

## Everyone's A Critic: Social Media, Participatory Fan Culture, and Postmodern Presence in Broadway Musicals

Maya Abbott-Smith

*Strategic Communications*  
*Elon University*

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements in  
an undergraduate senior capstone course in communications

### Abstract

*Amy Jensen's theory of participatory fan culture, and Chantal Pontbriand's concept of postmodern presence, each help explain how Broadway musicals are able to encourage online buzz. Fans using social media interact with shows, and they are sometimes being noticed by those in charge of the production. This study explores how fans and audience members interact with three Broadway musicals through social media, and how that contrasts with how theatre critics in traditional media perceive these productions. By doing so, these fans are able to create narratives that can drown out the views of critics.*

### I. Introduction

The Broadway musical is an American icon that has been an entertainment source since the late 1800s. From long-running hits like *Wicked* and *The Phantom of the Opera*, to new productions like *Dear Evan Hansen* and *Hamilton*, Broadway musicals are big, bold and entertaining while reflecting relevant topics in today's society. Musicals are an extremely costly venture in time and money, as noted in *The New York Times*:

Bigger-scale musicals tend to cost \$10 million to \$15 million these days. (The hit musical "The Book of Mormon" cost about \$9 million.) The most lavishly produced musicals are even higher: DreamWorks has confirmed that "Shrek the Musical" cost \$25 million to mount on Broadway, while the producers of "Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark" have confirmed that the show cost \$75 million to stage (Healy, 2011).

Creative teams can spend months doing workshops, staged readings, rewrites and out-of-town tryouts perfecting their show before getting the green light to bring it to New York. The 2017 hit musical *Come From Away* had five out-of-town tryouts, which included an international engagement in Toronto, in order to perfect the show. The large time and financial investment is made in hopes of producing a musical that will receive great acclaim once it opens in New York. The success of a musical can be seen in many forms: good reviews in major newspapers like *The New York Times*, award nominations or wins, and word-of-mouth

---

**Keywords:** Broadway, musical, *Mean Girls*, *Carousel*, *Frozen*  
Email: msmith113@elon.edu

---

publicity from audience members are the most common. However, box office sales are what fuel a musical's recouplement, and up until the mid-2000s, a good newspaper review is what made a musical.

In the digital age, print reviews have significantly less of an influence on production success than they once did. In the past, a rave review from *The New York Times* would guarantee a musical's longevity and success due to the influence critics had on the public's decision to attend productions. Now, in the 21st century when digital and social media have taken over the presentation of media, Broadway musicals are having to adapt to different sources for production success. Musicals still use quotes from reviews for print advertising, but traditional print media criticism is disappearing, and in the digital age, anyone can declare themselves a critic. Audiences and fans can engage with musicals in fresh and innovative ways. Through social media, anyone can share their own thoughts and perceptions of a production and the sheer number of these opinions can drown out credible critics. Bud Coleman (2017) sums up the challenge of arts criticism in the 21st century: "What is the point of a reviewer in an age where everyone reviews?" (p. 334).

### ***Theoretical frameworks: Postmodern presence***

Social media has enabled musical theatre to interact with productions on levels never before available. They are free to share their thoughts and experiences in addition to interacting with the musicals themselves. This interaction can be understood as a form of "postmodern presence, which scholar Chantal Pontbriand (2017) defines as a condition where "presence is no longer dependent on materiality but instead depends on the artwork's exhibition value, its multiplicity, and its accessibility" (p.136). Social media has also helped extend Broadway's reach on a geographic scale. Prior to the internet, Broadway was contained to a small, physical location in New York. Now, thanks to out-of-town tryouts of musicals, national tours of successful productions, TV appearances on the *Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade*, and the online sale of production souvenirs, the musical theatre fan no longer has to be in New York, or even have seen the production, to be a dedicated fan. The internet has defied the traditional limitations of live theatre and enabled accessibility so that fans anywhere in the world can interact with musical theatre at any time they wish. Postmodern presence also offers musical theatre producers and production teams a fantastic marketing opportunity. If handled correctly, fan interaction on social media can ultimately lead to increased box office revenues for the musical.

