

Summer 2020 Lesson #1

Pasadena Musical Theater Company

Class: Pasadena Musical Theatre Program

Grade Band: 4th-10th

Teacher: Emily Clark

Lesson: The Origins of Broadway

Objective: Review the earliest days of American musical theatre and its development.

Materials: Internet in order to access sites like YouTube or Spotify to listen to music.

Process: Our first video gives a history lesson on how musical theatre developed as an art form in the early 20th century in New York City. We begin with the converging of various performing art forms (Vaudeville, Operettas, and Minstrel Shows), then discussing the music, written by the many famous composers who worked at Tin Pan Alley. These art forms coalesce on the stage in a major way for the first time in the 1910s when The Ziegfeld Follies are born, and we do spend time on some of the major figures from the era (George M. Cohan, Fanny Brice, and Florenz Ziegfeld himself to name a few). The lesson ends with Broadway's first major watershed moment - the musical *Show Boat* in 1927 - giving us the first musical to tackle serious topics like prejudice, and one of the first with a racially integrated cast.

Homework: Spend 15-20 minutes listening to songs by Tin Pan Alley composers and/or the score to *Show Boat*.

Vocabulary: Vaudeville, Operettas, Minstrel Shows, Tin Pan Alley, *The Ziegfeld Follies*, *Show Boat*