

MOVIE: THE MUSICAL! A THREE-ARTICLE DISSERTATION
EXAMINING THE PHENOMENON OF FILM AS SOURCE
MATERIAL FOR BROADWAY MUSICALS

by

RICHARD J. WALLACE

STEVE BURCH, COMMITTEE CHAIR
ANTHONY BUHR
JOSHUA EYER
ABIGAIL KATZ
NATALIE LOPER

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ABSTRACT

Prior to 1997, 52 musicals based on films were produced on Broadway over a time period of 45 years. From 1997 through April 24, 2017, 73 more film-based musicals opened, an increase of 138% in less than half the time. The shift in popularity of the film-based musical is what drives the research of this three-article dissertation.

The mixed methods research of the first article verifies the phenomenon of film as source material for Broadway musicals. The research also establishes two theories why film-based musicals are more popular than other forms: they are perceived to be less risky to produce in an industry where only 23% of musicals recoup their investment and writers of Broadway musicals find it easier to adapt material that already has proven dramatic narrative content. The rationale of producing film-based musicals is tested by comparing the different types of musicals using industry related metrics.

The research discussed in the second and third articles seeks to identify factors that relate to the success of a film-based musical that can then be used by Broadway producers and writers as they select and adapt films into musical productions. A statistical analysis is used in the second article to develop a mathematical formula that can predict the success of film-based musicals with 79% accuracy. Qualitative methods are used in the third article to establish five rules for adapting and producing film-based musicals. A combination of these findings can be used by producers and writers as they embark on the selection and adaptation process.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. My father, Dr. Joe Wallace, and sister, Dr. April Nunn, both earned their doctorates at The University of Alabama. I follow in their footsteps at the Capstone. My mother, Joanna Wallace, has been my biggest cheerleader and supporter as I pursued my education and I could not have finished without her constant love and encouragement.

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INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1996, while applying for colleges, I was prompted with the question, “Where do you see yourself in 20 years?” I wrote about my observations of the phenomenon of film-based musicals being produced on Broadway including *Beauty and the Beast* (1994), *Sunset Boulevard* (1994), and *Big* (1996). Seeing myself as a future Broadway producer, I suggested a musical based on another Tom Hanks film, *Forrest Gump* (1994), because of my love for the film and its Alabama connections. I expressed my desire to use the film as the primary source material rather than the 1986 Winston Groom novel, and I called the musical *Forrest!*

Looking back, I realized that I left out important fixtures of the musical like the librettist, composer, and lyricist, but I was very adamant about the music of the piece, whom I wanted to direct the musical, and where the musical was to be developed. I wrote about having specific styles of music to reflect the nature of each of the five major characters. Four of the characters were to have static musical themes adhering to a particular style of music, because the character development remains fairly stagnant in the film. Forrest’s theme would be the rockabilly sounds of Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash, Mrs. Gump’s theme would be country western like Patsy Cline, the soul and rhythm and blues music reminiscent of artist like Percy Sledge and Wilson Pickett would provide the musical theme for the character of Bubba, and Lieutenant Dan’s theme was to echo the sounds of Southern rock bands like Lynyrd Skynyrd, Creedence Clearwater Revival, and The Allman Brothers. An unchanging theme, however, would not be suitable for

Jenny, whose character arc is the most extreme of the five principle roles in the show. For Jenny, I decided the musical theme should follow her journey from the country sounds of 1950s and early 1960s rural Alabama, the psychedelic sounds of the late 1960s into the early 1970s, the disco era of the mid-to late 1970s, and the new wave artists of the early 1980s. My director would be Des MacAnuff, who at the time, was my favorite Broadway director and the musical would be developed in Montgomery, Alabama at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival.

Unfortunately, *Forrest!* never came to fruition, but the I was correct on predictions in regard to growing popularity of film-based musicals over the next 20 years. Prior to writing the entrance essay in 1996, 52 musicals based on film were produced on Broadway beginning in the 1953 with *Hazel Flagg* (1953), based on the 1937 film *Nothing Sacred*, and ending with *Big* in 1996. After the essay was submitted, *The Lion King* based on the 1995 Disney film, opened on Broadway and 73 more film-based musicals opened through the end of the 2016-2017 Broadway season. To put this in perspective, this is a 138% increase in productions over a much shorter time span.

The film-based musical phenomenon is still prominent, but there is little written about this phenomenon outside of industry-related articles. I might not be currently producing *Forrest!* on Broadway as I predicted, but my focus remains on film-based musicals, fulfilling a need of academically focused research in an industry that grossed \$1.45 billion during the 2016-2017 season (Seymour, 2017). Therefore, this research is beneficial to theatre scholars and patrons and could also be beneficial industry personnel like producers, investors, composers, lyricists, librettists, and dramaturges.

In this dissertation, I address the phenomenon of the film-based musical with an interdisciplinary approach presenting research in three separate articles utilizing historical data,

theory and criticism, statistics, and dramaturgy related to Broadway musicals. The analysis seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Why are film-based musicals so popular?
2. Under the assumption that film-based musicals are as popular as they appear, what are the components of a financially successful musical adaptation?

Utilizing a mixed methods approach, the first question, “Why are film-based musicals so popular?” is the focus of the first article, “Screen to Stage: An in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of film as source material for Broadway musicals.” My starting point was creating a database containing information on all musicals produced from the 1952-1953 season through the 2016-2017 season. Part of the data collection process included creating a unique categorizing system to separate each musical by their narrative content in addition to the already determined production type (new/revival). The information collected allows for the determination of the popularity of the film-based musical compared to other types of musicals and the creation of a timeline to track the popularity of film-musicals over the last 65 years. I observe and assess theories related to the popularity of adapting and producing film-based musicals. Finally, in order to determine the rationale of film as a viable source for musicals, a series of metrics related to peer and audience reception are observed to compare the success rate of film-based musicals and other types of musicals.

To answer the second research question, I identify a series of factors that correlate with the success of film-based musicals using two different methods, which is discussed in the second and third articles. The findings can aid producers, investors, and creative personnel as they go through the process of selecting and adapting source material for Broadway musicals. A quantifiable approach is discussed in the second article, “‘Nobody knows anything’: predicting

the success of film-based musicals.” The article features a statistical analysis of past films used as source material and their subsequent Broadway musical adaptations. Logistic regression is used to identify optimal determinants and create a formula that can predict the success of a film-based musical. The third article, ““Where did we go right?’ (or wrong?): Determining qualities of successful and unsuccessful film-based musicals,” features a qualitative approach, answering the research question: “what makes a successful film-based musical?” In addition to a literature review of previous studies that focus on qualities of successful and non-successful musicals, the researcher makes further observations of films and their subsequent film-based musicals to develop a set of parameters that can be utilized by producers and writers seeking to adapt successful film-based musicals.

From the results discussed in the first article, the I offer two theories why film is such a prevalent source for musicals and reveal why the choice to adapt films into musicals is validated. The formula developed through the statistical analyses of the second article can be used with an accuracy of 79% to predict the financial success of a film-based musical, while the third article offers additional parameters that can be used in the adaptation and production process of film-based musicals.

As for *Forrest!*, the film-based musical of my 17 year-old fantasy? Maybe it is not a bad idea after all. Assume that the musical came out 20 years after the November 1996 essay, in 2016. Using the formula developed in the second article, if *Forrest!* maintained the same production elements described and overcame a particular negative qualitative trait found among non-successful musical described in the third article, I predict the musical would be a hit.

ARTICLE ONE
SCREEN TO STAGE: AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE PHENOMENON OF FILM AS
SOURCE MATERIAL FOR BROADWAY MUSICALS

Walking through Times Square on April 27, 2017, it would not be surprising for pedestrians to feel as if they are in the middle of Hollywood rather than New York City. Familiar movie titles, like *Aladdin* (1992), *The Lion King* (1994), and *School of Rock* (2003), light up the billboards surrounding the theatre district. Looking for one of these films at one of the 42nd Street movie theaters would end in disappointment, though. The bright lights in Times Square are not advertising the movie, but a musical based on the movie. It can certainly be confusing. Currently of the 26 Broadway theaters currently housing a Broadway musical, 11 are homes to musical adaptations of films. By comparison, representing a variety of sources: the three are musicals biographical in nature or based on historical events, three are based on plays other works for the stage, five are based on written works not intended for the stage, and three have original narrative content.

By all appearances, Hollywood is taking over Broadway as a source for musical adaptations. This trend has been rising for years (see Table 1). The film-based musical has consistently held its place among other types of musicals during the past five seasons, peaking during the 2016-2017 season with approximately 42% of all musicals currently running on Broadway.

Table 1

Distribution of film-based musicals among all musicals running at the end of each season
2013-2017

Date	All	Film-Based	Percentage
April 25, 2013	19	5	26%
April 24, 2014	27	9	33%
April 23, 2015	25	5	20%
April 26, 2016	27	8	30%
April 27, 2017	26	11	42%

Although popular to produce, the influx of film-based musicals also meets with criticism. Terry Teachout suggests that “movie adaptations are killing a great popular art form,” while Michele Willens asks, “Is Broadway being destroyed by Hollywood?” (Teachout, 2014, p. 72; Willens, 2014). David Gritten pleads “Can we please stop turning great films into musicals?” (Gritten, 2013). The London-based critic writes, “Most often, a transfer to the stage lessens a film.” He also remarked that film-based musicals rarely work (2013, para 7). Broadway blogger Christina Huschle asks, “If you just plop a movie plot on a stage, toss in some songs and call it a musical, what’s the point? I don’t need to spend \$100 to hear Johnny Castle sing ‘nobody puts Baby in a corner.’ I have a Netflix account” (Huschle, 2009, para 14).

Due to the proliferation of the film-based musical, its implications for the future of the Broadway musical, and the controversy surrounding the form, this article seeks to answer the question: “Why are film-based musicals so popular?” To address this question, I address the definition and historical significance of the film-based musical within the Broadway musical theatre canon, create a timeline in order to determine when film becomes the most popular form of source material for the Broadway musical, explore theories offered by industry-related experts attempting to explain the growth in the film-based musical’s popularity, and use industry related

metrics to determine the film-based musical's worthiness among other types of Broadway musicals.

Methodology

In order to find a solution to "Why are film-based musicals so popular?" I addressed the following questions:

1. By definition, what are the different types of musicals and how does the film-based musical fit within the Broadway musical canon?
2. When did film become a popular form of musical theatre source material?
3. What is the reasoning for the film-based musical's attractiveness to recent Broadway producers?
4. Is the popularity of using film as a source material justified when compared to other musical theatre forms?

I address these questions in four sections: Definitions and Categorizations, Timeline, Theories, and Comparisons. In Definitions and Categorizations, I discuss data collection and categorize the different types of musicals based on their narrative form.¹ The database contains information for every Broadway musical produced beginning with the 1952-1953 season, when the first identified film-based musical, *Hazel Flagg* (1953) based on the 1937 film, *Nothing Sacred*, was produced, and ending with the 2016-2017 season. The second section, Timeline, includes a discussion that utilizes the database to create a comparative analysis of the number of musicals produced within each category and establishes a timeline detailing the rise in popularity of film as the dominant source for musical adaptations. There is a dearth in academic writing relating to the film-based musical, but through a literature review of industry-related articles and

¹ The data is collected in a database located at <https://tinyurl.com/y934jph6>

interpersonal interviews, I explore and challenge theories about the film-based musical's rise in popularity in the section Theories. In Comparisons, a series of charts indicate how film-based musicals compare to the other types of musicals using the metrics of Tony Awards, number of performances, box office gross, attendance, and recoupment. The results of the four questions and the established research question are discussed in the Conclusion.

Definitions and Categorizations

In this section, categories of musicals are defined. To identify the production type, version, and subcategory of a show, this article first uses the Internet Broadway Database or IBDb found at www.ibdb.com. Despite the wide range of musical identities offered by critics, historians, and producers, I created a unique cataloging system that separates musicals by the source of narrative content.

Using the definitions provided by IBDb, this study focuses on productions identified as musicals, with attention given to new (original) and revival productions.

Type:

The type of a show refers to one of three genres: musical, play, or special. Specials are defined as any production not “typically theatrical” in nature and often presented for a limited run (e.g. concerts, dance pieces, comedians).

Subtype:

Subtypes are more specific than the three main types mentioned above. Each production must have one and only one type but may have many or no subtypes. Subtypes for a musical may include “comedy” (*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*), “dance”, (*Riverdance*), “revue” (*Smokey Joe's Café*), etc. Plays may have such subtypes as “farce” (*Tartuffe*), “mystery” (*An Inspector Calls*), “tragedy” (*Hamlet*), etc. Subtypes can also vary from production to production of a particular show. For example, a one-man version of *Hamlet* would have “play” as its type and “tragedy” and “solo” as its subtype.

Version:

The two versions of a production are “original” and “revival”. An original production is the first time the show appeared on

Broadway. A revival is subsequent production of that show with a different concept (usually with a different creative staff). (Hauser, 2018, para 1-3)

Critics, historians, and producers also offer suggestions to categorize musicals, but these are varied and offer no single scheme. One way of distinguishing musicals is the structure of a musical. If the plot is linear with integration of song and dance to tell the story, it is considered a book musical like *Wicked* (2003) or *Oklahoma* (1943; Flinn, 2008). Another form is the concept musical popularized by Stephen Sondheim in the 1960s and 1970s. A concept musical is “a show whose music, lyrics, dance, stage movement and dialogue are woven through each other in the creation of a tapestry-like theme (rather than in support of a plot)” (Gottfried, 1971, p. D1). Examples include *Company* (1970), *Pacific Overtures* (1976), and *Assassins* (2004)². An additional category, the revue is a subtype used by IBDb to identify musicals that are a collection of songs, scenes, or sketches relating to a particular artist or subject matter (Hischak, 2002, p. 131). Examples of revues include *Fosse* (1999), which includes songs and scenes from Broadway musicals directed or choreographed by Bob Fosse, and *Contact* (2001), a musical made up of three different scenes told mostly through dance as the protagonist in each search for a romantic connection.

Other terms can refer to the music content of a musical. For example, the term jukebox musical, describing a musical that uses music from a non-theatrical source for the majority of the work, was coined first to identify the musicals *Swinging on a Star* (1995) and *Smokey Joe's Café* (1995; Brantley, 1995, p. 11). Popular phrases referring to the style of music within a show include pop operas, rock operas, rock musicals, classical musicals, chamber musicals, etc., yet there is no consensus how to use these categories. Another way to designate a show is how the

² *Assassins* first premiered in 1990 Off Broadway at Playwrights Horizons. The 2004 date refers to the Broadway production.

show is produced. Terry Teachout, of *Commentary Magazine*, uses the term commodity musical to describe musicals “that usually treat their source material not as a springboard for fresh, creative endeavor, but as an exploitable economic commodity that can be “repurposed” for further profit” (Teachout, 2014, p. 72).

With the lack of convenient pre-determined categories of musicals based on the source for narrative content, this study uses a unique cataloguing method to classify a musical first placing musicals in three categories: adaptation, original, and revue. A musical adaptation signifies that the musical credits one or more sources for its narrative basis. The four categories of musical adaptations used in this article are film, history, performing arts, and literature. If the musical has an original narrative, it is considered original. Any musical determined by IBDb to be a revue, regardless of source material, is defined as a revue.³ The method of categorization by source material relies on extracting the necessary data from the musical’s opening night *Playbill* title page or following credits found in the online database, www.PlaybillVault.com. When no source material is credited, the musical is considered original.

Using the 1952-1953 season as a starting point, a database containing pertinent information regarding each musical produced until April 27, 2017 was created. IBDb provides the musical title, version, opening date, closing date, and season, and the study’s unique cataloguing system provides the type of narrative content category for each musical. Additional information about the source material for adaptations, including the source title, release or publication date, and its creators was collected from The Internet Movie Database, Amazon.com, and Google.com. I also collected data relating to the success of a musical, including the number

³ An example of a revue classified by IBDb with adapted narrative content is *A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine* (musical), which features songs from films in the first act and an adaptation of Anton Chekhov’s *The Bear* (play) in the second act.

of performances, box office grosses, and Tony Award nominations and wins. Recoupment statistics are collected from a variety of sources as indicated within the database.

There are multiple cases in which the categorization process provides unexpected results in regard to a musical's source material. Examples include musicals based on a source different from the medium of which the audience is familiar, rely heavily on the narrative content of one source but credit another, classified as original despite having similar narrative content to previously produced works, credit multiple sources, or have a source difficult to classify. Examples are discussed further under the appropriate headings.

Film. Film-based musicals are musicals based on documentaries, feature length films, and teleplays. Examples of musicals based on feature films include *Promises, Promises* (1968) based on *The Apartment* (1960), *Nine* (1982) based on *8 ½* (1963) and *The Producers* (2001) based on *The Producers* (1968). Musical adapted from documentaries include *Grey Gardens* (2006) and *Hands on a Hardbody* (2013), each based on similarly titled films that debuted in 1976 and 1998 respectively. Film-based musicals also include musicals based on television shows, mini-series, or films, like *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* (2013), based on *Cinderella*, which first appeared on television in 1957 and *The Man of La Mancha* (1965), based on the *DuPont Show of the Month's I, Don Quixote* that premiered on CBS on November 9, 1959. The teleplay was based on the 1605 novel *The Ingenious Nobleman Sir Quixote of La Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes.

Like *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* and *The Man of La Mancha*, multiple musicals draw from films that are based on other sources. Disney Theatricals-produced musicals such as *Aladdin* (2014), *Beauty and the Beast* (1994), and *The Lion King* (1997) are based on the animated films. Source credit is given to films in the opening night *Playbill*, yet the film *Aladdin*

draws from a story in *Les Mille et une Nuits* published between 1704 and 1717. Although *Les Mille et une Nuits* is a French translation of *One Thousand and One Nights*, a collection of tales compiled during the Islamic Golden Age (between 8th century to 14th century), the story of Aladdin is unique to the French publication. The film *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) is an adaptation of “La Belle et la Bête,” one of the stories found in the 1740 publication *La Jeune Américaine et les contes marins* by Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve. *The Lion King* is based on the stories of Joseph and Moses in the Judeo-Christian *Bible* and William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, which was first produced between 1599 and 1602. A musical is classified as film-based if *Playbill* acknowledges a film and the source material for the film. Examples include *Catch Me if You Can* (2011), based on the 2002 film and the 1980 semi-autobiographical book of the same name and *Finding Neverland* (2015), based on the similarly titled 2004 film-adaptation of the 1998 play *The Man Who Was Peter Pan* by Alan Knee.

There are also musicals that have had influences from film but are not considered to be film-based musicals. For example, in 1951, the musical *The King and I* debuted on Broadway. The future star of the production, Gertrude Lawrence, approached Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein about writing a musical based on the novel *Anna and the King of Siam* (1944). Although the two had considered writing a musical based on the novel, upon their wives’ suggestions, it was not until they saw the 1946 film adaptation of the novel that they decided to develop the musical (Kempeskie, 2015). The film influenced the musical but was not the recognized source material. Similarly, Alan Jay Lerner and Fritz Lowe’s *My Fair Lady* (1956) is

based on George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* (1913). The 1938 film adaptation of the play influenced the musical, but *My Fair Lady* is not considered a film-based musical.⁴

Although a musical can begin with inspiration from a film, sometimes producers and writers are restricted from using the film as source material for legal reasons. *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* (2014), for example, was originally based on the 1949 film *Kind Hearts and Coronets*. However, after a rights dispute over the use of the film, the 1907 novel *Israel Rank: The Autobiography of a Criminal* by Roy Horniman, which is the basis of *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, was used. The dispute continued, though, due to similar production elements found in the film and musical. In the film and musical, the casting trope of a single actor playing multiple roles is utilized for comedic effect. The rights holders of the film, stating the musical was based on the film, filed an intellectual property lawsuit, using the multi-casting as an example of plagiarism. The musical eventually won the lawsuit, because casting a single actor in multiple roles is a commonality in most Broadway musicals (Hebert, 2010). However, since it is legally forbidden to be associated with the film, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* is not considered a film-based musical in this study.

History. History-based musicals are works based on factual events or figures in history. Examples include *1776* (1969), a dramatization of the lives of the signers of the *Declaration of Independence* during the summer of 1776, *Jersey Boys* (2005), which tells the story of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons, and *Titanic* (1997), a retelling of the events surrounding the sinking of the Titanic. Not included in this category are musicals based on other forms of media which

⁴ Upon further investigation, an error was found in the categorization process of *My Fair Lady*. Although the *Playbill* does give credit to the play *Pygmalion*, an additional line was found acknowledging the 1938 film but not by name. Other musicals with at least one source listed as a film are designated as film-based, but for this article, *My Fair Lady* is considered a performing arts-based musical.

might also be based on a historical figure or event. *Hamilton: An American Musical* (2015) contains similar historic allusions as *1776* but its creator Lin-Manuel Miranda credits the Ron Chernow's biography *Alexander Hamilton* (2004). For this reason, *Hamilton* is considered a musical based on a work of literature rather than history.

Literature. Represented in literature-based musicals are biographies, children's stories, story collections, comic books, comic strips, epic poems, fairy tales, Greek mythology, non-fiction, novels, novellas, novel collections, religious texts, and short stories. The most frequent literature-based musical source material since the 1952-1953 season is *The Bible*, inspiring seven musicals: *The Megillah of Itzak Manger* (1968), *Ari* (1971), *Hard Job Being God* (1972), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971)⁵, *Godspell* (1976), *Your Arms Are Too Short to Box with God* (1976), and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (1993). Charles Dickens is the most represented author with musical adaptations of *The Pickwick Papers*, a serial published between April 1836 and November 1837 that served as source material for *Pickwick* (1965), *Oliver Twist*, a serial published between February 1837 and April 1839, which is the basis of *Oliver!* (1963), *David Copperfield* a serial published between May 1849 and November 1850, the source for *Copperfield* (1981), *A Tale of Two Cities*, a serial published between April 1859 and November 1859 and the source of the 2008 musical of the same name, and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, an unfinished serial due to Dicken's death, published between April 1870 and September 1870, adapted into a musical in 1985 of which the audience gets to decide the ending.

Even though the popularity of a film based on a source might be used as a marketing tool for the musical adaptation, the musical's classification in this study relies on the credentials

⁵ *Jesus Christ Superstar* began its life as a concept album with the intent of becoming a work on stage (Wilson, 2012).

found in the musical's *Playbill*. An example of this is *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* (2011), which includes elements of the comic books in which the superhero appears and the Sony Pictures film franchise that debuted in 2002. Sony Pictures and Marvel Comics are both producers of the musical, but no credit is given to the film series. *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* is considered a literature-based musical given these parameters. Also considered a literature-based musical despite the relative popularity of the film is *Carrie* (1988). Based on the 1974 novel, the musical adaptation of *Carrie* has a book by Lawrence D. Cohen, who also wrote the screenplay for the 1976 film adaptation. Despite the similarities, however, *Carrie* is considered a literature-based musical in this study.

Performing Arts. Performing arts-based musicals include musicals based on plays, ballets, musicals, operas, and albums. The most prolific sub-category within the performing arts-based musicals is plays. The oldest play used as source material is Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, first performed in 411 B.C. *Lysistrata* is the basis of two musicals, 1961's *The Happiest Girl in the World* and 2011's *Lysistrata Jones*. The most recently produced play used as source material for a Broadway musical is 2002's *C-R-E-P-U-S-C-U-L-E* by Rebecca Feldman, which serves as the source for *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (2005). Plays are not the only form of performing arts used as source material. Ballets, musicals, operas, and albums are other sub-categories of performing arts-based musicals. The 1944 ballet *Fancy Free* choreographed by Jerome Robbins soon after became the musical *On the Town* in the same year. Not to be confused with revivals, musical based on other musicals share similar plot points, settings, or characters from previously produced musicals. Examples of musical-based musicals are *Lorelei* (1974) based on *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1949) and *The Best Little Whorehouse Goes Public* (1994), which serves as a sequel to *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (1978). Opera-based musicals

do not refer to productions of operas on Broadway but instead are musicals adapted from operas. *Rent* (1996) is an example of an opera-based musical, taking Puccini's *La Bohème* (1896) from Paris near the turn of the 20th century to New York City's East Village near the turn of the millennium. An album-based musical is a musical based on a previously recorded rock or pop album intended to be performed by the initial artist but not necessarily as a theatrical work. This does not include concept albums, which are albums written with the artists' intention to bring the album to the stage.⁶ Two examples of album-based musicals are *The Who's Tommy* (1993), based on the rock album *Tommy* (1969) and *American Idiot* (2010), based on the 2004 album of the same name by Green Day.