### ***#Ham4Ham and the 21st Century Musical King***

Every so often, a musical becomes so popular that it becomes "the musical" for that generation. There is little debate that the king of 21st century musical theatre is *Hamilton*. Created by Lin-Manuel Miranda and the team that created *In The Heights*, *Hamilton* exploded onto the New York theatre scene in 2015. Even in its off-Broadway run at the Public Theatre, the musical was a sold-out success being praised for its incredibly diverse cast and its incorporation of hip hop and rap into a traditional musical. Once the musical moved to the Richard Rodgers Theatre, tickets sold out in a matter of hours for months of the run. In the three years since it has opened at the Public Theatre, *Hamilton* continues to expand its U.S. and international reach. It now has two permanent productions in the states, one in New York and another in Chicago, two national tours on the road visiting cities around the country, a permanent production in London, and a staging planned in Puerto Rico, with Miranda set to return to the title role.

When speaking of the musical, set designer David Korins comments "It's the first social media show. It's put theatre at the heart of pop culture conversation and all media conversation" (Hillman-McCord, p. 123). *Hamilton* was first introduced to the world as a 4-minute, 30-second video on YouTube when creator and star Lin-Manuel Miranda performed the opening number at the White House. Since the musical's genesis began on the internet, people were able to develop a personal connection to Miranda and the piece before it even became a full-scale production. This led to two audiences for *Hamilton* – those who somehow have managed to get into the actual theatre, and a much larger base of fans that gets its fix of the musical online. For its dedicated fans, according to Hillman-McCord (2017) "Hamilton's digital life offers an integral and inseparable part of the experience" (p. 120). The "Hamilfans" have a variety of names for themselves, and they are able to express themselves on numerous social media platforms. Some create their own fan cultures within those platforms, and others are just there to watch and observe. Since it began previews on Broadway, *Hamilton* has encouraged fans to interact with the show in person and on social media.

The evening that *Hamilton* was set to begin previews, the show was sold out except for a handful of lottery seats that would be sold a few hours prior to the performance. More than 700 fans turned up at

---

the Richard Rodgers Theatre hoping to enter and Miranda, moved by the number of people who showed up, came out the stage door to acknowledge the fans. Thus a new tradition started, prior to the next day's show Miranda inaugurated the *Ham4Ham* performances. A short performance presented on the sidewalk in front of the theatre before the lottery featuring cast members from *Hamilton* and other Broadway companies. An active member of Twitter, Miranda would also drop hints on his account leading up to some of the performances. Through *Ham4Ham*, he created a new way to connect with fans that was interactive and rewarding, no matter how far away fans were.

### **Participatory fan culture**

Although passionate online fandom is not exclusive to *Hamilton*, it is the best modern example of the participatory fan culture for a Broadway musical. Musicals create obsessive and very interactive fans, who find personal connection and representation in a variety of musicals. With the addition of social media, the musical theatre fandom has many sources for fans to feed their love and obsessions. They will buy tickets to see shows multiple times, send gifts and flowers to the theatres, and share their passion for their musicals all over social media. According to Amy Jensen (2017), participatory fan culture and the internet places:

... the virtual spectator at the center of the theatrical narrative, which extended beyond the world of the play into the world surrounding the performance...the participatory spectator has learned to advance theatrical narratives beyond the threshold of theatre space into their own private space (Hillman-McCord, p.122).

On social media, fans can feel a part of the production and the process. Through backstage video blogs on *Broadway.com*, YouTube interviews with production teams, and Twitter and Instagram posts from performers. Fans can get an intimate look into what life in a Broadway musical is really like. It is a whole new fan culture.

