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**Tough Guys, Rock Stars, and Messiahs:
Genre and Gender in the Hollywood Musical, 1966-1983**

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**Tough Guys, Rock Stars, and Messiahs:
Genre and Gender in the Hollywood Musical, 1966-1983**

by

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Dedication

To Liz, for getting it

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Genre and Gender in the Hollywood Musical, 1966-1983

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This project seeks to examine how the generic norms (narratives, themes, aesthetics, performers, and performances) of integrated musicals of the 1966-1983 period diverge from those the previous era, and further, how they interrelate with the films' representations of masculinities (visually, intertextually, and bodily). While the musical has oft been discussed academically and popularly as having an underlying mission of projecting an imagined cultural utopia and celebration of romance, many of these later vehicles deviate into a subgenre which features a pattern of unsatisfactory resolutions including unrequited love (*Sweet Charity* [1969], *At Long Last Love* [1975]), failed business ventures (*Camelot* [1967]), and death (*The Rocky Horror Picture Show* [1975], *All That Jazz* [1979]). This study interrogates emerging generic dictates in terms of narrative goals, integration of contemporary visual techniques associated with New American Cinema, and a definitively changing pool of musical male stars (eschewing Howard Keel and Fred Astaire for Steve Martin, Burt Reynolds, and The Village People), and ultimately examines their impact on the construction of a less restrictive notion of male gender.

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Chapter 1: The Musical and Masculinity Take a Turn for the Ambivalent

INTRODUCTION

The screen glows with 1955's *Hit the Deck*. Three madcap sailors (Russ Tamblyn, Vic Damone, and Tony Martin) on leave in New York City evade the military police by hoofing in a new Broadway show featuring dancing sailors. They revere their country; they pine for their sweeties, and they dance like men, that is, with panache when spontaneously bursting into song and dance, but stumbling when trying to mimic professional dancers/faux sailors. They are men's men but fully accept the dictates of finding suitable mates in the likes of a Jane Powell or Debbie Reynolds.

Nearly thirty years later, the dancing sailor revisits the big screen, only this time his forearms bulge; he is missing an eye; he dances a caricatured little shuffle step; and not until his curmudgeonly ex-sailor father and a hulking bully (who brags "I'm mean, I'm mean, I'm mean, you know that I'm mean.... I'm so mean I had a dream of beatin' myself up") demoralizes him does he discover the power of green vegetables, fight the good fight, and win the heart of his own sweetie, not Powell or Reynolds's girl next door, but a screeching pipe cleaner of a dame played by Shelly Duvall.¹

Robert Altman's 1980 live-action musical *Popeye*, starring Robin Williams restructures the iconic image of the sailor. While the early Hollywood musical once naturalized the virile military man-cum-domestic provider, as generic norms shifted later examples of the genre were more apt to illuminate the constructed *performance* of

masculinity and masculine tropes. From the disappearing vestiges of the studio-controlled star system to the freedom ushered in by trends in New American Cinema and the dissolution of the Production Code, to narrative and aesthetic conventions and types of bodily performances, the musicals of the late 1960s to early 1980 illustrate a broadening of generic norms and a catering to contemporary notions of male gender performance.² With *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*'s (1982) reconfiguration of the cowboy, *Jesus Christ Superstar*'s (1973) and *Hair*'s (1979) representations of post-Vietnam masculinity, or the *Wiz*'s (1978) evocation of class and race in a remake of a previous white, rural cinematic vehicle, contemporary hegemonic and marginalized versions of masculinity emerge as part of the array of possibilities for the American musical.

Prior to the Second World War, the Hollywood musical stood as one of the most popular genres; comprised of spectacle, song, and dance, it ranged from “integrated” musicals whose narrative development remained dominant over the music and dance to backstage musicals and those such as the Busby Berkeley vehicles which used music and movement as a means to foreground the artistry and collaboration of choreography and cinematography. Following World War II and industrial and economic changes in Hollywood (e.g., divestment of studios’ exhibition wings and changes in distribution and booking patterns), the genre lost popularity and presence. As the actual number of musicals declined, the dominant successful form of the genre shifted to the integrated—those musicals which used spontaneous musical displays as a means to forward the narrative. The characters in integrated musicals need not have jobs or celebrations to

bring them to the brink of musical performance; the joys, pains, and sorrows of life itself are enough to drive characters to seemingly unmotivated song and dance. These films were often based on pre-sold Broadway successes. In the mid 1960s, with the popularity of *The Sound of Music* (1965), studios again attempted to capitalize on the popularity of the well-established genre. Yet, rather than signaling a resurrection of the genre, high budget musicals such as *Hello Dolly!* (1969) and *Doctor Dolittle* (1967) led to economic disaster for the producing studios. While the musical has certainly waned at various points in film history, it did maintain a constant presence throughout the early 1980s, and its current resurgence with *Chicago*'s 2003 Best Picture Academy Award and various proposals for new film musicals indicates its enduring viability as a significant entertainment form.

Nonetheless, the later manifestation of the musical genre remains under-investigated in film studies. While scholars such as Thomas Schatz, Jane Feuer, Steven Cohan, and Rick Altman have dedicated extensive work to the pre-1950s musical, very little has been produced to examine the generic changes which occurred in later films. This dissertation focuses on generic structures and their impact on the articulation of masculinity in the decades often considered to be one of the low points of the musical genre. Beginning with 1966 and following through to 1983—the years between the genre's “rebirth” with *The Sound of Music* and the final year to see more than one integrated musical—I will focus on the ways in which the generic norms and expectations shifted from the early era and the ways in which these shifts affect the role of the male performer and his performance in the 1966-1983 integrated Hollywood

musical.³ The question I seek to answer is, how are the generic norms (narratives, themes, aesthetics, performers, and performances) of integrated musicals of the mid 1960s to the early 1980s different from those of the 1930 to 1960 era? Further, how do these new norms interrelate with the films' representations of masculinities? In other words, in what ways have the rules of the Hollywood musical shifted from those established in the genre's heyday, and how do they change the genre's articulation of masculinity (visually, intertextually, and bodily).

I will argue that while some films in the later period hold relatively true to earlier established norms (e.g. *Hello Dolly!*, *Half a Sixpence* [1968], *Song of Norway* [1970]), this period illustrates various modifications in the expression of the genre, and these changes produce a noticeable shift in male and masculine representation. For example, the early musical has oft been discussed as having the underlying mission of projecting an imagined cultural utopia and celebration of romance (Altman, Schatz). Later musicals, however, feature a decided pattern of unsatisfactory resolutions including unrequited love (*Sweet Charity* [1969], *At Long Last Love* [1975], *Funny Girl* [1968]), failed business ventures (*Camelot* [1967]), and death (*Godspell* [1973], *Hair*, *Rocky Horror Picture Show* [1975], *All That Jazz* [1979]).⁴ These pessimistic themes and the associated storylines result in an overall contrast to the earlier films on which most academic study has focused. Throughout, I will use the term *arcadian* to represent the films which embrace utopic social values through clear-cut resolutions, heterosexual unions, unifying song and dance, and idealistic mise-en-scène and *ambivalent* to refer to films of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s which present a more complicated and contentious

view of society through inconclusive narratives, ideologically complex and inconclusively driven characters, unclear notions of morality and social norms, and variations of realistic *mise-en-scène*. Chapters 2 through 6 will further elucidate these terms through an examination of each phase's generic norms.

Accompanying such deep structural changes, the very fashion of American cinema of the late 1960s left its mark on the genre. Following the Americanization of techniques popularized by avant-garde filmmakers and the French modernist film movement, many musical films integrated distancing camerawork such as the montage, quick cuts, extreme long shots, and jump cuts.⁵ Industrial changes with regard to the star system and the cessation of producing a pool of musical stars led to the disappearance of the Hollywood musical-specific performer (except for those left over from a previous age). Consequently, stars from other mediums and genres became a major staple (Steve Martin, Burt Reynolds, Roger Daltrey, The Bee Gees, Peter Finch, etc.). These types of changes, along with evident alterations in terms of performance style and musical flavor would lead to an overall shift in a significant faction of the newly produced musicals. Following the identification of these changes, I will examine their impact on the construction of male characters and characteristics in the ambivalent musical. I believe changes in narrative and aesthetic structure, star involvement, and levels and types of performance have allowed for a greater range of male characterization (and perhaps one more in tune with the culture's shifting set of masculine norms).⁶

By considering the intersection of these new masculine representations with various stages of the genre, overall changes in film narratives, and the physical

performance of the male body, I hope to illuminate the varying negotiations of male performance. Because I see the late 1960s as a turning point in the musical's storytelling form and a cultural benchmark for shifting notions of acceptable masculinities, my analysis will focus on the mid to late 1960s through 1983, using the earlier films to construct a norm against which the latter would deviate. From the popular Broadway transfers to films made solely for the big screen, how do musicals over this period differ in their (re)presentation of the male body, norms of male performance, and masculinities?

For this project, my research has two stages. I (1) use neo-formalist textual analysis to examine the ambivalent integrated musicals in light of their relationships to pre-established arcadian codes and (2) use a combination of textual analysis and gender and performance studies to examine how these new generic norms come together in the articulation of varied masculinities. It is my hope that this dual approach allows me to investigate thoroughly two categories oft dismissed in genre studies, the waning years of the integrated musical and the gendered implications of that genre.

Using previous academic works as a starting point and gender and performance studies and textual analysis as an analytical base, I seek out the changing ways in which these ambivalent musical stories are told (textually, intertextually, visually, and bodily) through answering questions such as the following. What types of stories are being told and how do they differ from the arcadian era? How do en vogue cinematographic techniques (montage, jump cuts, quick cutting, extreme long shots, etc.) impact upon the storytelling? How does the continued application of "realism" to *mise-en-scène* affect the narrative connotation? What impact does the dissolution of the star system have on

the musical performer? How do new trends in music and dance manifest themselves in these narratives? Finally, how do these formal alterations manifest themselves in the overall performance of masculinity?

My hope is that this project can help to bridge the gaps between and within musical and gender scholarship. By examining the genre in congress with its established norms and industrial changes, I hope to shed further light on the interplay among the popular musical genre, popular performances of male bodies, and the industry in which they circulate. While the history and cultural implications of more decidedly gendered genres have been extensively examined (melodrama, Western, hard-boiled detective, etc.), I believe it is important that scholars not only consider the cultural implications of films which overtly display the trappings of hegemonic masculinity. Through this project I will delve into the ways in which less overtly masculine project is imbued with an adherence to *and* deviations from notions of dominant masculinity and highlight the ways in which generic codes interrelate with such articulations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Over the past thirty years, film scholarship has favored specific types of musical and masculinity studies. While a significant amount of recent work has illuminated the two topics, especially masculinity (which until the last fifteen years or so had been often ignored), identifiable gaps still exist within each area of research. Scholars have not wholly overlooked what I see as important aspects of the topics at hand; rather, the scholarship often vacillates between studies which very broadly interrogate masculinity and/or the musical or investigate the minutia of very specific moments of film history or

fashion. I hope my work will create a middle-range description that not only links the corpora of masculinity and musical studies but also illuminates a period in musical history which has heretofore been overlooked.

Though the study of gender in film emerged through feminist film theory calling further attention to the patriarchal ideology which saddles cinematic product, over the past decade film scholars have turned to the examination of masculinity. The current scholarship often focuses on specific stars or traditionally masculine genres. Works such as Robert Sklar's *City Boys* and David Grossvogel's *Vishnu in Hollywood* examine clusters of star personas within specific periods, while Gaylyn Studlar's *This Mad Masquerade: Stardom and Masculinity in the Jazz Age* provides a more historical view of masculinity with detailed cultural contextualization and explication for the popularity of stars such as Rudolph Valentino and Douglas Fairbanks in the narrow cultural context of the 1920s. Similarly, scholars such as Neal King, Frank Krutnik, Susan Jeffords, and Yvonne Tasker have produced significant studies examining postwar-to-present representations of men in the so-called male genres of film noir and action/adventure, and Cohan has provided a mixed bag of genre study (noir, biblical epic, melodrama) in his book *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties*. While such scholarship aptly engages with the circulation of masculine tropes in Hollywood texts, little complicates the very notion of American masculinity and its engagement with American film by pointedly interrogating genres not commonly associated with proper masculinity (or male spectators for that matter).

While the aforementioned scholars focus largely on dominant masculinity, they seldom discuss the inherent difficulty of placing hegemonic male figures into narratives which question that assumed hegemony. This task must be negotiated in the integrated arcadian musical which removes the narrative focus from the physical duties and actions of the male protagonist and resituates them on the social integration of a community and/or union of a couple. In addition, while some of these works do focus on the performance of the male body in film, none do so in such a way which would explain the types of performances, namely spontaneous song and dance, carried out in the integrated Hollywood musical. In a culture which values the aggressive male hard body and derides the perceived-as-feminine male dancer's body, the musical has persisted, constantly challenging these gendered stereotypes.⁷ I hope to embrace previous work but broaden its scope by venturing into the realm of the masculine performer whose narrative and performative scenarios challenge cultural norms and icons defining (or defined by) hegemonic masculinity.

Along with scholarly gaps in gender studies, I see similar lapses in the existing work on the musical itself. Altman's *American Film Musical* and Feuer's *The Hollywood Musical* stand as the two most significant texts investigating the genre. Each providing a thorough study of thematic, structural, and communicative mechanisms, they focus more strongly on the building blocks of the genre in its early stage, rather than any specific texts or industrial changes (though both make minor forays into post-1950s musicals). Because these works focus mainly on films of 1930s-1950s, they do not account for the changes (narrative, aesthetic, or ideological) in the genre's later form.⁸ Topics of identity

politics (mainly race and gender) in musicals have been somewhat addressed by *Spectacular Passions* (Brett Farmer's study of queer spectatorship), Cohan's work on masculinity in Fred Astaire's narratives and their engagement with the audience, and various essays in the recent *Hollywood Musicals: The Film Reader*. As with the works on masculinity in film, I see this area of scholarship missing significant historical analysis of the genre as entity in flux and considerations of dominant masculinity (rather than only those of ethnic, racial, and sexual minorities). To assist in my research, I turn to a set of theoretical developments: studies of the Hollywood musical, theories of masculinity and its place in culture, and masculinity as represented in film.

The Hollywood Musical: Conventions and Connotations

Scholars have greeted the Hollywood musical with two main lines of study. Books such as *The Hollywood Musical* by Clive Hirschorn, *Hollywood Musicals Year by Year* and the *Encyclopedia of the Musical Film* both by Stanley Green, and *Rock and Roll at the Movies* by Rob Burt are included on a long list of works which focus mainly on listing films (and their directors, producers, and stars) which have, through each individual author's definition, been deemed members of the musical genre. Hirschorn, for example, provides a seventy-year list of musical films, including small blurbs and trivia for each film and partial lists of songs, actors, and other crewmembers. Green's *Year by Year*, which has a theatrical companion piece *Broadway Musicals Show by Show*, provides a selective list of 1927-1989 musicals. Ultimately, the problem of developing a definitive generic corpus arises; what is a musical? From study to study this issue resurfaces. Is it a film with a great deal of music? A certain number of songs? A lot of

peppy dancing? A film in which spontaneous musical outbursts interrupt the spoken narrative? While these types of works do prove a useful source for identifying films that fall under a very broad category of the musical genre, they (self-admittedly) add little to the academic study of the genre.

The only two significant studies wholly dedicated to the musical genre, those by Altman and Feuer, focus not on names and dates, but rather conduct broad structural studies of the genre. Focusing on topics such as identifying the generic corpus, narrative structure, and performance elements, they provide overviews which articulate the musical's big picture or über structure (or the complicatedness of identifying such a structure). The difficulty of the very naming of the genre's corpus and definitive characteristics begs many questions scholars ask themselves when defining such as body. Does the definition treat the phenomena in question in a fashion compatible with the analyst's needs and interests? Does it provide an explanation for the internal functioning of each example of the genre and explain a maximum number of shared attributes between examples of a type? Does such a definition consider explanations for those elements not shared, and/or establish a terminology that permits linkage to other cultural phenomena? Finally, does it provide a basis for systematic analysis and generic division while also providing a reasonable basis for generic history? After posing these questions Altman argues that one must break down the large corpus into a set of shared structures and functions that justify one's original hypothesis.⁹ Inherently connected to these types of choices is a notion of the genre's place in film history as well as its amenability to the type of analysis used by the scholar.

Audience Engagement via Generic Structure

From this problem of generic identification, Altman identifies the romantic couple as the device which drives the genre's storytelling. Before the film starts, the audience knows this romantic duo will unite successfully. Making the climax a foregone conclusion, this foreknowledge allows the viewer to forgo standard conceptions of plot and cause-effect motivation, instead inviting him/her to engage with the *structure* of the film which presents the process of coupling. Solos, duets, and elements of *mise-en-scène* aurally and visually connect the soon-to-be lovers prior to the actual union.¹⁰ The spectator follows a trajectory of *implied* couplehood rather than demanding logical causal relations. This particular resolution of the narrative problem embedded in the genre's deep structure creates a means for the audience vicariously to resolve difficult cultural issues. Tying the spectator's interpretation of genre films to the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss and John Cawelti, Altman states, "The constitution of a genre thus short-circuits the 'normal' sequence of interpretation. Text after text is generated from the same mold, thus highlighting certain textual relationships, repressing others, and eventually limiting the field of play of the interpretive community."¹¹ Thereby, the film lassos the audience into a pattern of meaning-making whereby they will automatically choose an interpretation of the film from options previously articulated in the Hollywood musical. Similarly, implicit in this narrative exists the contractual connection between the industrial producers and the paying audience who consume genre films which repeatedly and successfully hash out irresolvable social conflicts. Schatz places the musical under the category of genres of "indeterminate space" and "social integration," identifying it as

a genre in which narratives repeatedly raise issues regarding conflicting moral beliefs and end with some kind of celebration or communal display of social values. With a grand wedding or celebration, narrative conclusions leave the viewer with a temporary feeling that overwhelming social quandaries can be solved acceptably.¹²

What then occurs when the genre shifts and those characteristics previously taken as given by the general audience are disrupted? The musicals of the mid to late 1960s on create such a quandary, marginalizing the convention of joyful celebration and social integration to raise other varieties of narrative problems. The couple may be there, but pushed to the background of other social conflict and drama.

The musical's ambiguous causal relations highlight the difficulty in evaluating the genre as tool of social learning. Contrasting the musical to a similarly feminized genre, the melodrama, scholars note the lack of ideological closure in the form. While the melodrama presents a clear world where emotion and conflict are depicted and resolved explicitly, the musical presents an ideal without instructions as how to achieve it. Simultaneously, it constructs this ideal through a language of music and dance, not through the standard language of spoken prose.¹³ Scholars have pinpointed the musical's emotionally and ideologically manipulative qualities. Richard Dyer's "Entertainment as Utopia" states as the genre's goal the appeasement of basic human needs, whereby the audience would ultimately find satisfaction through the film.¹⁴ It would present them with a "utopian sensibility," making it possible to present "complex or unpleasant feelings (e.g., involvement in personal or political events; jealousy, loss of love, defeat) in a way that makes them seem uncomplicated, direct and vivid, not 'qualified' or

‘ambiguous’ as day to day life makes them.”¹⁵ In bestowing the artificial feeling of satisfaction through the unrealistically simple solutions to daily life, the films present a false sense of security in the created utopia. By constructing two conflicting ideals as unquestionably congruous, this logic suggests a utopic sensibility can be established and all problems will appear surmountable.