Original. Without a basis of characters or plot, original musicals have purely novel narrative content. Musical with similar narrative content are considered original if no credit is given to a source. For example, *Mamma Mia!* (2001) tells the story of a single mother living on a Greek island with her daughter, whose father is one of three suitors from the mother's past. The 1968 film, *Buona Sera, Mrs. Campbell* tells the story of a single mother living in Italy with her daughter, whose father is one of three suitors from the mother's past. Coincidentally, the musical *Carmelina* (1979) gives credit to *Buona Sera, Mrs. Campbell* as a source, but *Mamma Mia!* does not (Simon, 2001).⁷ Satirical or parody musicals are also considered original musicals within this context. *Bye Bye Birdie* (1960), a musical parodying the military draft of rock and roll star Elvis Presley, although inspired by the event, contains an original plot and music. *The Book of*

⁶ Examples of musicals that began life as a concept album include *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Evita* (1979), and *Chess* (1988).

⁷ Upon further investigation, PlaybillVault.com acknowledges *Buona Sera, Mrs. Campbell* as source material for *Carmelina* in the description of the musical. However, in the *Playbill*, no credit is given to the film. However, due to PlaybillVault.com's description, this article acknowledges *Carmelina* a film-based musical.

Mormon (2011) satirizes musicals such as *The Sound of Music* (1959) and *The King and I* as well as the culture of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Despite the allusions, *The Book of Mormon* contains an original narrative and characters, and therefore is considered original.

To better understand the phenomenon of a film-based musical, different types of musicals, including film-based musicals are defined. Using IBDb, musicals are separated from plays and special events. Additionally, IBDb differentiates the versions of musicals between new musicals and revivals. Despite a variety of categories provided by Broadway historians, critics, and producers for musicals, I created a unique cataloguing system using the source of narrative content of a musical. The title page of the opening night *Playbill* is used to identify the basis of each musical separated into the categories of film, history, literature, and performing arts. In the parameters of this article, musicals without defined source material are considered original musicals, and musicals defined in IBDb as revues retain their identification.

Timeline

The discussion in Timeline explores the popularity of film-based musicals over time in comparison to the other five categories of musicals using the database. The musicals are first compared in total number separated by versions and categories (see Table 2).

Table 2

Distribution of new musicals per narrative category							
	All	Film	History	Literature	Performing Arts	Original	Revue
Count	711	109	59	155	97	188	103
Percentage of musicals		15%	8%	22%	14%	26%	14%

It is clear that original and literature-based musicals outnumber film-based musicals over the 65-year period. However, by observing the number of musicals produced at varying time

periods, trends become noticeable. A timeline is developed through observations of the number of new musicals produced each decade per narrative category (see Table 3).⁸

Table 3

Distribution of new musicals per narrative category and decade produced							
Decade	All	Film	History	Literature	Performing Arts	Original	Revue
1950s	86	5	1	19	15	25	21
1960s	140	13	9	37	29	31	22
1970s	139	8	7	29	23	50	22
1980s	103	11	10	24	11	29	18
1990s	69	14	10	13	8	10	14
2000s	89	28	7	20	5	25	4
2010s	84	30	15	13	6	18	2

Beginning in the 1950s, original musicals are the most produced category of musical / After the 1960s spikes for literature and performing arts-based musicals, and a spike in the 1970s for original musicals, the popularity of each wanes, while film-based musicals progress. This is especially noticeable in the 1990s when film-based musicals outnumber every category. Film rises in popularity as source material throughout the 2000s, doubling the number of musicals from the decade prior from 14 to 28. In the 7 years reflected in the 2010s, film continues to outnumber all other narrative source categories and reaches a peak of 30 productions.

As the previous table indicates, the total number of musicals produced can vary greatly, dependent upon the season or decade. The 69 new musicals produced in the 1990s is less than half of the 141 musicals produced in the 1960s. To account for this variance, an observation of

⁸ Including revivals of musicals within this study can distort findings because there can be multiple revivals of the same musical, which can affect the perception of popularity of a particular type of source material. For example, if the three revivals of *Guys and Dolls* (1950) are counted in addition to the original, the number of literature-based musicals would increase. Also, the strength of source material as a viable source can be altered with the inclusion of revivals. Using the example of *Guys and Dolls* again, observing the three revivals, all flops, could indicate that the source material is poor, yet the original succeeded. For this reason, revivals will only be included in future studies.

the percentage of musicals produced each decade by category is made. The percentages reveal that film, which accounted for less than 10% of the source material for the first three decades, has a 10% increase each year beginning in the 1990s (see Table 4).

Table 4

Distribution percentage of new musicals per narrative category and decade produced

Decade	Film	History	Literature	Performing Arts	Original	Revue
1950s	6%	1%	22%	17%	29%	24%
1960s	9%	6%	26%	21%	22%	16%
1970s	6%	5%	21%	17%	36%	16%
1980s	11%	10%	23%	11%	28%	17%
1990s	20%	14%	19%	12%	14%	20%
2000s	31%	8%	22%	6%	28%	4%
2010s	36%	18%	15%	7%	21%	2%

To better assess the popularity of film as a category, the number of musicals produced since the first film-based musical is observed. After creating tables, a timeline is established. Film is not a popular form of source material in the earlier decades observed in the study. However, the number of musicals based on films increases significantly over time, especially when observing the percentages of musicals produced. The rise in popularity is significant in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, increasing by 10% each decade.

Theories

This section features theories relating to the causes of the boom in popularity of film as source material for Broadway musicals since 1990. Through literature reviews and interpersonal interactions with two prominent Broadway producers, two sets of theories are found. The first set of theories involves issues facing producers with the creative aspects of a musical including casting, writers, and source material. The second set of theories involves the commercial aspects in producing a musical. Both sets of theories have validity, and two theoretical conclusions are made: film is perceived to be a worthwhile source due to the relative ease of writing musicals

that already have an intact dramatic narrative familiar to audiences, and producers believe film-based musicals are less financially risky to produce.

Creative Theories. The creative theories regarding the proliferation of film-based musicals include the inability to cast sustainable male stars in character driven shows, a decrease in substantial composers, lyricists, and librettists compared to other eras on Broadway, and a general lack of adaptable material for Broadway musicals. Examining each theory more closely reveals that the perceptions regarding film's popularity as source material are underdeveloped. However, one overwhelming theme is the ease of writing musicals with an intact narrative that is familiar to audiences.

Male Stars. With the theory, "male singing stars are as elusive as four-leaf clovers," Peter Marks assumes if a male star is featured in a show, it will be successful, and the lack of bona fide male stars could be one of the driving forces behind film-based musicals (Marks, 2002, para 1). The star issue, which has been a problem for producers since the 1960s, does not necessarily refer to the opening night casting of a show; but pertains to what a producer should do when a star leaves after their six-month or year-long contract expires (Viertel, 2016). Producer Mark Routh agrees in the chapter "How to Produce a Smash Hit Broadway Musical" in *The Art of Doing: How Superachievers Do What They Do and How They Do It So Well* (2013), in which he implores producers to not depend upon star power to keep a show running (Sweeney & Gosfield, 2013).⁹

⁹ Female stars are not included in Marks' theory. While female driven shows like *Wicked* and *Mamma Mia!* became hits despite replacing their stars Idina Menzel and Louise Petre, respectively, with lesser known actresses, productions like the original 1964 *Hello Dolly!* and subsequent 2017 revival easily replaced the stars Carol Channing and Bette Midler with other big named actresses like Ginger Rogers and Bernadette Peters (Grode, 2017; Connolly, 2018). Two recent revivals of film-based musicals, however, closed immediately when they could not replace their starts. In 2005, after producers failed to sign on singer Britney Spears to replace Christina

An example of Marks, Viertel, and Routh's theories involves Hugh Jackman. Prior to coming to Broadway, Jackman performed in musicals in Australia and in London's West End, but he is probably best known for playing the character Wolverine in *X-Men* (2000). Upon his arrival on Broadway in 2002 in the Peter Alan biographical musical, *The Boy from Oz*, Jackman became a surefire draw for audiences (Pogrebin, 2003, pp. E1-E5). Producers of *The Boy from Oz*, after a year-long run in which Jackman did not miss a single performance, closed the show. They recognized that audiences only wanted to see Jackman in the starring role and did not consider recasting the role (Bettinson, 2016).

Some producers have success recasting their male leads. During the original production of *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), original star Zero Mostel was replaced with high profile actors like Topel, who later appeared in the film version. The 1998 Roundabout production of *Cabaret* (1966) replaced Alan Cumming with television stars, Neil Patrick Harris and John Stamos, and musician, Jon Secada. Barry and Fran Weissler also found a workable formula for re-casting the male lead in the 1996 revival of *Chicago* (1976). The Weisslers allow their stars to take on the lead role of Billy Flynn for weeks, rather than months at a time. They are also known for casting stars not affiliated with musical theatre like Country Music Star Billy Ray Cyrus and the 1995 Heisman Trophy Winner and 1996 NFL Rookie of the Year, Eddie George (Tran, 2017).

Film-based musicals are not immune to the star problem, though. Nathan Lane and Mathew Broderick's casting in the film-based musical, *The Producers* has spawned a term for the strain of re-casting: "The *Producers Syndrome*" (McKinley, 2003). *The Producers* currently

Applegate in the revival of *Sweet Charity* (1966), based on *Nights of Cabria* (1957), closed prior to recouping (Simonson, 2005). Similarly, producers of the 2010 revival of *Promises, Promises* (1968) decided to close citing, "the high costs and unpredictability of re-casting" its stars Sean Hayes and Kristin Chenoweth after their contracts ended (Healy, 2010, para 1).

holds the record for most Tony Awards won in a single year with 12, and after opening, Broadway insiders predicted the show would have a successful run for a number of years. However, once its two stars left, sales immediately reduced by 10% and continued to drop. The show was never intended to be a star vehicle for Lane and Broderick, but audiences seemed only interested in seeing the original Leo and Max. The show ran a total of 2,502 performances over six years, and recouped its costs, yet it still underperformed in relation to the hype and success it had after first opening (McKinley, 2003).

To compare the impact of the male star on a show's success, one need to look no further than the longest running Broadway musicals of all time. Among the top ten longest running shows, no shows require a male star within the production outside of the revival of *Chicago*, which also banks on its female star power. Instead, half of the ten longest running musicals rely heavily on the spectacle as the appeal for the show, including the 1980s mega musicals *The Phantom of the Opera* (1988), *Les Misérables* (1987), and *Cats* (1982). In quite the opposite manner, *A Chorus Line*, the only musical on the list to win the Pulitzer Prize for Best Drama, became a hit with strong character development and an ensemble cast with a limited set. *Wicked*, a musical that received mixed reviews, maintains its popularity because of its connections to the beloved film and story series based in L. Frank Baum's Oz and its appeal to adolescent girls, who have developed a cult-like following around the musical (Aucoin, D., 2013, p. N1). *Mamma Mia!*'s appeal branches from the audience's familiarity of its score, which is entirely composed from ABBA's catalog (Moore, 2014). Frank Rich of *The New York Times* gives credit for the longevity of the 1976 revival of *Oh! Calcutta!* to its less than standard run of performances of up to three-a-day, a small theatre, and its appeal to mostly foreign audiences interested in seeing a

show with an abundance of nudity (Rich, 1989). The final two shows on the list, *The Lion King* and *Beauty and the Beast*, are film-based musicals.

While the lack of male stars is a problem, many producers have created proven solutions. Some producers rely on a casting carousel that some call stunt casting, while others produce shows that do not require stars, including film-based musicals. However, not all film-based musicals are immune to the star problem, as seen with *The Producers*.

Writers. In addition to his theory about male stars, Marks believes the proliferation of film-based musicals in the early 2000s was due in part to the shortage of “great composers” and “top flight” lyricists, a theory echoed by culture writer Rich Copley in 2006 (Marks, 2014, para 1; Copley, R. 2006). A similar theory involving librettists is mentioned by Jack Viertel in his 2016 book *The Secret Life of the American Musical*. Viertel suggests that all the best writers are skipping Broadway for other forms of media, including television and film (Viertel, 2016, p. 97).

While it is true that there are no Rodgers and Hammerstein or Kander and Ebb anymore, the theories of lack of talent are problematic. The theory discounts new artists like Lin-Manuel Miranda, the Emmy, Tony, Grammy, and Pulitzer Prize winning composer and librettist for *Hamilton* and Oscar winners Benj Pasek and Justin Paul who composed the original musical *Dear Evan Hansen* (2016). Another fallacy when comparing contemporary musicians to the legendary teams of the Golden Age is the change in music heard on the Broadway stage. For decades, especially during the eras of musical legends like Rodgers and Hammerstein, the music of Broadway was more formulaic, drawing from the days of Tin Pan Alley¹⁰ (Evan, 2010).

¹⁰ “The term Tin Pan Alley refers to the physical location of the New York City-centered music publishers and songwriters who dominated the popular music of the United States in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Tin Pan Alley was the popular music publishing center of the world between 1885 to the 1920s.” (“Tin Pan Alley,” 2018, para 1)

Contemporary audiences expect more variety in musical theatre that might include rock and roll, hip-hop, pop music, country, and a myriad of other forms. There are great composers and topflight lyricists who do not rely on film-based musicals, but to compare their music to the great composers and lyricists of the past would be like comparing apples to oranges (Teachout, 2014, p. 72-74).

Viertel, a producer and dramaturge, suggests that all the great librettists are avoiding Broadway for other forms of media. This is why film-based musicals are being produced more often (Viertel, 2016, p. 97). Although there is no way to prove or disprove Viertel's assumption, there are examples of librettists that have come from other media to work on Broadway. Examples include Steve Martin of *Bright Star* (2016), an Emmy and Grammy Award winning writer,¹¹ television and screenwriters Karey Kirkpatrick and John O'Farrell of *Something Rotten!* (2015), and Green Day leading man Billy Joe Armstrong of *American Idiot*.

Veteran book writers, however, are focusing more on film-based musicals. Terrence McNally, a four-time Tony and Emmy winning writer¹² believes that adapting films to Broadway is preferable. "It takes a little bit of pressure off the audience to follow the story," he said, when asked about the shift to film-based musicals (Marks, 2002, para 19). Since winning his last Tony Award for Book in a Musical, three of the five musicals McNally wrote were based on films. One of Broadway's most prolific book writers, with 11 musicals, is the recently deceased Thomas Meehan. After writing the Tony Award winning book for *Annie* (1977), based

¹¹ Shared winner of the 1969 Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing for a Variety Series for *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* (1967) and winner of 2 consecutive Grammy Awards for Best Comedy Recording for *Let's Get Small* (1977) and *A Wild and Crazy Guy* (1978).

¹² 1990 Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing in a Miniseries or a Special for *Andre's Mother* (1990), 1995 and 1996 Tony Awards for Best Play for *Love! Valour! Compassion!* (1995) and *Master Class* (1995) and the 1993 and 1998 Tony Awards for Best Book of a Musical for *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1992) and *Ragtime* (1993).

on the *Little Orphan Annie* comic strip that debuted in 1924, six of his remaining ten musicals were based on films. Tony Award winning playwright and book writer¹³ Harvey Fierstein relied exclusively on films for his next four Broadway musicals after writing *La Cage aux Folles* (1983) based on the 1973 play with the same title. Another prolific playwright and librettist that is becoming more reliant on films as source material is Doug Wright. After winning a Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize for his only Broadway play, *I am My Own Wife* (2004), Wright has since focused primarily on film-based musicals with *Grey Gardens*, *The Little Mermaid* (2007), *Hands on a Hardbody*, and *War Paint* (2017). These are just four examples of renowned playwrights and librettists that are becoming more reliant on films as musicals. Therefore, to suggest that there is a shortage of good librettists is false. Even some of Broadway's best writers are moving in the direction of adapting films.

The theories involving Broadway writers suggest that the film-based musical is a result of a lack of talented writers on Broadway. However, there are a number of talented and award winning new writers debuting each year on Broadway. Even seasoned writers are turning to film as source material more frequently than any other source due to the ease of adapting works that have already been tested as performance material for audiences.

Material. Broadway musicals have relied on a wide variety of source material. In the last two decades, though, experts believe the sources have become limited. One theory comes from producer and former President of Jujamcyn Theatres, Rocco Landesman. "Maybe it's because people don't read anymore," adding "Everyone's frame of reference is movies" (Marks, 2002, para 20). Light novellas like *The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant* (1954), the underlying

¹³ 1983 Tony Award winner for Best Play for *Torch Song Trilogy* (1982) and the 1984 Tony Award winner for Best Book for a Musical for *La Cage aux Folles*.

source for *Damn Yankees* (1955) have become a rarity (Viertel, 2016, p.98). *Hairspray* producer Margo Lion makes a similar observation, “Traditionally, the great musicals were based on plays, but the thing is we ran out of plays and we had to find something else to base them on” (Marks, 2002, para 18).

With so many devices and options to watch videos, television, or films, the argument that people do not read anymore or there are no great books seems valid. A study performed by David W. Moore and Gallup News in 2005, reveals opposite. Research shows the number of people reading novels actually increases exponentially by decade. When asked, “Do you happen to be reading any books or novels at the present?” 21% of respondents said yes in 1949, the year *South Pacific* based on the collection of written stories, *Tales of the South Pacific* (1947), debuted, compared to 47% in 2005 (Moore, 2005).

Landesman’s theory is that audience’s frame of reference is more related to film than literature. One possible way of interpreting this theory is people in general simply watch more films than read books. That is to say, they watch films as an alternative to reading books. Another possible interpretation is that the proliferation of film-based musicals is in line with the proliferation of films released each year. Each interpretation is addressed by further exploring Moore’s findings in the 2005 study and by looking at facts and figures regarding the number of films that are released each year and when the subsequent musicals opened on Broadway.

In Moore’s study, the number of films watched by a person each year correlates with the number of books read; just not the way Landesman predicts. With the following results of the study, it appears that audiences are not choosing one medium over the other, but rather spend more time actually doing both.

Movie attendance does not appear to depress book reading. The more movies people attend, the more likely they are to be reading books -

- from 33% who didn't attend a movie last year, to 49% among people who attended a few movies, to 62% who attended several movies.

Also, among people who say they are attending movies more often than they did five years ago, 56% are presently reading a book, compared with 47% among people attending the same number of movies as in the past, and 44% among people attending movies less often. (Moore, 2005, para 10 - 11)

The market for films is continuously more saturated each year, possibly adding to the rise of film-based musicals. For example, there were 1560 films released in 1930, when the earliest film used as source material for a musical, *The Blue Angel* debuted. By comparison, 5,381 films debuted along with *Waitress*, the latest film used as source material, in 2007. If the number of movies produced each year increases, it stands to reason that producers are relying on film-based musicals more due to the sheer amount of films being released. The theory also suggests that with more films released each year, producers are not only relying on films more often than other types of sources, but on modern films that would still be considered in the public eye. Yet, this is not the case. The average length of time between the film release and the Broadway opening is approximately 22 years. This means that despite the oversaturation of films in the present, producers are choosing films to adapt from a smaller pool in the past.

Viertel's theory that the lack of light novellas is a culprit for the proliferation of film-based assumes that there are many musicals based on novellas. However, since 1952, only 10 new musicals were based on novellas, three of which were published after *The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant* in 1954. Novellas only account for 1.4% of new musicals produced over the time period and only 6% of literature-based musicals.

The final theory relating to the source material of Broadway musicals or lack thereof concerns Margo Lion's theory that "We ran out of plays" (Marks, 2002, para 19). There has been a sharp decline in the use of plays as source material from the 1952-1953 season to the 2016-

2017 season. However, this does not indicate a shortage of plays. Since 1990, only 12 musicals have been adapted from plays. Just counting plays that have opened on Broadway, 339 plays opened since 1990. By comparison, 28 musicals based on plays came out in the 1960s, while at the same time, 383 plays were produced. Therefore, the ratio of musicals based on plays is two times higher in the 1960s than in the last 37 years. The issue, therefore, cannot be a shortage of plays.

Each theory in relation to the creative aspects of a Broadway musical being motivation to lean towards film-based musicals appears to be valid from glancing at the past twenty-five years of Broadway. However, after further inspection, research reveals there are solutions to each theory outside of the reliance of film-based musicals. While it is a fact that there is a star problem on Broadway, producers have found other ways to compensate for the missing “four leaf clovers” without relying on film-based musicals. Occasionally, producers will be lucky enough to have replacements that are just as popular as their original stars, as is the case of *Fiddler on the Roof* or the 1998 revival of *Cabaret*. Other producers have to be more creative in their casting by seeking out non-traditional theatrical stars and allowing them more flexible contracts. It seems, though, in relation to the majority of the long running musicals, producers seek other ways to appeal to audiences, whether it is the spectacle of a mega musical, a smaller musical with an ensemble cast and a unique narrative, or a show with familiar music or characters. New and capable composers and lyricists arrive on Broadway frequently with hits in their freshman or sophomore outings like Lin Manuel Miranda of *In the Heights* and *Hamilton*, Duncan Shiek and Steven Slater of *Spring Awakening* (2006), and David Bryan and Joe DiPietro of *Memphis* (2009). Though it cannot be proven either way if potential book writers are leaving Broadway for other forms of media, it does appear that there are increasingly more writers

coming from other media coming to Broadway. Meanwhile, well-known theatrical book writers and playwrights are becoming more reliant on film-based musicals.

Commercial Theories. In this section, the financial-based theories from industry professionals and critics relating to the proliferation of film-based musicals are discussed. The overwhelming feeling concerning the proliferation of the film-based Broadway musical stems from the rising costs to Broadway shows. Even when factoring inflation, production costs from the 1940s through 1970s are much lower than those of 1980s through the present. For example, in 1972, the cost of producing the musical *Pippin* was \$450,000 (Rosenberg & Harburg, 1993). The cost to produce a revival of the same musical in 2013 was \$8.5 million, a difference of more than \$8 million (Healy & Heller, 2012). To combat these costs, three changes occurred in the Broadway industry. Producers require more capital to produce musicals and must recruit additional producers and investors, many with little to no expertise in the industry. Musical must run longer to recoup costs, which in turn requires Broadway producers to rely on selling tickets to a broader audience over a longer period of time. A final change is the growing presence of media conglomerates and movie studios as producers on Broadway. However, this change is a result of the high risk, high reward factor of the Broadway industry of which a hit musical like *The Lion King* can gross over \$1 billion in just Broadway ticket sales (Seymour, 2017).

The producers have changed. *Hamilton* producer Jeffrey Seller (2014) hypothesizes, “The proliferation of the movie musicals dovetails with the decline of the professional producer” (J. Seller, personal communication, 2014). Seller’s theory refers to the title of producer losing its meaning since the mid-20th century. During the 1950s through 1970s, a producer found “a property-either brought to his attention or developed from his office-and optioned it, raised money, hired an artistic team, rented a theatre, cast the show, rehearsed it, took it out of town to

work it into shape, and then ‘came in’ and opened on Broadway” (Adler, 2004, p. 32). Producers at the time mostly worked alone, like David Merrick or through a small partnership, like Cy Feuer and Ernest Martin. Returning to the example of *Pippin*; for the original 1972 production, only one producer, Stuart Ostrow, is listed above the title in the opening night *Playbill*. Due to the rise in costs to produce a musical, the 2013 production featured 24 producers above the title. This does not mean that 24 different offices perform the duties of producer as described in Adler’s definition. Instead, the old meaning of producer refers to what is now called the lead producer, and producer can refer to anyone who has an investment or a financial stake in a show (Fierberg, 2017).

The result is a growing trend of investors with little to no theatrical background being awarded the title of producer, or more importantly to many, above the title producer, which meets the qualifications for membership into The Broadway League and Tony Award eligibility. These above the title producers are looking for known commodities, such as film-based musicals, instead of unfamiliar, original, or groundbreaking material. For example, Louise Beard of Birmingham, Alabama, is a retired dance instructor with no other theatrically related background. However, she maintains a growing portfolio of Broadway shows as a producer (Healy, 2014). These shows include *A Christmas Story: The Musical* (2012), *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder*, *Dr. Zhivago* (2015) and *Dames at Sea* (2015). Although not all film-based musicals, the source material for *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder*, *Israel Rank: An Autobiography of a Criminal* was also adapted into the film *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, the basis of *Dr. Zhivago* (2006) is the 1957 novel by Boris Pasternak that had an immensely popular film adaptation in 1965 that won five Academy Awards, and *Dames at Sea* (2015), originally an

Off Off Broadway musical in 1968, is a musical parody based on the Busby Berkeley movies of the 1930s.

Longer running shows. During the 1940s, a musical could run one to two years and recoup its investment. In the current climate, however, a show must run much longer in order to recoup its costs (Knapp, Morris, & Wolf, 2011). Within the parameters of this study, the number of new musicals that recoup with 416 or more performances¹⁴ opening between the 1952-1953 and 1979-1980 seasons is 75 out of 88 musicals produced or 85%. Ten musicals that recouped over this same period have less than 416 performances. Since 1980, however, only 62 of 107 or 58% of new musicals with 416 performances or more recoup, a difference of 27%. Over this same time period, only one new musical, *The Boy from Oz*, with the star power of Hugh Jackman, recouped with less than 416 performances. Therefore, current producers must find ways of keeping their shows running longer than before.