Intensive knowledge has always been a traditional trait of musical theatre fan culture. In-depth knowledge of a particular show is the norm, including its production history, cast members, cast recordings and additional content such as books is considered a privilege. Through social media, musical theatre fans are able to create content and talk to other fans with the possibility of being noticed by the production and its stars. A symbol of one's status in the fandom can be a very important entity, and being recognized multiple times by the stars or creators can be incredibly "valuable," even though it carries no actual worth.

Even though the knowledge and statuses in the musical theatre fandom have no monetary value, the amount of love and support for the many different musicals is profound. The ultimate gratification for musical theatre fans is validation by the production team that their love and support for the musical is appreciated. It is important to note that fans will offer continued support to performers as they move from production to production. Any actresses who have played Elphaba or Glinda in the Broadway phenomena *Wicked* automatically inherit the production's passionate fan base. In addition, performers from the Disney musical *Newsies* carry the "fansies" from that production with them now even though the musical has been closed for four years. A permanent association is established with many musicals that fans will continue to identify with even after a performer leaves or the show closes.

In her acceptance speech for *Dear Evan Hansen*, the winner of the 2017 Tony Award for Best Musical, producer Stacey Mindich not only thanked the cast and production team, but fandom. "Thank you to our fans from Martha and Jule in California to to Kaho in Japan, you have been seen and heard and found. You matter" (2017 Tony Awards, CBS, Live Telecast). Acknowledgement of the musical theatre fans through fan interaction is a valuable marketing tool for musical theatre producers. By acknowledging the audience, people can be compelled to come see or return to the musical.

---

## II. Methods

This study uses qualitative research methods and examines the social media related to three Broadway musicals – *Frozen*, *Mean Girls* and *Carousel* – contrasting them with reviews from professional theatre critics in legacy media outlets. The objective of this research, through data analysis, is to identify how users of social media create a participatory fan culture and postmodern presence that counters the voice of credible theatre critics.

Broadway musicals have their own social media presence and accounts on various social media sites run by production teams or producers. By joining social media, musicals can share content and news with those following the show, with the goal of encouraging attendance and ticket sales. Supporting participatory fan culture on these platforms also allows audience members to share their thoughts and feelings about the productions with the people that matter. McDonald (2017) writes that “Fan buzz is also recirculated by the producers through their official social media channels, but exclusively online ... pre- and post-show photo opportunities are facilitated at performance venues generating more content for fans to circulate on social media” (p.35).

For new Broadway musicals, this social media buzz can be valuable. By interacting with fans of the production early on they can encourage sales while the show is still in previews and generate positive audience buzz around the production. This study will analyze how social media musical theatre fans have the ability on social media to drown out the voices of credible reviewers in legacy media.

New Broadway musicals run for a few weeks in previews, which is an ideal opportunity to gauge what social media audiences are saying about each new show. For this study, social media will be examined for each musical’s “preview period.” Each preview period lasts three to four weeks, where the show is being worked on during the day and being performed at night. This is a critical time as the production team scrambles to add rewrites as necessary before the show is put into its final form. Social media buzz and media coverage during these weeks can be very valuable to boost ticket sales before the reviews from theatre critics are posted after opening night. The type of audiences that shows get in previews are quite different from those seeing the show once it is up and running. According to Anita Gates (2008):

If you choose to see a big Broadway production during previews, you will probably find yourself among a different crowd than during a show’s official run. Some of the seats are filled by family and friends of the cast or the director...some were invited by the producers to “paper the house,” as theater people say, and may have paid little or nothing for their tickets, so there can be an unusual number of industry people there...some have other professional reasons to be there...and some theatergoers are just trying to save money.

The fact that the show has yet to take its final form can be a big appeal to audiences. A preview show could be completely different from what ultimately makes the final version. Avid musical theatre fans can easily be found in the preview audiences for the seasons newest musicals. Some are there to see if a show lives up to preexisting buzz, good or bad, or if a show is looking like it will be the next big hit. Attending a new musical during previews can ensure seeing the show with the original stars before the ticket prices skyrocket after opening.