A genre built on this type of ideological duplicity and falsity poses a number of dichotomies which must somehow be resolved—work/entertainment, serious/fun, reality/performance, and social/individual—and the musical narrative must thusly resolve such tensions. Altman notes films such as *The Sound of Music* and *Silk Stockings* (1957) where one member of the pair is initially constructed as serious and the other fun and lively. In order to seal the romance, this difference must be negotiated.¹⁶ Additionally, he points out a recurring work/entertainment dichotomy. To resolve this pairing, the narrative must eventually posit that the most proper type of work is entertainment. “From film to film the specific incarnation of the work/entertainment duality may change, but in one way or another every musical somehow manages to build its thematic complex around its very status as a form of entertainment.”¹⁷ Similarly, Feuer highlights the interpellation of the audience through the resolved tensions between community and individual and amateur and professional. As the romance is secured, notions of community and amateurishness come to the forefront and are deemed ideal. The audience can be successfully integrated into the world of the narrative, as its subject position therein is deemed necessary. To resolve the tension between the romantic

couple, the characters must be fully integrated into a community compatible with its divergent needs.¹⁸

While these scholars assert that the formula secures easy closure, others deny this and posit the impossibility of such resolution within the musical narratives. Using Gene Kelly-Stanley Donen musicals such as *On the Town* (1949) and *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) as his point of departure, J.P. Telotte notes:

The genre typically depicts a world needing transformation by the individual impulse for music, but qualifies this theme with a sense of individual anxiety, due to the potentially alienating difference and isolation that all self-expression seems to entail. To this tension, the Kelly-Donen musicals add a growing awareness not simply of the world's resistance to music or society's to self-expression, but—paradoxically—of the self as a source of resistance.¹⁹

Contrasting those who see a constant resolution which legitimizes entertainment, he states:

. . . it has also sought to disguise the discomforting obverse of this relationship: a sense that individual expression is, on a fundamental level, an antisocial, because of differentiating, act, just as every assertion of the social compact might, by its implicit urge to conformity, deny a potential for true *self-expression*.²⁰

This type of conflict regarding the genre's utopic ideals can be seen even more clearly when investigating the ambivalent musical. Deviating from the conciliatory romance formula, these films—often male melodramas or personal quests—provide less satisfactory or comfortable endings, in part because no clichéd formula exists (or at least is used) to resolve social or personal problems raised.

Aesthetics and Technical Practices

Additional scholarship focuses most directly on the aesthetics and technical conventions of this genre. Recurring methods of visual display in the arcadian period of

the musical have aided in the communication of conservative and utopic norms associated with it. Whether through the interpellation of the diegetic audience through shot-reverse-shot filming or video dissolves which transform the characters into a more idealized time or space, conventions create a sense of oneness and ease between the characters and diegetic and theatrical audiences.²¹ Dyer further discusses these aesthetic feats through the identification of representational (plot, characters, stars) and nonrepresentational (color, texture, movement, rhythm, camerawork, etc.) signs. The two may encounter some form of dissonance, rendering the film simultaneously utopic and ideologically unsatisfactory.²² This contradiction may allow for a film to remain “entertaining” while possessing a plot bereft of the happy-go-lucky closure of the traditional musical. Rather, the utopic nonrepresentational elements compensate for the problematic representational signs. With the integration of more plots which fail to resolve themselves utopically coupled with more realistic settings and harsher rock-driven musical beats, the lack of “entertainment” provided by the later ambivalent films can aptly be investigated by the aesthetic choices, both representational and nonrepresentational.

The centrality of music and the (often) theatrical precursor which latches the film into a preexisting notion of proper sound forces a reconsideration of the formal and commercial dictates of the audio track. As the visual becomes reliant on the audio (often non-diegetic) for cues, Altman states:

We must conclude, I think, that the order of priorities of audio and image track has now been reversed. At first the image track calls forth musical accompaniment by means of an audio dissolve (sound is motivated, naturally and thematically, by the diegesis/image). Once this progression is complete, the

reversal can take place: the movement which we see on screen is now an accompaniment to the music track.²³

The practice of sound dubbing results in a further idealization of the narrative world. By dubbing sound, the work necessitated by the performance of song is erased. The actual bodily process of singing is rendered invisible, leaving the image of an actor easily feigning performance. In this same process the sound of dance is often removed, with vocal and music tracks not coinciding with the actual diegetic sights of the narrative.²⁴

Scholars such as Marsha Siefert, Altman, Feuer, and Dyer recognize the manipulative power of the control and alteration of sound and image in the musical. While the self-conscious narrative technique of characters randomly bursting into song and moving back and forth in time and space may appear the norm to the seasoned musical fan, they subtly place an erroneous construct of naturalness on the film itself. As bodies and voices execute humanly improbable tasks, this façade of performative normalcy, like the false narrative closure, invites the viewer to accept an unrealistic concept of bodily performance. Recurring conventions of the ambivalent musical—montage sequences, voiceover, and performance within a performance—challenge this genuineness.

Negotiation and Subversion of the Genre

Various reasons have been identified as an impetus for the decline in the musical's popularity, such as social disillusionment with the arcadian musical's characteristics (for example their inherent lightheartedness and the social simplicity of

the narratives). Leo Braudy observes a decline in audience acceptance and diegetic adherence to the utopian vision of individualism and energy espoused by the form and internal changes which resulted: “The essential change has been the growing hostility within the musical form to the power of individual energy, coupled with a belief that circumstances, the world outside, are too much for any one person to understand, let alone cope with.”²⁵ He remarks that *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954), for example, uses the practice of dance to implement a more restrictive social norm on the brothers. Dance diminishes their ability to act as individuals. Similarly, as the country headed into social unrest in the 1960s (Civil Rights, Women’s Rights, Vietnam, etc.), the popularity and sheer number of musicals declined. Marc Miller ties this waning to a growing lack of acceptance of utopic endings and social harmony in a culture which saw none.²⁶ Such a critique is problematized by further inspection of the more ambivalent films produced at the time of the genre’s decline, as they begin to contradict the norms which Miller and Braudy see as historically incongruous (utopic endings, success of the individual).

While unsettled spectators need not entirely reject the genre, other scholarship addresses identificatory problems caused by the genre’s structure and conventions. For example, if watching men is a problem so is watching films whose narrative forms disrupt the possibility for any enduring point of identification and engagement.²⁷ Tying this possible rupture to the integrated musical’s form itself, narrative shifts between traditional narration and musical spectacle draw the spectator in and out of a “sutured” identification. Identifying with the performers during the narrative interludes and with

the diegetic and/or external audience during musical numbers, spectators constantly vacillate between subject positions.²⁸ Patricia Mellencamp notes that:

During the spectacles, the discrepancy between the spectator's immobility and silence and the performer's and /or camera's heightened mobility plus the foregrounded music/voice can result in awareness of that very immobility and silence—the place of the spectator as spectator in a movie theatre. At the same time, intensified identification with a superior-self capable of fantastic athletic feats can occur, drawing the spectator further into the spectacle's fantasy. Tension results; the movement of the diegesis is ruptured by both possibilities, and the spectator is no longer completely sutured into the fiction.²⁹

Factions of Queer studies name the narrative rupture caused by spectacle as a major site which allows spectators to disidentify with the heterosexual couple and locate a space for queer pleasure. As the genre enters the late 1960s, the elements which led to such critiques move to the foreground of the musical's formulaic segments (waning of the production number, decentering of successful romance) and these conventions of audience interpellation and self-conscious narration become reworked through new types of narratives and performances.

Implications of Performance

Due to the highly performative nature of the genre, multiple scholars have focused not only on the effects of the narrative progression, but also on the ideological and social implications of explicit performance. Unlike a majority of Hollywood products, the key goal of the musical is not representation of causal narrative via modes of continuity editing and omniscient narration. Rather, the musical performer is constantly drawing attention to himself/herself, his/her voice and body, and his/her connection to the theatergoer. As these dancers put their bodies/voices on display for the

viewers, they invite them to engage vicariously with the ensuing spectacle. Braudy points out dancers such as Kelly created an almost utopic sense of community by mediating the individual and group by taking dance out of venues traditionally associated with dance and bringing it into the streets (unlike Astaire who merely transcends expectations in traditional dance venues). As Kelly dances, the community appears to be drawn naturally to him and become part of the dance.³⁰ Braudy states, “[Dance] tries to subvert reality through its new energy, an energy available to everyone in the audience through Kelly’s insistence on the nonprofessional character, the musical self that wells from inside instead of being imposed from without, whether by training, tradition, or society.”³¹

Like Kelly’s transformation of public space into spontaneous communal space and dancehall, traditions such as the passed-along-song and “non-choreographed” dance numbers theoretically create a sense of community between audience and performer. The erasure of the work involved in the production appears to invite the audience into the picture. They too could effortlessly join in the song and dance. Feuer’s *The Hollywood Musical* cites bricolage or tinkering as a means to create an aura of spontaneity in a cultural product which is, in reality, highly rehearsed.³² She states that in the folk or backstage community:

The choreography blurs the dividing line between performer and audience, between principals and chorus in the dance, between audience and film, so that the dance may become a community ritual. The folk musical reeks with nostalgia for America’s mythical communal past even as the musical itself exemplifies the new, alienated mass art³³.

In this case, the diegetic choreographer is the community.³⁴ By erasing that rehearsal and drawing on a nostalgic notion of the idealized past, the director can project spontaneity, naturalness, and ease. Like others, she cites Kelly and the apparent naturalness of his dance as highly representative of this type of communal interpellation.³⁵

This closeness established with the audience via dance is often problematized when the conversation turns to the performance of song. The study of vocal dubbing merges the study of gendered genre with technology. Not addressed, but I believe implicitly connected to the study, are gendered norms and expectations regarding gender-specific vocal quality and tone that dictate the need for some types of vocal dubbing. The technology of the musical distances the performer from the emanation of his/her own voice. To adhere to what was established as expected vocal quality or star persona, actors' voices are often dubbed into the sound track, thereby separating body and voice. Musicals transferred from Broadway often bore the burden of pre-established fan bases and expectation of vocal quality, thereby limiting what the film could look and sound like; however, the focus on star power and aesthetics in film created a quandary: face or voice?³⁶ In many cases, the body proved to be the more significant element in the film. Siefert claims an existing need for an "audiovisual contract." The voice should appear as if it "could" come out of its apparent producing body. She states, "Dubbing must be concealed to contribute to the musical's major functions—to provide entertainment and to create a utopian vision of life and love."³⁷ The ambivalent musical breaks the audiovisual contract with vocal dubbing which foregrounds its own artifice in films such

as *Bugsy Malone* (1976) and *Pennies From Heaven* (1981) and thereby unsettles generic and gendered norms and expectations.

Additional scholarship focuses most explicitly on the sexual underpinnings of the form. Examining the explicit display of the male body through dance and the place of these performances within the generic narrative, this scholarship focuses on the social connotations of the specularized male in a genre which, due to cultural connotations of the dancing male body, threatens the proper masculinization of the male. Steve Neale points to the musical as one of the few Hollywood spaces where the male body is put on display and therefore potentially feminized, while both Cohan and Jeff Yanc approach the topic from two very different musical icons: Astaire and John Travolta.³⁸ Cohan examines the films of Astaire as aiding in a reversal of these gendered assumptions. He states, “Hollywood musicals re-imagined American masculinity for postwar audiences in the kind of spectacular terms that would later come to dominate a televisual popular culture, but with more mobility and flexibility.”³⁹ Though grounded in the feminized qualities of narcissism, exhibitionism, and masquerade, Cohan argues that Astaire’s portrayals escape the common connotations of feminized performance. Cohan uses Astaire’s capacity to use dance as a means of sexualized power and his ability to halt and resume the internal diegesis as condemnations of any submissive or subservient—hence feminized—narrative role.⁴⁰ Yanc uses the more contemporary example of Travolta to examine the feminizing and homoerotic elements of male musical performance. He examines the non-integrated *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) and *Staying Alive* (1983) and their “attempts to repair the rift between Hollywood’s traditionally polarized definitions

of active masculinity/power and passive femininity/objectification [which] form a fascinating look into Hollywood's strategies for fetishizing the erotic male body."⁴¹

Focusing largely on phallic imagery and assumptions regarding reception Yanc explores the homoerotic implications of Travolta's recurring character. Through song and dance, the male body in the musical runs the risk of crossing over into a feminized performance.⁴²

Related scholarship exists in the field of dance studies. Referring to dance as an isolated art form, rather than an aspect of the Hollywood musical itself, scholars have discussed structures for determining the "meaning" of dance, the cultural connotation of historicized notions of dance, and hierarchization of gendered bodies. Highlighting the significance of the dancing body in its own cultural and historical context, Susan Leigh Foster states:

A body, whether sitting writing or standing thinking or walking talking or running screaming, is a bodily writing. Its habits and stances, gestures and demonstrations, every action of its various regions, areas, and parts—all these emerge out of cultural practices, verbal or not, that construct corporeal meaning.... Constructed from endless and repeated encounters with other bodies, each body's writing maintains a nonnatural relation between its physicality and referentiality.... It mutates, transforms, reinstantiates with each new encounter.⁴³

The very body exists as a cultural construction which lends itself to interpretation.⁴⁴ In the context of a genre whose use of dance and dancing bodies is shifting, such a precept would lead one to contend that the declining use of dance in the ambivalent musical would remain significantly loaded, as this minimal amount of dance would still be imbued with the genre's past articulations. The small amount of dance present would not only create meaning by its existence but also by its absence.

Foster has devised a five-part blueprint for analyzing the meaning of any given dance performance. By looking at frame, mode of representation, style, vocabulary, and syntax, one can determine meaning by a combination of physical and cultural analysis. Examining types and order of movement, context of the dance event itself, and use of specific body parts allows the critic to create meaning from the overall performance.⁴⁵ Placing such an analysis within a culture which feminizes the act of dance and, per Foster, ties thinking (a venture often connected to the masculine) to a stationary act allows the critic to investigate fully the bodily articulation of cultural constructs.⁴⁶ In a genre so linked to notions of proper gender and reliant on performance, the specificities of performances and the ruptures of gendered expectation must be further examined.

Stars in the Musical

In a genre very reliant on the fourth-wall breaking performance, the star persona of the individual who embodies the main characters will inevitably come into play. Whether by encouraging the audience to conjure up memories of previous vehicles or related musical careers or by creating congruity or dissonance in narratives which play with or against the star's own persona, the star aids in the construction of the film's meaning and thereby maintenance of the genre itself.⁴⁷ As with genre, the star itself is not born through a single utterance, rather through a process of "repetition, differentiation, sedimentation, and interchange," and therefore serves as a work in progress.⁴⁸

To this point, the majority of the literature produced specifically on stardom in the Hollywood musical focuses on the two most identifiable male stars of the arcadian period: Astaire and Kelly. Kelly's ability to evoke a sense of everyman and Astaire's

propensity toward eliciting “more awe and wonder than empathy” lead the audience toward a preferred reading of the narrative. As the character and star become inextricably linked, the line between the two begins to dissolve. As this occurrence is often desirable, Schatz states, “Just as the genre operates by means of a balance between story and music and between reality and illusion, so must its central characters balance and interrelate their dramatic personalities with their talents as musical performers.”⁴⁹ Similarly, Cohan states, “Slippage between fictional character and star persona occurs because of the performing style fostered by the protocols of shooting and editing musicals to make stars the main attraction.”⁵⁰ This slippage becomes particularly relevant in the ambivalent period when the number of “legitimate” Hollywood musical stars heavily declines and rock stars and genre-jumpers (those initially associated with a different genre) fill the ranks. Stars such as Williams (*Popeye*), Burt Reynolds (*At Long Last Love*, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* [1982]), and Keith Moon (*Tommy* [1975]) invite the integration of extratextual characteristics no longer connoting an intertextuality tied directly to the traditional film musical. Rather than the safety of Kelly and Astaire, these new musical performers suggest riotous slapstick comedy, animal magnetism, and violent rebellion. Scholars such as Andrew Britton and Dyer would argue that this possibly incongruous aspect of one’s star persona (or a persona fostered in previous films but ultimately abandoned for different ventures) would remain latent in these later films.⁵¹

A reverse logic would imply that the stars would not so much impact the genre, but the genre would impact upon the construction of the star persona. Existing within a

cinematic form with its own established (if in flux) meanings and conventions, the star would make sense within and be linked by the context of the genre and how s/he was able to speak within it. In “Stars and Genre” Britton states,

The Anna Karenina story is an archetypal bourgeois narrative which, in one sense, Garbo cannot effect: the available outcomes (her films enact every conceivable variant), and even the complex pattern of sympathies which problematize our attitude to the heroine’s ‘crime,’ are pre-given. In another sense, of course, her effect is crucial, but it is precisely because her films are not ‘like’ a genre but embedded in one that we can specify what that effect is.⁵²

The star, therefore, cannot affect the musical, but rather the s/he can only be readable *within* the context of the musical and other stars who before have been associated with the particular genre.⁵³

As important as the ways in which the star functions with and against his/her individual characters within films are the ways in which s/he operates in the non-diegetic “real world,” for this “real” star persona will likely enter in to the spectator’s interpretation of the star within the diegesis. Imbued with superhuman powers—granted by the power of the big screen and those who gaze at it—stars’ constructed personas are granted various privileges. Because they vacillate between the real and fictional worlds, their star personas (often just as constructed as their characters’) are granted a sense of legitimacy. In the struggle to find truth within the star and his/her performances, the spectator settles on the star’s “real” attributes as “truthful.”⁵⁴ Dyer further constructs the star as having the ability to (1) negotiate internal contradictions within one’s persona, for example Lana Turner as sexy/pure and Marilyn Monroe as manipulative/innocent and (2) embody waning cultural values.⁵⁵ The presence of such characteristics brings a highly charged entity to the narrative and genre. In the musicals of the ambivalent period, the

ability to negotiate internal contradictions comes into play as the values promulgated by the genre itself change significantly and the stars further contradict the previously established ideals.

The existing scholarship on the musical genre embarks on a solid investigation of the arcadian period; I hope to further this work by examining an era which has heretofore been largely ignored. Further, I ultimately would like to converge the two lines of gender and genre study. While scholars such as Altman and Siefert pose important questions regarding gender and the musical, a better study of the genre and its impact on the production of gender has value.

Maleness and the Cultural Problem of Masculinity

In the wake of 1970s second-wave feminism, theories of masculinity, both within and outside of film studies, have proliferated. With calls for expanded male bonding and men's liberation, more scholars began to investigate the constructedness of the social male. While the burden of female gender construction (and thereby oppression) had been one major rallying cry for feminists, the burden of the restrictions of the social male soon became a similar topic of discussion. Scholars such as Barbara Ehrenreich, Anthony Easthope, Michael Kimmel, Susan Faludi, and Peter Stearns have added to the body of scholarship which now investigates the state of manhood and masculinity in American culture.

Generalized Historical Trajectories and Theories of Masculinity and Masculine Behavior

Various scholars have used a historical trajectory as a springboard for investigating the social construction of masculinity.⁵⁶ Attempting to overcome the assumption that male history is ubiquitous, recent works have striven to make explicit the historical path of the *construction* of Men. Thusly, prompted by a recognition that “American men have no history,” and that though much of America’s histories are written about “great” men and their contributions to the country and its construction, “works do not explore how the experience of being a man, of *manhood*, structured the lives of the men who are their subjects, the organizations and institutions they created and staffed, the events in which they participated. American men have no history of themselves *as men*.”⁵⁷ These new studies examine shifts in male expectations based on issues such as work, race/ethnicity, sexuality, marital status, etc., investigating male icons such as the self-made man, the cowboy, the breadwinner, the sensitive new age guy, and the weekend warrior and contextualizing them within contemporary social movements and cultural contexts. Ehrenreich focuses on a specific trajectory of American masculinity to investigate what she determines to be an increasing “flight from commitment,” especially after World War II. By interrogating hegemonic and subcultural male roles such as the breadwinner, beatnik, playboy, androgen, and antifeminist, as well as cultural demands placed on the male and the ways in which each role negotiates these demands, she uncovers the interconnectedness of emergent masculinities and a distancing from responsibilities once deeded masculine imperatives.