Due to the required increase in performances of musicals, producers are required to fill seats for a longer period of time. Up until the 1980s producers could rely on New Yorkers and those from the surrounding metropolitan area to make up 66% to 75% of their audiences. New Yorkers tend to see things within the first two years, so a show would not need to run longer (Lazarus, n.d.). Once Broadway shifted to be a tourist attraction in the early 1980s, the majority of theatregoers changed from New Yorkers to tourists. In the most recent Demographics of Broadway Audiences report provided by the Broadway League, 61% of Broadway audiences are tourists from outside of New York and the surrounding areas (Hauser, 2018). To entice tourists to come to their shows, producers are becoming more reliant on recognizable brands and titles,

¹⁴ The number of shows within a year if a production runs eight shows a week for fifty-two weeks.

which include film-based musicals. Jed Bernstein, former president of The Broadway League, states, “One of the biggest challenges for selling a Broadway show is that it’s a relatively high price,” Mr. Bernstein said. “How can I tell you stuff that will reassure you that you’re going to spend your 90 bucks and you’re going to like it? If it’s based on a title I know, I’m going to feel a little more confident that I’m going to like it” (Marks, 2002, para 14).

The movie studios. Observing the timeline of popularity of film-based musicals, it is evident the tipping point of the trend began in the 1990s. In her book, *Theatre in a Media Culture*, Amy Petersen Jensen writes:

American theatre history will probably mark 1994 as a pivotal year for how Broadway theater is produced and marketed. The show that made this lasting impact won no major awards that year, featured no significant star or celebrity, and was dismissed by most critics as fluid and of no consequence. The show is *Beauty and The Beast*, the first Broadway endeavor by Walt Disney Productions. Disney capitalized on a theatre environment that was more than a decade in the making – an environment of name-branding, mass-marketing, mass-audiences, and investment in the replicable rather than the unique. (Jensen, 2007, p. 89)

With the success of Disney Theatricals, other major film studios like Twentieth Century Fox, Universal, and Sony are joining Broadway producers to bring their respective movies to the stage. According to Jeffery Horowitz, the President of Universal Pictures, a singular hit musical can out gross even the biggest movie franchises and producing a Broadway musical, in comparison to a Hollywood blockbuster, is about a tenth of the cost (Healy, 2013a). Funnily enough, the Universal property of which Horowitz is speaking is *Wicked*, based on a novel and not a film. *Wicked* has grossed \$3 billion worldwide since 2003, out-performing the films *Jurassic Park* (1993) and *E.T.* (1982) and continues to run on Broadway and all over the world (2013a).

Each commercial theory concerning the growing popularity of film-based musicals is a reaction to the changing industry on Broadway. As Broadway costs of production rise rapidly even when accounting for inflation, producers become reliant on more investors and are forced to adjust to a previously untapped market. To entice more investors, many of whom have little theatrical experience, producers are becoming more dependent upon properties with name or brand recognition. The same logic is used to attract tourists to see Broadway shows, who now make up the majority of theatre goers. The final theory is that movie studios, based on the success of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King*, are opening their own theatrical divisions to produce their own properties.

Comparisons

This section addresses the rate of success of film-based musicals as compared to other forms of musicals based on peer reception and general public reception. By doing so, the validity of producing film-based musicals over other forms is revealed. The Tony Awards are used to measure the success of films from the perception of peers. The remaining metrics are based on the general public's reception, including the longevity of a production or number of performances, total box office gross, attendance, and whether or not the show recouped. All of the information regarding Tony Awards, performances, gross, and attendance are collected from IBDb, while recoupment statistics are collected from multiple sources.¹⁵ The Tony Awards and recoupment statistics are listed by category with the appropriate percentage rates of nominations, wins, and recoupment. For the other sets of metrics, the maximum, minimum, mean and median are provided for each set of numbers per narrative category.

¹⁵ Each source used to determine recoupment of a musical is addressed individually within the database since multiple sources are utilized.

The Tony Awards. The Antoinette Perry Awards or Tony Awards were first given in 1947 for Excellence in Broadway Theatre by the American Theatre Wing, of which the late Ms. Perry was a co-founder. The American Theatre Wing later partnered with what is now The Broadway League in 1967. To be eligible for a Tony Award, a play or musical must meet the rules and regulations set by the Tony Awards Administration Committee. The first year to acknowledge a winner in the category of Best Musical was 1949, though no nominations were made to the public. In 1956, the nominations for Best Musical were made public and this tradition has continued through the 2017 ceremony.¹⁶ The number of nominations given in each category is dependent upon the year and the discretion of the committee, though cannot exceed five.

Not included in this study are the four winners from the 1948-1949 season to the 1951-1952 seasons because these seasons fall outside of the parameters of the study. The winners of the Tony Award for Best Musical prior to the 1952-1953 season were *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948) based on the play *Taming of the Shrew* (between 1590 and 1592), *South Pacific* based on *Tales of the South Pacific*, *Guys and Dolls* based on the short stories “The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown” (1933) and “Blood Pressure” (1933), and *The King and I*, based on the novel *Anna and the King of Siam*. At the conclusion of the 1959-1960 season, voting for the Tony Award for Best Musical ended in a tie, and *The Sound of Music* and *Fiorello!* (1959) were both awarded (see Table 5).

¹⁶ According to The Tony Awards Rules and Regulations, Section 2(g), “A play or musical that is determined by the Tony Awards Administration Committee (in its sole discretion) to be a “classic” or in the historical or popular repertoire shall not be eligible for an Award in the Best Play or Best Musical category but may be eligible in the appropriate Best Revival category, if any, provided it meets all other eligibility requirements set forth in these Rules.” For this reason, the 2004 production of *The Assassins* (1990), the 2014 production of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (1998), and the 2014 production of *Violet* (1997), though new to Broadway, were only eligible for the Best Revival of a Musical.

Table 5

Distribution of Tony Award nominations and wins for Best Musical including percentages per narrative category

	All	Film	History	Literature	Performing Arts	Original	Revue
Count	708	108	58	154	97	187	103
Nominations	239	50	24	52	37	52	24
Wins	66	15	6	16	13	12	4
Percentage of new musicals		15%	8%	22%	14%	26%	15%
Percentage of nominations		21%	10%	22%	15%	22%	10%
Percentage of wins		23%	9%	24%	20%	18%	6%

With 15 wins and 50 nominations, film-based musicals trail literature-based musicals and original musicals. One important statistic to look at, however, is the percentage of eligible musicals when compared to the percentages of nominations and wins. Film-based musicals only make up approximately 15% of the eligible musicals but have 21% of the nominations and 23% of the wins.

While the Tony Awards do have prestige among the Broadway community and can aid in marketing, a musical’s success cannot entirely be measured by its awards. For example, in 1994, two of the four nominees for Best Musical were film-based musicals. Despite taking home the award that evening, *Passion*’s (1994) success outside of awards season pales in comparison to the other film-based musical from the 1993-1994 season, *Beauty and the Beast*.¹⁷ For this reason, four other measures of success are considered, beginning with the longevity of a production.

¹⁷ Another factor that should not be ignored is the difference in source material for *Passion* and *Beauty and the Beast*. *Passion* is based on the Italian film *Passion de Amore* (1981), which aside from festivals, had a limited release in the United States and appealed to a specific audience (“Release Info,” 2018). Disney’s first musical adaptation, another appeal for audiences, *Beauty and the Beast* was based on the immensely popular film of the same name that was released just three years prior, grossed nearly \$425 million worldwide, not accounting for inflation, and was the first animated feature to be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Picture (“Beauty and the Beast [1991],” 2018).

Longevity. The number of performances of a musical can also be indicative of a show’s success. The collected data referring to the longevity of a musical comes from IBDb and was collected on April 23, 2017. The number of performances only includes those that occur on and after the official opening night. Previews or performances outside of the Broadway theatre are not considered. The standard week for a Broadway musical is eight performances, although there are examples of musicals that have a number of shows that does not coincide with a normal 8-show week. This can be due to additional performances being added for the holiday season or, in the case of the revival of *Oh! Calcutta!*, which ran 5,959 performances in just under thirteen years, multiple performances added each week. Within the parameters of the study, the number of performances was collected for new musicals opening between June 25, 1952 and April 28, 2016. Musical openings during the 2016-2017 season are removed as not to distort the statistics. Also removed from the study are musicals with limited engagements. This includes musicals produced by non-profit theaters not intended for an extended run like *The Frogs* (2004) at Lincoln Center Theatre, musicals produced for a specific holiday like *A Christmas Story* (2012), and musicals that are part of a touring production like *Bring it On: The Musical* (2012; see Table 6).

Table 6

Distribution statistics of number of performances of new musicals per narrative category (Currently running musicals are censored with a cut-off date of 4/23/17)

	All	Film	History	Literature	Performing Arts	Original	Revue
Count	654	96	51	146	93	181	87
Minimum	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Maximum	12,166	8,091	4,642	12,166	5,123	6,137	2036
Average	446	663	424	529	484	353	235
Median	100	351	111	89	152	72	61

In comparison to other forms of musicals, the average and median numbers of performances of film-based musical outperform the other categories. Does a long run, however,

necessarily guarantee financial success? The film-based musical, *Sunset Boulevard* (1994), and the literature-based musical, *Jekyll and Hyde* (1997) each had runs of over 975 performances yet failed to recoup their capitalization. Meanwhile, the recent film-based musical, *Once* (2012) announced recoupment after just 169 performances (Kennedy, 2012). Meanwhile, other shows like the original musical *Paramour* (musical), closed prematurely due to its theatre closing for renovations (Gerard, 2016). For these reasons, the number of performances should not be the only measurement of a show's success.

Box Office Grosses and Attendance. Each week, The Broadway League releases the weekly attendance and box office grosses for musicals that wish to report the information. Records for the attendance and box office grosses have been archived since the 1984-1985 season, though not all productions report their earnings, as they are not required to do so. Having these parameters in mind, a smaller sample size of new musicals is observed (see Table 7).

Table 7

Distribution statistics of attendance and total box office gross of new musicals per narrative category (Currently running musicals are censored with a cut-off date of 4/23/17)

Attendance							
	All	Film	History	Literature	Performing Arts	Original	Revue
Count	251	65	28	51	19	62	26
Min.	470	7,738	470	6,669	39,217	2,875	7,243
Max.	16.6 mil.	13.7 mil.	5.2 mil.	16.6 mil.	6.2 mil.	7.6 mil.	1.9 mil.
Avg.	754,479	1 mil.	446,268	1 mil.	1.1 mil.	484,235	254,738
Med.	146,730	350,389	104,054	123,774	298,652	99,048	58,853
Cumulative Box Office Grosses							
Count	251	65	28	51	19	62	26
Min.	\$5661	\$128,907	\$5,661	\$105,736	\$756,503	\$78,865	\$110,732
Max.	\$1.4 bil.	\$1.4 bil.	\$558 mil.	\$1.1 bil.	\$286 mil.	\$624 mil.	\$89 mil.
Avg.	\$56 mil.	\$80 mil.	\$38 mil.	\$77 mil.	\$60 mil.	\$40 mil.	\$12 mil.
Med.	\$8 mil.	\$2 mil.	\$6 mil.	\$6 mil.	\$15 mil.	\$7 mil.	\$2 mil.

Much like the results of the longevity of shows, film-based musicals have a higher attendance and average gross than any other category. However, the median grosses show that with blockbusters like *The Lion King*, the film-based musical's average gross is slightly distorted, and the performing arts-based musical actually performs better at the box office.

There are also other limitations to box office grosses. The box office gross does not indicate the actual profit made by each production. High capitalization rates and weekly running costs can mean even the highest grossing musicals never make a profit. For example, *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*, though grossing \$212,406,040, lost \$60 million upon closing due to a capitalization of \$75 million and weekly running costs of \$1.2 to \$1.4 million (Healy, 2013b). Other conditions that can affect the perception of Broadway grosses are the ticket pricing and seating capacity of the theatre. When *The Phantom of the Opera* opened in 1987, it was the most expensive ticket on Broadway at \$50. For the week ending April 23, 2017, the average ticket price paid for Broadway's most expensive show, *Hamilton*, was \$291.07 with a premium ticket price of \$849. One final factor is the size of the theatre. Not all Broadway theaters have the same seating capacity, meaning the disparity among box office grosses can be hundreds of thousands of dollars on a weekly basis, just based on the number of tickets available. For the week ending April 23, 2017, the largest theatre housing a musical was The Gershwin, home of *Wicked*, with a gross potential of \$1,779,845. Comparatively, the smallest theater hosting a musical was the Walter Kerr, home of *Amelie* (2017), with a gross potential of \$985,352. Due to these limitations and the lack of access to statistics prior to the 1984-1985 season, the attendance and box office alone is not a reliable determinant of a musical's success.

Recoupment. According to Jeffrey Seller (2014), a producer responsible for *Rent*, *In the Heights*, *Avenue Q* (2003), and *Hamilton*, "The true measure of a show's success is if it recoups"

(J. Seller, personal communication, 2014) Despite the number of Tony Awards received, the number of performances a show runs, the number of tickets sold, or the overall box office gross, the only measure of a Broadway musical’s success among commercial producers is its profitability.

Recoupment statistics are collected from numerous sources as indicated within the database. Excluded within the recoupment statistics are musicals that are produced by non-profit companies, musicals with limited engagements, and musicals that did not report earnings. Additionally, musicals that are open as of April 23rd that have yet to recoup or close are omitted. This article uses the terminology from *Variety*’s (periodical) long-running “Hits and Flops” report at the end of each Broadway season. A show that recouped is a hit and a show that did not recoup is a flop (Cox, 2013; see Table 8).

Table 8

Distribution of hits among new musicals per narrative category

	All	Film	History	Literature	Performing Arts	Original	Revue
Count	654	96	51	146	93	181	87
Hits	148	26	11	32	27	37	15
Hits Percentage	23%	27%	22%	22%	29%	20%	17%

When observing the final determinant of a show’s success, evidence shows that film-based musicals have a higher percentage of recoupment when compared to all musicals and each category of musical except performing arts-based musicals. Performing arts-based musicals have a recoupment rate of 29% compared to film-based musicals’ 27%.

Within this section, five different metrics of success are observed in order to determine if the growing phenomenon of film-based musicals is warranted based on past success. The first determinant is the Tony Award for Best Musical, which is voted upon by industry peers. Film-based musicals, though fewer in number, have a relatively high rate of success receiving

nominations and awards for Best Musical. The remaining sets of metrics are based on audience response. Based on the number of performances, attendance records, and box office grosses, film-based musicals on average have a greater success than other types of musicals.

Additionally, film-based musicals have a higher percentage rate of recoupment when compared to all musicals, but a lower rate compared to the category of performing arts-based musicals.

With these considerations, it appears that the status of film-based musicals is justified when comparing the different measurements of success with the other narrative categories of musicals.

However, another smart option for producers is performing arts-based musicals.

Conclusion

Beginning in 1952-1953 Broadway turned to Hollywood for source material for its musicals. Through the decades, the phenomenon of the film-based musical has continued to grow rapidly at the turn of the 21st Century through the first two decades. This article sought to determine why this phenomenon has had such growth during this time period. In order to answer this question, four subsequent questions were addressed:

1. In definition, what are the different types of musicals and how does the film-based musical fit within the Broadway musical theatre canon?
2. What is the historical significance of the film-based musical on Broadway and when did film become the most popular form of musical theatre source material?
3. What is the genesis of the film-based musical's attractiveness to recent Broadway producers?
4. Is the popularity of using film as a source material justified when compared to other musical theatre forms?

Discussed in Definitions and Categorizations, information derived from Broadway musicals produced between the time of the first film-based musical, *Hazel Flagg* and April 27, 2017, the final day of the 2016-2017 Broadway season was collected in a database. Each musical's source material was determined and placed in the categories of film, history, literature, and performing arts if adapted from a source. Musicals with no adaptive material were placed into the category of original musicals. The additional category of revue was determined by IBDb, and musicals determined to be revues by IBDb, were considered revues.

Observations were made based on the number of musicals within each narrative category to determine a Timeline for the popularity of the film-based musical. While film was not a dominant source for musicals in the mid to late 20th century, during the 1990s, film gained popularity. By the 2010s, film-based musicals outnumbered not only other types of adapted musicals but also musicals with original narratives.

After establishing the definition of the film-based musical and a timeline based on its popularity, theories of critics, historians, and other industry leading experts were observed to discuss why the film-based musical has risen in popularity, especially over the last 25 years. While several theories were dismissed, two remained prevalent. The first theory that stands out is the ease of adapting films when compared to other media. Film has an established narrative that, unlike literature, has been proven to work off the page. While performing arts-based musicals also offer a similar advantage to librettists searching for proven performance-based narrative material, book writers like Terrence McNally and producers like Rocco Landesman believe the audiences are simply more familiar with film than plays, operas, and ballets; all sources of Broadway musicals.

The other overwhelming theory is commercially based. The costs of producing Broadway musicals rose significantly in the early 1980s. This forced three major changes in how Broadway musicals were produced. No longer are there Broadway impresarios like David Merrick, who produced musicals on his own without outside partners. Instead, producers are forced to recruit a number of investors or other producers, often times people with no theatrical background. In order to entice these investors to gamble in an industry that sees more failures than successes, producers turn to projects that have established branding like jukebox musicals and film-based musicals. Prior to the 1980s, a Broadway musical did not have to run a number of years to recoup, but now a longer run is a necessity, which means a broader audience is required. As a growing destination for tourists from around the globe, producers are more willing to produce film-based musicals with recognizable names than musicals with original or lesser known sources in order to sell tickets. The final change comes from the corporations that are coming to Broadway. After Disney had commercial successes in the 1990s with *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King*, more film companies are opening their catalogs for musical adaptations. It is simply cheaper to produce a \$15-\$25 million musical that has the potential to make \$3 billion, as is the case with *Wicked*, than to produce films that costs in the hundreds of millions of dollars. For these reasons, in theory, film has become the dominant form of source material for Broadway musicals.

The section Comparisons featured a discussion using five different metrics to determine the benefit of producing film-based musicals. In all five measurements, including the Tony Awards, longevity of musicals, attendance, box office grosses, and recoupment, the film-based musical performed highly against musicals, justifying producers' preference to produce more in the future. However, performing arts-based musicals also did well using these same metrics.

During the 2017-2018 season, four more musicals based on film and television, *Frozen* (2018), *SpongeBob Squarepants* (2017), *Mean Girls* (2018), and *The Band's Visit* (2017), opened on Broadway along with three other non-film-based musicals. At the Tony Awards ceremony in June 2018, all four film-based musicals were nominated for Best Musical and *The Band's Visit* won. According to *Playbill*, 25 more musicals based on films are either in the works or have announced opening dates for future seasons (*Playbill*, 2018) With so many film-based musicals opening, the question to be asked now, is, what films make the best musicals? To answer this question, the next two articles within this dissertation focus on the variables and other factors that contribute to a film-based musical's success in order to determine the optimal film for adaptations.

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ARTICLE TWO
“NOBODY KNOWS ANYTHING”: PREDICTING THE SUCCESS OF BROADWAY
MUSICALS BASED ON FILMS

In his book, *Adventures in the Screen Trade* (1983), writer William Goldman, known for his Broadway memoir *The Season: A Candid Look at Broadway* (1969), states:

Nobody knows anything.... Not one person in the entire motion picture field knows for a certainty what's going to work. Every time out it's a guess and, if you're lucky, an educated one. (Goldman, 1983, p. 39)

Goldman's adage is in response to the uncharacteristic nature of the film industry, in which a small low-budget film can become a blockbuster and a film destined for success becomes a box office failure. For example, Universal Studios, who had produced George Lucas's hit film, *American Graffiti* (1973), passed on his project set in outer space citing the failures of recent science fiction movies, and 20th Century Fox eventually picked up the film. The production experienced one disaster after another, running over schedule and over budget. Its stars like Harrison Ford believed the film would easily be a forgotten blip on their resumes. Meanwhile, Lucas himself, due to the stress of making the film, was diagnosed with hypertension. When the film finally opened, Lucas escaped to Hawaii in order to avoid the fallout of bad reviews. To nearly everyone's surprise, the film *Star Wars* (1977) not only became the highest grossing film of all time, but it spawned a billion-dollar franchise that continues today (Gates, 2017). Nobody knew anything.

Mr. Goldman could have made a similar statement about the Broadway industry. During the 2008-2009 Broadway season, two very different musicals opened. One was based on an

Oscar-winning film, produced by the multi-media conglomerate DreamWorks and capitalized at an estimated \$25 million, making it one of the most expensive musicals ever produced on Broadway. It was developed at the 5th Avenue Theater in Seattle, Washington, where the Tony Award-winning film-based musical *Hairspray* was developed in 2002. The other was a musical built on the premise that Journey's "Don't Stop Believing" would be a great finale of a musical (Cronen & Weaver, 2013). Instead of previewing the musical at an established regional theater like the 5th Avenue Theater in Seattle, its inexperienced producer developed the musical in a dive bar in Los Angeles. Despite receiving poor reviews during transfers in Las Vegas and eventually Off Broadway, the musical opened on Broadway with a modest capitalization of \$7.25 million. *Shrek: The Musical* (2008), despite the name recognition and branding of the film franchise and its large budget, closed after 441 performances without recouping its investment. Meanwhile *Rock of Ages* (2009), recouped its investment, inspired a film adaptation, and currently sits in the top 30 longest running Broadway musicals. Nobody knew anything.

If nobody knows anything about Broadway, what if a producer could gain the knowledge of a show's probability of recoument? Then, somebody would, in fact, know something and an educated guess could be made. Already, the cards are stacked against any Broadway producer or investor trying to make money in the industry. As I discussed in "Screen to stage..." only 23% of musicals recoup on Broadway. However, 27% of film-based musicals recoup. With this knowledge, it seems likely that a Broadway producer looking for a new property to develop would look to film-based musicals.

If a producer chooses to invest in or develop a film-based musical, then are there ways to determine the optimal film for adaptation or production features that can lead to success? In order to answer this question, I use a statistical analysis utilizing the data of past Broadway

musicals based on films. The empirical data relating to the source material and the subsequent musical adaptation is compiled in a database.¹⁸ The collected data is used in a logistical regression to develop a model that most accurately predicts the binary outcome: whether a film will recoup its investment or not (Nau, 2018). The strength or accuracy of the model is determined by comparing the predicted values with the actual recoupment data. A further test is applied to musicals with known recoupment stats that are not a part of the initial dataset. The resulting formula from the model could then be used by producers or investors as they look to develop future musicals based on films.

The purpose of this study is to aid producers in making informed decisions prior to developing new musicals based on films. This study begins with a Literature Review of past studies using regression analysis to predict the success of Broadway shows. Under the heading of Methodology, the limitations and determinants of the sample set of film-based musicals are discussed. Once the sample set is defined, I discuss the selection of variables pertaining to the source material of the musicals and their subsequent productions. Under the heading Results, the process of using logistic regression and its results are discussed and tested for accuracy. In the Conclusion, I focus on the implications of the results and discuss options for future studies.

Literature Review

Utilizing statistical analysis is not unique to this article. I observed four previous studies using regression analysis to predict the success of Broadway shows. Although each study has merit, the studies are subject to some limitations regarding the nature of this study's particular aim. The sample sets can be too narrow or without specificity, the dependent variables do not adequately measure a show's success, and certain variables, like the show's critical reception or

¹⁸ The database can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/y9lxao4f>

Tony Award nominations and wins are decided after the show opens, making them impractical to help producers before developing a musical adaptation (see Table 9).

Table 9

Previous studies using regression analysis to predict the success of Broadway productions				
Year	Author(s)	Sample set	Dependent variable	Independent variables
1998	Reddy, Swaminathan, and Motley	All Broadway productions opening during the 1980-1981 and 1981-1982 seasons, excluding limited engagements (102 productions) A random sample of Broadway shows produced during the 1991-1992 through 1993-1994 seasons (40 productions)	Number of performances	Critical reviews Box office and attendance for previews Advertisement Ticket prices Show category Opening date Talent
2003	Simonoff and Ma	Broadway shows eligible for Tony Awards in the 1996-1997 through 1999-2000 seasons with limited engagements omitted. (88 productions)	Number of performances prior to announcement of Tony Awards nominations Number of performances after announcement of Tony Awards nominations Number of performances after Tony Awards ceremony	Critical reviews Category of show Opening week attendance Tony Award wins and nominations Opening Month
2004	Maddison	All Broadway shows listed on IBDb.com opening between 1960 and 2003 (1887 productions)	Number of performances	Category of show Genre of show Production (New or Revival) Tony Award for Best Play or Best Musical

2014	Herschberg	All Broadway shows produced between 1988 and 2003 with limited engagements omitted. (360 productions)	Number of performances	Category of show Production (New or Revival) Origination location Show running time Show setting Show cast size and amount of Broadway debuts
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The dependent variable for all four articles is the longevity or the number of performances for a production. Longevity, however, is not a reliable measurement of a musical's success. If a show runs relatively long, it is implied that the additional number of performances and the chance to sell tickets would increase profits. However, there is not a determination of the exact number of performances that guarantees success due to the fluctuation of initial capitalization, operating costs, and ticket prices. The film-based musical *Sunset Boulevard* (1994), for example, ran two and a half years, closing after 1,530 performances. The production only recouped 85% of its capitalization (Grimes, 1997, para 7). On the contrary, *Newsies: The Musical* (2012) also a film-based musical, announced its recoupment on December 20, 2012 after approximately 300 performances over nine months after opening on March 29, 2012 (Healy, 2012). Jeffrey Seller (2014), producer of *Rent* (1996), *In the Heights* (2008), *Avenue Q* (2003), and *Hamilton* (2015), states "the true measure of a show's success is if it recoups" (J. Seller, personal communication, 2014). Despite the number of performances, the most accurate measure of a Broadway musical's success for commercial producers is its profitability. With this in mind, I chose recoupment (yes/no) as the dependent variable for this article.