The 2017-2018 theater season was an interesting one for musicals. All of the new productions opening in the spring were adaptations from other pop culture forms, movies being the most common. This can be helpful since there is a percentage of the audience that will likely attend, however, this can also be difficult because the doorway for comparisons is wide open. If audiences have a negative reaction to the stage adaptation, this can also hurt online buzz and ultimately the ticket sales. Of the three chosen musicals, Disney’s *Frozen*, *Mean Girls* and Rodger and Hammerstein’s *Carousel*, two are pop culture adaptations and the third is a revival of an old musical.

***Frozen***: The stage adaptation of the smash hit animated Disney film featured music by the team of writers who scored the movie, and a cast full of Broadway veterans, including Cassie Levy (*Hair*, *Les Miserables*, *Wicked*), Patti Murin (*Wicked*), and Greg Hildreth (*Cinderella*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*). The musical had a very successful pre-Broadway run in Denver during 2017. This production already had a

---

large fan base from the movie that was only increased by the pre-Broadway tryout. However, New York theatre critics and award nominators alike are notorious for not favoring Disney theatrical productions. Stage adaptations of *Tarzan*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Mary Poppins* have all found their way to Broadway but they were more hit with audiences than critics. The only Disney musical that seems to be an exception to this trend is the stage adaptation of *The Lion King*.

**Mean Girls:** An adaptation of the 2004 cult classic film, *Mean Girls* had a very successful tryout in Washington D.C. in the fall of 2017. With Tina Fey as the production's book writer, acclaimed Broadway director Casey Nicholaw, and another cast of Broadway veterans, including Taylor Louderman (*Kinky Boots*, *Bring It On*, *Peter Pan Live*), Kerry Butler (*Xanadu*, *Catch Me If You Can*, *Hairspray*), Ashley Park (*King and I*) and Kate Rockwell (*Rock of Ages*), *Mean Girls* also comes to Broadway with a sizeable pre-existing fan base. Unlike *Frozen*, the production does not have a negative stigma surrounding its creative team.

**Carousel:** Revived by Lincoln Center, this Rodgers & Hammerstein musical classic is the only one featuring a Tony Award-winning performer starring in it. Jessie Mueller (*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Waitress*, and *Beautiful the Carole King Musical*) rose from the chorus ranks to center stage, winning a Tony for her portrayal of the title character in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. The rest of the company is equally impressive with Tony nominee Joshua Henry (*Hamilton*, *In the Heights*), Renee Fleming, and a chorus of familiar Broadway dancers.

### Data Collection

The study examined each production's official Facebook page, where content and announcements can be shared, and where fans can review the production. Twitter served as the ideal platform for monitoring each musical's account for fan interactions and opinions, and in addition, allowed the broad ability to search for each show. By searching the hashtags for each musical – #FrozenBroadway, #MeanGirlsBroadway and #CarosuelBroadway – a wider range of opinions were available, not just the positive comments the official accounts are retweeting. This social media data was contrasted with reviews from major newspapers and well-known entertainment publications there were published after the official opening night, to gauge how social media created a participatory fan culture and postmodern presence that differed from how legacy media evaluated these musicals.

### Frozen

As foreshadowed by its Disney predecessors, the production didn't receive good reviews from most of the major newspapers. Jesse Greene (2018) from *The New York Times* wrote:

Forget girl power, sisterly love and the high-belt clarion call of "Let It Go." Anxiety over the handling of a previous gift is the theme that comes through loudest in "Frozen," the sometimes rousing, often dull, alternately dopey and anguished Disney musical that opened on Broadway on Thursday.

Likewise, Johnny Oleksinski (2018) of the *New York Post* added:

For its new stage musical "Frozen," Disney should've heeded the sage advice of Queen Elsa: Let it go. Broadway should be the place to see what you can do, test the limits and break through. No right, now wrong, no rules for thee – you're free! But that's wishful thinking. With "Frozen" the house of Mouse doesn't let us in, doesn't let us see. Stays the good Mouse it always has to be. Conceals, doesn't feel. Doesn't let us know. Well, here's what I know: "Frozen" is not a very good show.