Rather, these new masculinities latched their identifying qualities to more inner- (rather than other-) directed needs.

A similar approach traces the “history of maleness” through a less Ameri-centric investigation. While scholars such as Kimmel and Ehrenreich focus solely on an American context, Stearns (beginning with an acceptance of biological determinism) interrogates universal structures such as the military and the family unit as bearing the markings of “manly traits.”⁵⁸ Using the social production of “manliness” as a means to discuss labor, sex, and class, such a study saddles men with an assumed essence up to which they must live. While this scholarship differs from the former in terms of methodology and specific focus, both types of studies attempt to highlight the at times dismissed (even in the current heightened attention to identity politics) evolving face of masculinity and maleness. Another area of masculinity studies favors turning a more critical eye on the *causes* of male behavior, rather than mere historical trajectory. Often criticized in the politics of feminism are essentializing “the female” and/or “feminine.” In order to contend with the secondary positioning of women in society, scholars have sought to discover what truly denotes woman-ness. This, however, runs the risk of either latching women to a singular definition or positing them as the natural opposite of men or masculinity (thereby retaining their secondary status by their dependence on the dominant).

Contemporary theorists such as Easthope, Faludi, and Roger Horrocks have been attacking the nonessential quality of masculinity to free both men and women from a seemingly predetermined nature or status. Psychoanalytic theory has been used by those

such as Easthope, Horrocks, Krutnik, and Grossvogel to uncover the underlying implications of popular male images and behaviors, investigating icons disseminated through pop culture. Semiotic and cultural analyses foreground the myths promulgated by cultural images and thereby uncover a conceptualization of masculinity built on a façade of strength derivative of preexisting concepts of body, nation, and power. These analyses denaturalize these myths, simultaneously moving toward eradicating the stigma of difference or deviance from its oft-implied inverse, femininity. In both psychoanalytic and cultural theorizing, popular culture is labeled “dream-like, naive, not censored by a more sophisticated intellectual understanding.”⁵⁹ Easthope and Horrocks use popular culture to examine male myths and icons (such as those in horror movies, rock-n-roll music, war, male melodramas, the Western, pornography, and sport). These studies consider power (and lack thereof), sublimated homosexuality, and the historical position of the male and its reflection in popular culture. Ultimately concluding that all of these images are rife with contradiction and that patriarchy oppresses the male in the same way as his female counterpart, a new view is to consider masculinity as constructed (just as is the case for femininity).⁶⁰

Scholars such as Faludi have used a loose ethnography to examine particular behaviors in postwar males and later generations. This type of study sets out to identify traits deemed socially masculine and the functional reasoning behind the enactment of those tropes. Studying men affected by the downsizing of Naval shipyards and McDonnell Douglas plants and the “feminization” of the traditionally male Citadel, ultimately Faludi uncovers a sweeping layer of despair, fear, and conceived

powerlessness which drove her subjects, raised with an expectation of male dominance, to varying levels of hopelessness and violence. She takes this culturally assumed interdependence of masculinity and power and identifies the former as a byproduct of social conditioning, stating:

Because as men struggle to free themselves from their crisis, their task is not, in the end, to figure out how to be masculine – rather, their masculinity lies in figuring out how to be human. The men who worked at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard didn't come there and learn their crafts as riggers, welders, and boilermakers to *be* masculine; they were seeking something worthwhile to do. Their sense of their own manhood flowed out of their utility in a society, not the other way around.⁶¹

Thus she concludes that the goal of men is one of utility. Everyone must find a purpose in society. Susan Bordo draws attention to a similar phenomenon tracing back to Renaissance fashion. As the woman's true shape was cloaked in yards upon yards of fabric hiding any semblance of an actual bodily shape, the man was clad in tight fitting clothing which highlighted the male muscles and genitals—the signs of male physical and sexual utility.⁶²

These types of psychoanalytic and cultural research repeatedly evoke notions such as physicality, style, and economic status to explain how a powerful masculine social image is maintained. For example, research connects physicality both to control of the self and the other, necessary for men to overcome their constant anxiety over an impending loss of social power. While Faludi discusses male physical dominance over women as a means to maintain a fleeting sense of social masculine power, others discuss a similar need for male personal control by investigating the psychic structure of the male athlete.⁶³ The mastery of the male body has been described as exemplifying the need for

the male ego to master everything. The “hard body” connotes armor and impenetrability. This masculine body enacts the male’s ability to control both his inner self and the outer corporal body. Combining the control over the pained athletic body with the control over the mind, Easthope points out: “If I can hurt my body freely, by an act of my own will, then my mind is proved to be master of my body.”⁶⁴

Style and economic status are other places to watch masculinity in action. The second half of the twentieth century has been one defined by a waning of the self-made-man and the emergence of a masculinity built on personal style signifying social and economic status. As the soldier traded in his uniform for the gray flannel suit and bowed to the bureaucratic workplace, he and his progeny assumed an ornamental sense of self once deemed feminine. Faludi begins such a discussion juxtaposing the flyboy with the military grunt and moves on to the postwar everyman desk jockey. She notes a need for some kind of stylistic identification of masculinity to maintain a sense of power in the bureaucratization of the workplace. So as the flyboy had his silk scarves, the McDonnell Douglas middle manager possessed various trappings indicating his success: lapel pins, company clocks, pens, etc. She states, “McDonnell Douglas has encouraged its male workers to base their manhood on a dependency that resembled a certain type of femininity: ornamental femininity.”⁶⁵ This same male needed to display economic status to present a sanctioned performance of hegemonic masculinity. The role of the white-collar male was to provide for his family. Failing this, one ran the risk of losing his mate or appearing less than heterosexual.⁶⁶

Refuting both the assumption of essential gender and the benign nature of popular culture, these types of masculinity studies interrogate the constructedness of gender in both real and fictionalized worlds. Whether providing a historical account of the construction of men or exploring the ideological underpinnings of their cultural products, these scholars provide a framework by which more cine-centric study can be performed. Through the recognition of such mutual gendered social construction, restrictions put on both the male and female behaviors come into question. This questioning of gender norms comes into play when the musical's narrative focus widens to include more stories and situations which deviate from the conciliatory romance which resolves itself with the male assuming his predetermined position of successful economic provider.

Masculinity in Film

Relevant to my work and creating a second large body of research are those scholars who focus specifically on cinematic products and masculinity and manhood. This growing area of scholarship covers various topics. Many scholars have been and are currently investigating such issues as the male body (Dyer, Peter Lehman, Kwai-Cheung Lo, Cohan, and Jeffords) as well as spectatorship and performance (Laura Mulvey, Dyer, Neale, Cohan, Dennis Bingham, and Studlar).

The Body

Addressing ways in which the male's power is threatened through bodily exposure, discussions of the male form frequently examine the cultural difficulty of displaying the physical features of the male, an issue which often comes into play when

the musical male must display his body through dance. From the flaccid penis connoting impotency to the threatening active look at the male body by the inferior female (or worse, another male), scholarship focuses on the attempt to maintain a front of proper masculinity. Penis jokes, physical scarring, or an inability to perform manly acts (e.g., murder) opens a man to public degradation.⁶⁷ This type of body theorization highlights the social stakes of displaying the male form and similarly underlines the ways in which society ties male social power directly to bodily prowess and perfection and points to the ease with which cracks in the corpus may lead to a loss of symbolic social standing.

Another line of research focuses more directly on the ideological implications of the male body in terms of legitimized national or cultural imagery (Lo, Jeffords, Studlar). As time shifts, marked by the acceptance of ornamental displays of masculinity at the expense of physical displays of proficiency, so do the cultural manifestations of various types of male forms (as evidenced by the shifting popularities and physicalities of male stars). Lo examines the cultural power of the active Hong Kong muscular male body, citing Matthew Turner's assertion that this physical body operates like Louis Althusser's Ideological State Apparatus (ISA).⁶⁸ Hong Kong popular culture shifts from images of "Cantonese weaklings" to those which adhere to Westernized masculinity (teddy boys, muscle-bound wrestlers) and thereby establishes a set of norms in an ideologically controlled system. A validated physical identity for the Hong Kong male consequently emerges in response to the expectations of that system.⁶⁹ Scholars also have examined the particularly "American body" and the ways in which political climates evoke a hierarchization of different body types. Jeffords's *Hard Bodies* contextualizes the

cinematic male body within political movements and imagery. Connecting the male hard body to the image of proper Americanism, which she claims the Ronald Reagan presidency propagated, she examines popular male action stars and star vehicles such as Sylvester Stallone's *Rambo* series (1982, 1985, 1988) and Bruce Willis's *Die Hard* series (1988, 1990, 1995), as well as films such as *An Officer and a Gentleman* (1982) which illustrate a transformation from the preferred body being soft to hard. This new male hard body was continually contrasted with the Jimmy Carter "soft" years and tied to the impenetrable nation of the Reagan presidency.⁷⁰ As with the male nude, the equation of political power to historically specific concepts of the proper and unflawed masculine body emerges.

Focusing on the connotation of the specific historicized bodies, Studlar's *This Mad Masquerade* interrogates the male body through a lens of contextualization and star persona. She illuminates the construction and circulation of stars (Fairbanks, John Barrymore, Lon Chaney, and Valentino) within popular discourse and the broader cultural context in an attempt to shed light on the overarching contemporary meaning of masculinity(ies). Studlar zeroes in on specific moments of cultural practice and their connection to specific star constructions such as Fairbanks's muscular athleticism, boyishness, and rambunctiousness and Valentino's slender body and historical positioning as a dancer.⁷¹ When considering the construction of masculinity through musical narratives, one must consider how contemporary society perceives body types and how the musical, through time, changes the ways in which it uses those bodies. Surely differences can be gleaned by comparing the athleticism or eloquence of a Kelly

or Astaire in connection with the slapstick movement of Williams (*Popeye*) or the early break dance stylings of a young Michael Jackson (*The Wiz*). The ways in which these bodies are displayed and set into action aid in the articulation of masculine norms or aberrance.

Watching the Male Body

Discussions of the politicized cinematic or photographed body often overlap into examinations of the ways in which that body performs and is observed performing. Not only do the stationary bodies of Astaire, Fairbanks, or Stallone bear the burden of cultural marking, but they also must perform within the politicized space of the cinema and bear the scrutiny of the actual or implied spectator. The study of gendered spectatorship emerged in the mid-1970s through the psychoanalytic study of the assumed, homogeneous spectator. Focusing on the structure of the classical Hollywood narrative and public viewing practices, scholars began this type of study as a feminist intervention into film studies. Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema" has been heavily criticized for its essentialist propositions, one-sided notions of gender politics, and conceptualization of "the spectator" as representative of a uniform male, undifferentiated in past or present experience, thought, action, or sexual preference.⁷² This generalized viewer receives moving images in a standard way, regardless of personal specificities. Focusing her work on the male spectator's view of the specularized female, Mulvey only dedicates one short section to the specularized male. She states: "according to the principles of ruling ideology and the psychological structures that back it up, the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification."⁷³ Based on this assumption, she

concludes that the male must control the narrative, must not be eroticized, and must therefore fulfill the role of ego ideal for the male spectator. Therefore, according to Mulvey, the male can only derive pleasure from identifying with his like. Through this he will merely see an ideal self, a more perfect self, a self to which he should strive.

In the last twenty years, scholars have produced more nuanced studies of gender politics and the specularized body (Mary Ann Doane, John Ellis, Cohan, and Neale). Subsequent scholars have provided more detailed analyses regarding male pleasure when encountering the male spectacle, expanding on the idea of the male as merely a site for identification, adding the possibility of eroticisation, and breaking down the male's pleasure (and pain) of experiencing the male spectacle into more nuanced and contextualized examples. Cohan and Neale attempt to scrutinize both the male spectator and the specular male.⁷⁴ Forays into gendered performance and spectatorship provide inroads into further understanding a complicated notion of the male viewer.

Predating studies which examine the cinematic specularized male and basing his argument on the general premise that men (not women) have the right to look, Dyer examines the tropes of the male pinup and how photographers position these males to look back at those (hypothesized homogeneous viewers) who gaze at them.⁷⁵ He analyzes both nude and clothed males, drawing out the gender politics of the form. Photographed with head up and eyes aloft toward intellectual endeavors or while looking out of the frame (at something more interesting than the viewer), the pinups connote spirituality, superiority, or ambivalence rather than eroticism. Further, such photos depict the active body posed in feats of action, sport, leisure, or muscular exertion,

compensating for their public display by performing suitable masculine exploits.⁷⁶

Though notions regarding who can and cannot look at gendered bodies have been critiqued and problematized since Dyers article, the idea of the male body as a vessel of action can still be seen in motion pictures in general and musical specifically with dance presented as artistic expression of masculine exploits such as fighting (*Popeye*), sex (*All That Jazz*), and Congressional debate (*1776* [1972]).

Film scholarship addresses the possible threats and ever looming fear of homoeroticism associated with looking at the male body largely through two genre specific forms: violence and feminization. While Dyer begins this discussion with his consideration of the aesthetic arrangement and connotative meaning of the stationary male body in pinups and pornographic photography, he focuses mainly on the body itself and the recuperative mechanisms used in dealing with the assumed viewer.⁷⁷ Detailed discussions of the *male-on-male* look (both diegetic and spectatorial) often engage with the cinematic male genres of action and Western. With constant diegetic and spectatorial looks, genre-specific male spectators must contend with the threat of their own homoerotic desires. Rather than expressing love, which would compromise the powerful heteronormative positioning of male spectators who identify with the characters, the diegetic male must endure violence, providing a safety mechanism preventing aberrant desire. In the case of the Western, the protagonist (and engaged spectator) participates in the highly ritualized gunfight, “at which point the look starts to oscillate between voyeurism and fetishism as the narrative starts to freeze and spectacle takes over.”⁷⁸ Though a kind of fetishization of the male body still exists, erotic identification is

replaced by a violent destruction, more closely connected to social accepted norms of male-on-male behavior.

While much study has been conducted on masculine genres and the recuperative mechanisms used in maintaining hegemonic norms of masculinity within them, the “female genres” of melodrama and musical present the special problem of negotiating the legitimization of the hegemonic male in a space deemed feminine through its narrative dictates: song, dance, excessive romanticized emotion. Focusing on Rock Hudson and Travolta, Neale (briefly and somewhat inconclusively) describes how the specular male body in the melodrama and musical respectively avoids being eroticized. Yet, in both cases, the male body emerges as feminized as a result of his overt display or to-be-looked-at-ness. This apparent circular logic, not defining “feminized” nor truly explaining why figures such as Hudson should be able to bear this distinction, serves as Neale’s sole solution for the avoidance of male threat over these supposed objectified displays. Similarly, while discussing Travolta he states:

Such instances of “feminization” tend also to occur in the musical, the only genre in which the male body has been unashamedly put on display in mainstream cinema in any consistent way. (A particularly clear and interesting example would be the presentation of John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever*.)⁷⁹

While this study does introduce an important element into film gender scholarship with an examination of the viewed male body, further work on and explanation of the specificities of these so-called feminizations are much needed. To date, no updated or more thorough version of the ideological analysis of the musical male exists.

Performing the Body

Very little work exists which explicitly details the gendered implications of the performing cinematic body. Bingham's *Acting Male* currently serves as the best (if not only) work that interrogates the gendered politicization of the male film actor. Though the book's study of James Stewart, Jack Nicholson, and Clint Eastwood often turns into a chronicle of each of their individual careers, it does include passages which serve as nuanced analyses of gender. Responding to Arthur Brittan's claim that, "Men are seen as having natures which determine their behavior in all situations," Bingham discusses the possible negative connotations of male acting⁸⁰:

Masculinity is thus seen as natural and uncomplicated, making the concept of "performance" problematic. Performance is valued when it refers to the proving of one's potential through action... However, performance is displaced onto femininity when it connotes a playing of parts, a fragmentation of the self into an array of roles, a creation of a self other than the one's own, and a dissembling.⁸¹

This notion of maleness equating with activity hearkens back to the concept of male utility. Quite relevant to the musical genre, Bingham captures the essence of much male dance in the Hollywood musical. Either through use of bricolage or dance which physically resembles productive labor, the male dance often dances as a mean to *act* not *play*.

For the most part, however, today's film scholarship is bereft of detailed studies which engage overtly with the acting male. Rather, one must turn to disciplines once-removed such as non-gender-specific theatrical study or gender-focused performance theory which engages with everyday acts and performances, not those of the stage or screen actor. Theatre practitioners (Lev Kuleshov, Constantin Stanislavsky, and Bertholt

Brecht) have examined what each considers the most effective technical or ideological method by which a theatrical actor should prepare and perform. They have introduced various strains of training, varying from acting as a means of political action through distanciation and alienation (Brecht), acting via accessing one's inner truth (Stanislavsky), or acting as method to produce cathartic release for self and audience (Jerzy Grotowski, Antonin Artaud, and Peter Brook).⁸² The type of *naturalistic* performance popularized by film actors such as James Dean and Marlon Brando emerged out of "the method" taught by Stanislavski wherein the actor does not feel or create, but rather *becomes* the character.⁸³ This type of holistic embodiment theory of acting directly contrasts with more politicized notions of acting which insist upon a definitive rupture between actor and character. For example, in Brecht's method of "citation," the actor does not transcend his own self but rather "acts" as if he is performing (rather than seamlessly embodying) his character. This method of performance encourages the audience not to identify with but to distance him/herself from the character being cited and therefore deeply considers the ramifications of the words being spoken.⁸⁴

Diverging from the art of theatrical (or cinematic) acting, scholars such as Erving Goffman and Judith Butler engage with conscious and/or unconscious performances of the socialized *self*. The performance of everyday life itself elicits (consciously or subconsciously) behaviors based on situational expectations. In Goffman's world of performance, for example, the act does not just occur on a stage or screen, but occurs with each action and interaction in daily life. Throughout daily procedures, an individual puts on a front appropriate to his/her particular situation. The "true" self is almost always

denied in favor of the persona or mask which must be worn to convey convincingly the role at hand.⁸⁵

Butler similarly adheres to the socially constructed notion of the subject but sets out to question the very means of this subject's existence. What sets her apart is her explicit means of critiquing the social derivation of gender. Through her discussion of performativity as the basis for social gender, she leans toward denying materiality (or a stable meaning lying in the very physical construct of the sexed body) in favor of gender based on the never-ending repetition of social norms. Repetition creates a legible subject.⁸⁶ Such performance theory scholarship questions the very basis for social gender, examining the performance politics which lead to the construction of self. Within a discussion of the musical, such performance theorists will aid in a discussion of the possible negotiations occurring with regard to the construction of "proper" masculinity in a genre whose repeated formal norms open up a space for more notions of gender other than the arcadian domesticated breadwinner.

Approaching the issue of performing the body from various disciplines, angles, and projects, this scholarship investigates masculinity and the implication of its performance have taken great steps in further investigating the façade often accepted as male essence and the political functions of the male body in society. Through this project I hope to fill some existing gaps and fuse areas of study which now seem unconnected. By considering the musical's representations of masculinity in fictional characters within a seventeen-year period during which American masculinity showed great malleability

and difference, a sharper picture of cinema's continual negotiation of maleness will emerge.

This scholarship embarks on an investigation of the intersection of gender and genre. I believe prior research serves as an excellent base for grounding and guiding my further investigations. I hope to converge these two lines of study. While scholars such as Altman and Siefert pose important questions regarding gender and the musical, a better study of the genre has value. I believe it is important to embark on such an investigation of a genre which is already so culturally loaded in terms of gender; it is my hope to investigate the culturally contextualized narrative and extratextual encrustations of the Hollywood musical and the American male.