All of the previous studies address all Broadway shows, without specificity, with variances in the size of the sample set based on the number of seasons observed. Reddy,

Swaminathan, and Motley (1998) had limited resources and while their intent was to observe ten years of data, only use the first two seasons of the 1980s and a random selection of 40 productions produced between 1991 and 1994. The remaining studies provide no information regarding parameters used to determine the number of seasons observed. The sample set used in this study differs greatly from the other studies. Since my focus is on new film-based musicals only, all other types of productions are omitted from the study.

When deciding to develop a musical, a producer has limited knowledge of how the musical will be received by critics, the Tony Award nomination committee and voters, nor the general public. Although these variables can help inform producers the level of importance of these factors play on a musical's longevity, these determinants cannot be used to inform producers what types of source material to adapt or how to develop the musicals. The novelty of this article is that no determinants relating to the quality of the musical adaptation are used. Therefore, the results of this study can inform producers and their investors as they choose properties for adaptation and subsequently, what production factors can be utilized when producing a film-based musical.

In observance of the previous studies, I seek to fill multiple gaps in the literature. The specialization of the article, determining factors that contribute to the success of film-based musicals, offers a unique and timely focus as producers continually develop musicals based on films. The dependent variable, recoument, is a more practical metric of success of a musical because it relates to the profitability of a production without doubt, unlike the longevity or the number of performances. Producers and investors do not have the luxury of waiting to invest in a production until after the show has opened, therefore, variables created relating to the success of the musicals are not utilized in this study.

Methodology

The Sample Set. One hundred twenty-five film-based musicals were produced on Broadway between February 11, 1953 and April 27, 2017, but limitations only allow 96 to be a part of the sample set. Since recoupment is the dependent variable, only shows with reported recoupment are observed. This excludes six musicals that are running as of April 23, 2017 that have not yet recouped¹⁹ and two musicals produced by the non-profit company, Lincoln Center Theater.²⁰ Only new productions of musicals are considered, given that the bankability of a source would alter when including the 15 revivals of film-based musicals. A final consideration is given to holiday or touring productions whose business models differ greatly from regular Broadway musicals. Holiday musicals and their revivals like *A Christmas Story: The Musical* (2012), the two productions of *Elf* (2010), *Holiday Inn, The New Irving Berlin Musical* (2016), and *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* (2009) had limited runs with no intention of recouping within one season (Lunden, 2012). The 2011-2012 touring production of *Bring It On: The Musical* (2012) made a final stop on Broadway for a limited run August 1, 2012 through December 30, 2012. *Bring it On: The Musical* did “not need to recoup all their costs in New York because expenses are amortized over the tour’s run” (Healy, 2014, para 14). After removing shows without recoupment statistics, revivals, seasonal, and touring productions, 96 samples remain.

¹⁹ Each of these musicals, *Amelie* (2017), *Anastasia* (2017), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2017), *Groundhog Day* (2017), *School of Rock: The Musical* (2015), and *War Paint* (2017), either closed prior to recouping or posted recoupment between the cut-off date of the data collection and the timing of this writing. These musicals, will, therefore, be used as part of the out-of-sample set to test the accuracy of the model.

²⁰ *My Favorite Year* (1992) and *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (2010).

Variables. In conducting this study using logistical regression to predict recoupment, a set of variables related to the source material of a musical is selected, tested, and finally utilized in a base model. I create a full model by using the optimal variables of the base model and add variables related to the subsequent Broadway productions to determine the further factors that can better predict a musical's probability of recoupment.

I began the process of selecting elements that can be tested for correlation to a film-based musical's success with the source material and continued with factors related to the subsequent production. The three types of data I collected include the quantitative attributes of a film, factors related to the perception of the film, and facts pertaining to the production of the subsequent musical adaption. The Internet Broadway Database (IMDb), found at www.imdb.com, provides all of the factual information related to the film. Subjective factors relating to a film are collected, in addition to IMDb, from Rotten Tomatoes at www.rottentomatoes.com, The American Film Institute, found at <https://www.afi.com/100years/>, and Box Office Mojo found at www.boxofficemojo.com. Information about the Broadway production is taken from the Internet Broadway Database (IBDb) at www.ibdb.com and the Playbill Vault at www.playbillvault.com.

I discuss each variable or variable detailing the purpose for exploration, the source of the data collection, the description of its content, and if the variable can further benefit the study. After each description, I created a table that features the distribution and recoupment statistics of the sample set across the variable or variable set. For clarity, I separated the distribution of continuous variables into bins or dummy variables (yes/no), including a variable using above or equal to the median (yes/no) value of the distribution. When necessary, I give the number of the sample set if the variable does not apply to all musicals observed. For example, the variable of film rating is taken from the Motion Picture Association of America (M.P.A.A.) rating system,

which began in 1968. Any film released prior to 1968 without a subsequent theatrical release does not have a rating.²¹ Only 46 of the films used as source material have an M.P.A.A. Rating.

Film factors. The first set of data I observed for this study is information about each film used as source material for a Broadway musical. In addition to the analytical purposes of the data, the information I observed also provides historical insight to the characteristics and patterns of films being adapted into film-based musicals. The selection of the subjective variables related to the film is dependent upon the following questions:

1. When was the film made and how much time has lapsed between the opening of the film and the opening of its musical adaptation?
2. Should producers pay attention to the M.P.A.A. rating of a film?
3. Are there particular directors whose works are more amenable for musical adaptations?
4. Are films from major studios and distributors better suited for Broadway success?
5. Since Broadway is an American medium, does the film's country of origin play a factor in the musical adaptation's success?
6. What is the importance of a film's genre as it pertains to the musical adaptation?
7. What types of music from the film should be used in the musical, if any?
8. Do longer or shorter films make better source material for musical adaptations?

To answer these questions, I collected data from the Internet Movie Database found at www.imdb.com. Included are the film's date of release, the film's rating, the director of the film,

²¹ For example, *Mary Poppins* (film), though debuting in 1964 received a rating of G after being re-released in theaters in 1973.

the film’s studio or distributor, the country from which the film originates, the film’s genre, and the running time of the film.

Date. The release dates of films are observed to help producers identify films for adaptations according to the era of their release. The opening night of the films used as source material range from April 1, 1930²² to January 21, 2007²³. For clarity, I arranged the dates into bins separated by decade. The median opening date is May 27, 1968 (see Table 10).

Table 10

Distribution of sample set per opening date by decade

Decade	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
After Median: May 27, 1968	46	12	26%
1930s	9	3	33%
1940s	6	0	0%
1950s	22	6	27%
1960s	13	5	38%
1970s	9	1	11%
1980s	11	2	18%
1990s	16	5	31%
2000s	10	4	40%

The observations of release dates can have problematic results. Though certain decades represent different styles or eras of filmmaking, which can affect the attraction of a film for different audiences, the recognition of a title can wane over time. That is, to say, would a film from the 1950s adapted into a musical in the 1950s be as popular as if it was made today? To address this issue, in addition to the date of the film’s release, I created a variable based on the duration of time between the film and musical opening dates. The median is 17.5 years (see Table 11).

²² *The Blue Angel* (1930), the basis of *Pousse-Café* (1966)

²³ *Waitress* (2007), the basis of *Waitress* (2016)

Table 11

Distribution of sample set per duration between film and musical opening dates

Duration	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Less than Median: 17 1/2 years	48	16	33%
Less than 10 years	26	12	46%
10 to 20 years	34	8	24%
20 to 30 years	10	1	10%
30 to 40 years	8	2	25%
40 to 50 years	11	2	18%
50 to 60 years	5	1	20%
More than 60 years	2	0	0%

Rating. Broadway shows do not have a rating system, yet if a producer’s focus is on family friendly entertainment, observation of the film’s rating might impact the selection of films for the musicals adaptation process. As part of the M.P.A.A., “The Classification and Rating Administration (C.A.R.A.) issues ratings for motion pictures exhibited and distributed commercially to the public in the United States, with the intent to provide parents information concerning the content of those motion pictures, to aid them in determining the suitability of individual motion pictures for viewing by their children” (“Film submissions for ratings,” 2018, para 1). The ratings include “G” for “General Audiences,” “PG” for “Parental Guidance Suggested,” “PG-13” for “Parents Strongly Cautioned,” “R” for “Restricted Audiences,” and “NC-17” for “Adults only” (Graves, 2010).²⁴ Since the rating system debuted in 1968, any film released prior to 1968 that did not have a subsequent theatrical release does not have a rating. Forty-six of the 96 films adapted into musicals have an M.P.A.A. rating. Due to the limited number of samples, it is difficult to determine an accurate correlation between the rating of the

²⁴ There were no films used as source material for Broadway musicals rated “NC-17.” The initial release of *American Psycho* (2000), which was adapted from the same 1991 novel as the 2016 musical, received an “NC-17” from the M.P.A.A.

film and the recoupment of its musical adaptation. The rating could not be utilized for the regression model (see Table 12).

Table 12

Distribution of sample set per film M.P.A.A. rating

Rating	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
G	6	3	50%
PG	20	5	25%
PG-13	13	3	23%
R	7	3	43%

Director. The popularity of Broadway musical based on a film can be dependent upon the notoriety and style of the director. However, after further observation of past film-based musicals, I found only ten directors of films that have had more than one adaptation of a film, making it statistically irrelevant for the study. Of the film directors, only Billy Wilder (3), Charles Walters (2), Federico Fellini (3), George Stevens (2), Herbert Ross (2), Mel Brooks (2), the team of Ron Clements and John Musker (2), Stanley Donen (2), Stephen Spielberg (2), and Vincent Minnelli (3) have multiple films adapted into musicals. Therefore, the variable of director could not be utilized for the regression model (see Table 13).

Table 13

Distribution of sample set per director (multiple films)

Director	Total	Recouped	% Recouped
Mel Brooks	2	1	50%
Ron Celments and John Musker	2	1	50%
Stanley Donen	2	0	0%
Federico Fellini	3	2	67%
Vincent Minelli	3	0	0%
Herbert Ross	2	1	50%
Stephen Spielberg	2	1	50%
George Stevens	2	0	0%
Charles Walters	2	1	50%
John Waters	2	1	50%
Billy Wilder	3	2	67%

Studios/distributors. Though DreamWorks and Walt Disney Studios have theatrical divisions to adapt their own properties for Broadway like *Shrek* and *The Lion King* (1995), Broadway producers are not entirely shutout from gaining the rights to all film properties. Therefore, I created a variable to assess the significance of a film’s studio and/or distributor. The films are separated into the major studios with a separate variable containing the sum of films from mini-majors, independent studios, and foreign studios. An additional binomial variable is created to show the difference between films produced or distributed by major studios and those that are not. Due to the low distribution of films within a number of bins representing each studio, the variables referring to particular studios cannot be utilized in the regression model. However, the dummy variable separating films produced by major studios from others can be utilized (see Table 14).

Table 14

Distribution of sample set per studio or distributor

Studio/distributor	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Film from a major studio	62	15	24%
Mini-major, independent, or foreign film	34	11	32%
Columbia/CBS film	5	1	20%
DreamWorks/Amblin film	3	1	33%
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film	14	3	21%
Paramount film	8	0	0%
RKO film	1	0	0%
20th Fox film	6	1	17%
United Artists film	7	2	29%
Universal film	5	1	20%
Walt Disney or Touchstone film	9	5	56%
Warner Brothers film	4	1	25%

Country. Though the majority of the films adapted into musicals come from the United States, it is still valuable information to observe the other countries that released films used as source material. However, due to the low number of samples from all other countries, the

variable based on the individual countries is not conducive to a regression model. Instead, a factor delineating American and foreign films is utilized in the base model (see Table 15).

Table 15

Distribution of sample set per country

Country	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
American Film	78	19	24%
British Film	7	3	43%
Italian Film	5	2	40%
French Film	2	0	0%
German Film	1	0	0%
Irish Film	1	1	100%
Swedish Film	1	1	100%
Australian Film	1	0	0%

Genre. IMDb lists 22 different genres for films and there is a possibility of a film having up to seven different genres (“Browse movies and tv by genre,” 2018). Only two of the 22 genres are not present among the sample set, science fiction and action. Due to the complexity of genres, I made several observations. An assumption can be made that in order to appeal to more audiences, a film used for adaptation that combines more genres would be better than fewer genres. This is observed by counting the number of genres IMDb lists for each film. The genre count can be utilized in the regression model (see Table 16).

Table 16

Distribution of sample set per genre count

Genre Count	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
1	11	4	36%
2	30	6	20%
3	33	9	27%
4	11	2	18%
5	9	3	33%
6	1	1	100%
7	1	1	100%

A second observation is created using dummy variables for each of the 20 genres. The number of films designated for each genre is tallied. Twenty different variables among just 96 films is problematic as it creates statistical noise. This variable, therefore, could not be used in the regression model (see Table 17).

Table 17

Distribution of sample set per genre

Genre	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Adventure	7	3	43%
Animation	6	3	50%
Biography	4	0	0%
Comedy	58	14	24%
Crime	7	0	0%
Documentary	2	0	0%
Drama	52	17	33%
Family	17	6	35%
Fantasy	13	6	46%
Film Noir	2	0	0%
History	4	2	50%
Horror	2	0	0%
Music	14	4	29%
Musical	23	8	35%
Mystery	1	0	0%
Romance	50	14	28%
Sport	2	0	0%
Thriller	2	0	0%
War	3	1	33%
Western	3	1	33%

Another consideration I made in reference to the genres is the different combinations. There are 62 unique combinations of genres within the sample set of 96 films, which is too convoluted for this study (see Appendix A). Instead, I take a different approach by using the most popular combinations (see Table 18). However, because 28 films qualify in more than one combination of genres, any attempt at finding correlations with specific combinations would be

flawed. Therefore, the variable of genre combinations could not be utilized in the regression model.

Table 18

Distribution of sample set per film genre combination

Genre combination	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Comedy & Drama	20	6	30%
Comedy & Romance	33	10	30%
Drama & Romance	27	9	33%
Musical & Romance	17	4	24%
Comedy & Musical	14	3	21%
Comedy & Drama & Romance	15	5	33%
Comedy & Romance & Musical	11	2	18%

My final observation related to genre is the first listed genre of the film according to IMDb. After collecting the data and comparing it with the films, I realized the results were problematic. For example, only one of the 23 musical films adapted into Broadway musicals, *Cinderella* (1957) is classified as a musical if going by the first genre listed. Upon further investigation, IMDb does not explain the order to which genres are assigned, so it is best not to rely on this variable for the regression model (see Table 19).

Table 19

Distribution of sample set per first genre

First genre	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Adventure	2	0	0%
Animation	6	3	50%
Biography	4	0	0%
Comedy	53	13	25%
Crime	1	0	0%
Documentary	2	0	0%
Drama	25	10	40%
Family	0	0	0%
Fantasy	1	0	0%
Musical	1	0	0%
Romance	1	0	0%

Music. After observing the sample set of musical adaptations, I made a discovery that led to my creation of the variable of music. As I mentioned, there are 23 musicals that are based on films that are classified as a musical by IMDb. Many times, the Broadway musical retains the diegetic music, or music sung by the characters, from the film. For example, *Aladdin* (2014) uses five songs from the 1992 movie of the same name. There are, however, examples of films that are not necessarily musicals as designated by IMDb that contain diegetic songs carried over to the musical adaptation like *Once* (2006). Nine musical adaptations contain music that was non-diegetic in the film, meaning the songs were a part of the soundtrack but not sung by the characters. Though non-diegetic in the film, the songs are sung in the stage adaptation. Examples include “9 to 5” from the 1980 film of the same name, featured in the musical, *9 to 5* (2009) and “Eye of the Tiger,” which was non-diegetic in the in the movie sequel *Rocky III* (1982) but was sung by the character Rocky and the men’s ensemble in *Rocky: The Musical* (2014). The musical is based on the original 1976 film of the same name. I make the designation of the type of music by observing the primary source material(s) and the subsequent adaptation. I created a categorical variable for the model that separates the sample set based on their musical score: uses non-diegetic film music, uses only original music, and uses diegetic film music (see Table 20).

Table 20

Distribution of sample set per music

Music	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Non-Diegetic Film Music	9	0	0%
Only Original Music	64	17	27%
Diegetic Film Music	23	9	39%

Time. Marc Hershberg (2014), when researching the factors that can lead to a show’s longevity, chooses the duration of a production as a variable due to previous studies discovering the correlation of a film’s duration to its monetary success. With this as context, I created a

variable using the running time of each film. The median running time is 106 minutes (see Table 21).

Table 21

Distribution of sample set per running time

Time	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Equal or more than median - 106 minutes	45	14	31%
70 to 79 minutes	3	0	0%
80 to 89 minutes	10	7	70%
90 to 99 minutes	21	4	19%
100 to 109 minutes	26	4	15%
100 to 119 minutes	17	4	24%
120 to 129 minutes	8	3	38%
130 to 139 minutes	8	3	38%
140 to 149 minutes	2	0	0%
150 to 159 minutes	1	1	100%

In search of reliable factors for the base model, the variables related to the decade of the opening date and duration between the film and Broadway opening dates can be used. Also utilized are the dummy variables I created for major studio (yes/no) and American film (yes/no) in addition to the genre count of each film. The variable music, separated by diegetic music, non-diegetic music, and no music is conducive to the regression model. The running time of the source film is the final film factor variable utilized in the regression model. I eliminated the film rating and film director due to the small size of the sample set. I also eliminated the dummy variables for each studio or distributor and country. The complexity of having 20 different bins with a wide-ranging distribution, the nature of 28 films qualifying for multiple genre combinations, and the inconsistency of first named genres, prevent the three variables genre related to be used in the study.

Audience perception. It stands to reason that good or popular films would make good and popular musicals. In order to test this assumption, I collected data related to the perception of

the film. To examine the critical reception of the film, I collected the scores provided by Rotten Tomatoes, a review aggregator. The first set of peer reception statistics is based upon entry within either of the American Film Institute’s list of “100 Greatest American Movies” (1998, 2007). The Academy Awards won by a film also provide a metric of a film’s success based on peer reception. For each film, I collected the Rotten Tomatoes audience score, IMDb rating, and the adjusted domestic box office grosses measures of the general public’s opinions of the film.

Critics. Rotten Tomatoes, found at <http://www.rottentomatoes.com>, gives a Tomatorater score based on the percentage of positive reviews a film is given by selected critics (“About Rotten Tomatoes,” 2016, para 3). Eighty-six of the 96 films in the study have Rotten Tomatoes critics’ scores. Because of the limited scope of the distribution among the sample set, the Rotten Tomatoes critics’ scores could not be utilized for the regression model. The median score is 90.5% (see Table 22).

Table 22

Distribution of sample set per Rotten Tomatoes critics’ scores

Tomatorater score	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Above Median 90.5%	43	16	37%
10% to 19%	1	0	0%
20% to 29%	0	0	0%
30% to 39%	1	0	0%
40% to 49%	1	1	100%
50% to 59%	2	1	50%
60% to 69%	8	0	0%
70% to 79%	6	0	0%
80% to 89%	19	4	21%
90% to 99%	37	14	38%
100%	11	4	36%

Peers. To measure the reception of the film from other members of the entertainment industry, I used two resources. The first source I used is the American Film Institute’s list of 100

greatest films of the last 100 years published in 1998 and again in 2007. The Academy Awards are the second metric used for the peer reception of films.

In 1998, the American Film Institute published a list of the 100 greatest films of the last 100 years voted upon “1,500 leaders from the American film community” (“A.F.I.’s 100 Years...100 Movies,” 2018, para 2). A second list was published in 2007 in celebration of the original list’s 10th Anniversary. For this study the appearance of a film on either list is applicable. Only seven films appear on either list. The list is problematic as the notoriety of a film has the possibility of being affected by adaptations or sequels based on the film. Six of the seven films on the A.F.I. list that were later adapted into musicals had musical adaptations that debuted prior to the list being made. Therefore, without the knowledge of whether or not a film’s subsequent musical adaptation affected the popularity of the film among voters, this variable cannot be utilized for the regression model (see Table 23).

Table 23

Distribution of sample set per film on A.F.I. Top 100 Lists

A.F.I.	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
On either list	7	3	43%

The Academy Awards, or Oscars, are presented each year for excellence in film making. “Most categories are nominated by the members of the corresponding branch—actors nominate actors, film editors nominate film editors, etc.” (“Voting,” 2015, para 2). All members of the Academy take part in nominating films for Best Picture. Once the nominations are announced, all voting members select the winners. For each film, a tally of the Oscars won are collected from www.imdb.com, creating the first variable of Oscar wins that can be utilized in the regression model. An additional dummy variable is created for an Oscar winner (yes/no).

Of the 24 categories that might be conducive to this study, I selected six. The first set of Oscar categories I observed are collectively known as “The Big Five,” which include Best Motion Picture of the Year, Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role, Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role, Achievement in Directing, and Adapted Screenplay or Original Screenplay (Lokker, 2018). The sixth category I utilized for the study is for Achievements in Music Written for Motion Pictures: Original Song. Through further investigation, the limited number of samples winning in each of the selected categories prevents the variables from being useful in the regression model. However, the continuous variable of Oscars won is further examined for the regression model (see Table 24).

Table 24

Distribution of sample set per Oscars

Oscars	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Oscar Winner	38	14	37%
0 Oscars	58	12	21%
1 Oscar	22	7	32%
2 Oscars	8	4	50%
3 Oscars	3	0	0%
5 Oscars	2	2	100%
6 Oscars	2	1	50%
9 Oscars	1	0	0%
Won a Big 5 Oscar	13	5	38%
Best Picture	6	3	50%
Best Actor	1	0	0%
Best Actress	1	1	100%
Best Director	5	2	40%
Best Screenplay (Either Category)	8	3	38%
Best Song	11	5	45%

General public. The reception of the general public is measured in three ways. My first observation is the Rotten Tomatoes Audience score. The IMDb provides a film rating that is

voted on by the general public using a weighted system. The final metric is the adjusted gross of the film collected from Box Office Mojo on June 1, 2017.

Similar to the critical score, Rotten Tomatoes offers a Tomatorater score based on the percentage of positive reviews given by visitors to the website. Although the score may be helpful for users, it can be easily manipulated by bots or other simply by people who want to manipulate the score for their own benefit. Alissa Wilkinson of Vox states, “Anyone on the internet can contribute — not just those who actually saw the film. As a result, a film’s Rotten Tomatoes score can be gamed by internet trolls seeking to sink it simply because they find its concept offensive” (Wilkinson, 2017, para 21). Without monitoring or regulation of the votes, the audience ratings on Rotten Tomatoes are not a reliable source of a film’s quality. The audience score from Rotten Tomatoes, therefore, could not be utilized for the regression model. The median score is 86% (see Table 25).

Table 25

Distribution of sample set per film Rotten Tomatoes audience scores

Rotten Tomatoes Audience Score	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Above or Equal to 86%	47	17	36%
30% to 39%	1	0	0%
40% to 49%	1	0	0%
50% to 59%	3	0	0%
60% to 69%	5	0	0%
70% to 79%	17	5	29%
80% to 89%	36	9	25%
90% to 100%	27	11	41%

The IMDb rating found on each individual film page is a score of 1 to 10 based on the weighted average of scores received from registered IMDb users. IMDb displays weighted vote averages rather than raw data averages. According to IMDb, “various filters are applied to the raw data in order to eliminate and reduce attempts at “vote stuffing” by individuals more

interested in changing the current rating of a movie or TV show than giving their true opinion of it” (“Weighted average ratings,” 2018, para 1). With the measures IMDb takes to prevent manipulation of its scores, I determined that the IMDb rating is a reliable source for an audience’s gauge of a film and it is used in the regression model. One finding of interest is that none of the 19 films with a score of 6.9 or lower has been adapted into a profitable musical. There is a total of 95 films within the sample set, which is still a large enough number for further utilization, and the median score is 7.5 (see Table 26).