Reviews like this in a print-reliant age would have been a death sentence for *Frozen*. The musical only has a small number of usable quotes for marketing, since the dislike was shared by the majority of reviewers in traditional media. However, on *Frozen's* Facebook page, fans showed mixed responses in the review section. While some had already seen the production multiple times and responded positively, others were lukewarm towards it. The musical was often viewed by fans as a good evening out with the family, but

---



fewer found it as a Broadway sensation that marketing suggested.

Another point of interest is that there was no fan interaction on the official *Frozen* social media accounts at all. While Facebook seemed to serve all three musicals solely as a marketing outlet, Twitter was the platform for the most fan interaction. But while *Mean Girls* and *Carousel* were at minimum retweeting fan comments, the account of *Frozen* showed only production tweets.

The lackluster professional reviews were not the reception *Frozen* hoped for, but this production also was not nearly as dependent on social media buzz from audiences or theatre critics for commercial success. The official social media accounts did not go out of their way to engage with fans, perhaps because the *Frozen* franchise was already well-known. Unlike *Mean Girls* and *Carousel*, it is the only musical of the three backed by Disney, one of the best-known media companies in the world. In addition, its predecessor was a smash hit movie which automatically gives it a very specific but fanatic pre-set audience. Simply having the Disney name on the production was an easy sell for families, and it joins *The Lion King* as one of the few shows running on Broadway that is kid friendly. *Frozen* wasn't created to be a Broadway hit in the traditional sense, it was created because people thought it would make a great musical. There are plenty of other Disney movies that would translate to the stage much better, but since it is such a popular children's movie in recent memory having the typical "Broadway success" story wasn't a factor in *Frozen* becoming a hit.

### ***Mean Girls***

*Mean Girls* received lukewarm reviews following the opening. Ben Brantley (2018) from *The New York Times* wrote:

The disconnect that troubles this musical isn't a matter of adapting to changing times. Scott Pask's set, Gregg Barnes's costumes and Finn Ross and Adam Young's video designs render sociological exactitude with flat comic-strip brightness. No, the trouble lies in the less assured translation of Ms. Fey's sly take on adolescent social angst into crowd-pleasing song and dance. Mr. Richmond and Ms. Benjamin's many (many) musical numbers are passable by middle-of-the-road Broadway standards.

Alexis Soloski at *The Guardian* echoed Brantley:

*Mean Girls* is fine. *Mean Girls* is fun. The songs, by Fey's husband Jeff Richmond and lyricist Nell Benjamin, are catchy enough, the book is reasonably witty, the staging, by Casey Nicholaw, sufficiently fluid. The anti-bullying message is straightforward enough (maybe too straightforward, the show says it twice): "Calling someone ugly doesn't make you better looking. Calling someone stupid won't make you any smarter." But - no offense, okay? - *Mean Girls* is basic.

On Twitter, fans actively shared their thoughts on the musical, and in contrast to *Frozen*, the *Mean Girls* Twitter account retweeted fan comments on a regular basis, giving them the gratification of being noticed by the production. This helps promote a participatory fan culture for the musical. Content being shared on Twitter ranged from fan pictures at the theatre, to art and videos, as seen in *Figures 1-4*.

---



Figure 1. Mean Girls fan tweet featuring photos in front of theatre, cast, and program.



Figure 2. Mean Girls fan tweet featuring catchphrases from the musical and a signed program.



Figure 3. *Mean Girls* fan tweet featuring multiple catchphrases from the musical.



Figure 4. *Mean Girls* fan tweet featuring the inside and outside of the theatre.