METHODOLOGY

In this dissertation I will be using mainly a Neo-Formalist version of textual analysis as applied by the disciplines of performance and gender studies. By Neo-Formalism I mean a type of textual analysis whereby form is considered the object of analysis. Janet Staiger states:

. . . formalists consider textual structures to exist, formed by devices which have functions such as presenting plot and character information (compositional), providing a sense of verisimilitude (realist), conforming to generic expectations (generic or intertextual), and supplying aesthetic play (aesthetic). . . . Often part of formalism is the notion of normative structures and conventional uses of devices as background for the production and reception of any text.⁸⁷

This method will suit addressing the ambivalent musical in the context of the greater form or generic structures of the musical.

By performance studies I am referring to the theories of such scholars as Goffman and Butler who focus on ways in which performing bodies actively create meaning within a specific context and the ways in which the receiver—or in this case cinematic spectator—theoretically aids in that construction. I believe this type of analysis will well complement a gender analysis which interrogates these films as part of a preexisting genre which circulates in a shifting discursive space.

Because of the varying definitions of the musical and the sheer volume of musical films made since the coming of sound, I have made choices to allow me most effectively to focus on under investigated issues of genre and masculinity. Various scholars have defined the Hollywood musical based on different criteria; I therefore devised a definition of the genre which best suits the types of phenomena I will be examining. Using the musical catalogs *The Hollywood Musical* and *Hollywood Musicals Year by Year*, I compiled a list of non-animated, integrated film musicals whose characters use song and dance as more than just a professional skill; rather, they express themselves (at least once, but most often more) through displays of spontaneous performance which further or more deeply progress the narrative or characterizations. Although this limits the corpus of texts, without such a definition examples could range from any film in which someone sings (music industry biopics such as *The Coal Miner's Daughter* [1980] or *The Singing Nun* [1966]) to those which follow various aspects of the music or entertainment industries (such as *A Star is Born* [1975] or *Saturday Night Fever* [1977]) to films which merely use music or dance as a major narrative device (*Head* [1968] or *American Graffiti* [1973]). For my purposes, I draw my line at “integrated” musicals—those which use

song and dance as a spontaneous means of self-expression and narrative development, not solely motivated by narrative action. In the entertainment-driven vehicles, the characters perform merely to fulfill a realistic career goal; these narratives dictate the men perform for purposes of social utility. However, the spontaneous appearance of song and dance in the integrated musicals I will examine deny the constant *realistic* motivation that I see as a possible recuperative mechanism for allying male performance with acceptable cultural norms (active, gainful employment). Rather, the men performing in these integrated musicals must sing and dance for the sake of enjoyment or uncontrollable personal expression, a choice which may require some kind of compositional or performative recuperation around concerns of masculinity.

Similarly, I have chosen to exclude films which lie on the periphery of the integrated musical such as Elvis vehicles and the *Beach Party* films. The former almost wholly use music in terms of a star-driven, plot-driven performed moment. The diegetic and external audiences both know Elvis is singing. The crowd asks him to sing and he cheerfully obliges. Much like the “let’s put on a show” musicals, these films lack an element of spontaneity and ambiguity in the role of singing and dancing in everyday life; similarly, the latter often includes one number which *may* fit the mold of the integrated musical, but the degree to which that number actually forwards the narrative (such as the opening number in films such as *Beach Blanket Bingo* [1965]) is minimal; for the most part, the *Beach* movies too wholly present song and dance as staged performances by the teens or visiting artists.⁸⁸

I do include films which contain short moments of animation (such as *Mary Poppins* [1964] and *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* [1971]), but I omit any which are largely or wholly presented in animated form (*The Jungle Book* [1967] or *Fox and the Hound* [1981]). My project concerns the gendered performance and construction of real bodies, and I believe the stakes are lowered when the bodies performing are once removed from a level of reality.

I have chosen the years 1966 to 1983 for various reasons befitting my goal to look specifically at the ambivalent Hollywood musical and American masculinities. I have begun in 1966 so I may enter the genre at a point when the overall industrial and ideological function of the genre begins to shift. Scholars such as David Bordwell, Staiger, and Kristin Thompson pinpoint the early 1960s as the moment when the industrial structure connected to the classical Hollywood cinema shift.⁸⁹ With the divestment of exhibition wings completed by the late 1950s, the ownership, financing, and distribution practices of the major studios demanded retooling. The musical genre suffered from this industrial shift, as the high profile, big budget musical declined in number and studios ceased to groom stars specifically to suit these vehicles.

Including financially successful films, big budget flops, B-film product, and musicals in between, the list created by the application of my parameters culminated to a total of 58 films between 1966 and 1983. I viewed about 95% of these films, with equal percentages from each decade and no focus on any given studio or success benchmark. My analysis will be based on patterns I see recurring or emerging throughout my sample.⁹⁰

OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION

This dissertation will be comprised of six chapters and a formal conclusion. This chapter serves to present my general argument and examine the existing literature and theory on which this dissertation will be based and to which it will be responding. Chapter 2 provides a brief historical background of the genre, exploring its varying incarnations, both early and late and on stage and screen. Within this brief history, I contextualize the specificities of the integrated musical and situate it within the genre's overall body of work. By providing an overview of the genre and discussing the process (industrial, regulatory, technological, generic) which ultimately led to the popularization of the arcadian musical and then the emergence of the ambivalent musical, I will be able to prepare for upcoming discussions of the specific stakes involved within the intersection of the ambivalent integrated Hollywood musical and masculinity. This chapter will also briefly describe the changing scene in American cinema as a whole, as a contextualization within late 1960s New American Cinema and shifting regulations will aid in explaining the greater context for the musical's transformation.

While some aspects of the musical's narrative and technical conventions remain relatively constant from the early period through to select films of the sixties, seventies, and eighties, strains of deviation become apparent through series of seemingly (at first) anomalous films. This is studied in Chapter 3. Elements such as narrative thrust and resolution, the prominence (or lack thereof) of the production number, aesthetic style, and cinematographic choices show varying degrees of change in films of this period. Within this chapter, my analysis will be broken down into two sections, narrative and aesthetic,

each to be examined through various elements of the generic structure. First, scholars such as Altman have pointed to romantic entanglements as the modus operandi of the musical's narrative. By the mid 1960s, however, a larger number of films placed the successful romance to the side of the main narrative or dismissed the topic altogether. Yet, despite the diversity of narrative context and degree of dependency on music displayed in the arcadian musicals, a strong majority continued to rely on ultimate successful heterosexual coupling as a means to a satisfactory romantic resolution. Though films used different characters, periods, and locales at their center, many still worked toward a similar satisfactory resolution of the sexual tension between the male and female.

While this practice of constructing a narrative around some form of companionate love remained common throughout the history of the genre, the late 1960s bring a repeated questioning of the possibility of a utopic ending to these romances. Instead, films such as *Sweet Charity*, *At Long Last Love*, *Paint Your Wagon* (1969), *Godspell*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Tommy*, *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, and *Hair* popularize new types of conflicts (failed romance, male bonding, religious quests, social concerns, etc.) which present the genre with new types of cultural issues to flesh out. Further, the dissolution of the conciliatory ending ushers in heretofore-unseen racially/ethnically diverse and/or critical narratives (*Zoot Suit* [1982], *Hair*, *Catch My Soul* [1974]) too culturally unruly for the arcadian version of the genre. At this time, and slightly before, non-integrated fringe musicals such as the *Beach Party* cycle, the Beatles's *Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help* (1965), the Monkees's *Head*, and Arlo Guthrie's *Alice's*

Restaurant (1969) forcefully begin to question hegemonic cultural and generic norms by problematizing musical narrative tidiness through the foregrounding of sub and countercultures. This chapter will also focus on the ways in which the seamless and conciliatory narrative of the arcadian musical becomes disrupted by the frequent inclusion of a performance within a performance (*Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Godspell*, *Man of La Mancha* [1972]), foregrounding the constructedness of the stories themselves. By examining the newly emerging trends in narrative development and resolution, I will illuminate the ways in which the very core of the arcadian musical—the belief in an attainable utopia—finds itself displaced by more cynical situations and narrative outcomes.

Second, a consideration of visual conventions in the genre accompanies that of the narrative. Not only do these formulas change, the visual storytelling aids, in conjunction with the more serious plots and conventions, also display an alteration. With an overall turn toward visual, historical, and emotional “realism” at this time, a faction of the musical follows suit with its presentation of *mise-en-scène*, thereby altering preferred perceptions of the ideological stakes connected to representations of realism or the narrative’s possible connection to any kind of “real world.” Straying from the arcadian period when the sets and costumes appeared as stylized as those made to be read from the distance of the stage, the visual “verisimilitude” in later films such as *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971), *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever* (1970), and *Hair* illustrate a distinct change from the stylized credit sequences and settings and/or pastel color palettes of films such as *Guys and Dolls* (1955) and even the gritty yet pretty *West Side Story*

(1961). The visual shorthand associated with earlier Hollywood genres is often relegated to servicing a critique of that genre (*Pennies From Heaven* [the musical], *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* [B-sci-fi], *Bugsy Malone* [gangster]). In addition to an increased sense of visual realism and nostalgic critique, the ambivalent musical also presents the highly stylized (*Tommy*, *The Wiz*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band* [1978]), theatrical (*Zoot Suit*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*), or combinations of realism and stylization (*Xanadu* [1980], *Godspell*) to heighten visually the raised moral stakes involved in the narrative or illustrate a clean distinction between a false utopic nostalgized world and a “real” flawed one. I show how these types of visual representations replace an earlier style and, as with changes in narrative structure, add to the weakening of the utopic sense of the musical.

Relatedly, as the musicals of Berkeley showed in 1930s and 1940s, the camera can serve as a means to guide the story or is able to create a story of its own. As en vogue cinematic techniques change (subjective shooting, montage sequences, disjointed shots, shorter shot length, etc. versus a filmed theatrical performance), the ways in which the subject is centered or de-centered as spectacle or subject alter; with these cinematic choices come different presentations of the characters being filmed—often appearing strange or introspective. I will draw out the changes in cinematography and editing practices and examine the ways in which these new narrational devices affect a genre which historically has used storytelling devices which forward its ultimate goals of community and conflict-resolution.

Finally, and combining the first two, this period of the musical demonstrates a distinct decline in the presence of the production number. A formulaic element referred to by Schatz, Feuer, and Mellencamp respectively as that which aided in the false sense of closure to culturally irresolvable problems, the ultimate celebration of social unity and utopia, or identification with the abilities of the performers, the loss of this narrative feature—or detractor—deprives the genre of a unique device integral in the completion of the traditional task of solidifying a sense of community, normalcy, and tradition.

As the musical genre waned in the 1950s and the non-cinematic music industry grew and morphed, the types of performers who embodied these generic products also shifted. Chapter 4 considers this. (Because of the overall scope of this project, I will focus mainly on male performers and/or stars, though a similar change can be seen with regard to female stars.) As remnants of the Hollywood musical heyday and the studio era's star system, musical film stars such as Kelly, Astaire, Howard Keel, Gordon MacRae, and Harve Presnell showed recurring presences in the films of the 1950s and early to mid 1960s (*Les Girls* [1957], *Silk Stockings*, *Kismet* [1955], *Carousel* [1956], and *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* [1964] respectively). Later appearances like Kelly in *Xanadu* and Astaire in *Finian's Rainbow* (1968) would seem like self-conscious performances of their former selves as publicity would hype these actors as vestiges of the old Hollywood musical. As the studio system ceased the cultivation of new musical stars and those in existence outgrew their statuses as leading men, new stars identified primarily with the musical failed to emerge; rather, various alternate entertainer types

assumed the role of musical male: the pop/rock star, comedic non-musical star, and incongruous genre jumper.⁹¹

This chapter will examine the role of the male star in the ambivalent musical. Examining three recurring types of stars—comedy star, tough guy genre jumper, rock/pop star—I will focus on the clusters of extratextual information which became part of this reformation of the genre. Focusing on the background of the actors and the ways in which previous vehicles, popular articles, and reviews place the star and genre in the context of each other, I want to illustrate how this shift in star presence aids in the rewriting or broadening of this genre's overall project. For as scholarship on stardom has alluded, stars will inevitably be read in the context of their popular construction; hence they cannot abandon their cultural connotation for one more congruous to the dictates of the traditionalist musical genre. At the same time, the actors can only be read in the context of other actors who have performed within a specific genre. This tension will be worked out through an overview of male celebrity presence in the ambivalent musical and three pairs of case studies: rock/pop stars The Who and The Village People, comedy stars Steve Martin and Robin Williams, and tough guy genre jumpers Clint Eastwood and Burt Reynolds. How were their personas merged with their musical characters and physical performances? How—via extratextual meaning based on their preexisting careers—were these men able to affect the types of stories told in these musical films?

While the Hollywood musical has—throughout various incarnations—by its very nature relied heavily on the performance of human bodies and voices, over time, the narrative integration and physical performance of song and dance has shifted. As the

ambivalent musical illustrates a decline in the presence of dance and polished singing voices, the ways in which these performances add to the overall meaning of the narrative too alters. Affected by the greater variety of narrative types and resolutions and the changing face of the musical star, song and dance once deemed celebratory of the very craft of entertainment develops a new face. Chapter 5 will focus on two main elements: the performance and narrative contextualization of song and dance.

Regarding the arcadian musical, scholars have connected the spontaneous production of song to the celebration of entertainment, a metaphoric expression of inner reality, and a spontaneous and joyous response to life.⁹² The ambivalent musical challenges these defining characteristics of the genre. Not only does the level of celebration wane with the decline of the backstage musical, but also the overall level of joy in the ambivalent musical takes a severe nosedive. This diminution of music as a spontaneous and public display of joy can be illustrated through various characteristics: the prominence of non-singers who negligibly demonstrate emotion in their performances (Richard Harris, Rex Harrison, Peter Finch, Barry Bostwick), voiceover singing (*On a Clear Day You Can See Forever*, *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* [1969], *Lost Horizon* [1973], *Pennies From Heaven*), overt (cross-age and cross-sex) vocal dubbing, and the integration of the hard edge of rock-n-roll to the genre (*Tommy*, *Xanadu*, *Hair*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*).⁹³ I will discuss how this change in performance style and articulation impacts upon issues such as utopia, romance, and community.

Similarly, as the place of singing within the genre shifts, so does that of dancing. Logically affected directly by the non-singer and voiceover song, the presence of dance

in conjunction with song becomes less sensical (as if that had been possible).

Additionally, as discussed previously, the production number fades in presence and significance. The loss of these grandiose opportunities for performance not only erases a major outlet for dance, but also simultaneously aids in the reduction of dance as a means to resolve internal conflicts (e.g. Altman and Feuer's notions of dance as battle, romance, community bonding, etc.). Though the integrated musical remains integrated, the presence of dance becomes more strongly linked to show numbers, leaving films such as *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1966), *Camelot* (also rife with voiceover singing and non-singers), and *Dr. Doolittle* almost completely bereft of dance numbers.

Aside from the overall reduction of dance, I will focus on the impact of changing dance styles and narrative context of dance. Again, both Feuer and Dyer refer to the connotation of the aesthetics of dance. While some films retain elements of folk dance (*The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *Bugsy Malone* [1976]), encouraging the diegetic community to join in and become one with the main characters, others such as *1776* and *Fiddler on the Roof* use this style to highlight irreconcilable divisions between communities. Further, many films integrate more freeform styles of modern/popular dance (*Xanadu*, *Hair*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*) or a more explicit sexualization of dance—often through a once *The Pajama Game*-tamed (1957) Bob Fosse (*Sweet Charity*, *All That Jazz*). Arcadian-style dance in films such as *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *Pennies from Heaven* serves to underscore the pessimism of the ambivalent narrative, as dances once seen as celebratory and curative in the arcadian musical fail in the activation

of their traditional powers. I will consider these new trends of aesthetic presentation in the context of old and previously established generic norms. At the same time, I will delineate the context for these dances, for during this period emerges a trend for non-backstage musical performance within a performance. With both *Godspell* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* framed as performances for the nonexistent diegetic audience and *Pennies from Heaven* constructed musically out of cross-sexed voiceovers, this confusion of gender and community leads to a convolution of the very function of song and dance within this genre.

Chapter 6, building on the previous four, will examine the ways in which the musical genre ultimately impacts upon the oft-overlooked presence of the male body and the overall presence of men and masculinity within the genre. Looking at how issues of actor choice, performance, and narrative and aesthetic conventions converge to create an overall image of genre-specific masculinity, I will use Butler's ideas to examine the construction of gender resulting from repeated narrative, aesthetic, and performance norms which culminate to establish the arcadian articulation of the musical.

The information gleaned from the previous four chapters will illustrate the ambivalent musical's widening range of acceptable or articulated masculinities. Whereas the arcadian, so reliant on the satisfactory resolution of the romance plotline, often forced the male into the role of economic provider and monogamous husband, the more cynical view of romance and more common personal and public quest narratives lead to plots which invite male characters whose personal conflicts not only develop in greater detail, but also may find no resolution or one contrary to dominant society or the diegetic

community. Further, as the aesthetics of the genre begin to deviate from those established in the arcadian era, a once-lacking notion of realism becomes attached to the musical. As *mise-en-scène* changes and drawn-out stylized openings disappear, the musical male becomes contextualized in a diegesis which focuses on the “real” actions of the male characters, rather than those visually connected to play or pretending.⁹⁴

Similarly, as the textual construction of masculinity begins to lend itself to more varied notions of masculinity, the new breed of musical star, generally associated with a different genre, brings with it strong images of masculinity. While stars such as Kelly and Astaire had repeatedly played the romantic lead, the musical itself and the stars within it were automatically threatened by the genre’s association with a cultural femininity or non-hegemonic masculinity.⁹⁵ I believe this new breed of star provides intertextual information embedded in his star personae which aids in the reversal of this feminized connotation. Whether through humorous self-aware gender parody, overt hetero- or covert homosexuality, or residual connotations from genres such as the Western, war, or adventure film, these actors approach the genre with complex trappings associated with both “proper” and non-hegemonic masculinities (utility, action, and sexual desire) and encourage an intertextual critique of gender and genre.

The combined building blocks of the ambivalent musical—*mise-en-scène*, narrative, stars, and performance—combine to create an overall presentation of masculinity which deviates from that established in the arcadian. No longer saddled to the domestic sphere and presented through various versions of musical performance (integrated, performance within a performance, gender-switching) and gendered/sexual

identity (breadwinner, playboy, bisexual), men and the emerging associated masculinity materialize as something less restrained than existed in the earlier incarnation of the genre. With an unclear view of hegemonic norms and a foregrounding of the actual construction—rather than nature—of masculinity, gender emerges as something fluid and variant.

In conclusion, the overall goal of this project is to provide an addendum to previous works which have focused solely on the arcadian and/or early musical. I hope to revise the existing history of the musical to represent effectively the patterns established in the transitional days of the genre. Simultaneously, I would like to take that revision and offer musical and gender scholarship an analysis of the little-studied musical male and the stakes involved when masculinity meets the musical. By taking on a genre often not associated with dominant masculinity, I hope to broaden the existing scholarship and highlight the ideological underpinnings of the genre and the real bodies which perform within it. Despite cultural shifts in cinematic tastes and gender ideals, this genre has remained present (in one form or another) since the coming of sound. I find it only appropriate that this complicated nexus of popular culture and performed gender receive the attention it duly deserves.

