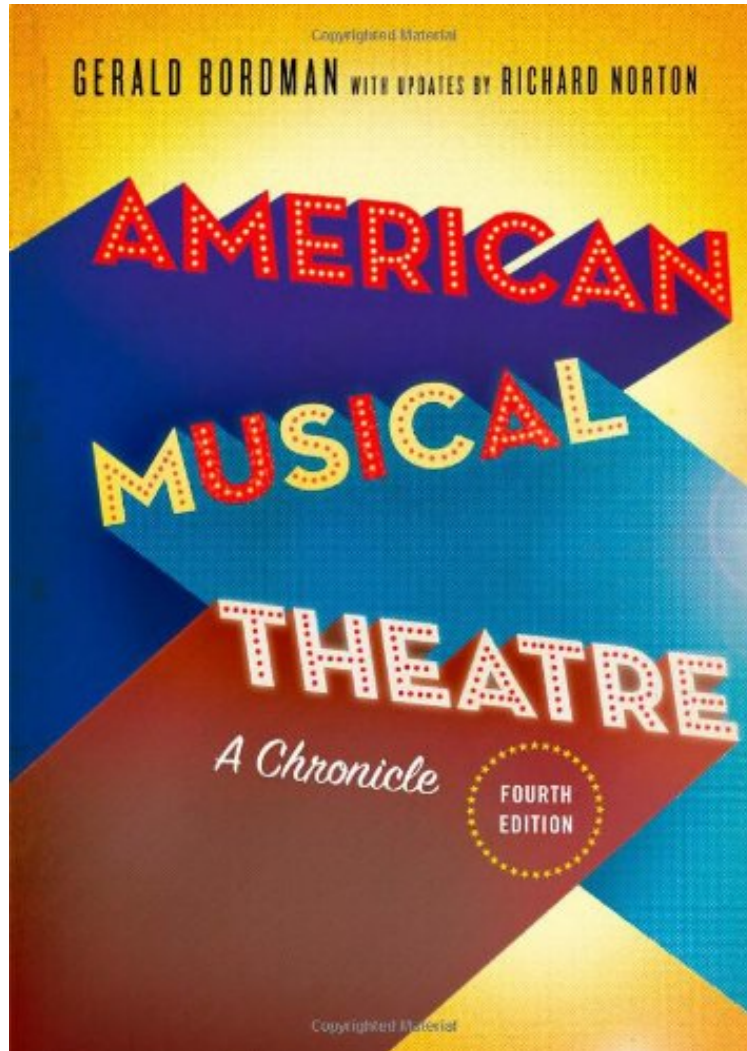


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## American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle

*Gerald Bordman, Richard Norton*  
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**Gerald Bordman, Richard Norton : American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Surprises on Every Page By Samuel Black This relatively new book can actually keep me awake. This is a monthly chronicle, so every page has musical theater performances for more than a century. All the ups and downs of the American musical scene are revealed, oftentimes with surprising tongue-in-cheek humor. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Irena Very nice book 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Bordman's overviews wonderfully knowledgeable By John Esche Gerald Bordman's CHRONICLES (his Musical Theatre overview was merely the first - there is also an indispensable three volume look at the non-musical theatre in New York from 1869 to 1969; 1869-1914, 1914-1930 - a relatively thin volume but

covering a very rich period between WWI and the great Depression, and 1930-1969; all back in the days when Broadway produced at least five to ten PLAYS for every musical!) are among the best light reference books on the detailed products of the New York stage there are. His works are unique in not only giving an assessment of the developing theatre scene, putting shows in a context of the world around them, but giving bare bones synopses of most shows to make them more than just cold titles in a record. Bordman has his biases among the more recent shows he has seen (the first edition of his MUSICAL THEATRE CHRONICLE was infamous for his opinion that it was only the low running cost of the recently opened smash hit A CHORUS LINE which would keep it on the boards since musical theatre goers couldn't be expected to care about listening to other people's problems!) but for the most part he tries for and achieves objectivity and a simple readability which puts him ahead of even the definitive (but long out of print) George C.D. Odell ANNALS OF THE NEW YORK STAGE for the early years of New York theatre (his AMERICAN MUSICAL THEATRE, A Chronicle, goes back to 1753). The chief criticism of Bordman is that he needs another update - to take his NON-Musical books (which only START at the date most earlier texts cite as the beginning of a uniquely American MUSICAL theatre) back as far as his Musical Theatre Chronicle (which only comes up to April of 1985 in the latest edition) and to bring all four books up as close as possible to the present day - or at least to the 2000-2001 Season.