The *Mean Girls* account also shared production-related content like backstage pictures, related articles from print sources, and promotions of their *Broadway.com* vlog *Too Grool for School*, created by star Erika Henningsen. This ensures that there is a range of material available for those following the *Mean Girls* account to interact and promote participatory fan culture and postmodern presence. The fan content re-tweeted fell into two primary categories, tweets that contain any sort of references to the musical, and pictures of the audience experience. Much of the buzz on Twitter describes the experience of seeing the show, dressing in pink, recreating the logo's pose, and tweeting catchphrases from the musical versus comments on the production itself. This could be linked to the movie fans being content with any sort of stage adaption instead of insisting the musical adhere strictly to the film.

### **Carousel**

*Carousel* received great reviews from the majority of the critics who saw the production. The only recurring negative comment was justifying the violent relationship the musical's plot revolves around to modern day audiences. Ben Brantley (2018) at *The New York Times* wrote:

The tragic inevitability of "Carousel" has seldom come across as warmly or as chillingly as it does in this vividly reimagined revival. As directed by Jack O'Brien and choreographed by Justin Peck, with thoughtful and powerful performances by Mr. Henry and Ms. Mueller, the love story at the show's center has never seemed quite as ill-starred or, at the same time, as sexy.



Adam Feldman (2018) from *Time Out New York* was complimentary as well:

Director Jack O'Brien invites us to admire the show as an exemplar of classic American musical theater, lovingly emphasizing its virtues. Prime among them is Rodgers and Hammerstein's innovative and varied score, repolished by orchestrator Jonathan Tunick and sterlingly sung by the cast; Henry offers a powerful account of Billy's long and winding first-act finale, "Soliloquy," and opera star Renée Fleming—though too grand in manner for the role of Julie's kindly cousin—adds elegant vocal luster to the stirring "You'll Never Walk Alone." The gorgeous choreography, by New York City Ballet's Justin Peck, is danced with aplomb by a very fine ensemble led by NYCB's Brittany Pollack and Amar Ramasar. Santo Loquasto's set, Ann Roth's costumes and Brian MacDevitt's lighting are first-class.

*Carousel* fans also showed lots of love for the musical on social media. They often wrote long statements about how much they love this new staging and how good the cast is. The *Carousel* Twitter account shares *Mean Girl's* encouragement of fan interaction and postmodern presence by actively retweeting audience content. But the comments shared on their account are much more centric on praises for the production, cast, and personal connections, as reflected in *Figures 5-8*.



Figure 5. Tweet from actress Anna Chlumsky complimenting *Carousel*.



Figure 6. Fan tweet sharing a personal connection.



Figure 7. Fan tweet congratulating *Carousel* and, specifically, Josh Henry.



Figure 8. Fan tweet praising *Carousel* and sharing a personal story.

*Carousel* was highly praised for its creative elements by reviewers and audiences alike. They are also a *New York Times* Critic's Pick meaning that the publication has recommended the musical to their readers. You can go online to *The New York Times* theatre section and look at shows that were specifically critic's picks and why the production was chosen. This gives the musical a variety of ways an audiences can access it. More traditional viewers can go online to *The New York Times*, while more contemporary audiences can go on social media and interact with the content available from fans and past audience members.

### III. Conclusion

This paper sought to contrast the waning influence of credible theatre critics to the rapidly expanding wave of social media buzz online. The data supports previous research that suggests participatory fan culture can work in concert with social media to create a postmodern presence for musical theatre fans. *Mean Girls* and *Carousel* both used social media to encourage audience interaction by retweeting audience content. The *Mean Girls* Twitter account was very centric on sharing the production experience, while *Carousel's* account shared audience thoughts on the production and personal stories. *Frozen*, in contrast, didn't engage in any sort of participatory fan culture on any of its social media platforms. However, due to the production being backed by one of the biggest companies in the world and the popularity of its cinematic predecessors they were not nearly as reliant on a positive audience and critic reception.