Chapter 2: How We Arrived Here - A Brief History of the Musical and Its Arcadian Structure and Conventions

How did the musical evolve into the arcadian—one evoking love and romance, joyful monogamy, happy endings, and a contented and fully bonded community? Why does the mention of the Hollywood musical invoke the memory of Maria and Captain Von Trapp ascending the Alps to an all-nun voiceover choir of the uplifting “Climb Every Mountain” or a rousing verse of that pro-American-statehood tune (O-K-L-A-H-O-M-A) “Oklahoma”? To both scholars and the popular press, the term Hollywood musical often conjures very specific notions of musical integration, communal harmony, and romantic love, evidenced by discussions in both academia and the popular press. In the hubbub regarding *Chicago*’s accomplishments, magazines often cite the musical’s twenty- to thirty-year drought—a period which includes financial and critical non-integrated successes such as *Nashville* (1975), *The Buddy Holly Story* (1978), *Dirty Dancing* (1987), and *Sister Act* (1992).¹

Was this period truly a drought? A glance through the annals of film history will reveal a veritable plethora of films that fall under the category of film musical but do not fit into integrated category. Biopics have been popular from the time *The Great Ziegfeld* took home the Academy Award in 1936 to Jimmy Cagney dancing his way through 1942 in *Yankee Doodle Dandy* to the latter day Jennifer Lopez’s embodiment of *Selena* in 1997. Similarly, the concert film found a place in the 1960s and 1970s canon with pictures such as *Gimme Shelter* (1970) and *Woodstock* (1970). Scholars such as J.P.

Telotte and Ethan Mordden also include dance films, represented in different incarnations by Sonja Henie's ice-skating features of the 1930s and 1940s and 1980s music movies such as *Footloose* (1984) and *Flashdance* (1983), in the overarching category of the musical.² Regardless, one type of film is often seen as the embodiment of the Hollywood musical: the integrated arcadian musical where characters randomly burst into song to solve seemingly insurmountable problems through the restorative powers of music, heterosexual romance, and communal unification.

A look at the history of the genre will illustrate how the reduction of its disparate characteristics will render this popular definition both inaccurate and yet commonsensical. Beginning prior to what Richard Kislak refers to as the mature musical,³ I will trace the construction of the arcadian musical through pre-Broadway traditions, the rise of the theatrical "book" musical, the emergence of sound film, and the shifting state of the Hollywood film industry. After establishing the historical predecessors of the film (and stage) musical and examining various early and continuing incarnations of the genre, I discuss the state of the film industry at the time of the appearance of the ambivalent variant and how new generic dictates contextualize within various industry changes and popular musical movements. In fact the musical was not predestined to have "everything coming up roses," but this chapter will make evident why it often may appear as such.

THE GREAT WHITE WAY AND OTHER IMPORTANT WAYS

Many have looked to various pre-Broadway and Broadway traditions as the stylistic precursors for the Hollywood musical.⁴ Entertainment forms such as ballad and

comic opera, operetta, minstrelsy, vaudeville, burlesque, revue, musical comedy, and musical play all contain elements which became integral to the evolution of the Hollywood musical. These earlier forms of tuneful entertainment parlayed into the American musical theatre of Broadway, paving the way for the “Rodgers and Hammerstein-ification” of the American theatre and ultimately film. Whether by their call to entertainment and glamour or their overall narrative structure and ideological connotations, such formats serve as identifiable kin to the *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*’s of the future.⁵

Ballad Opera

Often cited as a major influence on the evolution of the musical play and operetta, the ballad opera brought an early combination of cohesive narrative addressing light subject matter, spoken dialogue, and interspersed musical numbers. Tracing its popularity back to the 1728 premiere of John Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera*, the format placed importance on the spoken word over song. Vehicles following this style included a well-developed narrative with a satirical yet realistic complex plot and set of characters, often based on preexisting texts which would have been familiar to the audience—not merely a flimsy premise to allow the performance of musical numbers.⁶ To further the audience’s nostalgic connection to the production, early ballad operas set their freshly written musical numbers to popular or traditional tunes.⁷ The ballad opera came to the colonies in the form of *Flora* in 1735.⁸ Early manifestations of the form took up residence in bars, inns, or wherever space could be found. *Flora*—performed in a Charleston courtroom without scenery, footlights, or costumes—moved away from the urban setting of vehicles

such as *The Beggars Opera*. Scholar Elise Kirk claims this shift to a more country or rustic narrative setting appealed better to the largely rural American audience.⁹

Burlesque

Popularly connoting the bluer variety of vaudeville-type performers, the term burlesque is also used to refer to a lowbrow parody with a collection of songs, not necessarily original numbers, and scantily clad women performing some kind of sexy or hootchie-koochie dance. The vehicle often cited as the first American musical fits into this faction of musical entertainment. *The Black Crook*, which opened at New York City's Niblo's Garden in 1866, evolved out of an amalgamation of theatrical mediocrity and tragedy. After a fire ripped through the venue slated for the performance of a Parisian ballet troupe, the troupe's producers sought to find a new location for its performance. Simultaneously, a reportedly mediocre melodramatic reworking of the Faust legend prepared to open at Niblo's. Persuaded to integrate the ballet troupe into show, the manager found himself with a five-and-a-half hour hit on his hands. Spicing up the tired rehashing of Faust, the revamped show incorporated a hundred plus dancing girls to enliven the moments of supernatural. Clad in pink tights, the girls were nearly naked by contemporary standards, eliciting both vitriolic reactions from the puritanical and guilty pleasures for the rest of the crowd.¹⁰ While the show stands for many as the first American vehicle to integrate fully musical performance into a theatrical play, others record the piece as a significant Broadway appearance of mildly integrated burlesque. With colorful costumes, grandiose sets, song, dance, and (in varying touring companies) specialty acts such as jugglers, contortionists, and animal acts, the show lacked the

complete integration of narrative and song expected of later story-heavy musicals.¹¹ Instead, the show included randomly interspersed popular musical numbers and moments of dance which tangentially, if at all, applied to the actual story. Regardless, the integration of musical into the performance and visual aesthetic accompanying those performances set a precedent for future musical extravaganza.

Comic Opera

Only twelve years after New York entrepreneurs created the American musical in *The Black Crook*, the English comic opera made its way to the United States, solidifying an American tradition of narrative-driven musical theatre.¹² Opening in Boston in 1878, W.S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan's *HMS Pinafore* enjoyed unprecedented success. Similar in form to the ballad opera, the comic opera is comprised of "a light or sentimental subject with a considerable amount of music, comedy, and a happy ending."¹³ Gilbert and Sullivan brought not only light opera but also an operatic tradition in native English. Americans could now enjoy European comic opera while fully engaging with plot twists and humor. Further, with moments between songs spoken rather than sung, this format required exemplary actors rather than singers, differentiating the form from the higher art of grand opera.

Operetta

Similar to the comic opera but differing in tone, the operetta emerged as a popular musical form in central European countries such as France and Austria. The French *opéra bouffe* gained acclaim in the middle of the nineteenth century, often attributed to

the works of Jacques Offenbach. By the 1860s, Offenbach's works had made their way to the United States. Concurrent with the growth of the vaudeville circuits and the emergence of musicals such as *The Black Crook*, the European operetta found a foothold where the grand opera had struggled to find popularity with a large American audience. Following on the heels of Offenbach, Charles Lecocq and Maurice Grau became the main importers of operetta to the United States.¹⁴ Though resembling the ballad opera's penchant for combining spoken dialogue with musical numbers, the operetta differed with the inclusion of original songs; one individual or a team of composers wrote for the specific project, rather than reconstituting already popular tunes. Congruent with later musical plays, these vehicles were largely escapist, often taking place in exotic foreign lands, concerning romantic entanglements, villainous rivals consistently conquered by the romantic hero, and clear-cut moral codes.

Following the popularity of the European imports, composers such as Reginald DeKoven and John Phillip Sousa popularized the first American-born operettas. DeKoven's *Robin Hood* (1891) and Sousa's *El Capitan* (1886) each found success, following the format of the European operetta and setting their stories in variations of romantic England. As the ballad opera beckoned the crowd with a nostalgic call to already endeared stories and songs, the American operetta was able further to engage its audience through the use of the English language.¹⁵ Victor Herbert, Rudolf Friml, and Sigmund Romberg penned the majority of operettas hitting the Broadway stage in the late 1920s. Their works added Americanized settings and sounds to the popular form. Herbert's *Naughty Marietta*'s took place in New Orleans, Romberg's reworked the music

of Franz Schubert in *Blossom Time* (1921), and Friml based *Maytime* (1917) on a German operetta.

As these early American operettas struggled to find a space among other forms, some formal conventions solidified themselves as others continued to shift. As early as DeKoven, the use of spectacular settings and props (e.g., dioramas, panoramas, sound effects, and realistic lighting effects) were used to lend an air of plausibility to these stories.¹⁶ Simultaneously, formats such as the comic opera, operetta, and revue struggled to establish their own look and sound, appropriating each other's characteristics (e.g., all leaning toward modern dress in the style of vaudeville, comic opera including topical songs similar to those in the revue, and operetta and revue incorporating the lavish trappings of the extravaganza).¹⁷ Finding popularity until 1930, the operetta set standards which would impact both theatrical and cinematic musicals to come.

Minstrel Shows, Vaudeville, and The Revue

The minstrel shows of the mid to late nineteenth century served as an additional source for an American flavor of entertainment. In the 1820s Thomas Rice initiated what would have popularly been known as the Jim Crow dance. Donning the torn clothing similar to that which he had seen a crippled black man wear, Rice enacted an imitative dance meant to represent honestly what he had seen performed. Rice's success has been said to be the first of this type of entertainment and established what would become one of the most popular yet pejorative stereotypes of contemporary black culture. Over the next half century, the minstrel show blossomed into a full night of entertainment. The three-act evening of musical comedy, variety acts, and comedy sketches provided not

only problematic racial stereotypes such as the coon but also an outlet for the public performance of plantation-style song and dance.¹⁸ Popularized by individuals such as Stephen Foster (“Camptown Races” and “Old Folks at Home”) and Dan Emmett (“Old Dan Tucker”), this music would eventually infiltrate the popular consciousness and the American musical theatre. Similarly, the dances performed in these minstrel shows, such as the cakewalk and walk around, serve as precursors to ensemble production numbers integral to the mature musical play.¹⁹

As the minstrel show waned in the latter half of the nineteenth century, other entertainment forms appropriated its different elements. The variety acts (singing, dancing, gags) found a home in the vaudeville circuit. The opening of ex-minstrel performer Tony Pastor’s variety act theatre in 1865 stands as one possible date of birth for the American vaudeville tradition.²⁰ Vaudeville circuits would ultimately cross the country, providing cheap family entertainment for the masses and venues for song, dance, comedy, and specialty acts. Enjoying its greatest period of expansion from 1890 to 1919, vaudeville would serve as a major source of public entertainment. By the late 1920s, however, both the proliferation of radio and sound cinema— which could provide similar entertainment cheaper and outside of large cities—and the economic hardships of the Depression sealed the circuits’ fate.

Also absorbing elements of the minstrel shows, revues included off-the-wall specialty acts. The revue can be traced to Raynor Taylor’s extravaganzas of the early nineteenth century which mixed songs with parodies of operas. Simultaneously, the French were devising a similar format comprised of multiple songs linked to a

satirization of the year's events. Less character-driven than a comic opera, the revue traditionally used a flimsy premise to tie together a string of otherwise unrelated numbers. This form would find success in the United States in the 1890s. In 1894, a revue including songs and scantily clad dancing girls and entitled *The Passing Show* premiered in New York, scandalizing the public. In 1907 Florenz Ziegfeld produced his first Broadway revue: *Follies 1907*. He would continue to stage lavish productions combining the music of popular composers of the time (Herbert, Romberg, Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, etc.), comedy, sketches, and lavishly costumed (and scandalously uncostumed) dancing girls which would rival those of Busby Berkeley. He would continue to produce such shows, continually increasing the levels of excess and ultimately employing the talents of designer Joseph Urban who would revolutionize set construction and decoration for the theatre.²¹

The Musical Play

While many of the aforementioned musical forms combined to influence musical entertainment on Broadway, the operetta and ballad opera can be dubbed the parents of the musical play. The new form combined the realism, spoken dialogue, song, and social satire of the ballad opera with the escapism, romantic entanglements, and original score of the operetta. While some disagree about the nature of theatrical landmark which occurred in 1927, many accounts of the musical concur that the Broadway premiere of Jerome Kern's *Show Boat* began a new stage in musical history. While adhering to the romantic entanglements of the operetta and the realist tendencies of the ballad opera, *Show Boat* provided a narrative which fully integrated musical numbers, closely linking

the songs to the specific characters and moments portrayed in the play rather than randomly inserting them for entertainment value. Simultaneously, the attendance to issues of miscegenation and slavery marked the entrance of the social conscience to the American musical.²² While some operettas had included moments of drama and death, *Show Boat* marked the beginning of a tradition of socially conscious quasi-operettas. Further, it heightened the level of narrative-song integration by placing not the story *or* music on a pedestal but concentratedly focusing on the full harmonization of the two.

Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein would carry the torch lit by Kern. Prior to *Show Boat*, context was often not taken into consideration in the composition of the score. A narrative set in Alabama was just as likely to have music of Viennese or Irish origin as any that actually would have been heard in Alabama. With Kern and then Rodgers and Hammerstein, the context of the setting and dramatic moment became preeminent. Not only were the songs written specifically for the characters in these specific narrative moments, but they were also written to represent the actual time, place, and dialect which were being represented.²³ For example, *Oklahoma!*'s "Old Jud is Daid" lacks the independent spark or tunefulness of a Cole Porter "You're the Top," only truly making sense when tied directly to the character's psychology and the situation of the moment. Furthermore, these works use the dialect of the people and the natural sounds of life to aid in the transition from spoken word to song. Attempting to alleviate the awkwardness of the transition, the sounds of life (horses, wind, footsteps, etc.) are often used to de-emphasize the changeover.

Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals also implement a shift away from the strictly class-based or romance-based obstacles of the earlier operettas to barriers based on character psychology or ideology—though most often all paths ultimately lead back to the romance plotline. Will *The Sound of Music*'s Captain Von Trapp join the Nazi party and should Maria leave the Abbey? In *Flower Drum Song* (1958), should Americanization trump the preservation of culture? In *The King and I*, how are we as an audience and Anna supposed to cope with the realities of slavery (and the wretched subplot of the young lovers)? Straying from the operetta, plots no longer relied simply on the trials and tribulations of class difference or the looming capture of our heroine by the evil villain; rather, deeper societal issues complicated and surrounded the romance plotlines.²⁴

Finally, Rodgers and Hammerstein took integration of production to a new level by fully committing to the collaborative nature of theatre.²⁵ Coming a long way from the ballad opera where the story and tunes had been poached from preexisting sources, this incarnation of the musical play included the full and simultaneous participation of director, writer, composer, and designer, creating an overall picture which tied all elements thematically and aesthetically into one greater whole.²⁶

SOUND, SINGIN', AND THE CELLULOID STAGE

As vaudeville and operetta flourished onstage, the motion picture industry gained momentum on the east coast. Thomas Edison had exhibited his early motion picture technology in 1886, and from his first shorts, dance acts emerged as legitimate cinematic subject matter. By the mid to late 1920s both the Broadway stage and the silver screen

were set for some major transformations in terms of their relationships with the musical. Only one year prior to Kern's genre-transforming *Show Boat*, Hollywood produced its first sound short. With the emergence of mechanically synchronized sound, it seemed only logical that the motion picture industry would look to the stage for help with bringing the talking/singing musical to the big screen. Whether directly, through the participation of stage directors, actors, or songwriters, or through the utilization of pre-established musical forms, the impact of the musical's theatrical base was evident even in the earliest film musicals. Filmmakers would ultimately discover how to innovate the aesthetic conventions developed for musical theatre, spicing up visuals with displays not available on the live stage. A negotiation of cinematic and theatrical techniques, shifting technology, societal discourses, regulatory codes, and industrial structures would produce a popular conceptualization of the classic (or what will be referred to here as the arcadian) Hollywood musical.

On August 6, 1926, Warner Bros. premiered its first sound offering. Using its newly patented Vitaphone technology, Warners produced a bill which included mechanically synchronized sound performances of orchestras, vaudeville guitarists, and opera soloists, leading up to the climactic performance of *Don Juan* with a recorded score.²⁷ From this initial presentation of sound, the projection of live music proved to be most engrossing to the film audience. Left to languish in the shadows, *Don Juan* paled in comparison to the filmed singing of opera stars. This early fascination with the projection of synchronic image and song set the scene for the early success of the film musical.

In 1927 Warner Bros. premiered the vehicle often considered to be the first feature-length film musical, *The Jazz Singer*. Conveying story largely through title cards, *The Jazz Singer* departed from both silent film and the short sound program by integrating Al Jolson's musical numbers into the plot of the otherwise silent film. Behind the times in terms of quality even for 1927, the overall film lacked in technical polish and finesse; regardless, the combined star panache of Jolson coupled with the integration of sound, singing, and plot wowed the audiences, ushering a new era and genre into the motion picture business. Warners would follow with additional "part-talkies" such as *The Singing Fool* (1928) and *My Man* (1928) before MGM would premiere the first all singing, all talking, all dancing film musical, *Broadway Melody*, in 1929. The trend took off, bringing forth the demise of the "silent musical" and the production of 128 "all talking, all singing" musicals in 1929 alone. Though by this time the technology had progressed to allow for simultaneous recording of image and sound, the new machinery was still cumbersome and hampered the filmmaking process. As directors attempted to record live image and sound, the large and loud camera equipment forced them to surround the technology with a large semi-mobile box to deaden the sounds of the machinery. Proving cumbersome for the cameramen and a challenge for editors and choreographers who were limited in their choices because of the large semi-mobile equipment, the technology hampered the visuals of these new musicals. With time and technological advancement, the motion picture industry devised methods to improve the quality of both sound and image.²⁸

This early boom in the Hollywood musical bore the mark of the past quarter century of the Broadway stage and other popular musical forms. In both *The Jazz Singer* and *Broadway Melody*, the stars and sights of the Great White Way surfaced as mainstays of the emerging genre. Able to demystify further the hidden workings of the theatre, film repeatedly used the theatrical backstage as an early (and recurring) source for setting and conflict. Broadway would play a significant role in not only the first all talking, singing musical but also in 1929 as a backdrop in the first two-color Technicolor musical (Warner Bros.'s *On With the Show*), source material for Romburg's operetta *The Desert Song* which made the trip to the big screen just three years after its Broadway debut, and intertextual promotion as Universal released its own version of *Show Boat* featuring bit performances from the stage performers in a tacked on sound prologue.²⁹ While not always successful in its application, Hollywood producers clearly saw no need to reinvent an already successful wheel and took full advantage of the stage as a source of inspiration for this burgeoning cinematic genre.

The films to come followed the lead of different musical formats of the contemporary stage. The operetta and the revue emerged as two of the most popular early styles for movie musicals. Once moviemakers determined that the cinematic mechanism could capture the story in ways heretofore impossible on the stage, the operetta took its place as one of the most cinematic of formats. Embracing the possibilities of film and the audience's more intimate relationship with visual aesthetics, studios found the grand themes, romantic drama, and exotic locales ideal for conversion to the screen. Broadway transfers and motion picture originals such as *Monte Carlo*

(1930)—which features a reflexive subplot involving a stage performance of the operetta *Monsieur Beaucaire*—popularized the form in a new medium, providing a preformatted means to combine music and plot, while creating a space for new operetta screen stars such as Jeanette MacDonald. MacDonald and Nelson Eddy would star in a successful string of operettas including Herbert's *Naughty Marietta* (1935), Friml's *Rose-Marie* (1936), and Romberg's *Maytime* (1937). Popular trappings for the musical, romance and exotic locales kept the operetta en vogue as Hollywood embraced the genre. Some argue that the format would continue through the works of Rodgers and Hammerstein and into the fifties, sixties, and seventies with films such as *My Fair Lady* (1964) and *Song of Norway*.³⁰

Similarly, studios took full advantage of their stables of performers by producing vehicles similar to Broadway revues—light on plot and heavy on stars, stars, and more stars. In the first year of all-sound film, MGM's *Hollywood Revue of 1929*, Universal's *King of Jazz* (1930), and *Paramount on Parade* (1930) had all entered the star-studded fray. One year after the emergence of the revue, it would enter a decline when the industry turned to cheaper, less grandiose, and star-studded fare as the nation entered into the Depression. Emerging again with the musical boom of World War II, the revue returned just in time to raise morale in vehicles such as Warner Bros.'s *This is the Army* (1943) and Columbia's *Stars on Parade* (1944). Again, the genre would wane as the studios lost their acting stables with the demise of the star and studio systems; however, such vehicles would continue to crop up through the 1960s with films such as *Hootenanny Hoot* (1963).