Table 26

Distribution of sample set per IMDb rating

IMDb rating	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Above or Equal to Median: 7.5	51	19	37%
Less than 7.0	19	0	0%
7.0	6	3	50%
7.1	4	1	25%
7.2	4	1	25%
7.3	5	0	0%
7.4	38	5	13%
7.5	5	1	20%
7.6	5	2	40%
7.7	11	2	18%
7.8	4	2	50%
7.9	5	2	40%
8.0	6	3	50%
8.1	5	1	20%
8.2	2	1	50%
8.3	6	4	67%
8.5	2	1	50%

My third measure of the general publics’ reception of the film used as source material is its box office gross. Box Office Mojo, a website owned by IMDb provides the published domestic box office grosses for films. For a more accurate comparison among movie grosses, Box Office Mojo provides adjusted grosses for inflation. To do so, the original gross is

recalculated using the average ticket price of a given year. For example, in 1974, the average ticket price is \$1.87, while the average ticket price on June 1, 2017 was \$8.89 (“All time box office adjusted for ticket price inflation,” 2017). A movie like *Young Frankenstein* that opened in 1974 with a gross of \$85,360,400 has an adjusted gross of \$405,804,200. Box Office Mojo only provides the grosses for 42 of the 96 films within the study, making this metric unsuitable for the regression model. One take-away however from observations of the adjusted gross is the significant difference between the number of musicals that recouped based on films that grossed less than \$100 million with 8/20 (40%) compared to films grossing higher than \$100 mil with 6/22 or 27%. As more film-based musicals are released based on films with box office gross data, this variable has the possibility of becoming highly significant for future models. The median adjusted gross is \$148 million (see Table 27).

Table 27

Distribution of sample set per adjusted box office gross

Adjusted box office gross	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Above Median: \$148 million	22	6	27%
\$0 million to \$25 million	8	5	63%
\$25 million to \$50 million	4	1	25%
\$50 million to \$75 million	3	0	0%
\$75 million to \$100 million	5	1	20%
\$100 million to \$200 million	3	0	0%
\$200 million to \$300 million	7	1	14%
\$300 million to \$400 million	4	1	25%
\$400 million to \$500 million	6	2	33%
\$600 million to \$700 million	1	1	100%
\$700 million to \$800 million	1	1	100%

To measure the quality of a film, the I focused on the reception of critics, peers, and the general public. Among these variables, only the variable of Oscar wins and the IMDb rating are utilized in the regression mode. The variable measuring the critics’ reception from Rotten

Tomatoes is limited to just 86 of the 96 films within the sample set. Of the peer-related sources, the A.F.I. does not make available its selection criteria, and the small number of recipients among the observed categories for Academy Awards prevent the variables from further utilization. The Rotten Tomatoes audience score is not reliable due to ballot tampering, and the number of films with adjusted box office gross information is too small for a statistical analysis. In the future, however, as more film-based musicals open on Broadway based on newer films, the adjusted box office gross could become an important factor in predicting the success of musical adaptations.

Broadway factors. The purpose of adding Broadway related variables to the base model is to increase the accuracy of the full model and provide producers the factors that best correlate with a show's success or failure. A Broadway producer faces many concerns after choosing source material for a musical adaptation:

1. What should the musical be titled?
2. Do I have to have a star actor, director, or writing team in order to have a hit?
3. Should the production workshop in another theater first or open directly on Broadway?
4. Is there a particular time of year better to open a show than others?
5. What is the best theater for a musical?

In addressing these concerns, I collected a set of data from each Broadway musical adaptation of a film. Included in the data is: the title of the musical; the creative team including the composer/lyricist(s), the director, and the top billed actor/actress; the opening date; the origin of the musical production; the Broadway theater in which the musical opened; and the theater's capacity.

Title. The first Broadway factor observed is the title of the musical as it compares to the title of the film. Jed Bernstein, former president of The Broadway League, when asked about retaining the name of a film for a musical adaptation, states: “This is a classic example of extending the life of the brand,” adding, “One of the biggest challenges for selling a Broadway show is that it’s a relatively high price. How can I tell you stuff that will reassure you that you’re going to spend your 90 bucks and you’re going to like it? If it’s based on a title I know, I’m going to feel a little more confident that I’m going to like it” (Marks, 2002, para 12-13). Despite Bernstein’s bravado, retaining the same title is not as beneficial to a production as believed (see Table 28).

Table 28

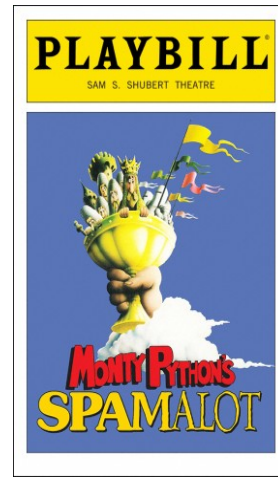
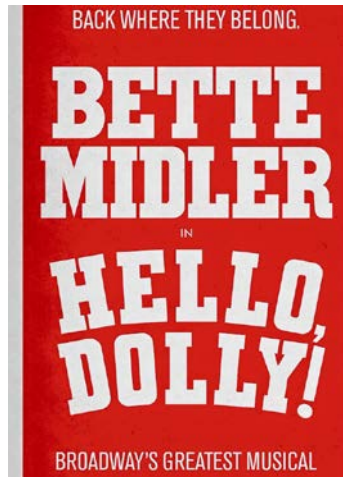
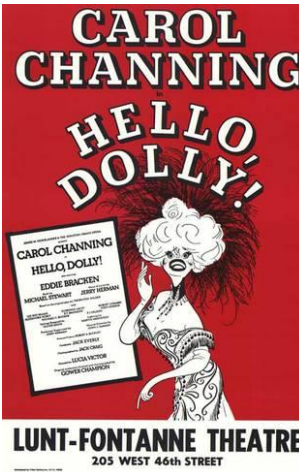
Distribution of sample set per film and musical title

Title	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Same title	68	16	24%
Different title	28	10	36%

Creative Staff. In “Screen to Stage...” I discussed the importance of male stars for Broadway musicals. For this study, I expanded the research to include the star of the musical, regardless of sex, the director, and the composer/lyricist. In addition to actors, name recognition of a director or a composer/lyricist can be used to market a show. For example, current and past actors who portrayed the title character of Dolly Levi in *Hello Dolly!* (1964) have their names featured prominently in advertisements for the show (see Illustrations 1 and 2). The official name of *Bob Fosse’s Dancin’* is *Dancin’* (1978), yet in the marketing materials, the famed director and choreographer’s name appears as part of the title of the show (see Illustration 3). Similarly,

Spamalot's (2005) title is prefaced with its source creator's names, Monty Python, on the *Playbill* cover²⁵ (see Illustration 4).

Illustration 1	Illustration 2	Illustration 3	Illustration 4
Carol Channing – <i>Hello, Dolly!</i>	Bette Midler – <i>Hello, Dolly!</i>	Bob Fosse's <i>Dancin'</i>	Monty Python's <i>Spamalot</i>



To analyze the benefit of a star actor, director, and composer/lyricist, I collected data related to these three important fixtures of the creative team. In order to determine the star of the musical, I chose the first cast member listed above the title or appearing first on the title page of the musical's *Playbill*. Each of the three members of the creative staff is given a score that determines the amount of success each had prior to the current musical. For example, if a director had five previous musicals that recouped on Broadway, their score would be 5. Because composer and lyricist teams can change throughout a career,²⁶ I counted the previous hits seasoned member of the team. I also created a variable for composer/lyricists based on their

²⁵ In addition to sparking interest in the musical based on the audience's knowledge of the comedy group, Monty Python, those familiar with the group and source film, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975) may recognize that the title is an allusion to the line "We eat ham and jam and spam a lot" sung in the film. (Hernandez, 2003)

²⁶ For example, Andrew Lloyd Webber composed the film-based musicals *Sunset Boulevard* with Don Black and Christopher Hampton and *School of Rock* with Glenn Slater.

experience on Broadway. Many times, Broadway attracts artists from other media like popular music²⁷, film²⁸, and television²⁹ to compose new musicals. To determine whether a composer/lyricist(s) came from another medium or is new to Broadway, each composer/lyricist's biographical information from the show's Playbill is observed. If no past Broadway works are listed, the composer/lyricist is designated to be from another medium or a new composer/lyricist (see Table 29).

Table 29

Distribution of sample set per number of hits for musical lead actor/actress

Lead actor/actress previous hits	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
0	52	13	25%
1	36	9	25%
2	4	2	50%
3	2	1	50%
4 or more	2	1	50%

Distribution of sample set per number of previous hits for director

Broadway Director Previous Success(es)	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
0	49	12	24%
1	30	7	23%
2	11	5	45%
3 or more	6	2	33%

Distribution of sample set per previous hits for composer and/or lyricist

Composer and/or Lyricist Previous Success(es)	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
0	56	17	30%
1	22	5	23%
2	5	1	20%
3	2	0	0%
4	2	1	50%
5 or more	9	2	22%
1st Broadway Show	34	10	29%

²⁷ For example, *Kinky Boots* (2014) was composed by popular music star Cyndi Lauper.

²⁸ For example, prior to bringing *The Producers* (2001) to Broadway, composer Mel Brooks had written music for many of his earlier films and received an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Song for the film *Blazing Saddles* (1974).

²⁹ For example, *South Park* (1997) creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone later went on to co-compose *The Book of Mormon* (2011) with Robert Lopez.

Season. The timing of the opening of a Broadway show can be strategic or by default. Many times, producers choose to open their shows during the holiday months of November and December, when many tourists come to New York or during the Tony season months of March and April (“Broadway marketing calendar - month by month” 2018). The distribution among the months is skewed towards these four non-consecutive months. For use in a logistical model, a set of dates with this type of distribution would be counterintuitive. Instead, a dummy variable (yes/no) is created using the four peak months (see Table 30).

Table 30

Distribution of sample set per opening month			
Month	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Peak months: Mar., Apr., Nov., Dec.	66	18	27%
Off peak months (Jan., Feb., May, Jul., Aug., Sept., Oct.)	30	8	27%
January	5	2	40%
February	6	2	33%
March	16	5	31%
April	26	6	23%
May	4	1	25%
July	3	0	0%
August	2	2	100%
September	1	0	0%
October	9	1	11%
November	13	5	38%
December	11	2	18%

Origination. Frequently Broadway musicals do not originate on Broadway. Instead, shows can be developed in the West End in London³⁰ or other foreign countries³¹, at a regional

³⁰ For example, *Sunset Boulevard* premiered at composers Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Sydnampton Festival and subsequently in the West End’s Adelphi Theater.

³¹ For example, *Rocky: The Musical* was developed in Hamburg, Germany.

theater³², in an out-of-town try-out or tour³³, or Off Broadway.³⁴ This is typical so that a show might gestate without the pressures of New York City critics and audiences (Cox, 2016).

Dummy variables are created using Off Broadway, Overseas, US Outside of New York, and On Broadway. For the regression model, the dummy variable On Broadway (yes/no) which denotes if the musical opened directly on Broadway, is utilized (see Table 31).

Table 31

Distribution of sample set per production origin			
Location	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Off Broadway	2	1	50%
Overseas	11	2	18%
U.S. Outside of New York City	52	18	35%
On Broadway	32	5	16%

Theaters. A final factor I observed is the theater in which the film-based musical is housed. There are currently 41 Broadway theaters on Broadway. Not all 41 theaters are available for producers to pick and choose for their musical adaptation. The 6-combined theaters owned and operated by the non-profit companies Lincoln Center Theater³⁵, Manhattan Theater Club³⁶, Roundabout Theater Company³⁷, and Second Stage³⁸, regularly house self-produced shows, with the exception of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (2013), currently running at Roundabout's Stephen Sondheim Theater. The New Amsterdam Theater, which is operated by Disney Theatrical Group, exclusively presents Disney-produced shows. A further limitation is the

³² For example, *Newsies: The Musical* originated at The Papermill Playhouse in Milburn, New Jersey.

³³ For example, *Gigi* (1973) began life in a pre-Broadway tour.

³⁴ For example, *Once* premiered at The New York Theater Workshop.

³⁵ Vivian Beaumont Theater

³⁶ Samuel J. Friedman Theater

³⁷ American Airlines Theater, Stephen Sondheim Theater, and Studio 54

³⁸ Helen Hayes Theater, which housed the film-based musical *Xanadu* (musical) prior to a change in ownership.

number of long-running shows that can take up real estate in a theater for years at a time. For example, the last show to open at the Majestic Theater prior to *Phantom of the Opera* (1988) was a transfer of *42nd Street* (1980) from the Winter Garden Theater on March 30, 1981 running through April 5, 1987 before moving again to the St. James Theater. Of the 41 Broadway theaters, 31 currently house or housed film-based musicals with recoupment data.³⁹ Due to the limited number of theaters available at any given time and the high number of bins with low number of samples, the variable of Broadway theater cannot be utilized for the regression model (see Table 32).

Table 32

Distribution of sample set per Broadway theater

Theater	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
The Al Hirschfeld Theater	4	2	50%
The August Wilson Theater	2	0	0%
The Belasco Theater	1	0	0%
The Bernard B. Jacobs Theater	1	1	100%
The Broadhurst Theater	2	0	0%
The Broadway Theater	5	1	20%
The Brooks Atkinson Theater	2	1	50%
The Eugene O’Neill Theater	1	1	100%
The George Abbott Theater	1	0	0%
The Gerald Schoenfeld Theater	2	0	0%
The Gershwin Theater	5	1	20%
The Helen Hayes Theater	1	0	0%
The Imperial Theater	6	3	50%
The Lunt-Fontaine Theater	5	0	0%
The Lyric Theater	2	0	0%
The Majestic Theater	4	3	75%
The Mark Hellinger Theater	3	0	0%
The Marquis Theater	6	0	0%
The Minskoff Theater	4	0	0%

³⁹ The current theater names as of May 2018 are used in the table. The George Abbott Theater, The Mark Hellinger Theater, The New Century Theater, and The Ziegfeld Theater no longer operate as Broadway theaters.

The Music Box Theater	1	0	0%
The Nederlander Theater	2	1	50%
The Neil Simon Theater	6	2	33%
The New Amsterdam Theater	3	3	100%
The New Century Theater	1	0	0%
The Palace Theater	7	3	43%
The Richard Rodgers Theater	5	1	20%
The Shubert Theater	4	2	50%
The St. James Theater	5	1	20%
The Walter Kerr Theater	2	0	0%
The Winter Garden Theater	2	0	0%
The Ziegfeld Theater	1	0	0%

I also observed the capacity of the theater. Having a larger house does require more ticket sales but can offer potential for a larger profit. For example, *Wicked* is housed at The Gershwin Theater, Broadway’s largest house with 1933 seats, and has the gross potential of \$1.78 million per week (“Broadway grosses – Wicked,” 2018). Comparatively, the revival of *Once on this Island* (1990) has a gross potential of just \$792,000 at the 980 seat Circle-In-The-Square (“Broadway grosses – Once on this Island,” 2018). Although the variable of capacity is problematic due this variance, the variable is still explored in the regression model. The median capacity is 1508 seats (see Table 33).

Table 33

Distribution of sample set per capacity

Capacity	Count	Recoup	Recoup percentage
Seating Capacity Above Median: 1508	48	12	25%
500 to 600	1	0	0%
900 to 999	2	0	0%
1000 to 1099	4	0	0%
1100 to 1199	4	3	75%
1200 to 1299	6	1	17%
1300 to 1399	5	1	20%
1400 to 1499	23	9	39%
1500 to 1599	8	0	0%

1600 to 1699	11	3	27%
1700 to 1799	25	8	32%
1800 to 1899	2	0	0%
1900 to 1999	5	1	20%

Adding factors related to the subsequent Broadway productions of film-based musicals can boost the accuracy of the base model. In observation of the Broadway factors, the musical's title, the star power of the creative staff, the season of the opening, the location where the musical originated, and the theater capacity are used in the regression model. With 31 theaters on Broadway that housed film-based musicals and the limited availability based on the owners or operators and long-running engagements, the variable of theater could not be utilized in the regression model.

Upon observation of the different factors related to film-based musicals among the sample set, a number of variables are discounted from the study due to the insufficient data among the sample set, the complexity of categorical variables, and data that might be manipulated. Seven variables based on the film factors and perception are used to create a base model. The remaining variables, based on the subsequent musical production, are added to the regression to create a full model (see Table 34).

Table 34

Variables for the logistic regression model		
Film Factors	Perception	Broadway Factors
Decade	Oscars won	Same title (yes/no)
Duration between the film and Broadway opening dates measured in years	IMDb rating	Actor score
Genre count		Director score
Music		Composer score
1 – diegetic music		Veteran composer (yes/no)
0 – only original music		Opened during peak season (yes/no)
-1 – non-diegetic music		Opened directly on Broadway (yes/no)
Running time in minutes		Theater capacity

Logistic Regression. For this study, I use a logistic regression model such that variables are added to the regression model to predict a dichotomous outcome. The logarithm of the odds ratios is a measure between 0 and 1 of how strongly the presence or absence of a variable is associated with the presence or absence of an outcome. A cutoff value, which is determined by the researcher, is applied to the predicted probability to assign the outcome. For example, if a cutoff value for the resulting probability is .5, all outcomes .5 or above would be one and all below would be zero. For this article, for the binomial outcome I used the terminology from *Variety*'s long-running "Hits and Flops" report featured at the end of each season. A show that recouped is a hit and a show that did not recoup is a flop (Cox, 2013, para 7). I set the cutoff value for a hit (1) as .35 for the base and full model.

Base Model. The process begins with forming a base model with variables related to the film factors and perception of the film. I used the process of backwards stepwise regression to identify the optimal variables for the model.⁴⁰ Results showed three significant variables, including Duration ($p = .014$), Music ($p = .011$), and IMDb ($p = .003$; see Table 35).

Table 35

Base model logistic regression results							
Binary dependent variable: recoup				Value labels: 0 = flop 1 = hit			
Independent variables: duration, music, IMDb							
Logistic regression equation							
Predicted probability of "Recoup = hit"							
$\exp(\text{LogOdds}) / (1 + \exp(\text{LogOdds})) = 1 / (1 + \exp(-\text{LogOdds}))$ where							
LogOdds = $-13.111 - 0.052 * \text{Duration} + 1.703 * \text{IMDb} + 1.482 * \text{Music}$							
Logistic regression statistics							
R-squared (McFadden)	Adj. R-squared	RMSE	Mean	# Fitted	# Missing	Critical z	Conf. level
0.22	0.15	0.38	0.26	95.00	95.00	1.96	0.95
Logistic regression coefficient estimates							

⁴⁰ See Appendix B for a summary of the regression model results for the backwards stepwise regression for the base model and full model

Variable	Coeff.	Std. err.	z-stat	p-val	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	VIF	Std. coeff.
Constant	-13.11	4.41	-2.98	.003	-21.75	-4.48		
Duration	-0.05	0.02	-2.47	.014	-0.09	-0.01	1.06	-0.44
Music	1.48	0.59	2.53	.011	0.33	2.63	1.06	0.47
IMDb	1.70	0.58	2.93	.003	0.56	2.84	1.01	0.60

Analysis of deviance base							
Source	Deg. freedom	Deviance	p-val	AIC	ROC	R-squared	
Regression	3.00	24.04 = Chi squared	0.00	93.47	0.81	McFadden .22	
Residual	91.00	85.47 = -2 * log likelihood				Cox-Snell .22	
Null	94.00	109.5 = -2 * null model log likelihood				Nagelkerke .33	

Full Model. I created a full model by using the base model and adding variables related to the subsequent Broadway production. Again, I used the process of backwards stepwise regression to determine the additional variables. Rather than focus on the predictive values of the individual variables as in in the base model, I evaluated the strength of the variable combinations based on the overall accuracy of the model. The resulting variables added for the full model include the title of musical (same/different), the number of prior hits directed by the musical's director, and if the show opened directly on Broadway (yes/no) (see Table 36).

Table 36

Full model logistic regression results								
Binary dependent variable: recoup				Value labels: 0 = flop 1 = hit				
Independent variables: duration, music, IMDb, title, director, Broadway								
Logistic regression equation								
Predicted probability of "Recoup = hit"								
$\exp(\text{LogOdds}) / (1 + \exp(\text{LogOdds})) = 1 / (1 + \exp(-\text{LogOdds}))$ where								
LogOdds = -11.806 - 0.046*Duration + 1.579*IMDb + 1.624*Music - 0.818*Title + 0.464*Director - 1.156*Broadway								
Logistic Regression Statistics								
R-squared (McFadden)	Adj. R-Squared	RMSE	Mean	# Fitted	# Missing	Critical z	Conf. level	
0.26	0.14	0.37	0.26	95.00	95.00	1.96	0.95	
Logistic regression coefficient estimates								
Variable	Coeff.	Std. err.	z-stat	p-val	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	VIF	Std. coeff.
Constant	-11.81	4.60	-2.57	.010	-20.82	-2.80		
Duration	-0.05	0.02	-2.02	.044	-0.09	0.00	1.18	-0.39

Music	1.62	0.67	2.44	.015	0.32	2.93	1.09	0.51
IMDb	1.58	0.59	2.66	.008	0.42	2.74	1.09	0.55
Title	-0.82	0.73	-1.12	.261	-2.24	0.61	1.32	-0.20
Director	0.46	0.31	1.48	.138	-0.15	1.08	1.03	0.23
Broadway	-1.16	0.77	-1.50	.133	-2.67	0.35	1.27	-0.30
Analysis of deviance								
Source	Deg freedom	Deviance		<i>p</i> -val	AIC	ROC	R-squared	
Regression	6.00	28.80 = Chi squared		0.00	94.71	0.83	McFadden .26	
Residual	88.00	80.71 = -2 * log likelihood					Cox-Snell .26	
Null	94.00	109.5 = -2 * null model log likelihood					Nagelkerke .38	

Results

Base Model. Observing the coefficients for each individual variable allows for interpretations about the types of films that are successfully adapted into film-based musicals. The coefficient of -.052 for duration of time between the opening nights of the film and subsequent musical adaptation implies that a shorter time period increases the odds of recoupment. Examples of hits with shorter time durations between opening nights include *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) at 2.55 years and *The Full Monty* (2000), at 3.52 years after the film. Outliers include *Ballroom* (1978) based on the television film, *Queen of the Stardust Ballroom* (1975), and *Oh Captain!* (1958) based on the film, *The Captain's Paradise* (1953), both flops that opened within 5 years of their source films. Conversely, only one of the adaptations with duration of more than 50 years, *Grand Hotel* (1990) (57.62 years), based on the 1932 film with the same title, recouped.⁴¹ Evidence shows that producers should avoid the temptation of

⁴¹ The other five musicals with a duration of over 50 years between source and adaptation openings include *Never Gonna Dance* (2003) based on *Swing Time* (1936) (67.32 years), *An American in Paris* (2015) based on the 1951 film with the same name (63.67 years), *Nick and Nora* (1991) based on *The Thin Man* (1934) series of films (57.58 years), *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* (2013) based on the similarly title 1957 television movie (55.96 years), *A Catered Affair* (2008) based on the 1956 film of the same name (51.88 years), and *State Fair* (musical), based on the film of the same name (50.61 years). *Rodger's and Hammerstein's State Fair* (1996) was based on the 1933 film of the same name and was remade again in 1962 with the Rodgers and Hammerstein score.

producing musicals with a score that includes non-diegetic music from the film, as the coefficient for music is a 1.482. There are no musicals that use non-diegetic music from the film that recouped. Therefore, films without music or containing diegetic music in the film are related to a higher probability for recoupment. Examples of musicals that were hits with no music used from the film include *Hairspray* and *Kinky Boots*, each based on films with the same names, and flops with no music from the film include *Finding Neverland* (2015) and *Big Fish* (2013), also based on films with the same titles. Although the examples *Xanadu* (1980) and *High Society* (1956) contain diegetic music that is used in their musical adaptations, neither musical recouped. However, examples *Once* and *Aladdin* have musical adaptations that use diegetic music from the films and became hits on Broadway. With a coefficient of 1.703, evidence reveals that a film with a higher IMDb rating is more likely to be adapted into a successful musical as opposed to a film with a lower score. The bench-mark for the IMDb scores is 7.0, as no musical adaptations of the 19 films with scores lower recouped. Hit film-based musicals based on films with high IMDb scores include *The Lion King* (8.5) and *Applause* (1970), based on the 1950 film *All About Eve* (8.3), while outliers include *Sunset Boulevard*, whose source film with the same title earned an 8.5, and *The Red Shoes* (1993) based on the similarly titled 1948 film with a score of 8.3.

With a cutoff of .35, 70 musicals have a prediction to be a flop and 25 are predicted to be a hit. Of the predictions, 60 of the 70 musicals forecasted to be a flop and 15 of the 25 forecasted as a hit are correct for a rate of 79%. For comparison, a second table features the accuracy of producers as they attempt to produce a successful adaptation of a film. Assuming that all producers predict recoupment for their given show, the accuracy of their predictions is just 26% (see Table 37).