The use of social media for two of these musicals supports Chantal Pontbriand's theory of postmodern presence in which musical theatre fans are no longer restricted to physically being in the theatre to feel involved as a fan. Thanks to its pop culture significance and movie predecessor *Mean Girls* has been able to cultivate a passionate fan base from all over the world thanks to cast recording, video blog and social media accounts giving fans an opportunity to talk about the production and their connection to it. Likewise, thanks to social media and similar participatory methods like fan retweets, *Carousel* enabled a new generation of theatergoers to share their connection and feelings of this classic Rodger & Hammerstein musical, while still connecting to older audiences with positive reviews from theatre critics.

Facebook, Twitter, and numerous other social media sites have brought the world of Broadway far beyond Manhattan and enabled fans, as Amy Jensen states, "to advance theatrical narratives beyond the threshold of theatre space into their own private space" (Hillman-McCord, p.122). By allowing Broadway musicals to build an online presence and interact with audience members and fans on a regular basis, future audiences are able to form and grow. While *Frozen* didn't utilize social media for the same type of fan interaction as *Mean Girls* and *Carousel*, its very presence on Twitter and Facebook enabled all three to be accessible to theatre fans from around the world.

This research provides insight into the future marketing of Broadway musicals. In a digital-dominated age, it is more important than ever for producers and production teams to acknowledge social media as a third audience with a vast geographic range. Its significance needs to be taken into account in addition to credible theatre critics and audiences. By knowing the value of all three audiences and by utilizing the influence of fans on social media, the voice of theatre critics, and the physical word of mouth from audiences, social media accounts will continue the success of the Broadway musical.

### Acknowledgments

The author thanks Harlen Makemson, professor at Elon University, for his supervision and revision, without which the article could not be published. The author also appreciates numerous reviewers who helped revise this paper, and the infinite love and support from friends and family.

---

## References

- Ault, N. (2016). *Jazz hands in the 21st century: How Broadway marketing navigates social media* (Thesis). University of Missouri--Columbia. Retrieved from <https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/handle/10355/56040>
- Brantley, B. (2018, April 12). Review: A 'Carousel' that spins on a romantically charged axis. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/12/theater/carousel-review-broadway.html>
- Brantley, B. (2018, April 8). Review: 'Mean Girls' sets the perils of being popular to song. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/08/theater/mean-girls-review-broadway-musical.html>
- Chandler, C. (2017). 'Does anybody have a map?' The impact of 'Virtual Broadway' on musical theatre composition. Presented at the song, stage and screen XII, Guildford School of Acting. Retrieved from <https://repository.edgehill.ac.uk/9495/>
- Chow, A.R. #Ham4Ham shows to end, for now. *The New York Times*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/31/theater/ham4ham-shows-to-end-on-wednesday.html>
- Coleman, B. (2017). The ever-evolving world of twenty-first century musical theatre criticism. In J. Hillman-McCord (Ed.), *iBroadway: Musical Theatre in a Digital Age* (pp. 331-346). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foreman-Wernet, L. (2017). Reflections on elitism: what arts organizations communicate about themselves. *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, 47(4), 274–289. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632921.2017.1366380>
- Gates, A. (2008, August 28). Pros and cons of Broadway previews. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/29/theater/29prev.html>
- Gates, S. (2013). Moneyball on Broadway: A statistical and economic exploration of how to succeed on Broadway without really trying. *Proceedings of the National Conference of Undergraduate Research 2013*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncurproceedings.org/ojs/index.php/NCUR2013/article/view/491>
- Green, J. (2018, March 22). Review: 'Frozen' hits Broadway with a little magic and some icy patches. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/22/theater/frozen-review-disney-broadway.html>
- Gross revenue of New York Broadway shows 2006-2017 | Statistic. Retrieved February 27, 2018, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/193006/broadway-shows-gross-revenue-since-2006/>
- Hillman-McCord, J. (2017). Digital fandom: *Hamilton* and the participatory spectator. In J. Hillman-McCord (Ed.), *iBroadway: Musical Theatre in a Digital Age* (pp. 119-139). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hillman-McCord, J. (2017). Musical theatre in the digital age. In J. Hillman-McCord (Ed.), *iBroadway: Musical Theatre in a Digital Age* (pp. 1-12). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Healy, P. (1311261350). The Staggering Cost of Broadway. Retrieved February 25, 2018, from [artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/07/21/the-staggering-cost-of-broadway/](https://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/07/21/the-staggering-cost-of-broadway/)
- MacDonald, L. (2017). Connection in an isolating age: Looking back on twenty years of engaging audiences and marketing musical theatre online. In Hillman-McCord, J (Eds.), *iBroadway: Musical Theatre in a Digital Age* (pp. 17-37). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Paulson, M. (2017, August 29). Race, money and Broadway: How 'Great Comet' burned out. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/29/theater/great-comet-broadway-race.html>
- Roundups, R. (2018, March 22). Review roundup: Did critics find a winter wonderland at FROZEN on Broadway? Retrieved from <https://www.broadwayworld.com/article/Review-Roundup-Did-Critics-Find-A-Winter-Wonderland-at-FROZEN-on-Broadway-20180322>
-