While the motion picture industry was taking full advantage of pre-established musical formats for their conversion to sound film, it was far from adhering to all Broadway traditions. Because of the possibility of a greater sense of intimacy through editing and camerawork and therefore realism (or expectation thereof) than in the theatre, Hollywood's conventional style softened the transition from dialogue to song. This difference would rationalize the repeated and sustained appearance of backstage vehicles. Not only could these films demystify the medium they were emulating by showing the audience the heretofore mysterious workings of the theatre, but also the diegetic theatrical performances provided a built-in realistic motivation for all the singing and dancing. With the actors' and actresses' faces and bodies closer to the audience members than had been to most theatergoers, it was necessary somehow to naturalize performances.³¹ Filmmakers would also learn to adjust to the narrational freedom provided by the camera. No longer limited to hearing and viewing the same onscreen image, technological advances would alter the way musicals presented their tunes. As early as the 1929 *Love Parade*, director Ernst Lubitsch began toying with detaching image from produced music. Separating the two tracks, Lubitsch filmed a grand military display over recorded singing which emanated from an unrelated source. The same year, Rouben Mamoulian would initiate the process of recording sounds on separate tracks and combining them in post-production, allowing for the amplification of multiple tracks of sound in *Applause*. While still clumsy in execution of song and dance, these films evidenced the burgeoning excitement for infusing the musical with techniques only possible on film.

In 1929, technical issues continued to hamper the production of fluid image and sound. Weighed down (literally and figuratively) by the loud encased camera and gargantuan immobile microphones, the dancing camera was not yet possible. Rather, the practice of simultaneously capturing image and sound resulted in film traffic jams where a full orchestra, dancing chorus, actors, and technicians vied for stage space. Recording the sounds of song and dance while the actors performed their respective scenes led to uneven sound production and restricted movement. By 1930 these problems would largely be solved by the popularization of post synchronization; pre-recording singing and dancing, technicians would be able to combine performed sounds to a lip-synced image, allowing for more freedom of movement and controlled bodily performance. Three years later, advancements in technology would allow for another type of musical extravaganza: Busby Berkeley's excessively mobile camera and his use of geometric gams. The successful negotiation of such technical issues may have led to another boom in musical production which occurred in 1933; Berkeley's *42nd Street* led the onslaught of new backstage musicals. The new freedom of the camera and sound allowed the choreographer to abandon static shots of performers in favor of his now familiar eye-popping geometric displays; bodies of dancers divorce their individuality and humanness as they become elements of a greater artistic visual effect. From his famous inverted V's created by close-ups of chorus girls' legs in numbers such as *42nd Street*'s "Young and Healthy" to the complete abstraction of female bodies via the overhead shot of their combined geometric positioning in *Footlight Parade*'s (1933) "By a Waterfall," Berkeley transformed the visuals of the cinematic musical as never before.

As lasting conventions such as the voiceover and cine-specific production number emerged, so too did the types of stories which would function as a base for the genre.³² As stated previously, the operetta served as a major source of inspiration for the Hollywood film musical. Both *Love Me Tonight* (1932) and *Monte Carlo* injected particularly modern and American mores into their plots. Replacing the mystical romance of the classic operetta with a more explicit presence of sex, *Monte Carlo* contemporized the form. *Love Me Tonight* upends class assumptions of the traditional operetta. Rather than presuming the superiority of the upper-class, the film turns the tables, forcing the upper-class heroine to see the frivolity of her ways and allowing the assertion of American “classless” values.³³ This infusion of more contemporary American values and moral quandaries allowed for the concurrent existence of legitimized song and dance in a plot-heavy vehicle via the glorification of the American everyman.³⁴

Less fully integrated than the operetta, the backstage musical has maintained success throughout the existence of the musical on film. The format used settings such as Broadway, motion pictures, and charity shows. These vehicles often changed in apparent response to industrial and social shifts. In the early years, Warner Bros. specialized in this type of vehicle, popularizing bawdy broads on the lookout for sex, dough, and fame. *42nd Street* and *The Gold Diggers* cycle exemplify this kind of licentious behavior. Just as *42nd Street* depicts men sneaking out of woman-only rooms and implies the highlights of the casting couch, *Gold Diggers* includes straight-talking dames and moment of sexual titillation through performance. Berkeley’s *Gold Diggers of 1933* “Pettin’ in the Park”

aptly illustrates early displays of sexuality which would later be verboten. The song's chorus reads:

Come on, I've been waiting long,
Why don't we get started?
Come on, maybe this is wrong,
But, gee, what of it?
We just love it.
Pettin' in the park, (Bad boy!)
Pettin' in the dark; (Bad girl!)
Whatcha doin' honey?
I feel so funny,
I'm pettin' in the park with you.³⁵

More forward than almost any respectable Rodgers and Hammerstein heroine, these ladies are plagued by a recurring randy baby (actor Billy Barty dressed in infant garb) and ultimately cast in silhouettes which imply the entire bevy of chorines are in their scanties or stark naked. As the women emerge from behind their onstage curtains sporting tin lingerie protecting them from their horny intendeds, their fleeting gesture toward propriety is squashed as the baby presents the hero a large can opener.

In the midst of the Depression and a move by the motion picture industry to rein in images of corruption and lasciviousness (and therefore hopefully avoid outside regulation), the musical took a nosedive. As the genre established itself, each studio had showcased a different type of studio stamp: Warner Bros.'s racy working class stories, Paramount's witty escapism, MGM's grand operettas, Twentieth Century-Fox's Shirley Temple/Sonja Henie formulaic musicals, and RKO's Astaire-Ginger Rogers showbiz pictures; despite their proven successes, the musical was met with a Depression era distaste from studios.³⁶ In attempts to save economic face, they demusicalized, delayed, or altogether shelved a large number of musical projects.

By 1922 the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association (MPPDA or Hays Office) had emerged in an effort to avoid external regulation of film content. Over the next ten years the organization would go through various levels of self-imposed regulation. The Hays office worked to establish industry standards which would require a more restrained approach to topics such as deviant sex, violence, blasphemy, crime, and contempt for the law—subjects which groups such as the Catholic Legion of Decency claimed could warp the minds of the weak and easily swayed public. The playful and provocative moments depicted in early musicals had been legitimized by implication rather than actual viewed deviance as well as the ultimate narrative rejection or admonishment of any woman of ill repute. By July 1934 the Production Code Administration (PCA) had become the official body from which studios were forced to gain approval regarding the suitability for a film's release. Without the seal of approval from the PCA, films could not be distributed or exhibited by any member of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association (MPPDA), with a violation fine of \$25,000.³⁷

One direction taken within a subset of the musical genre evidences the greater moves occurring within the industry—and the underlying goals of the arcadian musical. Companionate love became the main narrative thrust of many R.K.O. backstagers, integrating these films into the already romance-driven musical form followed by the MGM operettas. Unlike many Warner Bros. theatre-bound vehicles, the Astaire-Rogers films used the show business setting to allow easily for their singing and dancing but built stronger plots which extended beyond the stage and made room for the development

of romantic love rather than merely sexual heat (*Follow the Fleet* [1936], *Swing Time* [1936], and *Shall We Dance* [1937]). Astaire would continue this trend in his semi-integrated 1950s films such as *Silk Stockings* (1957) with Cyd Charisse.³⁸ Through the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s show business settings still served as the basis for many plotlines, often focusing more on the story and the ultimate attainment of romantic love than earlier vehicles.³⁹

“Let’s put on a show” vehicles provide a similar optimistic move from the racier backstageers of the early 1930s. Juvenile performers stood as hope for the future for the struggling American economy and family. These adolescent amateurs decide that for charity, family, or country, they must contribute by putting on some sort of performance. Along with the charity show backstageers, they reinforced the notion that the kids as performers and we as a society must do what they/we must to help our fellow citizens. Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney starred in films such as *Babes in Arms* (1939) and *Babes on Broadway* (1941) using new music such as hip swing and jazz while in *One Hundred Men and a Girl* (1937) Deanna Durbin sought to save her struggling musician father by locating an orchestra for him, but surprise, she is a hot fifteen-year-old opera diva. Watch out!

Addressing the backstage from another perspective, the biopic served as a popular format within the early film musicals. From as early as *The Great Ziegfeld*, entertainment personalities served as fodder for musicals, providing a built-in rationale for song and dance. Not needing to integrate awkwardly the musical performances into

everyday non-musical scenarios, these films have continued in popularity through to the present.

Finally, Broadway's musical plays also served as a chief mine for motion picture source material.⁴⁰ The works of Kern and Hammerstein and Rodgers—both together and with other partners—made numerous appearances on the big screen. Universal remade *Show Boat* in 1936 as did MGM in 1951. Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote one original screenplay, *State Fair* (1945 film; 1962 film) and expeditiously brought each of their six stage successes to the film (*Oklahoma* [1943 stage; 1955 film], *Carousel* [1945 stage; 1956 film], *South Pacific* [1949 stage; 1958 film], *The King and I* [1951 stage; 1956 film], *Flower Drum Song* [1958 stage; 1961 film], and *The Sound of Music* [1959 stage; 1965 film]). Though perhaps carried by their initial popularity rather than their dynamic screen presence, the films of Rodgers and Hammerstein were often visually hampered by the tight controls of their composer and lyricist. Flat settings which failed to engage with the possibilities granted to film left much to be desired. Not until *The Sound of Music*—after the death of Hammerstein—would any of their films engage with the lush surroundings implied by their scripts. Using their specific settings as mere three-dimensional backdrops rather than active participants in the action, films such as *South Pacific* and *Carousel* ran like replications of their stage versions. Joining them in the 1950s and 1960s less socially relevant, yet narrative-heavy musical plays, such as *Kiss Me Kate* (1953), *Guys and Dolls*, *Damn Yankees* (1958), and *Bells are Ringing* (1960) transferred their integrated comic shtick to a new medium. Along with film originals such as *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), *An American in Paris* (1951), and *Gigi* (1958), these

vehicles brought an element of consistent plot-focus to the film musical which combined story, character, and song in a fluid fashion through plot motivation and syncopated dialogue. Whether presenting idealized notions of Paris, baseball and marriage, or New York telephone operators, such films often laid a veil of innocence over the narrative, overcoming all obstacles in the ultimate search for a love which would immediately be recognized as true and natural.

AND SO CAME THE ARCADIAN MUSICAL

This *mélange* of formats, along with their theatrical predecessors, set the scene for what critics would ultimately define as the musical genre—in this study, the arcadian musical. Setting norms for musical performance, romance, and community, both theatrical and cinematic forms combined and negotiated social and industrial shifts to culminate in an image of nostalgic musical integration.⁴¹

Setting

Rick Altman's descriptions of the musical's setting revolve around notions of artifice and nostalgia. Both characteristics can be traced to early musical ventures in the European operettas and their American versions. Composers such as Friml and Weber relied on "exotic lands" or "old Europe" to create an air of the unusual. Rather than striving for a sense of the local real, these vehicles relied on broad strokes which connoted a sense of unusual place. As composers such as Kern and the Gershwins adapted the form, they transformed these exotic or ancient lands to nostalgic versions of the American frontier or urban landscapes. Similarly, American composers such as

George M. Cohan strove to construct an idealized notion of America evoking a sense of nationalism with songs such as “Yankee Doodle Boy” and “You’re a Grand Old Flag.” Additionally, artists such as Rodgers and Hammerstein who retained tight controls over their projects as they transferred from stage to screen influenced this type of artificiality or idealization attributed to setting. Using the flatness of space employed in the stage productions, their films avoided actual specificity of locale until the filming of *The Sound of Music*.

Plot and Characters

Plots and characters can be seen as a blend of those presented in the early forms. The importance of sex as a battle or adventure resulting in love originates in the first operettas whose major premise involved the romantic entanglements of their heroes, heroines, and villains. As in traditional (non-musical) romance narratives, this initial recognition and resistance to or barrier from a romantic partner served as the basis for the operetta. The characters enacting these romantic quests adhered to the restrictions of the time. Discouraged by the PCA to present sex in an unwholesome fashion, films continually plot the normalcy and necessity of companionate love. *42nd Street*’s Anytime Annie is ultimately replaced by *Oklahoma!*’s Ado Annie who, though she “Cain’t Say No,” is allowed to marry rather than suffer the tarnish of a fallen woman. Additionally, these films bear the mark of the specific historical moments of their popularization. During both the Depression and World War II, musicals often played the role of unifier, reinforcing or imagining a cultural desire to bring the American people together for some sort of healing.⁴² The kids brought the community and their families together. The

hoofers joined forces to save the show. The star-studded reviews sought to unify the nation under a similar nationalistic banner. Both regulation and contextualization aided in the configuration of a genre which reinforces the communal good over individual desire.

Use of Music

The early forms such as the ballad opera and operetta set the standard for musical entertainment which combined spoken dialogue and popular music. Further, the rise of the Broadway narrative-focused musical with the emergence of Kern and Rodgers and Hammerstein as major innovators developed a form in which music and dialogue could be easily integrated. Their works also standardized the inclusion of musical arrangements tailored to characters' specific psychological situations and rhythms which ease the spoken voice into song, such as the sound of a horse's hooves (*Oklahoma!*) or recitative.⁴³ Additionally, the stables of contracted actors provided studios with a constant stream of musical performers and the means to create further generations thereof.

Theme of Community

Scholars such as Thomas Schatz, Jane Feuer, Richard Dyer, and Altman have all identified the musical as approaching utopic possibilities or reinforcing communal middle-class values. The shifts which occur within the film musical underline these ideals. Backstage musicals often emphasized the importance of the group, as did the "let's put on a show" films. In both, music and performance exist as the means by which

successfully to bring together a community in strife. This formula convention strengthened during the Depression and WWII when musicals strayed from topics of individual economic advancement to those of personal or communal satisfaction. A popular genre during the war, musicals of various formats sought to raise morale for the troupes and reinforce the stick-to-itiveness of the country. Similarly, as the war ended and the genre further solidified its style with the works of Arthur Freed and the spate of successful musical play Broadway transfers, the postwar culture at large sought to reinforce community values and the strength of the American middle-class.

Overall, the emerging arcadian musical genre eschews various standards of the medium to which it belongs. Classical Hollywood cinema has been discussed as one typified by logical cause and effect-driven linear narratives pushed forward by individuals with personal agency; this compositional dominance is supported by self-effacing camerawork, overt motivation for actions, and a clear-cut conclusion. In short, the Classical Hollywood vehicle plays itself out making evident the events and individuals which cause diegetic change and ultimately lead to a resolution of the narrative conflict, while encased in a standardized—though continually evolving—set of narrational norms which hide, rather than announce, the means by which they were created. Continuity editing—shot-reverse-shots, eye line matches, maintaining axis orientation—as well as effective presentation of onscreen and implication of off screen space work to present a diegetic world as a seemingly real one. Cinematographic choices, visual and aural editing, framing, and choices in *mise-en-scène* function together to mask the mechanics of the filmmaking process.⁴⁴

To the contrary, the integrated arcadian Hollywood musical deviates from the norms of classical Hollywood form and style. Altman points to the irrelevance of the cause-effect process, as the generically determined ending relies not on a logical causal chain of events, but rather on a series of matched visuals, songs, and dances which create a visual and narrative link between the two lovers. The music and budding romance takes precedence over the actual development of the film's story—the details of which appear nearly irrelevant due to the foregone generic narrative conclusion. Additionally, the very means by which music functions in the integrated musical works against the dictates of classical Hollywood cinema. The actors randomly burst into song, breaking any semblance of linkage with the “real” and believable world. They turn full front, breaking the fourth wall, to speak directly to the audience member—reversing the masking of artifice accomplished by any self-effacing visual style. Finally, the two divergences—narrative causal logic and visual narration—often come together to create a satisfactory conclusion distanced from logical or overt causality; rather, as the narrative plays itself out through the union of the romantic couple, the conclusion often emerges not as a result of a satisfactory alleviation of narrative conflict, but by means of a burst of visual excess. Often concluding with a large production number or celebration, the climax occurs as song, dance, and grandiose visual displays coalesce to create an extravagant sensual exhibition. With its fourth wall breached to celebrate communal values and heterosexual romance, the integrated arcadian musical belies the closed narrative system common in Hollywood filmmaking. Questions are—though superficially—answered, though not fully explained.⁴⁵

AND THEN...

While in this environment of innovation and repetition, conventions and standardized formats emerged to define and transform the genre, by the 1960s the film musical had all but played itself out. For various reasons, scholars have deemed this time period as one which would no longer support the musical. Firstly, by the end of the 1950s the motion picture industry had exhausted Broadway's smash hits.⁴⁶ At this point, Broadway transfers garnered the most confidence from producers seeking financial success. Though New York was still churning out musical successes, the number of new shows had declined as the revenues for the stage suffered a postwar decline. Secondly, scholars such as Gerald Mast point to the aging of the Broadway musical in the 1950s. No longer focusing on contemporary music or dances as the Gershwins, Porter, and Irving Berlin had previously, most new musicals kept their distance from the emerging sounds of rock-n-roll and popular country and the non-partnered dances that accompanied those musical styles and may have enticed youth audiences.⁴⁷ As the genre aged and avoided these emerging musical forms, the success of the Broadway pop single also waned. Consequently, the sound and audience aged with the genre.⁴⁸ Thirdly, by 1948 the government had declared the five major studios—Paramount, MGM, Twentieth Century-Fox, Warner Bros., and RKO—participants in an oligopoly and forced them to divest of their exhibition wings within the next five years and immediately cease practices such as block booking and blind buying.⁴⁹ This industrial shift affected both the availability and grooming of stars for the musical genre—as the decline in contracting stars for lengthy periods coincided with the studios altering their modes of financing and

producing products. Following the transformation of the studio system, the genre suffered in terms of number and consistent aesthetic. Also, post-disintegration, studios began to farm out production and/or their resources. No longer would films bear a definitive studio stamp, as the uniformity of production bodies such as MGM's Freed Unit gave way to a system bereft of any single organizing force.⁵⁰ The director's voice would often hold more sway than that of the producer's as the studios' roles became more of an economic one. Finally, critics such as Marc Miller have claimed that by the late 1950s and mid 1960s audiences were sufficiently jaded by social issues (civil rights, women's rights, etc.) that the conciliatory ending of the most musicals did not sit soundly.⁵¹

As the 1960s began, the occasional musical would achieve financial success: *West Side Story*, *Gypsy* (1962), *My Fair Lady*, and *The Sound of Music*. Each film illustrates visual, ideological, and casting shifts which would deviate from the genre's established cinematic roots. All four films demonstrate the effects of the demise of contracted star stables as well as a manifestation of the blockbuster mentality. All four films were sold on the celebrity of stars known for attributes other than their abilities to sing. Neither Natalie Wood—who appears in two of the four—Rosalind Russell, Christopher Plummer, Audrey Hepburn, nor Richard Beymer did their own singing.⁵² As film musicals declined in number and studio-groomed musical stars failed to emerge, films appeared to rely on selling dubbed celebrity over actual vocal talent. Additionally, the new musicals sought to rev up the relevancy of settings and themes. Straying from the comfortable nostalgia indicative of the genre, *West Side Story* integrated a music and dance style more

contemporary than most and centered its narrative on a grittier, more pessimistic topic. Similarly, *Gypsy* ends with its heroine Rose delusional and cracking under the pressure of abandonment and unrealized dreams. *West Side Story* and *The Sound of Music*—both directed by Robert Wise—strayed from such denotative, studio-created sets of Technicolor wonders as the Rodgers and Hammerstein vehicles, *Guys and Dolls*, and *The Court Jester* (1956) by using location shooting to capture a heightened sense of detail, realism, and space.⁵³ Both Wise films begin with a helicopter shot descending upon New York and the Alps respectively. While *South Pacific*'s Nelly never swam in the actual ocean, New York and the mountains helped define the two Marias. Shot on location, the cinematography and mise-en-scène were far from the manmade cornfields and nostalgic tunes of *Oklahoma!*'s simpler West side.