Table 37

Classification table for the base model							
Cutoff value for prediction of Hit: 0.35 RMSE = 0.384							
Predicted:				Predicted:			
Actual:	# Flop	# Hit	Total	Actual:	% Flop	% Hit	Total
# Flop	60	10	70	% Flop	63%	11%	74%
# Hit	10	15	25	% Hit	11%	15%	26%
Total	70	25	95	Total	74%	26%	100%
Percent correct = 79%			True positive rate = 60%		True negative rate = 86%		
Classification table without using the base model							
Predicted:				Predicted:			
Actual:	# Flop	# Hit	Total	Actual:	% Flop	% Hit	Total
# Flop	0	70	70	% Flop	0%	74%	74%
# Hit	0	25	25	% Hit	0%	26%	26%
Total	0	95	95	Total	0%	100%	100%
Percent correct = 26 %			True positive rate = 100%		True negative rate = 0%		

Full Model. In addition to the variables in the base model, the coefficients of the Broadway related variables can help producers as they develop musical adaptations. With a coefficient of -0.818 , evidence shows that a musical has slightly better odds of recoupment without retaining the title of the film. Examples of hits include *Promises, Promises* (1968) based on *The Apartment* (1960) and *Sweet Charity* (1966) based on *Nights of Cabria* (1957), while flops with different titles include *Hazel Flagg* (1953) based on *Nothing Sacred* (1936) and *Illya Darling* (1967) based on *Never on Sunday* (1960). Examples of musicals based on similar titled films include hits *The Producers* and *Waitress* and flops *Honeymoon in Vegas* (2015) and *Ghost: The Musical* (2012). During the process of the stepwise regression, the variables of the actor and composer/lyricist's scores along with the experience of the composer/lyricist showed little effect on the outcome of the musical's probability of recoupment. This suggests that producers should not have to rely on the star power of a particular actor or actress nor the composer/lyricist. However, the director's resume proved to be helpful as a predictor of recoupment and a

coefficient of .464 shows that a more successful director helps with recoupment. For example, prior to directing the hit film-based musical *42nd Street*, Gower Champion had success directing *Bye Bye Birdie* (1960), *Carnival!* (1961), *I do! I do!* (1966), *Sugar* (1972), and *Hello Dolly!* An example of an outlier of a flop with an accomplished director, Bob Fosse, is *Big Deal* (1986). Fosse directed the hit musicals *Redhead* (1959), *Pippin* (1972), *Chicago* (1975), and *Dancin'* all prior to *Big Deal*. The final additional component to for the full model is the location where the musical is developed. Although musicals have recently been skipping out-of-town try outs to open directly on Broadway, a coefficient of -1.156 shows that opening directly on Broadway is not necessarily the best option (Cox, 2016). Opening in London before coming to Broadway were the hit film-based musicals *Billy Elliot: The Musical* (2008) and *Mary Poppins* (2006), while examples of film-based musicals developed at regional theaters prior to transferring to Broadway include *Shenandoah* (1989) and *The Color Purple* (2005), which opened at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, CT and The Alliance Theater in Atlanta, GA respectively. *Sweet Charity*, which opened initially at the touring house Fischer Theater in Detroit, MI, is an example of a hit film-based musical optioning to do an out-of-town try out and *Once* premiered at Off Broadway's New York Theater Workshop. The only outliers to recoup that opened directly on Broadway are *A Little Night Musical* (1973), *Applause*, *Grand Hotel*, *Nine* (1982), and *Sugar*. Examples of film-based musicals that originated away from Broadway that flopped are *Rocky*, transferring from Hamburg, Germany, *Finding Neverland*, a transfer from American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, MA, *Big* (1996) that workshopped out-of-town at the Fischer Theater in Detroit, MI, and the Off Broadway musical *Grey Gardens*.

The addition of the latter three variables in the full model does not increase the overall percentage of correct forecasts, the full model correctly forecasts 2 more hits but misses on two

additional flops. Keeping the same cut-off value of .35, the true positive rate increases to 68%, while the true negative rate decreases to 83%. The number of correctly predicted hits rises from 15 to 17, while the number of predicted flops decreases from 60 to 58 (see Table 38).

Table 38

Classification table				RMSE = .372			
Cutoff value for prediction of hit: .35							
	Predicted:				Predicted:		
Actual:	# Flop	# Hit	Total	Actual:	% Flop	% Hit	Total
# Flop	58	12	70	% Flop	61%	13%	74%
# Hit	8	17	25	% Hit	8%	18%	26%
Total	66	29	95	Total	69%	31%	100%
Percent correct = 79%			True positive rate = 68%		True negative rate = 83%		

Model comparisons. Both approaches correctly forecasted the same 13 hits and 56 flops with 8 false positives and 6 false negatives. The remaining twelve productions had differing forecasts. Each model has an accuracy of 79%, but due to statistical noise, a different probability of recoupment for the twelve samples was observed. This can be explained by minor changes in the values of the coefficients as a result of adding additional variables to the base model (see Table 39).

Table 39

Coefficients and forecasts that differ in each model									
Base model coefficients					Full model coefficients				
Constant		-13.11			Constant		-11.81		
Duration		-0.05			Duration		-0.05		
Music		1.48			Music		1.62		
IMDb		1.70			IMDb		1.58		
					Title		-0.82		
					Director		0.46		
					Broadway		-1.16		
Base model forecasts					Full model forecasts				
Musical		Pbty.	Fcst.	Act. Accu.	Pbty.	Fcst.	Act. Accu.	Result	

<i>Applause</i>	0.50	Hit	Hit	Yes	0.32	Flop	Hit	No	Different
<i>Billy Elliot: The Musical</i>	0.39	Hit	Hit	Yes	0.30	Flop	Hit	No	Different
<i>Big Deal</i>	0.28	Flop	Flop	Yes	0.44	Hit	Flop	No	Different
<i>Carnival in Flanders</i>	0.28	Flop	Flop	Yes	0.38	Hit	Flop	No	Different
<i>King of Hearts</i>	0.31	Flop	Flop	Yes	0.53	Hit	Flop	No	Different
<i>Sunset Boulevard</i>	0.28	Flop	Flop	Yes	0.42	Hit	Flop	No	Different
<i>Applause</i>	0.50	Hit	Hit	Yes	0.32	Flop	Hit	No	Different
<i>Billy Elliot: The Musical</i>	0.39	Hit	Hit	Yes	0.30	Flop	Hit	No	Different
<i>Big Deal</i>	0.28	Flop	Flop	Yes	0.44	Hit	Flop	No	Different
<i>Carnival in Flanders</i>	0.28	Flop	Flop	Yes	0.38	Hit	Flop	No	Different
<i>King of Hearts</i>	0.31	Flop	Flop	Yes	0.53	Hit	Flop	No	Different
<i>Sunset Boulevard</i>	0.28	Flop	Flop	Yes	0.42	Hit	Flop	No	Different
Base model forecasts					Full model forecasts				
Musical	Pbty.	Fcst.	Act.	Accu.	Pbty.	Fcst.	Act.	Accu.	Result
<i>Donnybrook!</i>	0.47	Hit	Flop	No	0.29	Flop	Flop	Yes	Different
<i>Here's Love</i>	0.38	Hit	Flop	No	0.22	Flop	Flop	Yes	Different
<i>42nd Street</i>	0.24	Flop	Hit	No	0.55	Hit	Hit	Yes	Different
<i>Carnival!</i>	0.32	Flop	Hit	No	0.53	Hit	Hit	Yes	Different
<i>Newsies: The Musical</i>	0.32	Flop	Hit	No	0.40	Hit	Hit	Yes	Different
<i>Shenandoah</i>	0.27	Flop	Hit	No	0.36	Hit	Hit	Yes	Different

Assuming that Broadway producers and investors are willing to invest, using the base model's forecasts, my recommendation would be to adapt 25 films into Broadway musicals, with an accuracy of 15 becoming hits. With the full formula created with the full model, I would recommend investing or producing 29 film-based musicals, with 17 becoming hits. Regardless of the investor or producer's ultimate decision, the use of logistic regression does reveal that in the Broadway industry, with apologies to Mr. Goldman, it is possible to know something.

Conclusion

In an industry in which only 27% of the products of a particular variety have a return on investment, producers and investors should take every opportunity possible to increase their odds

of securing a profit. This study reveals that using a logistic regression formula can actually aid producers as they determine the right films to adapt and what further steps could be taken to produce a successful film-based musical. Also revealed is the importance of multiple variables as they relate to a film-based musical. The genre of a film, its rating, its director, the size of the studio, the country of origin, the running time, its Rotten Tomatoes scores, if it appears on the A.F.I. Top 100 list, the number of Oscars won, and the amount of money it earns are all factors that statistically provide little or no correlation to help predict a film-based musical's success. Additionally, there is little evidence showing production elements like the star quality of the actors or writing team, the month or season a show opens, and the theater where the show opens have a significant effect on its success. Instead, evidence suggests that a producer should look at recent films with a high IMDb score and avoid attempting to adapt a film with music that is not sung in the film but used in the musical score. Despite industry experts suggesting the importance of a film's title be retained for branding purposes, the model reveals having a different title can lead to a more positive outcome. Having a seasoned director that can develop the show prior to reaching Broadway is also preferable, whether it be overseas, in a regional theater, an out-of-town tryout, or Off Broadway.

Out-of-sample. This study proved to be successful in developing a formula to accurately predict recoupment of film-based musicals nearly 80% of the time. To test the model, I evaluated out-of-sample musicals using equations from the base and full models. The results of the base model are consistent with the initial findings, accurately identifying four of the five musicals' success. The full model, however, did not have the same effect, getting only one of the five predictions correct (see Table 40).

Table 40

Results of out-of-sample test using probability formula created with the base model				
Musical	Probability	Forecast	Actual	Accurate
<i>Amelie, A New Musical</i>	0.548	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i>	0.325	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Groundhog Day</i>	0.322	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>School of Rock - The Musical</i>	0.456	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>War Paint</i>	0.157	Flop	Flop	Yes

Results of out-of-sample test using probability formula created with the full model				
Musical	Probability	Forecast	Actual	Accurate
<i>Amelie, A New Musical</i>	0.435	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i>	0.717	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Groundhog Day</i>	0.342	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>School of Rock - The Musical</i>	0.259	Flop	Hit	No
<i>War Paint</i>	0.434	Hit	Flop	No

When comparing the base model and full model, differing outcomes are possible due to the statistical noise created by additional variables. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* received a forecast of flop in the base model and hit in the full model. The additional variables in the second model all have positive coefficients including the title of the musical, which differs from the film⁴², the director, Jack O'Brien directed three hit musicals prior to directing the show, and the show transferred from London. *War Paint* also boosted its probability score by not having the same title as its source film⁴³, having a director's score of 2 hit shows prior to *War Paint* and premiering away from Broadway at The Goodman Theater in Chicago, all positive coefficients. *School of Rock: The Musical*, which was predicted as a hit in the base model, but a flop in the full model, uses the same title as the film, has a director, Laurence Connor, with just one

⁴² Though the original Roald Dahl novel and the 2005 were each titled *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* the musical is based on the 1971 film, *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (film).

⁴³ The source for the documentary, *The Powder & the Glory* (2007) is based on *War Paint* (2004), which also serves as the title of the musical.

previous hit musical, and it opened directly on Broadway, all of which affected the probability score negatively.

Where did we go right (or wrong?) As seen in the out-of-sample results, predicting future outcomes using statistics is never perfect. Correlation does not necessarily mean causation; meaning a musical is not necessarily doomed for failure just because it retains the same title, has a new director, and opens on Broadway. Yet, with an accuracy of 79%, the logistical model can still be used as a tool to aid in selecting a new property to adapt into a musical and what other production factors can help or hinder a production.

Further investigations can be made, though, to explain the 21% of inaccurate predictions. One of the false forecasts can be explained through the quantitative data. *Grand Hotel* was based on the 1932 Academy Award winning film of the same name with an IMDb score of 7.6, used none of the film's score, was directed by Tommy Tune, who had two previous hits with the film-based musical *Nine* and *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (1978), and was developed in Boston prior to coming to New York City. However, the over 57 ½ year duration between the film and musical was enough to cause each formula to forecast a low probability score of recouping, as only three of the 15 musicals with durations of more than 40 years recouped; *Grand Hotel* was the only one of seven musicals with durations recouped over 50.

In the following article, “‘Where did we go right’...” I discuss qualitative factors or patterns found in hit film-based musicals and flops. After observing a broad range of film-based musicals and previous studies relating to the success or failure of musicals in general, I develop five rules for the creative teams and producers that can supplement the findings of this article. The set of rules are then applied to a number of musicals, including the 13 musicals that received false forecasts. As seen in this article and with all art forms, sometimes statistics and logic cannot

explain everything. No-one expected *Star Wars* would become a fixture in popular culture, nor could Broadway producers predict a show entirely based on the final song would be a hit. Even so, as Goldman suggests, even to have an educated guess would be lucky and that is what the goal for this article and the following article is: a way to improve an educated guess.

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Appendix A
Genre Combinations Table

Genre(s)	Count	Recouped	Percentage recouped
Adventure, Comedy, Fantasy	1	1	100%
Adventure, Drama, Fantasy	1	0	0%
Adventure, Family, Fantasy, Musical	1	0	0%
Animation, Adventure, Comedy, Family, Fantasy	1	0	0%
Animation, Adventure, Comedy, Family, Fantasy, Musical, Romance	1	1	100%
Animation, Adventure, Drama, Family, Musical	1	1	100%
Animation, Adventure, Family, Music, Romance	1	0	0%
Animation, Family, Fantasy, Musical, Romance	2	1	50%
Biography, Crime, Drama	1	0	0%
Biography, Drama	1	0	0%
Biography, Drama, Family	1	0	0%
Biography, Drama, History	1	0	0%
Comedy	5	1	20%
Comedy, Crime	3	0	0%
Comedy, Crime, Drama, Family	1	0	0%
Comedy, Crime, Family, Music	1	0	0%
Comedy, Crime, Mystery	1	0	0%
Comedy, Drama	1	1	100%
Comedy, Drama, Family, Fantasy, Romance	1	0	0%
Comedy, Drama, Family, Music, Musical, Romance	1	1	100%
Comedy, Drama, Family, Musical, Romance	1	0	0%
Comedy, Drama, History, Romance	1	1	100%
Comedy, Drama, Music	1	1	100%
Comedy, Drama, Music, Romance	1	0	0%
Comedy, Drama, Musical, Romance	1	0	0%
Comedy, Drama, Musical, Romance, Western	1	0	0%
Comedy, Drama, Romance	8	2	25%
Comedy, Drama, Romance, Sport	1	0	0%
Comedy, Family, Fantasy, Musical	1	1	100%
Comedy, History, Romance	1	0	0%
Comedy, Horror	2	0	0%
Comedy, Music	1	0	0%
Comedy, Music, Musical, Romance	1	0	0%
Comedy, Music, Romance	1	0	0%
Comedy, Musical	1	0	0%

Comedy, Musical, Romance	6	1	17%
Comedy, Romance	5	4	80%
Comedy, Romance, Thriller	1	0	0%
Comedy, Romance, War	1	0	0%
Comedy, War	1	0	0%
Comedy, Western	1	0	0%
Crime, History	1	0	0%
Documentary	1	0	0%
Documentary, Comedy, Drama	1	0	0%
Drama	4	3	75%
Drama, Comedy, War	1	0	0%
Drama, Family	1	0	0%
Drama, Family, History, Musical	1	1	100%
Drama, Fantasy	1	1	100%
Drama, Fantasy, Romance, Thriller	1	0	0%
Drama, Film Noir	2	0	0%
Drama, Music	2	0	0%
Drama, Music, Romance	3	2	67%
Drama, Musical, Musical, Romance	1	0	0%
Drama, Musical, Romance	2	1	50%
Drama, Romance	3	1	33%
Drama, Romance, Western	1	0	0%
Drama, Sport	1	0	0%
Drama, War, Western	1	1	100%
Fantasy, Musical, Romance	1	0	0%
Musical, Family, Comedy, Fantasy, Romance	1	0	0%
Romance, Drama	1	0	0%

Appendix B
Summaries of Backwards Stepwise Regression Models

Base Model						
Dependent variable: recoup						
	Logistic Regression Stepwise 1	Logistic Regression Stepwise 2	Logistic Regression Stepwise 3	Logistic Regression Stepwise 4	Logistic Regression Stepwise 5	Logistic Regression Stepwise 6
Model size	var=8 n=95	var=7 n=95	var=6 n=95	var=5 n=95	var=4 n=95	var=3 n=95
Mean	0.263	0.263	0.263	0.263	0.263	0.263
Standard Deviation	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440
RMSE	0.381	0.380	0.381	0.381	0.383	0.384
R-squared	0.230	0.230	0.229	0.229	0.225	0.220
Adjusted R-squared	0.066	0.084	0.102	0.119	0.133	0.146
Maximum VIF	1.785	1.682	1.633	1.115	1.105	1.063
AIC	102.293	100.312	98.375	96.436	94.919	93.467
Area under ROC curve	0.808	0.808	0.808	0.807	0.805	0.806
Cutoff	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350
Correct	75.8%	75.8%	75.8%	76.8%	76.8%	78.9%
True positive	56.0%	56.0%	56.0%	56.0%	56.0%	60.0%
True negative	82.9%	82.9%	82.9%	84.3%	84.3%	85.7%
Coefficient estimates						
	Stepwise 1	Stepwise 2	Stepwise 3	Stepwise 4	Stepwise 5	Stepwise 6
Type	Logit	Logit	Logit	Logit	Logit	Logit
Constant	-12.608 (0.012)	-12.441 (0.010)	-12.08 (0.009)	-12.398 (0.006)	-12.898 (0.004)	-13.111 (0.003)
Country	-0.17 (0.835)	-0.174 (0.831)	-0.202 (0.803)			
Duration	-0.049 (0.023)	-0.05 (0.022)	-0.049 (0.022)	-0.049 (0.022)	-0.05 (0.019)	-0.052 (0.014)
Genres	0.035 (0.892)					
IMDb	1.589 (0.009)	1.584 (0.009)	1.595 (0.008)	1.625 (0.006)	1.7 (0.004)	1.703 (0.003)
Music	1.471 (0.024)	1.503 (0.014)	1.48 (0.014)	1.475 (0.015)	1.54 (0.011)	1.482 (0.011)
Oscars	0.106 (0.531)	0.106 (0.533)	0.116 (0.481)	0.115 (0.486)		

Studio	-0.449 (0.559) 0.005	-0.417 (0.568) 0.004	-0.389 (0.591)	-0.498 (0.386)	-0.413 (0.460)
Time	(0.787)	(0.802)			

Full Model

Dependent variable: Recoup

	Logistic Regression Stepwise 1	Logistic Regression Stepwise 2	Logistic Regression Stepwise 3	Logistic Regression Stepwise 4	Logistic Regression Stepwise 5	Logistic Regression Stepwise 6
Model Size	var=11 n=95	var=10 n=95	var=9 n=95	var=8 n=95	var=7 n=95	var=6 n=95
Mean	0.263	0.263	0.263	0.263	0.263	0.263
Standard deviation	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440
RMSE	0.368	0.367	0.367	0.367	0.368	0.372
R-squared	0.273	0.273	0.272	0.271	0.268	0.263
Adjusted R-squared	0.054	0.072	0.089	0.106	0.122	0.135
Maximum VIF	1.601	1.559	1.517	1.486	1.325	1.324
AIC	103.584	101.637	99.722	97.872	96.186	94.708
Area under ROC curve	0.839	0.836	0.836	0.839	0.834	0.833
Cutoff	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350
Correct	77.9%	77.9%	76.8%	77.9%	78.9%	78.9%
True positive	68.0%	68.0%	68.0%	68.0%	68.0%	68.0%
True negative	81.4%	81.4%	80.0%	81.4%	82.9%	82.9%

Coefficient estimates

	Stepwise 1	Stepwise 2	Stepwise 3	Stepwise 4	Stepwise 5	Stepwise 6
Type	Logit	Logit	Logit	Logit	Logit	Logit
Constant	-10.852 (0.029)	-10.647 (0.029)	-10.578 (0.030)	-11.047 (0.019)	-11.063 (0.020)	-11.806 (0.010)
Actor	-0.104 (0.759)	-0.098 (0.771)				
Broadway	-1.174 (0.143)	-1.208 (0.127)	-1.19 (0.132)	-1.184 (0.132)	-1.186 (0.130)	-1.156 (0.133)
Capacity	-0.001 (0.534)	-0.001 (0.533)	-0.001 (0.493)	-0.001 (0.506)	-0.001 (0.469)	
Composer	-0.052 (0.818)					
Director	0.542 (0.103)	0.529 (0.106)	0.521 (0.109)	0.503 (0.118)	0.487 (0.125)	0.464 (0.138)

Duration	-0.043 (0.077)	-0.044 (0.063)	-0.044 (0.062)	-0.044 (0.055)	-0.045 (0.050)	-0.046 (0.044)
IMDb	1.666 (0.009)	1.643 (0.008)	1.635 (0.008)	1.67 (0.007)	1.661 (0.007)	1.579 (0.008)
Music	1.694 (0.017)	1.683 (0.017)	1.66 (0.017)	1.677 (0.016)	1.71 (0.014)	1.624 (0.015)
Peak	-0.357 (0.608)	-0.36 (0.605)	-0.38 (0.584)	-0.388 (0.575)		
Title	-0.8 (0.325)	-0.789 (0.332)	-0.751 (0.349)	-0.708 (0.371)	-0.859 (0.247)	-0.818 (0.261)
Veteran	-0.204 (0.758)	-0.259 (0.676)	-0.238 (0.698)			

Appendix C
Forecast Tables for Base and Second Models Sorted by Probability

Base model

Predicted probability of "Recoup = hit" =
 $\exp(\text{LogOdds}) / (1 + \exp(\text{LogOdds})) = 1 / (1 + \exp(-\text{LogOdds}))$ where
 $\text{LogOdds} = -13.111 - 0.052 * \text{Duration} + 1.703 * \text{IMDb} + 1.482 * \text{Music}$

Musical	Probability	Forecast	Actual	Accurate
<i>The Lion King</i>	0.935	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	0.865	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Once</i>	0.826	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Spamalot</i>	0.720	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Aladdin</i>	0.707	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Singin' in the Rain</i>	0.685	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Ilya Darlin</i>	0.649	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Victor/Victoria</i>	0.647	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Promises, Promises</i>	0.642	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Sweet Charity</i>	0.598	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>The Little Mermaid</i>	0.591	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Sugar</i>	0.585	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Catch Me If You Can</i>	0.562	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Applause</i>	0.503	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Big Fish</i>	0.500	Hit	Flop	No
<i>La Strada</i>	0.472	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Donnybrook!</i>	0.469	Hit	Flop	No
<i>The Producers</i>	0.437	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Silk Stockings</i>	0.430	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Nine</i>	0.421	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Billy Elliot: The Musical</i>	0.392	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Here's Love</i>	0.376	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Mary Poppins</i>	0.368	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Finding Neverland</i>	0.366	Hit	Flop	No
<i>A Little Night Music</i>	0.366	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>The Conquering Hero</i>	0.335	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Gigi</i>	0.335	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>High Fidelity</i>	0.334	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Ballroom</i>	0.330	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Newsies: The Musical</i>	0.321	Flop	Hit	No
<i>Carnival!</i>	0.318	Flop	Hit	No
<i>King of Hearts</i>	0.313	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Hands on a Hardbody</i>	0.306	Flop	Flop	Yes

<i>Meet Me in St. Louis</i>	0.299	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>The Color Purple</i>	0.296	Flop	Hit	No
<i>Carnival in Flanders</i>	0.284	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Big Deal</i>	0.283	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Sunset Boulevard</i>	0.281	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Destry Rides Again</i>	0.267	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Shenandoah</i>	0.267	Flop	Hit	No
<i>The Full Monty</i>	0.266	Flop	Hit	No
<i>Big</i>	0.251	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>42nd Street</i>	0.239	Flop	Hit	No
<i>Young Frankenstein</i>	0.232	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Oh Captain!</i>	0.220	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Hazel Flagg</i>	0.214	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>The Goodbye Girl</i>	0.214	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>The Bridges of Madison County</i>	0.212	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>The Red Shoes</i>	0.208	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Passion</i>	0.205	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Bullets Over Broadway</i>	0.204	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Kinky Boots</i>	0.196	Flop	Hit	No
<i>Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella</i>	0.194	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Sweet Smell of Success</i>	0.187	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Anya</i>	0.184	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Dirty Rotten Scoundrels</i>	0.179	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Thoroughly Modern Millie</i>	0.178	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Shrek: The Musical</i>	0.177	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Grey Gardens</i>	0.166	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Waitress</i>	0.158	Flop	Hit	No
<i>Pousse-Café</i>	0.155	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Chitty Chitty Bang Bang</i>	0.145	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>High Society</i>	0.132	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Hairspray</i>	0.125	Flop	Hit	No
<i>The Wedding Singer</i>	0.124	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Prince of Central Park</i>	0.119	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Never Gonna Dance</i>	0.118	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Carmelina</i>	0.112	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>State Fair</i>	0.103	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Jimmy</i>	0.102	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Nick and Nora</i>	0.090	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Dance of the Vampires</i>	0.073	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Golden Rainbow</i>	0.065	Flop	Flop	Yes