- Roundups, R. (2018, April 8). Review roundup: Did the critics think MEAN GIRLS was fetch? Retrieved from <https://www.broadwayworld.com/article/Review-Roundup-Did-the-Critics-Think-MEAN-GIRLS-Was-Fetch-All-the-Reviews-Updating-Live-20180408>
- Roundups, R. (2018, April 12). Review roundup: Critics weigh-In on CAROUSEL on Broadway, starring Jessie Mueller and Joshua Henry. Retrieved from <https://www.broadwayworld.com/article/Review-Roundup-Critics-Weigh-In-on-CAROUSEL-on-Broadway-Starring-Jessie-Mueller-and-Joshua-Henry-20180412-facebook>
- Sedgman, K. (2016). 'What's bigger than a standing ovation?': Intimacy and spectacle at the Tony Awards. *Studies in Musical Theatre*, 10(1), 37–53. [https://doi.org/10.1386/smt.10.1.37\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/smt.10.1.37_1)
- Shao, G. (2009). Understanding the appeal of user-generated media: A uses and gratification perspective. *Internet Research*, 19(1), 7–25. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10662240910927795>
- Staff, P. (2018, February 21). Schedule of upcoming and announced Broadway shows. Retrieved from <http://www.playbill.com/article/schedule-of-upcoming-and-announced-broadway-shows-com-113677>
- Statistics - Broadway in NYC | The Broadway League. (n.d.). Retrieved February 27, 2018, from <https://www.broadwayleague.com/research/statistics-broadway-nyc/>
- Whiting, A., & Williams, D. (2013). Why people use social media: a uses and gratifications approach. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 16(4), 362–369. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-06-2013-0041>.
- Wickman, F. (2015, November 24). The show is nonstop. *Slate*. Retrieved from [http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/theater/2015/11/ham4ham\\_lin\\_manuel\\_miranda\\_and\\_the\\_cast\\_of\\_hamilton\\_reward\\_ticket\\_lottery.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/theater/2015/11/ham4ham_lin_manuel_miranda_and_the_cast_of_hamilton_reward_ticket_lottery.html)
- Williams, D. L., Crittenden, V. L., Keo, T., & McCarty, P. (2012). The use of social media: an exploratory study of usage among digital natives. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 12(2), 127–136. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.1414>
- Wingfield, G. (2014, Sept. 9). 8 surprising things you didn't know about Broadway previews. Retrieved from <https://broadway.showtickets.com/articles/8-surprising-things-about-broadway-previews/>
- Wollman, E.L. (2017). Looking backward, looking forward: an afterword. In J. Hillman-McCord (Ed.), *iBroadway: Musical Theatre in a Digital Age* (pp. 351-358). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
-