During the 1950 and 1960s, some movements occurred in the American culture industries which would aid in pushing the musical toward what is identified in this project as the ambivalent musical. The 1950s television boom placed immense pressure on Hollywood to compete with the new medium available in the comfort of people's homes. The postwar suburbanization of the middle class was well served by this theatre of the living room, and Hollywood responded through the musical via several technical ploys. Whether through the flashy technology of Todd-AO or Cinerama or special effects like *Kiss Me Kate*'s 3-D, the industry fought to differentiate its product from the small screen.

Concurrently, particular films pushed the boundaries of the Production Code. Films such as *Lolita* (1962), *Kiss Me Stupid* (1964), and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*

(1966) pressed on with risqué dialogue and sexual situations. In 1966 an early version of the contemporary motion picture rating system replaced the Code, paving the way for darker and more adult subject matter. By the mid 1960s, the film industry at large experienced a major shift in production which would take advantage of this revision in censorship protocol. Following an influx of French films and a subsequent boom in the American avant-garde, a number of independent American productions found commercial success in what became a movement now referred to as New American Cinema.⁵⁴ Filmmakers such as Arthur Penn (*Bonnie and Clyde* [1967]), Robert Altman (*M*A*S*H* [1970]), and Mike Nichols (*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *The Graduate* [1967]) embody this movement which simultaneously questioned American culture and Hollywood narrative structure. Such films simultaneously defy classical Hollywood form and popular notions of morality. Steve Neale describes the narrative, aesthetic, and ideological shifts associated with New American Cinema as posing such a challenge to established norms:

The use of devices such as the zoom, telephoto lenses, slow motion and split-screen have destroyed the dramatic and spatio-temporal unity that founded classical mise-en-scène with its economy, density and “subtlety” of signification; plot-linearity and its corollary, the goal-oriented hero, have been replaced by narrative fragmentation and troubled, introspective protagonists; genre conventions have to a large extent been broken down, to be replaced by “realism” compromised by traditional dramatic values and the exigencies of narrative conventions or use of older generic conventions invested with an empty nostalgia or a knowing cynicism, or both.⁵⁵

Foregrounding the self-awareness of this type of cinema, Thomas Elsaesser describes a move toward styles such as parody, pastiche, and adaptation and narrative journeys which “foreground themselves and assume the blander status of a narrative device, sometimes a

picaresque support for individual scenes, situations, and set pieces, another time ironically admitted pretext to keep the film moving.”⁵⁶ Allowing a high level of reflexivity, ambivalent morality, internal contradiction in human action, and ideologically problematic social norms, these films embraced aesthetic experimentation, social realism, and an articulation of the palpable discontent occurring in a nation struggling through multiple assassinations, civil and women’s rights movements, and emerging sexual revolutions. Seemingly contrary to the tenets of the musical genre, these characteristics would nonetheless find their way into the musical films of the late 1960s and 1970s.⁵⁷

In the 1950s, the popularization of rock-n-roll and the new economically flush teenage market encouraged the transfer of this music to entertainment venues, both through films which heavily featured rock music such as *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) and those which included musical performance (*Rock Around the Clock* [1954], *Don’t Knock the Rock* [1956]). Such films ushered in a new form of danger to the traditional musical. Though not integrated musicals, these musical films—both through content and audience response—brought the threatening image of the teenager to the fore.⁵⁸ In a genre which focused on community and nostalgia—often using those characteristics as ingredients to the conciliatory and status quo affirming conclusion—these rock films highlighted a violent or raucous path adults feared as looming for the budding teen demographic. In 1956, Elvis made his film debut in *Love Me Tender*. Though his film personae were usually tamed down, his stage version of traditionally black music was making shock waves as he swiveled his hips, grew his sideburns, and sported hip clothing, all the while shocking parents, churches, and even that bastion of the entertainment industry, Ed

Sullivan. Soon, clean teen artists such as Frankie Avalon (*Beach Party* [1963], *Muscle Beach Party* [1964], et al.), Pat Boone (*State Fair* [1961], *April Love* [1957]), and Bobby Rydell (*Bye, Bye Birdie* [1963]) made similar shifts from vinyl to celluloid, starring in vehicles which displayed both their acting and singing abilities in narratives which provided culture-reaffirming conclusions.⁵⁹

Though the aforementioned early manifestations of the rock musical often successfully negotiated the threatening sexual and social connotations attributed to rock-n-roll music and the safeness and nostalgia allied with the musical genre, by the mid 1960s, rock-n-roll films had taken on a sharper edge, both in terms of visual style and subject matter. The Beatles' *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!* strayed from the sanitized scripts of Boone and Avalon to those which engaged with both the frenzy of their adoring fans and their swinging lifestyles. *A Hard Day's Night* also wandered from traditional Hollywood film techniques with the inclusion of shaky cameras and short shot lengths which replicated the frenzied path of the band. *A Hard Day's Night* peppered the film with voiceover Beatles' music, occasional performances of the band, and numbers which walked the line between integration and musical performance, pushing the boundaries of traditional musical norms by creating a story of unclear causality. Performers such as The Monkees and Arlo Guthrie would continue the trend with *Head* and *Alice's Restaurant*, presenting varying images of drug use and the 1960s counterculture revolution. As rock music entered the musical, the nostalgic reification of hegemonic social norms exited the scene as youth rebellion of sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll took center. Films such as these and *Phantom of the Paradise*, the 1973 Paul Williams as

devil/evil record producer who buys and enslaves the soul of rock composer whose face has been horridly disfigured in a record press—one truly has to see it to believe it—distances from the arcadian notion that music serves as a form of social glue. A similar pessimism would emerge in the integrated musicals of the period, now free to dabble in the darker side of society without the constraints of the Production Code.

Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the musical morphed and morphed again, negotiating musical forms, the role of music, and the role of the visual in theatrical and cinematic musical performance. Following and rejecting contemporary trends, the genre has continually produced variables, whether by reforming the grand opera for a broader audience via the operetta, strengthening the narrative and relationships among psychology, character performance, and song with the musical play, or rebelling against the traditional notions of nation, community, story, and music via the emergence of rock-n-roll both on stage and in the cinema. Vehicles which fell outside of the integrated musical—star-studded revue, biopics, and some backstagers—helped in the continued transformation of the genre and its popular meaning. By the mid to late 1960s, reflecting a restructuring of the motion picture industry and the associated changes in economic, hiring, production, and distribution patterns, the once high-priced, big box office genre declined in popularity as it struggled to continue during a time period whose determining factors ran counter to its current form. An alternate version of the musical, contrary to the community-preserving, marriage-glorifying films of the 1940s and 1950s began to come clear. Whether through the genre hybridization of *Lost Horizon* or the cynical rock-n-roll stylings of The Who's *Tommy*, the space for nuns to chortle over

solving a problem like Maria or all of New York's problems to be worked out by Judy Holliday parked at her *Bells are Ringing* Suzanswerphone desk quickly decreased. The following chapters will begin to interrogate how such changes manifest themselves in the overall structure and connotation of these emerging genre films. Again, not all musicals illustrate drastic changes in form and content, but the changes in the genre can nonetheless be seen in the stories, visuals, performances, and performers of a significant portion of the integrated musicals of 1966 through 1983.

Chapter 3: Narrative and Visual Conventions

Discussion of the arcadian musical's narrative and visual conventions has largely revolved around the creation of a world which enables the attainment of a cultural utopia. At the center of the arcadian narrative, romance often functions as a stabilizing force providing a space for opposing sides to come together in a peaceful union of bodies and ideas. Both Thomas Schatz and Rick Altman focus on such romantic unions, identifying them as the bedrock of the musical structure.¹ Whether the story's frame engages with gangsters, cowboys, socialites, or businessmen, chances are the romantic hero will find his heroine and the two will live happily ever after. Narrative conflicts of these films seldom reach a degree of complexity which cannot be overcome by the love of a good woman and a dazzling final number. Wholesome entertainment and entertainers can save family and country, aid in finding true love, and make performers out of diegetic—and by proxy nondiegetic—audience members. To complement the ideological simplicity of the musical narrative, the arcadian musical's visual aesthetics often present a similarly simple world. Casting broad strokes in the creation of the fictional society, a feeling of nostalgia often overwhelms any sense of objective realism. By situating narratives in locales which denote a less complicated time or more ambiguously exotic place, impossibly simplistic recuperative conclusions appear more credible. Whether an idealized vision of America in the 1950s, turn of the century Paris, or “*ye olde timey*” England, such settings allow for a golly, gosh, aw shucks conception of reality and legitimize even the most absurd narrative turns.

This chapter will examine the ambivalent musical's deviations from idealism and nostalgia. While not all musical vehicles of this time period abandon narrative and/or visual characteristics of the arcadian, various trends emerge which aid in creating more complex musicals which surpass the two-dimensional notions of human nature and conflict resolution common in the dominant version of the genre. Further, these films employ techniques which distance the musical from its often problematic or simply unrealistic practice of having people randomly bursting into song. As romance becomes decentered in this period of the genre, stories become more varied and complex. Even the surefire cure for narrative conflict, romance, becomes problematized as companionate heterosexual relationships come face-to-face with sexual promiscuity, irresolvable affairs, and the possibility of a life without love. Along with subjects such as religion and personal quests, problematic romance becomes part of the ever-complicated world of the ambivalent musical. To harmonize with these more complex or irresolvable narratives, these films use camera techniques and choices in mise-en-scène to emphasize conflict over resolution. Combining en vogue narrative and visual practices with realistic, stylized, and theatrical settings and costumes, these films further the musical's project into one which confronts the intricacies of human experience.

NARRATIVE: EVERYTHING'S NOT COMIN' UP ROSES

Existing scholarship often addresses the connotation of what is termed here the arcadian musical via its established conventions. Altman has cited the musical as a genre prone to using nostalgic notions of the past to create an atmosphere ripe for clear-cut and socially sanctioned resolutions.² By functioning in a world already perceived as

idealistically uncomplicated, illogical narrative conclusions appear plausible as long as they reinforce the status quo and unite the musical community. Characters' relationships which bridge the different ideological goals of opposing factions of society ultimately lead to the union of a once divided community, resulting in the prospect of an emergent utopic future. Similarly, both Schatz and Altman cite such a romance as the catalyst for the musical's conflict.³ With a romance formula—and ultimate attainment of couplehood—structuring the overall narrative, the musical protagonists work through an initial conflicted but consuming attraction and overcome ideological and social barriers ultimately to negotiate any obstacles to their love and emerge transformed—physically and/or mentally—as members of a happy united couple.⁴ Successful romance, a fully bonded community, and a life lived happily ever after under the dictates of the dominant society often describe the narrative and ideological goals of the arcadian musical.

Richard Adler and Jerry Ross's *The Pajama Game*, starring Doris Day and John Raitt, centers on an impending workers' strike in a pajama factory and illustrates such a narrative. Divided solidly between the workers and the management, the community needs to heal wounds inflicted by the conflicting desires of the two groups. Simultaneously, the narrative seeks to mend this division through the inclusion of a romance plotline involving Day's Babe Williams, the head of grievance committee/union rabble-rouser and Raitt's Sid Sorkin, the new Superintendent of Sleepytime Pajamas who is hired to block the strike and negotiate a contract amenable to the needs of both groups—through his alliance lies with management. As Babe and Sid negotiate their budding romance, their relationship becomes inextricable from the union negotiation over the

proposed seven and a half cent raise. Bob Fosse choreographs a stylized, syncopated work stoppage which pushes the work-oriented conflict while challenging the budding romance. Ultimately the prospect of a love lost for a lousy seven and a half cents pushes Sid to act. The strike ends; love continues, and happiness ensues. A love strong enough to salvage any old company conflict allows the bridging of management-labor difference and leads to an inexplicable production number in which happily united couples model pajamas (for no apparent reason). Joy, commerce, and romance reign triumphant.

Such a narrative trajectory is common in the arcadian musical. *Silk Stockings* must confront the opposing needs of frigid Russian comrade Cyd Charisse, the Hollywood motion picture industry, and dancing producer Fred Astaire. Female backwoods ingenuity, frontier entertainment, and male egos meet in Irving Berlin's *Annie Get Your Gun*. Such films and countless others adhere to the norm of the generic arcadian form, centering a romance plotline between two characters who must succeed in their romance to overcome external conflicts (business, class, politics) which otherwise keep them in different worlds (or at least on different sides of the town, mountain, or horse). Only the romantic union and consequential renunciation of external conflict can resolve the narrative and lead the characters into a world where they can coexist peacefully—though we very seldom see this world, as the musical often ends with the celebration of the union overwhelming any lingering doubt about the compatibility of the main characters. While such a conciliatory narrative sets the foundation of the arcadian musical, the ambivalent musicals of the late 1960s to early 1980s illustrate a decided shift

in narrative trajectory, attendance to romance, and attitude toward community and the possibility of a utopic existence.

During this period, certain films do adhere firmly to the dictates laid out in the arcadian period. For example, a romance which bonds the community stands solidly at the center of films such as *Half a Sixpence*, *Grease* (1978), *Finian's Rainbow*, and *Hello Dolly!*, all of which conclude with the hope for a future utopia. Each overcomes class or clique difference to result in satisfactory union. *One from the Heart* (1982) bridges the gap between the arcadian and ambivalent with its highly tumultuous romantic relationships, infidelities, breast-beating, but ultimate reconciliation of the main couple in the end. Both the Village People vehicle *Can't Stop the Music* and the visually bizarre *Dr. Doolittle* focus on the bonding of communities, while pushing the romance slightly to the side. A significant portion of the films made in this time period, however, challenge the social stability reinforced by these arcadian narratives. The ambivalence articulated through this period of the genre emerges partially as a result of the conflicted societies portrayed in the narratives. This section will interrogate various ways in which this occurs, examining the removal of successful romance from the center of the film's narrative and the alternate cultural narrative arcs which exist in its place. In addition, as the films' senses of idealistic place and human companionship wane or become problematized, the resulting images of community and utopia also become unsettled from that of the reaffirming arcadian musical. The reigning ideology of the dominant group will no longer work for all.

Narrative Focus: What Is the Story About Anyway?

The narrative foci of the ambivalent musicals pull away from the status quo-affirming ones of the earlier arcadian varieties. While the assurance that a couple would meet and live happily ever after created a web of safety around the arcadian musical, the outcome of the ambivalent remains unclear. These films vary both the outcome of the narratives and the issues which drive them to their conclusions. The very unsettling of narrative focus immediately upsets the safety and assuredness of the musical as a genre. As Schatz has stated, the routinized nature of narrative in any given genre allows for a short-circuiting of the meaning-making process.⁵ Because the story's outcome is overdetermined, the narrative connotation precedes its very existence, or the acts of each prior genre film impacts on the connotation of those in each new film. Where classical Hollywood cinema has been discussed as a result of organized cause-and-effect events, genre films rely less heavily on an articulated causal chain, as the repeated "boy meets girl, boy gets girl, all problems are solved by love between boy and girl" format overwhelms the actual logic which guides the narrative. The ending ultimately becomes a foregone conclusion and therefore guides the meaning of the film and, from the beginning, reinforces the strength of community and the possibility of utopia. Whereas aforementioned films adhere to arcadian notions of companionate romance, patterns emerge in some integrated musicals of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s which figure into the broadening of the musical genre. While these narratives challenge or decenter the notion of romance, they also shift to include topics less easily addressed by the arcadian musical: irresolvable social or generational conflicts, social critique of the status quo, and

personal quests not based around love; often abandoning the romance formula for one more akin to the melodrama, the double protagonist often disappears as the male's personal and public journeys—and overall moral (or immoral) fiber—take center in the narrative. Such divergent subject matters ultimately lead to conclusions more apt to move away from the safety of successful romantic coupling. Eschewing the once imperative wedding festivity or other celebratory conclusion, such narratives often close without the reassuring (if false) ending; rather, the protagonist's physical or moral downfall, couple's incompatibility, or an overall sense of hopelessness emerge as the musical's lasting impression.

Romance Decentered, Challenged, or Erased

While the majority of musicals made during this period, including those adhering most closely to the category described here as ambivalent, do include some form of amorous relationship or male-female coupling, the ways in which these narratives use romance differ from those narratives discussed as being largely structured around the imminent success of the main characters' destined union. Rather than using these relationships as a means to unite the community through the resolution of any male-female conflict representing the greater social conflict, ambivalent narratives may use romance as a means to articulate the impossibility of a successful social unification or as a symptom of greater social ills.