<i>Tarzan</i>	0.063	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>A Catered Affair</i>	0.063	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Priscilla Queen of the Desert</i>	0.062	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Woman of the Year</i>	0.062	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Rocky</i>	0.061	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Legs Diamond</i>	0.054	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Smile</i>	0.051	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Legally Blonde</i>	0.049	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Cry-Baby</i>	0.048	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Grand Hotel</i>	0.041	Flop	Hit	No
<i>Sister Act</i>	0.033	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Seven Brides for Seven Brothers</i>	0.031	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Leap of Faith</i>	0.023	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Urban Cowboy</i>	0.023	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Ghost: The Musical</i>	0.022	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Saturday Night Fever</i>	0.016	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>An American in Paris</i>	0.015	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Footloose</i>	0.014	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Xanadu</i>	0.013	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Honeymoon in Vegas</i>	0.012	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Little Shop of Horrors</i>	0.010	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>9 to 5</i>	0.009	Flop	Flop	Yes

Full Model

Predicted probability of "Recoup = Hit" =
 $\exp(\text{LogOdds}) / (1 + \exp(\text{LogOdds})) = 1 / (1 + \exp(-\text{LogOdds}))$ where
 $\text{LogOdds} = -11.806 - 1.156 * \text{Broadway} + 0.464 * \text{Director} - 0.046 * \text{Duration} + 1.579 * \text{IMDb}$
 $+ 1.624 * \text{Music} - 0.818 * \text{Title}$

Musical	Probability	Forecast	Actual	Accurate
<i>The Lion King</i>	0.905	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Aladdin</i>	0.827	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	0.819	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Once</i>	0.774	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Sweet Charity</i>	0.768	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Sugar</i>	0.717	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Promises, Promises</i>	0.712	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Catch Me If You Can</i>	0.670	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Spamalot</i>	0.670	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Silk Stockings</i>	0.641	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Singin' in the Rain</i>	0.636	Hit	Flop	No

<i>Victor/Victoria</i>	0.591	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Ilya Darlin</i>	0.590	Hit	Flop	No
<i>La Strada</i>	0.568	Hit	Flop	No
<i>42nd Street</i>	0.546	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>The Little Mermaid</i>	0.539	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Carnival!</i>	0.531	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>King of Hearts</i>	0.527	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Big Fish</i>	0.504	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Finding Neverland</i>	0.492	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Mary Poppins</i>	0.454	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Big Deal</i>	0.443	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Sunset Boulevard</i>	0.417	Hit	Flop	No
<i>A Little Night Music</i>	0.411	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>The Producers</i>	0.402	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Newsies: The Musical</i>	0.398	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Carnival in Flanders</i>	0.384	Hit	Flop	No
<i>Shenandoah</i>	0.362	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>Nine</i>	0.354	Hit	Hit	Yes
<i>High Fidelity</i>	0.347	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Applause</i>	0.318	Flop	Hit	No
<i>Anya</i>	0.315	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Gigi</i>	0.304	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Billy Elliot: The Musical</i>	0.297	Flop	Hit	No
<i>Donnybrook!</i>	0.288	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Dirty Rotten Scoundrels</i>	0.284	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>The Conquering Hero</i>	0.279	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Big</i>	0.269	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Young Frankenstein</i>	0.258	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Waitress</i>	0.255	Flop	Hit	No
<i>The Goodbye Girl</i>	0.234	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Hands on a Hardbody</i>	0.231	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>The Color Purple</i>	0.225	Flop	Hit	No
<i>Here's Love</i>	0.223	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>The Full Monty</i>	0.197	Flop	Hit	No
<i>High Society</i>	0.194	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Grey Gardens</i>	0.190	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Dance of the Vampires</i>	0.185	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Hazel Flagg</i>	0.179	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Thoroughly Modern Millie</i>	0.171	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>The Bridges of Madison County</i>	0.161	Flop	Flop	Yes

<i>Shrek: The Musical</i>	0.159	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Kinky Boots</i>	0.147	Flop	Hit	No
<i>Hairspray</i>	0.144	Flop	Hit	No
<i>Chitty Chitty Bang Bang</i>	0.142	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>The Wedding Singer</i>	0.141	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Never Gonna Dance</i>	0.137	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Prince of Central Park</i>	0.137	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Nick and Nora</i>	0.128	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Oh Captain!</i>	0.123	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Passion</i>	0.115	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Destry Rides Again</i>	0.113	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Meet Me in St. Louis</i>	0.110	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Golden Rainbow</i>	0.109	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Sister Act</i>	0.103	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Ballroom</i>	0.093	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Pousse-Café</i>	0.090	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Bullets Over Broadway</i>	0.084	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Sweet Smell of Success</i>	0.080	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella</i>	0.069	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Carmelina</i>	0.063	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>The Red Shoes</i>	0.058	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>A Catered Affair</i>	0.053	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Jimmy</i>	0.041	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Woman of the Year</i>	0.041	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Cry-Baby</i>	0.039	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Legally Blonde</i>	0.039	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Priscilla Queen of the Desert</i>	0.039	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Rocky</i>	0.039	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Little Shop of Horrors</i>	0.036	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>State Fair</i>	0.036	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Legs Diamond</i>	0.032	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Leap of Faith</i>	0.031	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Grand Hotel</i>	0.028	Flop	Hit	No
<i>Seven Brides for Seven Brothers</i>	0.021	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Urban Cowboy</i>	0.020	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Honeymoon in Vegas</i>	0.017	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>An American in Paris</i>	0.015	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Ghost: The Musical</i>	0.015	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Tarzan</i>	0.013	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>9 to 5</i>	0.011	Flop	Flop	Yes

<i>Saturday Night Fever</i>	0.011	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Smile</i>	0.010	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Footloose</i>	0.005	Flop	Flop	Yes
<i>Xanadu</i>	0.005	Flop	Flop	Yes

ARTICLE THREE
“WHERE DID WE GO RIGHT?” (OR WRONG?): DETERMINING QUALITIES OF
SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL FILM-BASED MUSICALS

In 2001, the film-based musical *The Producers*, based on the 1968 film with the same title, debuted on Broadway. The musical follows Broadway producer Max Bialystock and his nebbish accountant, Leopold “Leo” Bloom. After Bloom discovers that it is possible to make more money, albeit illegally, by producing a flop rather than a hit, Bialystock devises a plan:

Step 1: We find the worst play ever written.

Step 2: We hire the worst director in town.

Step 3: I raise two million dollars...One for me, one for you...

Step 4: We hire the worst actors in New York and open on Broadway!

And before you can say step five, we close on Broadway, take our two million and go to Rio! (Brooks & Meehan, 2001, p. 92)

The two producers follow steps one through four, but step five does not go on as planned. After finding the worst play, *Springtime for Hitler*, and hiring the worst director and the worst actors, the show-within-a-show should have been a flop. Instead audiences and critics gave the show rave reviews. In Act 2, Scene 5, realizing jail time for fraud would be immanent the two ask themselves, “Where did we go right?” (Brooks & Meehan, 2001, p. 92).

Though the Bialystock and Bloom style of producing does not exist in real world situations, the question “Where did we go right?” might come off the lips of a producer after a major hit. “How can we catch lightning in a bottle for a second time?” On the other side of the coin, however, producers might ask “Where did we go wrong?” after their surefire hit flops.

Recent examples of the perceived flop becoming a hit and the sure thing becoming a flop are the film-based musicals from Disney Theatrical Productions. During the 1980s Walt Disney Pictures went through a slump of producing animated films like *The Black Cauldron* (1985) and *The Great Mouse Detective* (1986) that performed poorly at the box office. Acknowledging these issues, the CEO at the time, Michael Eisner, made the decision to revive the Disney tradition of producing animated films based on fairy tales that were musically-driven. After hiring the theatrical composer and lyricist team of Alan Menken and Howard Ashman to compose the music and structure his next project as if it were a Broadway musical, *The Little Mermaid* debuted in 1989. The film was a box office success earning nearly \$85 million in its initial release, won two Academy Awards, and started what critics call the Disney Renaissance (Kaye & Shatz, 2016). Three years later in 1992, hoping to bank on the Broadway musical structure of *The Little Mermaid* and *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) Walt Disney Pictures released the live action musical film *Newsies* which also featured music by Menken. The movie proved to be disastrous, earning back only 20% of its initial budget of \$15 million. In 2008, after the success of the film-based musicals *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) and *The Lion King* (1997), Disney hoped to have another blockbuster, bringing *The Little Mermaid* to Broadway. Despite the success of its predecessors, *The Little Mermaid* received a litany of poor reviews and closed prior to recouping its investment (“The Little Mermaid Broadway reviews,” 2008). In 2012, Disney Theatrical Productions produced *Newsies* on Broadway, hoping the 3-month limited run would spark interest in the show that Thomas Schumacher hoped to license out (Smith, 2012). The 3-month run extended to nearly 2½ years and *Newsies* recouped its investment and won 2 Tony Awards along the way. The hit became a flop and the flop became a hit, and Disney Theatrical Productions was left asking, “Where did we go right (or wrong)?”

Continuing the goal of “Nobody knows anything...” this article seeks to identify the factors or patterns that can be applied to the question, “Where did we go right (or wrong)?” or in other words, “Why do certain film-based musicals succeed while others do not?” In the previous article, the factors and patterns found to predict the success of film-based musical were based on a statistical analysis of quantitative data. In this article, I analyze a selection of film-based musicals to define factors and patterns based on qualitative data.

The steps taken to answer the research question begin with a brief overview of past research on the qualities that contribute to a musical’s success or failure. There is a dearth of academically based research on film-based musicals, therefore the Literature Review focuses on works that offer their own set of rules or criteria for successful or non-successful musicals. I address the musicals observed and the research process under the heading Methods. After making observations of the musicals within the sample set and considering the writings found in the literature review, I establish a set of 5 rules under the heading Results. With each rule, I offer examples of musicals from the sample set that adhere to or defy the rules, thus answering the question, “Where did we go right (or wrong)?” Also included is a discussion of an example of an outlier or a musical that performs the opposite of what the criteria suggests. In the Conclusion, I summarize the study and discuss options for future studies.

Previous Studies

Although there is a lack of peer reviewed literature specifically about film-based musicals, I review two books, a dissertation, and a non-peer reviewed article that focus on the qualitative aspects of musicals and musical adaptations. Among the works observed are Lehman

Engel’s 1972 book *Words and Music: Creating the Broadway Musical Libretto* (book)⁴⁴ and Ken Mandelbaum’s 1992 book *Not Since Carrie: Forty Years of Musical Flops* (book). Other works observed are Jeanne McGorwan Sheehan’s 2008 dissertation *From Books to Broadway: The Musicalization of Literature* (dissertation) for Northern Illinois University, and Mac Rogers’ 2006 article for Slate.com, “From Screen to Stage: How to Turn a Movie into a Musical.”

Creating a criterion for Broadway musicals is not unique to this study. Each of the four works reviewed offer rules or criteria found in successful or non-successful musicals and musical adaptations. There are limitations to each study in regard to time period the author observed, the range of musicals observed, or the specificity. However, each study has merit and offers valuable insight for this study (see Table 41).

Table 41

Previous studies with a set of rules or criteria for Broadway musicals			
Year	Author	Focus/sample set	Criteria/rules
1971	Engel	Operettas, plays, and musicals through 1971	<u>Six needs of a musical</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling • Lyrics and particularization • Romance • Comedy • Music • Subplot
1991	Mandelbaum	Broadway flops from 1943 to 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Don’t musicalize works that can’t be musicalized” • “Don’t musicalize works that don’t need music” • “Don’t start with a bad/impossible idea” • “Don’t attempt to musicalize a work if you’re not up for it”

⁴⁴ This article uses the 2006 edition of *Words and Music: Creating the Broadway Musical Libretto* with additional commentary by Howard Kissel.

2006	Rogers	<i>The Wedding Singer</i> (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Don’t write shows without an audience” • “Don’t fool around with a good source” • “Don’t do the same thing twice” • “Don’t use old music” • “Don’t do sequels” • “Pick the right movie” • “Hire a new creative team” • “Make your own moments”
2008	Sheehan	Broadway musicals based on literary works ⁴⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Choose the right source material” • “A musical should be entertaining” • “The entire creative team must share the same vision” • “Know what the show is about”

Because Engel’s thoughts on musical theatre are based on observations made during Broadway’s Golden Age,⁴⁶ he negates things like the change in popular music and its effect on Broadway music, and the concept musical, which was slowly becoming a popular style of musical in the early 1970s; he could not foresee the change in Broadway audiences that would occur in the 1980s as producers began to focus on attracting tourists to their shows. For example, one of Engel’s requirements of a musical, subplot, while a fixture of musicals from the fifties like *Guys and Dolls* (1950) is not as important in popular modern musicals like *Hamilton* (2015) or *Dear Evan Hansen* (2016), neither of which have established subplots with secondary characters. Another example is Engel’s requirement of romance. Modern hit musicals like *The*

⁴⁵ Sheehan’s definition of literature-based musicals differs from my definition used in the article, “Screen to Stage...” *My Fair Lady* is a performing arts-based musical adapted from *Pygmalion* (1913). *West Side Story* (1957) is a performing-arts based musical using *Romeo and Juliet* (believed to have been written between 1591 and 1595) as its source. *Man of La Mancha* (1965), though based on *Don Quixote* (1605 and 1615) uses the teleplay *I, Don Quixote* (1959) as its credited source. While Sheehan includes all three of these in her discussion of literature-based musicals, I consider the latter a film-based musical.

⁴⁶ Broadway’s Golden Age is usually defined as the period between 1943, when the musical *Oklahoma* opened, and 1959, when the musicals *Fiorello!*, *Gypsy*, and *The Sound of Music* all opened (“Golden Age,” 2008).

Book of Mormon (2011) and *Kinky Boots* (2013) focus more on the relationship of the two male leads in a non-romantic setting rather than the type of boy meets girl romance of Engel's time.

There are moments in which Engel makes valid points. In particular, Engel believes characters should be well defined and engaging, stating, "The more specific the acquaintance we have with characters, the more we become involved in their problems, whether these seem funny or melancholy to us. We are incapable of having any feeling for or against any character or situation which is vague" (Engel, 2006, p. 73). Another still relevant and often ignored need described by Engel is music. While this might seem obvious, what Engel means is that the music must come from an emotional place within the character. Engel states, "Music in a first-rate show must at least *appear* to be generated by characters in situations. The songs must express feeling of one kind or another (this is the essence of lyric theatre). Otherwise why employ music at all" (p. 73). As observations are made of the sample set, these two elements described by Engel, character (or feeling) and music, become prominent as a new set of criteria for film-based musicals is created.

Mandelbaum's rules reflect the sentiments of Lehman Engel. For example, Mandelbaum's first two rules continue Engel's requirement of music, suggesting that producers should not "musicalize works which can't be musicalized" or "musicalize works that don't need music" (pp. 184 and 191). Mandelbaum's other rules for musical adaptations are generalizations made from his observations that might have been premature. For example, Mandelbaum states, "Don't use old music" (p. 217). He suggests that recycling old music for new musicals can be toxic using the flop *My One and Only* (1983) which uses the music of George Gershwin, as an example. This rule was created just a year prior to the hit musical *Crazy for You* (1993) opening on Broadway. The Gershwin tune-filled musical *Crazy for You*, based on *Girl Crazy* (1930),

includes the songs “Bidin’ My Time,” “Embraceable You,” “I Got Rhythm,” and “But Not for Me,” all also featured in *Girl Crazy*. *Crazy for You* also includes “I Can’t Be Bothered Now,” and “Nice Work If You Can Get It,” from the Gershwin catalog that were featured in *My One and Only* (musical) (Cohn-Eichner, n.d.). This rule also came prior to the jukebox musical gaining popularity on Broadway beginning with *Smokey Joe’s Café* in 1995.

The remaining Mandelbaum rules deal with selection of good source material, some of which that have no bearing on film-based musicals, like avoiding sequels. However, Mandelbaum’s rule, “Don’t start with a bad or impossible idea” (Mandelbaum, 1991, p. 199) can be useful when discussing film-based musicals. Mandelbaum explains that a producer should avoid producing a musical whose source material is already associated with a specific person or entity. The 1968 production of *Molly* was a musical flop based on the characters the Goldbergs, created by Gertrude Berg. The Goldberg characters stretched across multiple platforms as a radio show, television series, and a Broadway play, and its creator portrayed Molly Goldberg in all incarnations. Berg passed away in 1966, two years prior to the musical’s debut on Broadway. However, producers were still willing to produce a musical based on the Goldbergs using a set of four writers with no Broadway experience and Kaye Ballard in the title role. Mandelbaum argues, “The problem was that Molly Goldberg *was* Gertrude Berg and vice versa. There really was no character without her, and it was foolhardy to attempt a musical about the Goldbergs without Berg at least writing it, as she had most of the other versions” (p. 200). Mandelbaum’s rule relating to significant actors and artists known for specific roles is further utilized in observations of film-based musicals.

In the article “From Screen to Stage, How to Turn a Movie into a Musical,” for Slate.com, playwright Rogers discusses his own set of criteria for successful film-based musicals

based on his observations of the film-based musical flop, *The Wedding Singer* (2006), based on the 1998 film with the same name. As in the other studies observed, Rogers puts an emphasis on choosing the right material, but he also suggests that film-based musicals be adapted without the assistance of the original creator. While this theory does ring true for *The Wedding Singer*, the hit film-based musical *The Producers* features a book, songs, and lyrics by the 1968 film's director and screenwriter, Mel Brooks. Davis's final rule, which I explore further, describes creating unique moments in the musical as not to rely heavily on the audience's recognition of the film's plot, characters, or scenes to enjoy the production. (Rogers, 2006)

In her dissertation *From Books to Broadway: The Musicalization of Literature* (2008), Sheehan examines the musicals *Show Boat* (1927), *My Fair Lady* (1956), *Oliver!* (1960), *Canterbury Tales* (1969), *Man of La Mancha* (1965), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), and *West Side Story* (1956) as well as others she deems misguided adaptations. In the first six chapters, Sheehan's research is historically based, revealing the adaptation process of well-known literature, rather than any particular theories or patterns of relating to the success of each adaptation. Yet, in Chapter 7, Sheehan's work becomes more relevant to this article's research as she discusses the failures of literary adaptations. The summation of her findings, although intended for literature-based adaptations, can be applied to film-based musicals as well:

...some perfectly good ideas that should have been successful musicals failed because they fell into the hands of talented production teams who were wrong for the project or inexperienced people who did not understand the intricacies of the musical play. Most often, however, the flops are based on literary works that simply are not enhanced by music. The results are librettos that have to cut out the genius of the original work in order to make room for songs that are really not necessary. (Sheehan, 2008, p. 216)

The idea of selecting sources that are enhanced by music is also significant in my findings of successful film-based musicals.

Methodology

In order to answer the research question, “Why do certain film-based musicals succeed while others do not?” a set of previously produced film-based musicals is observed. The selection of the sample set of musicals observed was based the available data related to the musical. As in the previous article, I use only new musicals with recoupment information. To narrow the sample set further without bias, attention was given to musicals that I could see in person or on an authorized video, which have librettos or cast recordings available to the public or are the subject of other literature that could be analyzed. I developed a set of criteria based on patterns found in multiple film-based musicals that shared the same outcome: hit or flop. Examples of outliers will also be given. After presenting my criteria I explain each point individually with examples and supporting literature.

The Sample Set. While there are 125 film-musicals that were produced between the 1952-1953 and 2016-2017 seasons, only new musicals with recoupment data are observed. Additional film-based musicals that are censored from the sample set include musicals whose business models differ greatly from regular Broadway musicals. This includes holiday musicals and musicals that are on tour with a residency on Broadway. After the elimination of these musicals, 96 remain. A further separation is made based on the availability of resources. For example, a preference was given to musicals that I could see on Broadway as opposed to relying on recordings. Among the remaining musicals, 30 musicals were randomly selected for further analysis (see Table 42).

Table 42

Sample set of musicals observed	
Musical flops	Musical hits
<i>An American in Paris</i>	<i>Aladdin</i>
<i>Big Fish</i>	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>

Catch Me If You Can
Finding Neverland
Footloose
High Fidelity
Ilya Darlin
La Strada
Legally Blonde
Little Shop of Horrors
Never Gonna Dance
Rocky
Saturday Night Fever
Singin' in the Rain
Sweet Smell of Success
The Little Mermaid
The Wedding Singer
Young Frankenstein

Billy Elliot: The Musical
Hairspray
Kinky Boots
Newsies: The Musical
Sweet Charity
The Color Purple
The Full Monty
The Lion King
The Producers
Waitress

The set of criteria was developed after observations of musicals within the sample set. Each rule is based on a pattern seen in multiple musicals within the sample set. With each criterion, I show examples from the sample set and supporting literature. This research does not imply that all successful musicals follow every rule, nor do all flops break every rule. Also, these observations should not be considered the cause of why a musical failed or succeeded.

Results

The results of my observations of factors found in film-based musical hits and flops are surmised in the following five rules:

1. The protagonist of a film-based musical must be active, taking action from the beginning of the musical to achieve a specific goal.
2. A film-based musical must have a protagonist that is engaging or likable to the audience.
3. Films that contain roles that are easily identified with a specific actor should be avoided.

4. A film should only be adapted if the film's story telling is enhanced by the addition of music.
5. A film-based musical should be complimentary of its source material without relying too heavily on the film.

The Active Protagonist. Among the hit film-based musicals, one pattern observed is that each musical has an active protagonist. That is, the protagonist propels the action of the story rather than letting the story happen to them. Thomas Viertel, a Broadway producer of the hit Broadway musicals *Hairspray* and *The Producers* states,

I'm a great believer in active heroes. It's crucial you have a character whose own decisions and whose own passions drive the story forward. Not all movies are like that. And the great musicals, based on movies or otherwise, have an extra trick, I think. They show you that the character needs something they didn't know they needed. (Phillips, 2010, para 10)

Viertel's brother Jack, a producer and dramaturge, in his 2016 book, *The Secret Life of the American Musical* concurs, adding,

There are no inviolable rules for the creation of enduring, popular musicals, possibly, except this one. The hero has to want something that's hard to get and go after it come what may. The sooner the audience understands this, the better. The "I want" song is the mark of an active hero. (Page 53)

The "I want" song usually occurs near the beginning of the musical in order to establish the character and set up the action for the musical. The protagonist sings a song about a particular wish or dream to provide the audience a glimpse of what will happen the rest of the musical. For examples of "I want" songs, Viertel uses "Wouldn't it be Lovely" from *My Fair Lady* (1956) from Broadway's Golden Age and as a modern example, "My Shot," from *Hamilton* (2015).

An example of an active protagonist from the sample set of musicals with an "I want" song is Belle from *Beauty and the Beast*. In the song "Belle (Reprise)," Belle encounters a suitor

who wants her to stay in her small town and live the life of a housewife. Yet, Belle wants to live a life like the characters in the books she reads, as heard in the following lyrics:

I want much more than this provincial life
I want adventure in the great wide somewhere
I want it more than I can tell
And for once it might be grand
To have someone understand
I want so much more than they've got planned. (Menken, Ashman, & Rice, 1994)

Belle's "I want" song helps establish her as a strong, active character who can successfully drive the storyline.

An example of a musical without an active protagonist, at least in the musical, is *Rocky*. All of Rocky's actions are motivated or provoked by other characters. For example, it takes Apollo Creed's interaction for Rocky to reach stardom as a boxer and his manager Mickey's encouragement to follow through with the fight. Just after the opening scene of the musical, Rocky returns to his humble home and sings "My Nose Ain't Broken" to his pet turtles. Rather than sing about his dreams or ambitions, though, he reflects on the things he lacks with the only optimistic line, "But hey, my nose ain't broken." Rocky sings:

See that poster on the wall?
Rocky Marciano
Never took a single fall
Not Rocky Marciano
He and me we share a name
I think of that a lot-
How one rocky gets to the top of his game
And the other rocky
Gets what I got

I got ten sore knuckles and a ringin' ear
I got a bruise over here, and here, and over here
I got a swelled up eye and a real flat beer
But hey, my nose ain't broken (Ahrens & Flaherty, 2012)

Because Rocky lacks ambition, the audience is not given a reason to follow his story. With Belle, the audience knows that she wants to explore the world and is willing to join her on her journey. With Rocky, however, all the audience knows is that he is a fighter that has never broken his nose. There's no sense of where his journey is going or even if he wants to go on such a journey.

An Engaging Protagonist. One of Engel's overlapping needs of the musical is a developed character that provokes feeling: "There is an impression that feeling, and sadness are inseparable...To feel is to laugh as well as to cry, to be charmed as well as repulsed. To feel is to experience, and in order to experience any kind of emotion from a play or musical one has to care about the characters and the situations" (Engel, 2006, p.74). All good theater must engage the audience or provoke feeling. When theater fails to provide engaging characters that the audience might root for, like the dancers in *A Chorus Line* (musical), fall in love with, like Tony and Maria in *West Side Story* (musical), or love to hate, like Mrs. Hannigan in *Annie* (musical), the audience becomes bored or disinterested.