Hailed as "absolutely the best reference book on its subject" by Newsweek, American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle covers more than 250 years of musical theatre in the United States, from a 1735 South Carolina production of Flora, or Hob in the Well to The Addams Family in 2010. Authors Gerald Bordman and Richard Norton write an engaging narrative blending history, critical analysis, and lively description to illustrate the transformation of American musical theatre through such incarnations as the ballad opera, revue, Golden Age musical, rock musical, Disney musical, and, with 2010's American Idiot, even the punk musical. The Chronicle is arranged chronologically and is fully indexed according to names of shows, songs, and people involved, for easy searching and browsing. Chapters range from the "Prologue," which traces the origins of American musical theater to 1866, through several "intermissions" (for instance, "Broadway's Response to the Swing Era, 1937-1942") and up to "Act Seven," the theatre of the twenty-first century. This last chapter covers the dramatic changes in musical theatre since the last edition published-whereas Fosse, a choreography-heavy revue, won the 1999 Tony for Best Musical, the 2008 award went to In the Heights, which combines hip-hop, rap, meringue and salsa unlike any musical before it. Other groundbreaking and/or box-office-breaking shows covered for the first time include Avenue Q, The Producers, Billy Elliot, Jersey Boys, Monty Python's Spamalot, Wicked, Hairspray, Urinetown the Musical, and Spring Awakening. Discussion of these shows incorporates plot synopses, names of principal players, descriptions of scenery and costumes, and critical reactions. In addition, short biographies interspersed throughout the text colorfully depict the creative minds that shaped the most influential musicals. Collectively, these elements create the most comprehensive, authoritative history of musical theatre in this country and make this an essential resource for students, scholars, performers, dramaturges, and musical enthusiasts.

From Library Journal Bordman's exhaustive chronology traces the musical from its origins through the 1989-90 season, providing a delightful mix of history, criticism, and theatrical lore. This second edition revises and updates the first (LJ 10/1/78) and expanded (Oxford Univ. Pr., 1986) editions, most notably in its appendix which covers early popular musical shows and farce-comedies that were not part of mainstream Broadway. Bordman is one of our best critical historians of musical theater, and this very readable work is still the last word on the subject. A required purchase for libraries with either the first edition or no edition at all; those with the expanded version might get by until the next edition.- Eric W. Johnson, Teikyo Post Univ. Lib., Waterbury, Ct. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Absolutely the best reference of its kind."--Newsweek "One of the most thorough treatments of the subject to be produced."--RBB/Booklist "A chronicle of unapproached detail, sweep, and relish."--The Washington Post "Fun to read...a labor of love."--The New York Times "THE reference book for the American musical theater...a remarkable achievement."--Musical Opinion "...Bordman's narrative chronology provides endless entertainment, in addition to a wealth of information. Open American Musical Theatre at almost any page and you will find hours whiz by before you realize it."--Show Music "Simply put, there is no other work on the American musical theater that provides such comprehensive information to the highlights of major and minor musical productions, nor that provides such information in a highly readable, informative and entertaining format."--American Reference Book Annual 2002 "American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle, Fourth Edition now runs over 1,000 pages....easier to read and easier for browsing."--Steven Suskin, Playbill.com "...fair, perceptive and interesting reading... giving the reader a real feel for what the show was like."--Brad Hataway, Theatre Shelf "This is the most up-to-date subject reference available and an enjoyable read."-- Library Journal "The fourth edition of American Musical Theatre brings readers up-to-date with early-twenty-first-century developments of musicals and the musical-theater industry through a new section by coauthor Norton... Bordman's passion for this genre is obvious, and the writing is informative and intelligent. Norton follows in the same format for 2000-2010... There are many other Broadway encyclopedias that offer show-by-show

details, but Bordman's and Norton's narratives provide an additional perspective beyond lists of facts."--  
Booklist  
About the Author  
Gerald Bordman is the author of many books on theatrical history, including *American Theatre: A Chronicle of Comedy and Drama, 1930-1969*; *Jerome Kern: His Life and Music*; and the *Oxford Companion to American Theatre* (with Thomas Hischak). Richard C. Norton, a musical theatre archivist, historian and former producer, is the author of *A Chronology of American Musical Theater* (2002), an ALA Outstanding Reference Source.