In the introduction of this article, I spoke about the musical *Newsies*, the unlikely hit that began as a movie flop. In reviews by Chris Jones of *The Chicago Tribune*, Linda Winer of *Newsday*, and David Rooney of *The Hollywood Reporter*, each remark about the engaging cast of newsboys whose relentless energy, optimism, and togetherness struck a chord with audiences. Rooney writes, "As much as the material, however, it's the attractive young cast and the high-energy physicality of Jeff Calhoun's production that make the show so engaging," adding about the musical's protagonist, "Jordan (recently of the short-lived *Bonnie & Clyde*) is a natural musical-theater star who brings effortless charisma to the role and an ideal blend of wise-guy

attitude, innate leadership and romantic wistfulness” (Rooney, 2012). Where did *Newsies* go right? The characters, including its leading man, Jack Kelly, were engaging to the audience.

Having an engaging protagonist should also mean having a likable protagonist. 2013’s *Big Fish* based on the similarly titled film and novel, tells the story of Edward Bloom, and his son, who wants to have some sort of real connection to his conman of a father. As a traveling salesman from Alabama, Bloom never really reveals the truth of his past, even on his death bed, an issue that his long-suffering son, Will, finds problematic. Critics of the musical suggested that the audience never engages with Bloom and his stories. Marilyn Stasio of *Variety* in her review of the musical with the bi-line, “Show speaks to anyone pining for a studiously heart-warming musical about a dying man’s efforts to justify a lifetime of lousy parenting,” describes the protagonist as an “egomaniac” and “conman” stating, “Every man wants to be a hero to his son. Edward needs to be a hero to himself. Hence, the tall tales and elaborate daydreams he spins to convince himself that there is meaning and purpose to his ordinary life” (Stasio, 2013). Ben Brantley describes Bloom “as one of those impossible, wonderful, embarrassing fathers whose ghosts have done so much to keep psychiatrists in business” (Brantley, 2013, para 4). David Rooney, of “The Hollywood Reporter” (website) refers to Bloom as “self-glorifying,” “elusive,” and “a blowhard” in his review. Each critic praises Norbert Leo Butz, the actor who portrays Bloom, yet the consensus is that the character is with a conman’s sensibilities and lack of honesty is unlikable. Therefore, the audience is not engaged to care or have feeling about the protagonist. This is likely one reason why the film-based musical was a flop.

Recasting a Star. As an example of Mandelbaum’s rule to avoid an impossible idea for a musical, he uses the example of the musical *Molly*, stating, “The problem was that Molly Goldberg was Gertrude Berg and vice versa. There really was no character without her, and it

was foolhardy to attempt a musical about the Goldbergs without Berg at least writing it, as she had most of the other versions” (Mandelbaum, 1991, p. 199).

My rule, however, is more specifically aimed at Broadway producers who choose to adapt musicals from movies with iconic actors in iconic roles. Examples include *Singing in the Rain* (1985) and *Saturday Night Fever* (1999). David Gritten writes, “...if I’m going to watch *Singin’ in the Rain* and *Top Hat*, then it’s the irreplaceable Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire I want to watch. If that’s on DVD, so be it.” (Gritten, 2013, para 8). New York Times critic, Charles Isherwood makes a similar statement about the Broadway musical adaptation of *Saturday Night Fever*,

All that emotional subtext has evaporated from the material as it has been translated to the stage. To be fair, much of the loss might have been inevitable — the movie’s soul was mostly written in the depths of Travolta’s wounded eyes, in the nervously arch nasal whine of Karen Lynn Gorney, playing Tony’s ambitious dancing partner Stephanie Mangano. The nuances these actors brought to the roles cannot reach to the balcony of the Minskoff Theater, so it’s not entirely the fault of Broadway’s Tony and Stephanie, James Carpinello and Paige Price, if their characters translate as coarse facsimiles of the film versions. (Isherwood, 1999, para 5)

Another interesting example is the Broadway production of *Little Shop of Horrors* (2003). The musical adaptation of *Little Shop of Horrors* comes from the 1960 Roger Corman film of the same name. The musical debuted in 1982 Off-Off Broadway before moving to Off Broadway’s Orpheum Theatre. The star of the musical was Ellen Greene, playing the role of Audrey. Greene reprised the role in the 1986 film adaption of the musical. Although the Broadway musical is based on the 1960 film, it is Greene who is identified with the role. In the 2003 revival, Kerry Butler starred as Audrey, yet when the reviews came out, critics immediately compared her to Greene. David Finkle writes of *Theatre Mania* writes, “Kerry Butler sings Audrey's "Suddenly Seymour" like a bird on a wire but, whether or not she’s seen predecessor

Ellen Greene's interpretation of the role, she seems to be doing a pale imitation" (Finkle, 2002).

In the *New York Times* review, Ben Brantley writes,

As his love interest and co-worker, Audrey...the appealing Ms. Butler...is a sugary wisp of a woman, with none of the lumpy, endearing whorishness that Ms. Greene brought to the part. With both Ms. Butler and Mr. Foster, you're always aware of the clean-cut winners who are portraying these smudged, bruised losers. (Brantley, 2002, para 15)

In 2015, City Center Encores produced a revival of *Little Shop of Horrors*, bringing in Greene to reprise the role she had originated more than 30 years earlier. Despite the age difference with her co-star, Jake Gyllenhaal, who was just 2 years old when Greene first portrayed Audrey, the two-night run received rave reviews. Brantley writes:

(The roof) was blown right off the building when Ellen Greene made her entrance in the blissed-out, two-nights-only concert production of *Little Shop of Horrors*.

Portraying the sweetest masochist in musical-comedy history — Audrey, the Skid Row florist's assistant — Ms. Greene received the kind of entrance applause you might imagine greeting the resurrection of Maria Callas at the Metropolitan Opera for a beyond-the-grave performance of "Norma." But Ms. Greene, make no mistake, is very much alive.

It may be more than three decades since she created the role of Audrey in *Little Shop of Horrors*, Howard Ashman and Alan Menken's eccentric, grisly, dearly beloved little musical from 1982 about a boy and his man-eating plant. But in a heartfelt performance that brought to mind a virtuosic jazz artist riffing out the essence of a signature melody, Ms. Greene demonstrated that she still unconditionally holds the patent on Audrey. (Brantley, 2015, para 1-3)

Music. A trait found in Engel, Mandelbaum, and Sheehan's rules all dealt with music and how it should be used in a musical. Engel uses a George Bernard Shaw quote to explain the basis of music in dramatic story telling:

...there is a great deal of feeling, highly poetic and highly dramatic, which cannot be expressed by mere words---because words are the counters of thinking, not of feeling---but which can be supremely expressed by music. The poet tries to make words serve his purpose by arranging them musically but is hampered by the certainty of becoming absurd if he does not make his musically arranged words mean something to the intellect as well as to the feeling. (as quoted in Engel, 2006, p. 148)

In musical theatre, there must be purpose behind each song. For example, in *West Side Story* (musical), when Tony first meets Maria in Act I, Scene 4, he is so overwhelmed with emotion by her name and beauty, he can do nothing but sing her name. In “Maria” (song), Tony sings her name twenty-seven times, each time with different meaning and expression (Bernstein, Laurents, Sondheim, & Kert, 2012) A recent example of a film-based musical that uses music as an emotional springboard is *Waitress* (2016) based on the 2007 film of the same name. David Rooney of *The Hollywood Reporter* states, “The ballads are not Broadway-style songs in that they advance the plot, but they do something just as vital, which is to deepen our affection for the characters and our access to their inner lives” (Rooney, 2016, para 9). Charles McNulty of *The Los Angeles Times* adds “The musical's lovely score by Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter Sara Bareilles gives Mueller plenty of opportunity to expose Jenna's inner drama” (McNulty, 2016, para 9).

This rule also suggests that producers seek to find musicals that require music to either progress the plot or reveal emotional depth of characters. Instead of asking “What would make a good musical,” producers should instead ask, “How can music enhance the story telling that is absent from the film?” Marc Platt produced the film, *Legally Blonde* in 2001. In addition to Platt’s efforts as a film producer, he has produced four Broadway musicals, including *Wicked* (2003). He also is the father of Ben Platt who is a Broadway actor who won the 2017 Tony Award for Best Actor in a Musical for *Dear Evan Hansen* (2016). While Platt seems like a natural fit to produce the 2007 musical adaptation of *Legally Blonde* he was not involved. In 2014, Platt was asked his feelings about the musical that closed prior to recouping its investment. His response about the not wanting to adapt the musical was “The question is not ‘can this film

be musicalized for stage?’ but ‘why should it be?’ I didn’t know how to improve upon the film experience” (Willens, 2014, para 12).

Complimentary. One of Rogers’ rules is to “Make your own moments” (Rogers, 2006, para 10). Many times, in musical adaptations, the musical tries and fails to replicate scenes from the film. Davis uses the example of the scene in *The Wedding Singer* (film) in which the character Robby sings, “Somebody Kill Me.” Davis believes the scene does not work in the musical because the audience will immediately recall Adam Sandler’s delivery and Drew Barrymore’s reaction, and they will unfairly compare the stage actors’ performances. Davis also points out that the original song from the film does not flow with the rest of Matthew Sklar’s score of the musical.

While observing the film-based musicals, I found a similar pattern among hit musicals. The majority of the hit musicals I observed avoided pandering to the audience recreating scenes word for word from the film, and several made drastic changes that actually helped the film’s narrative connect with Broadway audiences. One example is *Kinky Boots* (2013) based on the 2005 film of the same name. Book writer, Harvey Fierstein, while sitting with Chris Jones of the *Chicago Tribune* during the development of the musical, offered what he believes is the difference between the musical and its source material,

...the biggest difference between the movie and the show, aside from the drag queens singing as they pass along the assembly line, will be that the movie is, at its core, about the saving of a factory and the musical will be, at its core, about two young men who come from seemingly opposite worlds who figure out that they have a lot in common, beginning with the need to stand up to their dads. (Jones, 2012, para 20)

While the setting of *Kinky Boots* remains in its original setting of Northampton, England, another adaptation of a British-based film, *The Full Monty* (2000) changes its setting to Buffalo, NY, which also entails adapting the characters and dialogue to reflect American culture. One

scene, however, puzzled the creative team behind the musical. During the film, the steelworkers perform an impromptu dance to “Looking for Some Hot Stuff” while waiting in line at the unemployment office. As the musical director Jack O’Brien explains, “That’s a film setup. You’re in and you’re out in a take. You sit in an audience, you wait for it to come, and it can’t be as good as when you didn’t know it was coming” (Marks, 2002, para 31). As a compromise, choreographer Jerry Mitchell alluded to the film sequence in a later and unlikely scene in the musical: during a funeral march.

While *Kinky Boots* and *The Full Monty* found ways of avoiding the traps of the film, other musicals rely too heavily on their sources. Davis uses the example *Spamalot* (2004) which he believes is entirely reliant of the audience’s recognition of scenes lifted directly from its source material, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975). However, *Spamalot* recouped its investment revealing that sometimes, reliance on the source material can be beneficial.

One example is *Illya Darling* (1967) based on the 1960 film *Never on Sunday*. In his review of the 1967 film-based musical, Walter Kerr of *The New York Times* immediately compares the ill-fated musical’s opening scene with that of its source material. In the film, actress Melina Mercouri strips to her bikini on the docks of Piraeus in Greece and dives into the water, inviting the dock workers to join her. In the musical, Mercouri, reprising her role in the film, makes a similar scene, stripping to her bikini, but runs to the wings where the water awaits. (Kerr, 1967) The comparisons do not end there. *Never on Sunday* features Mercouri singing the title song, which won the Academy Award for Best Song and became a popular song recorded by such artists as Petula Clark. During the closing night, the song, sung in its original Greek, elicited such a response that the song was performed two more times (Daley, 2014). Considering the film and song’s popularity, the musical adaptation could never separate itself from its source

material. The result was an ill-conceived musical that relied too heavily on its source material and the audience's familiarity. The musical closed after 320 performances without recouping its capitalization.

Sometimes, the musical adaptation is caught between being too faithful or too distant from its source, thereby appearing chaotic. In my introduction, *The Little Mermaid* served as an example in which producers asked, "Where did we go wrong?" *The Little Mermaid* was a difficult undertaking for director Francesca Zambello, set designer George Tsypin, and costume designer Tatiana Noginova. The creative team brought to Broadway from the world of opera could not seem to grasp a coherent way of staging the musical's underwater world and its inhabitants. Despite a book by Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Doug Wright⁴⁷ and retaining music from the film by Alan Menken and Howard Ashman, with additional songs by Menken and lyricist Glenn Slater, the musical never overcame its visual elements from costumes to the set. Another distraction was the director's solution to make the actors appear as if floating or swimming under water, wheels attached to their footwear (Rooney, 2007; Brantley, 2007; Gardner, 2007; Reidel, 2007) Additionally, however, Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* states "The show's creators appear to have been hoping for a cross between the company's two biggest Broadway hits: *Beauty and the Beast*, which was a fair facsimile of the original movie, and *The Lion King*, which the director Julie Taymor turned into an ingenious, multicultural arts-and-crafts fair" (Brantley, 2008, para 17). According to Brantley, then, *The Little Mermaid* was not faithful enough to be like *Beauty and the Beast*, whose costumes were visually similar to the film, but too faithful to be like *The Lion King*, which featured puppetry and head pieces to hint at the

⁴⁷ *I Am My Own Wife* (play) won the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the 2004 Tony Award for Best Play.

African animals rather than being too literal. On a positive note, during the 2016 holiday season, *The Little Mermaid* was revived by The Paramount Theater in the Chicago suburb of Aurora, IL. The musical received a rave review from *Chicago Tribune* (newspaper) critic, Chris Jones (Jones, 2017). According to Jones, Paramount solved Broadway's problems related to the spectacle of the underwater world by using puppetry ala *The Lion King* to show the undersea creatures.

The Outlier. The musical *The Color Purple* (2005) breaks three of rules for an adaptation of a film and in the statistical analysis was predicted as a flop, yet the musical became a hit. The musical's "I want" song, "Somebody Gonna Love You" is more heartbreaking than inspiring, as Celie, the central character of the musical has her newborn baby taken from her, breaking my 1st rule. In his review for *The New York Times*, Ben Brantley complained about the rushed narrative leaving little to the character development or feeling for the central character, which breaks the 2nd rule. (Brantley, 2005) The film starred Whoopi Goldberg and Oprah Winfrey, two immensely popular actresses that would seem impossible to replace. As Brantley alluded to in his review, the fast pacing required to fit the epic plot and additional music did not allow the audience to reflect on what was happening on stage, essentially making the music more of a distraction than a way of enhancing the story telling. Therefore, the 4th rule was broken. How then, did *The Color Purple* succeed, despite being forecasted as a flop in my statistical analysis and breaking the rules set using a qualitative analysis? The answer is the marketing power of the Oprah Effect⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ "A phenomenon resulting from the extensive power and influence of the television personality, Oprah Winfrey, with a fan base of 42 million people, in which products and celebrities that receive her endorsement achieve the greatest heights of popularity and success. For example, books mentioned in connection with her book club have become immediate best sellers." ("Oprah effect," 2018)

Just weeks before the musical started previews on Broadway, producer Scott Sanders asked Oprah Winfrey, media mogul and one of the film's original stars, to add her name to the musical's marquee as a producer. Even though Winfrey played no part in the musical's eight-year development to that point, she agreed, "and pretty much just like that, everything about the show, from its marketing plan to the prospects for its success, changed" (Berfield, 2005).

Conclusion

In order to answer the question, "Why do some film-based musicals succeed while others do not?" I developed qualitative on film-based musicals that either recouped or did not recoup their initial investments. I began the analysis by reviewing previous studies that offer parameters for successful musicals. With the criteria in mind, I observed 30 musicals within a sample set, all based on films with varied levels of success. After finding patterns in successful and non-successful musicals, I created a set of five rules that surmised my findings. With each rule, I gave examples and supporting literature from theatre critics and other experts. I also offered an explanation for a musical that seemed to defy the formulas from "Nobody knows anything..." and the rules set in this article.

As with the results of the previous article, as more film-based musicals are produced and trends change, the patterns found in hits and flops can change as well. Looking into the near future of Broadway, however, there are 25 proposed new film-based musicals according to Playbill.com. If one were to apply the rules of this article to some of the adaptations, evidence shows that they might not do as well as hoped. For example, the film *Labrynth* (1986) has been announced. The film stars the late singer David Bowie in the role of the Goblin King. As the adaptation process continues it will be interesting to see how producers handle the issue of recasting the role made famous by an icon like David Bowie. According to my research and set

of rules, it could be a lost cause. A film and book that has not been adapted is *The Princess Bride* (1987), which according to my criteria could be hit!⁴⁹

⁴⁹ A musical adaptation has been in development since the early 2000s, but no realized production has been announced. (Viagas, 2016)

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CONCLUSION

In the introduction, I discussed my 17-year old dream to one day produce a Broadway musical adapted from the film *Forrest Gump* (1994) called *Forrest!*, based on my observations of film-based musicals produced during the 1990s. After thorough investigation of film used as source material in this dissertation, the findings suggest that a production of *Forrest!* might not be too far-fetched. In the first article, “Screen to stage...” I determined film-based musicals to be a viable option for Broadway producers based on the number of Tony Award nominations received and won by film-based musicals and the percentage of film-based musicals that recouped compared to other types of musicals. Therefore, the initial idea to produce a film-based musical is a worthwhile endeavor.

Per the variables discussed in article two, “‘Nobody knows anything’ ...” *Forrest!*’s stats are as follows:

1. The duration between the film and Broadway musical debut, if the musical came out 20 years after the essay was written, is 22.33 years.
2. The film’s IMDb rating is 8.8.
3. The musical would not use music from the film.
4. The musical has a different name from the film.
5. The director’s score for *Des MacAnuff* prior to the fall of 2016 is 5.
6. The musical would be developed outside of New York at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Montgomery, Alabama.

With these variables in mind, using the base model formula, the probability score for *Forrest!* is .67, and using the full model formula, the probability score is .97. Since both scores are over the cutoff of .35, both models predict *Forrest!* to be a hit on Broadway.

Two qualitative concerns mentioned in the third article, “‘Where did we go right’...” begin with the film’s protagonist. In the film, Forrest is not an active protagonist. Forrest is perfectly happy living in his mother’s boarding house in the fictional town of Greenbow, Alabama with little motivation to ever really leave. His journey is motivated by his interactions with other characters in the film. For example, in the first act of the film, Forrest runs because Jenny tells him to run, he goes to college because Coach Bear Bryant sees him running and wants him to play football for The University of Alabama, and he joins the army because a recruiter taps him after his college graduation. Despite these characteristics, however, the character of Forrest is engaging because he is so simple and has no lofty goals, yet he becomes an All American football star in college, a Medal of Honor honoree in the Army, an entrepreneur worth millions, and eventually, a loving father and husband. While Forrest might now be the ideal protagonist of a musical, his optimism and pure luck fit well in the world of musical theatre in which a chubby girl can become a dancing television star, or a group of unemployed average Joes can become sexy Chippendale dancers.

Another possible issue found in the film *Forrest Gump* is the star of the film, Tom Hanks. Hanks is well known for his portrayal of the character of Forrest, for whom he won the Academy Award for Best Actor in 1995. This could be detrimental as was the case of *Singing in the Rain* (1985), *Rocky* (2014), and other film-based musicals. Yet, in the hands of the right actor, director, and librettist, it is possible to overcome the star issue as James Monroe Iglehart did in the musical adaptation of *Aladdin* (2014) replacing the legendary comedian Robin Williams in

the role of Genie. Although not discussed in either the second or third article due to the small number of musicals affected, another factor could be the relationship between the star of the film and the subsequent adaptations. Two films starring Hanks were adapted into musicals, *Big* (1996) and *Catch Me If You Can* (2011), and neither one recouped. Again, because there are limited examples, it is insignificant on a statistical basis, but it is an interesting finding that can be further studied.

While *Forrest!* is fictional, the findings of this dissertation are relevant as producers and creative teams continually develop film-based musicals. Case in point, the 2017-2018 Broadway season includes seven new musicals. Among those seven, four musicals are film-based, including *The Band's Visit* (2017) based on *Bikur Ha-Tizmoret (The Band's Visit)* (2007), *SpongeBob Squarepants* (2017), based on the cartoon series that debuted on Nickelodeon in 1999, *Frozen* (2018), based on the 2014 animated film, and *Mean Girls* (2018), based on the 2004 film that is loosely adapted from the Roaslin Wiseman's 2002 book, *Queen Bees and Wannabes*. The remaining three musicals are *Prince of Broadway* (2017), a revue highlighting the works of Broadway producer and director Hal Prince, *Escape to Margaritaville* (2017), a juke box musical based on the music of singer/songwriter Jimmy Buffett with an original narrative, and *Summer* (2018), a musical telling the life story of singer Donna Summer. Using the first metric discussed in "Screen to Stage..." the Tony Awards, the film-based musical is competitively successful compared to other types of musicals and that continues with the 2018 Tony Awards. Of the seven musicals eligible for Best Musical, only the four film-based musicals received nominations. The winner, *The Band's Visit*, ended up winning nine additional Tony

Awards and became one of only four musicals to win the Tony Awards' "Big Six."⁵⁰ While it is too soon to tell if all the musicals will recoup, *Prince of Broadway* had a limited run produced by the non-profit Manhattan Theatre Club and closed after 76 performances. *Escape to Margaritaville* is closing without recouping its initial investment (Evans, 2018). It is also doubtful that *Summer* will remain open long enough to recoup as reviews are mixed to poor according the review aggregator "Did he like it" ("Summer: the Donna Summer musical Broadway reviews," 2018). Also, in relation to ticket sales, at 86.82%, *Summer* has a lower capacity sold percentage through June 24, 2018, compared to *Frozen* (98.77%), *Mean Girls* (100.76%), and *The Band's Visit* (94.52%), only averaging more than one film-based musical, *SpongeBob Squarepants* (81.76%; "Broadway grosses - week ending 6/24/2018," 2018). Among the film-based musicals, using the formulas created in "Nobody knows anything..." *Frozen* and *SpongeBob Squarepants* received forecasts of hit, while *Mean Girls* and *The Band's Visit* were forecasted to flop. Only time will tell, though, how accurate the forecasts are.⁵¹

After completion of this study, there are other areas that could be examined further. Since this study focuses on new musicals, an additional study can be performed adding revivals to the

⁵⁰ The "Big Six," similar to the Oscars "Big Five," include Best Musical, Best Score, Best Book, Best Performance by a Leading Actor, Best Performance by a Leading Actress, and Best Director. The other three winners of the "Big Six" include *South Pacific* at the 1950 Tony Awards, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (1979) at the 1979 Tony Awards, and the film-based musical *Hairspray* at the 2003 Tony Awards.

⁵¹ In "Screen to stage..." the issue of casting and replacing male stars was addressed. Tony Shaloub, an actor known for his television roles in *Wings* (1990), *Monk* (2002), for which he won three consecutive Primetime Emmy Awards for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series, and currently featured on *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* (2017), was cast in the Tony Winning lead role of *The Band's Visit*. Shaloub has taken a hiatus intermittently while filming the latest season of ...*Mrs. Maisel*. Despite his absence and being replaced by the star of the Israeli film, Sasson Gabay, ticket sales remain consistently high for the show (McPhee, 2018). However, the show's female star, Katrina Link, may be more difficult to replace after "taking Broadway by storm," according to *Parade* (Brunne, 2018).

regression model. Although the focus of this research is on film-based musicals, similar studies can be performed using history-based musicals, literature-based musicals, performing arts-based musicals, and revues, all of which already have pertinent data collected in the database discussed in the first article. Other categories of musicals not based on narrative content can also be examined more closely. For example, as jukebox musicals continue to be produced, a study can be made to find what types of juke box musicals are more profitable: musicals with original narratives like the Beach Boys' *Good Vibrations* (2005), musicals with a historical base like *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (2014), or musical revues like *The Look of Love* (2003) which features the music of Burt Bacharach and Hal David.

As more film-based musicals are produced annually on Broadway, the determinants of success can and will most likely change in relation to the models discussed in “‘Nobody knows anything’” The rules presented in “‘Where did we go right’ ...” may also change as the sample set grows larger. An area of particular interest to me is the adjusted box office grosses of the films used as source material. When more musicals based on films with reported grosses open in the future, it will be interesting to see if the high recoupment rate of musicals based on films with comparatively lower grosses remains constant. Another variable possible for further exploration is the marketing budgets or media presence of film-based musicals, which would require cooperation with producers and their marketing teams. Finally, a qualitative approach could use audience surveys to determine why audience members choose to see particular shows, whether their knowledge of the source material plays a factor in their decision to see the show, and how the audience reacts to a film-based musical with or without knowledge of its source material. For example, what is the comparison of the enjoyment level of audience members who have not seen the film to those who have? My interest in film-based musicals as an academic and a practitioner

has lasted over 20 years and it is exciting to know that there are more avenues to follow to continue my research another 20 more. Who knows? Maybe even one day I will finally win that Tony Award for *Forrest!* like I did in my college essay.

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