Instead of happily joining their couples in a rousing production number of communal gaiety—as do films such as *Oklahoma!* with the reprise of “Oh What a Beautiful Morning”—ambivalent musicals such as *Sweet Charity*, *At Long Last Love*,

Camelot, and *Funny Girl* use failed romance in a fashion which disputes the “love can conquer all” theory of many older musicals.⁶ *At Long Last Love* and *Sweet Charity* both end with rather pessimistic conclusions. Gone is the inevitable final kiss. Shirley MacLaine’s trusting dime-a-dance Charity can only aspire to be the heroine of the arcadian musical. Established as a honorable, idealistic girl who just happens to work in a sleazy business, she moves from man to man, being robbed by her fiancée Charlie and stashed in a closet by movie star Vittorio Vitale, until she meets the supposed man of her dreams, Oscar Lindquist, while trapped in an elevator. Sensitive, timid, and violently claustrophobic, Oscar appears ideal for Charity, as Altman has described the perfect musical pair as embodying opposite characteristics.⁷ If the man represents freedom, the woman must represent restraint. If the man is a professional entertainer, the woman must be an amateur. By reinforcing the notions that opposites attract, the characters are able to synthesize seemingly incongruous character types, walks of life, or factions of society—as long as they both possess an underlying desire for romance, couplehood, and communal harmony; the personal victories thereby ultimately create one vision of peaceful coexistence, suggesting the possibility for social utopia. In the arcadian musical Charity and Oscar would overcome different backgrounds, and the love which develops as he makes her feel like a lady and she helps him overcome his claustrophobia would conquer all. Instead, the ambivalent musical reinforces the incongruous nature of opposites and the overwhelming cynicism of society. Abandoned at the altar because Oscar is haunted by thoughts of Charity’s bevy of ex-lovers and Charlie’s name tattooed on her shoulder, Charity must continue to hope for change and love in a world which

gives her no reason to expect such. Oscar does not change his mind and sweep her off her feet in the end. Her female friends do not comfort her and create an alternate utopia of female friendship (for she is too embarrassed to admit to them that she has failed in her escape from the dime-a-dance life). She must simply walk alone, watching the other couples spoon in the park, hoping that someday she too can find happiness in a society contemptuous of her past and continuously creating road blocks for a changed future.⁸

Similarly, Peter Bogdanovich's homage/satire of the 1930s musical *At Long Last Love* works against arcadian conventions. Where *Sweet Charity* highlights the impossibility of merging romance between two different worlds, *At Long Last Love* presents a world full of irreconcilable sameness and improbable love. The narrative centers on four characters and their varying sets of romances: privileged playboy tycoon Michael Oliver Prichard III or MOP (Burt Reynolds), poor little rich girl Brooke Carter (Cybill Shepherd) who is forever waiting for her next check from mother, singer and dancer Kitty O'Kelly (Madeline Kahn), and *Little Orphan Annie* obsessed exotic gambler Johnny Spanish (Duiilio Del Prete). Though Kitty and Johnny lack the economic capital of Brooke and Michael, the foursome appears immediately compatible and romance blooms as MOP and Kitty and Johnny and Brooke strike up relationships. The action minimizes the social conflict or division as the four dance, sing Cole Porter numbers such as "Friendship," drink as only the social elite can, and party. The number "Well Did You Evah?" highlights the similarity within the group and difference between them and the society in which they circulate. While the foursome radiate life, passion, joy, and music, the greater society—depicted by the nameless social elite—emanates conformity and

ambivalence toward life itself. At a high-toned society party, the four mock the stiff propriety of the guests by making statements such as, “Have you heard that poor dear Blanche got run down by an avalanche?” only to hear in response, “Well, did you evah? What a swell party this is!”⁹ Ultimately, however, the interchangeable nature of the characters leads to partner swapping and unhappiness for everyone. After Brooke and MOP swap partners, Johnny and Kitty decide to make the others jealous to regain their original mates. In the meantime, the women fall hard for their second round of beaux (as the men yearn for the originals). In the final scene, the initial couples dance at a society gathering. The conductor calls for all to switch partners and Kitty and Spanish and MOP and Brooke take the dance floor; however, the men’s dissatisfaction interrupts the fulfillment of the women. Ultimately, the film ends with unhappiness for all and an unclear resolution regarding the relationships. As the film begins, the film ends with a close-up of a music box of two pairs of dancing partners. As the music plays, the two couples swap partners and continue dancing. This mirrors the ending of the film. As the men and women desire different mates, they dance at a society event, suffering a similar form of blasé earlier mocked by the foursome. Rather than synthesizing energy and calm, the group relocates from one to the other, failing in romance and losing energy and passion associated with it. This acquired sense of nonchalance cloaks the hopelessness and desperation of the couples as the impossibility of their initially seemingly flawless relationships emerges. Romance cannot conquer all. It may just be one more route to ennui.

The ambivalent musical also differs from the arcadian by commonly integrating narratives which shift the focus from the communal bond of companionate love and romance to the socially destructive act of carnal lust. Though sex was often implied in earlier film musicals—Altman engages in a detailed discussion of sex represented as adventure or battle—the ambivalent articulation of the genre head-on engages with the topic and adverse results of sex.¹⁰ While films such as *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* implied some mattress squeaking—for only the birth of the married couple’s child and the claim that the baby was actually the illegitimate product of one of the unwed brothers and their captive beloveds could urge the girls’ fathers to allow the climactic sextuple marriage—films such as *Paint Your Wagon*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Pennies From Heaven*, and *All That Jazz* bring a more puerile notion of male-female (or male-male) relations to the Hollywood musical. In these films, premarital, extramarital, and/or non-monogamous, non-heterosexual sex becomes the locus of communal disharmony and personal dissatisfaction. Similarly, other films use infidelity as a major narrative catalyst to a maudlin conclusion (*Camelot* and *A Little Night Music* [1977]) or simply foreground the sex act in ways seldom seen in the post-code musical genre (*The Boy Friend* [1971]—orgy, *Man of la Mancha*—rape, 1776—sex as a relief for writers block, *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Heart’s Club Band*—sex as corporate corruption). The temptation to deviate from socially sanctioned rules of sex, love, and marriage push many such narratives toward conclusions which do not and ultimately cannot mirror those of arcadian musicals.

Paint Your Wagon, the only film of the four to end with a relationship in tact, focuses on the growth of No Name City, a mining town with “population: Male.”¹¹ After

losing his brother in a wagon accident, Sylvester (Clint Eastwood), known mostly as Pardner, becomes partners with Ben Rumson (Lee Marvin) upon the discovery of gold in his brother's freshly dug grave. Sharing everything and serving as physical, economic, and emotional support for one another, the two ultimately stake their claim on a Mormon woman, Elizabeth, whose husband sells her off while traveling through town. Prior to the arrival of Elizabeth, the men live seemingly happy lives eating, drinking, fighting, and dancing with one another. Not until this female intrusion does anyone stop to interrogate his own lifestyle. Though officially married to Ben, Elizabeth takes a liking to Pardner, resulting in a happy and socially sanctioned threesome. With the intrusion of an upstanding Christian family on No Name City—at this point harboring a threesome and making quite a name for itself as a bastion of prostitution and liquor—the perversity of the Ben-Pardner-Elizabeth arrangement becomes evident to its participants. Elizabeth becomes ashamed of the relationship, and in the presence of a visiting upstanding Christian family, she banishes Ben from the house. As the Christians reside with Elizabeth and Pardner, the threesome's relationships disintegrate and Ben's state of drunkenness increases as peaceful cohabitation disappears in the wake of appearances of proper virtue. While the film ultimately concludes with Ben moving on to prospect elsewhere and Pardner, a farmer by trade, remaining to live properly with Elizabeth, illicit or unconventional sex acts lead to an eventual dissolution of community. Yet, rather than ending on the image of the united Pardner and Elizabeth, the music fades as Ben and the rest of the miners leave town to the tune of "Wanderin' Star."

Similarly, both *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *All That Jazz* focus on sex as the weakness within human nature that leads to an eventual downfall—in contrast to arcadian musicals such as *Seven Brides* or *Oklahoma!* where it leads to marital bliss. In both films, the main characters eschew their socially sanctioned roles as members of monogamous couples for illicit sex with multiple partners. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, in a knowing wink to the arcadian musica, begins with the number “Dammit Janet” in which upstanding leading man Brad Majors (Barry Bostwick) professes his love to his girlfriend (Susan Sarandon) after a friend’s wedding. Singing:

The road was long but I ran it,
There’s a fire in my heart and you’ll fan it
If there’s one fool for you then I am it
I’ve one thing to say and that’s dammit Janet I love
...
Here’s the ring to prove that I’m no joker,
There’s three ways that love can grow
That’s good, bad, or mediocre
Oh, J-A-N-E-T I love you so-o-o.¹²

This number establishes the wholesome version of romance promulgated by earlier articulations of the genre. Prior to Brad’s serenading of Janet, the newlywed’s wedding car cruises across the screen, foregrounding the suspect positioning of sex; written in shaving cream, the car door reads “She got hers, now he’ll get his.” Ambiguously set in terms of actual time and place, the clean-cut and wholesome costumes connote a world incompatible with lasciviousness. After their car breaks down and they seek the help of the inhabitants of a neighboring castle, Janet and Brad enter a world of transvestitism, bisexuality, and group sex. While the sex between Janet, Brad, bisexual/transvestite Frank-N-Furter (Tim Curry), and the monster Rocky momentarily brings the two worlds

closer together, culminating in an Esther Williams-esque swimming pool orgy, ultimately this newly formed community is destroyed at the hands of incestuous alien siblings Riff Raff and Magenta—who seem to feel left out of the whole love fest. After Frank-N-Furter and Rocky are murdered, Janet and Brad are left crawling in the rumble, dressed in fishnets and corsets, bereft of the innocence they once possessed. Like Ben and Pardner, the peace found in alternate modes of sexual expression could not bear the burden of society, even one far removed from reality.

All That Jazz negotiates similar issues as director/choreographer Joe Gideon (Roy Schieder)—based on the film’s director Bob Fosse—vacillates between his ex-wife Audrey, current girlfriend Kate, daughter Michelle, and various lovers and sex toys and the confrontation of his limited mortality in the dream world of Angelique (Jessica Lange) the virgin/therapist/angel figure. Rife with sex, drugs, cigarettes, and more sex, Joe’s life is on a crash course with disaster. Rather than dancing his way into the arms of a loving woman, Joe flits from sexual encounter to sexual encounter. In the same way, *Pennies from Heaven* places unnatural sex as the cause of all narrative calamities. From Arthur’s (Steve Martin) unwanted advances toward his wife, implications of anal sex, and fetish for lipstick on his wife’s nipples to his extramarital affair with Eileen/Lulu (Bernadette Peters) which results in a pregnancy, abortion, and ultimate prostitution, the film places the cause of Arthur’s downfall solidly on his carnal lust.¹³

Narratives such as these push boundaries seldom challenged by the arcadian musical. Though often casting moralistic aspersions through their disastrous conclusions, the sexual and communal possibilities expressed in these films short-circuit the over-

determined process of meaning-making often associated with genre films. While such films often reinforce the naturalness or at least safety of monogamous heterosexual relationships, alternate sexual behavior—though marked as aberrant—articulates additional possibilities and questions not only the normalcy of relationships portrayed in arcadian musicals, but ultimately changes their status as the solitary option. These musicals construct a much messier society, one which cannot always find a proper solution. Its inhabitants will not always make the safe decision in life and love. Rather, unchained sexual desire or a complicated society—two characteristics often lacking from the arcadian musical—shroud their decisions.

In addition to these ambivalent musicals which question romance as pure or foolproof, musicals of this time period also decenter the very importance of heterosexual coupling. While many scholars have pointed to successful coupling as the bedrock of the genre, various musicals from the sixties to eighties eschew the romance plotline altogether or simply push it to the side to function as a subplot which adds nuance to the conflict at the center of the narrative action. Films such as *Fiddler on the Roof*, *1776*, and *Hair* include plot-point issues regarding coupling, but the outcomes of the narratives are not contingent on the successful joining of the characters. For example, *Fiddler on the Roof* repeatedly engages with the topic of marriage and romance, but this subject matter merely serves as a means to complicate overarching themes regarding tradition and social change. Ultimately, whether Tzeitel and the tailor, Chava and the revolutionary, or Fyedka and the gentile marry and live happily ever after is secondary. These relationships activate moral struggles of the women's father, Tevye. They force

decisions and compromises regarding a larger way of life; the romances themselves are not central to the overall conclusion of the narrative. While adding to the family drama, they do not impact upon the overall ousting of the Jews from their community. Similarly, *1776* introduces the characters of Abigail Adams and Martha Jefferson so they can function as outlets for their husbands' emotions or libidos. In several scenes the film uses the convention of John and Martha speaking through letters (though they appear to be having complex two-way conversations). These interactions allow John to express his emotions regarding his work in Congress in ways unseemly in the company of his fellow politicians. This relationship mainly acts as a legitimated locus for soliloquy. Martha bears similar weight in the narrative, largely appearing so Thomas can satiate his sex drive. He makes it quite clear that he cannot write until he is relieved. Similarly, a film such as *Hair* introduces the character of Sheila the socialite to complicate the class wars occurring among the hippies (Berger, Jeannie, Hud, and Woof), the drafted farm boy (Claude), and the New York elite. Concurrently, a suggested possible relationship between Sheila and Claude provides an impetus for his actions. The narrative does not center on or even explicitly depict the ultimate state of their relationship; rather, Sheila serves as a carrot which impacts upon Claude's and Berger's decision making. Her role as domestic or even sexual partner is irrelevant.

In films such as *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Hair*, the de-centering of romance provides space for more isolated public or personal journeys and complex social critique. In the place of romance, many films of this period construct narratives around personal quests, religious journeys, and cultural struggles. Without the conciliatory ending and

expected successful romance, the social critique and individual journeys become more biting and complicated. Including more inconclusive endings and stories unfettered by cheerful romance, these films produce a critical vision of society and humankind not often expressed in the arcadian musical.¹⁴

A large group of these ambivalent musicals focus on personal voyages. Films such as *The Wiz*, *The Little Prince* (1974), and *Tommy* center on the personal enlightenment of their main characters. Casting aside any suggestion of romantic involvement for leading men or women, they instead examine the emotional growth of Dorothy, The Pilot, and Tommy respectively. These films focus on the internalization of the personal conundrums felt by their lead characters, playing out self-exploration without the burden of a guaranteed recuperation in their conclusions. *The Little Prince*, for example, focuses almost solely on the pitfalls of contemporary society via the perspectives of the Pilot and the Little Prince. An upper-class lad shunned by his elders, the pilot grew to be an isolated adult. As he discovers the need for kinship through the Little Prince, the boy articulates the inanity, depravity, and tenderness of the world through his solitary interactions with various planets/ rulers (a land-hogging king, a warmongering general, and a reality constructing historian), the cunning snake, and the fox. Ultimately, the narrative quite simply follows the emotional journeys of the two, illuminating the need for joy and kinship on the part of the once solitary and somber pilot.

In a similar vein, *Tommy* focuses on the title character's journey into manhood. While the morally bankrupt and lascivious natures of his mother and stepfather greatly

impact upon his development, the story of the boy remains solitary—highlighted by his initial deafness, blindness, and muteness. Like the *Little Prince*, Tommy's narrative relies not on the interactions of a couple, but the personal discoveries of individuals. His parents systematically leave him with relatives (sadistic Cousin Kevin who tortures him and pedophilic and simply perverse Uncle Ernie), the “Acid Queen” whose psychedelic/hallucinogenic song depicts a disturbing sex and drug-induced encounter, and a psychiatrist. Others act on Tommy until his bizarrely liberating discovery of pinball and the eventual regaining of his senses. Once cured of his physical ailments, he is free to act upon others, creating the Tommy's Holiday Camp/Pinball religious cult. Though far from *realistic*, the narrative plays out without returning to the safety of the happy ending. More like personal journeys in an actual society, all loose ends cannot be tied up. Rather, as with *The Little Prince*, endless possibilities are implied. At this point the visitors have revolted, destroyed Tommy's camp, and murdered his (less than appealing) parents. Though all has been ruined, the film's final image is of Tommy standing victorious on a mountain. No true love, no visible success, but an indeterminate image of conquest and possibility. As in real life, the film depicts no true conclusion, simply a pseudo-resolution to a series of misadventures and an implication of more to come.

In addition to this type of personal emotional journey, the ambivalent musical often focuses on the political or business ventures of the main characters. Films such as *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *1776*, *Camelot* (though more invested in the romance than most), and to some extent *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever*,

Lost Horizon, and *Doctor Dolittle* center their narratives not on an ensuing romance but rather on the career-minded exploits of their main characters. Whether corporate, political, or scientific, the stakes in these films heighten around issues regarding the protagonists' professional rather than personal lives. Like the narratives of personal exploration, these films enter into investigations of individual actions in the complicated world of work. Though arcadian musicals too built stories around careers, often those films merely used those vocations as backdrops for a budding romance or otherwise joyous occasion (ex. musicians in *One Hundred Men and a Girl*, the military in *White Christmas*, and modeling in *Funny Face*).

A film such as *1776* restructures the narrative to focus more heavily on the political process and conflicts. Whereas the female characters remain in the periphery, the bulk of the narrative hashes out the conflicts occurring between the battling factions of the Continental Congress. Unfettered by a conciliatory ending, the film highlights infighting occurring within and between varying states and the concessions and conflicts often glossed over in the idealistic history lesson often made of the signing of *The Declaration of Independence*. Instead of serving as a backdrop, the political process is the primary plot of the narrative. Negotiations over slavery, apathy regarding the state of the militia and dying soldiers, class disputes, and battling personalities become the center of the story. In a similar vein, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, relegating the budding romance of J. Pierpont "Ponti" Finch and Rosemary to the background, concentrates on the incompetence and obliviousness of the corporate business system. This reversal of narrative hierarchy provides space for a deeper critique

and examination—though humorous and satiric—of the American business world than an arcadian film such as *The Pajama Game*. The film’s voiceover reading of the how-to-book after which the film is titled illuminates the improbability of a competently run business. The World Wide Wicket Company functions via incompetence, the uninspired actions of men following “The Company Way,” deceit, and sheer luck. Focusing on Ponti’s speedy rise from window washer to chairman of the board by means of manipulation and a manual, the film chronicles his step-by-step counter-intuitive climb thorough the company.

While films such as *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *1776* replace the importance of romance with the complexities of business, another group of films eschews the romance plotline for one centering on a religious journey or quest of self-discovery. *Lost Horizon*, *Tommy*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Godspell* all fit within this category. Combining the characteristics of the personal journey and business venture, these films sideline love for the spiritual and social search of some sort of superior being. Whether an actual Christ tale or the Christ-like Tommy or Shangri-La’s Lama, these films force an interrogation of the internal moral and ethical conflicts associated with the acceptance of a higher being in a living society. While traditional arcadian romance plotlines may interrogate issues of trust and faith as associated with family and a marital union, these films place faith within the context of complicated, changing societies in which such faith poses contradictions to the status quo or danger to the faithful. In the case of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Judas’s religious quandary forces an investigation of contemporary politics, community pressure, and individual crises of

faith, all with a contemporary spin (as in critiquing the contemporary tabloid press through mock press conferences in numbers such as “What’s the Buzz”). With no clear conclusion, the focus remains on the inconclusiveness of religion in a world based on politics and wary of faith. Individual stories and choices outweigh a clean resolution.¹⁵

Lost Horizon presents a similar, though presented as more answerable, quandary. While opening scenes situate the film as a traditional drama or disaster film with bombs bursting, Asian citizens rioting, and Americans and Europeans rushing to escape the war torn land via the only remaining airplanes, the narrative quickly turns to one of contemplating faith and politics. After being hijacked by a mysterious man and crashing somewhere in the Himalayas, the Americans and Englishmen seek solace with a band of natives (led by an Asian Sir John Gielgud). Led to Shangri-La, they discover that they have been kidnapped with little chance of returning home but find a social utopia that in some way satiates each of their individual personal trials and tribulations—greed, human indifference, thankless jobs, etc. By remaining in Shangri-La the members of the party can live out carefree lives in a society which—though ironically appearing to relegate nearly all people of color to décor or menial labor—stands free from crime, hunger, envy, stress, and anything else unseemly (though certain members do appear to be quite bored by the pleasantries). The hitch, anyone who stays must never return to his or her home in the United States or England.¹⁶ The main protagonist, diplomat Richard Conway (Peter Finch), has been unknowingly whisked away to this hidden land to take the place of its ailing political and spiritual leader, the High Lama. He, and the others, must search themselves for the true meaning of happiness, forcing the deliberation of a utopian vision

as a paradise or prison. Richard ultimately flees the land with his brother, only to realize its promise and make a death-defying solo hike back through the mountains to find his salvation. Much like the quests portrayed in the Christ musicals and *Tommy*, *Lost Horizon* questions a greater system of beliefs, concept of society, and the ultimate meaning of life. Again, while peripheral romances factor into these dilemmas, they are not the determining factor. Romance is not the meaning of life but only a piece of a greater picture. Unlike *Going My Way* (1944), *Say One for Me* (1959), or even *Guys and Dolls* and *Robin and the Seven Hoods* (1964), religion does not function simply as a means to bring joy, cloak evil, or service shenanigans. These films present religion as a central locale at which large unanswerable questions may be posed and struggled over—a characteristic itself incongruous with the arcadian musical.

A final type of recurring narrative that circumvents romance for more serious matters is one in which cultural struggle surfaces with more severity. While many arcadian musicals pose some sort of cultural struggle, the ambivalent musical presents sharper, less recuperable critiques of the dominant system.¹⁷ The more nuanced picture of cultural struggle is in part due to more complicated representations of race relations than most musicals, even other ambivalent articulations of the genre. The arcadian musical seldom engages the topic of racial diversity. The culturally reaffirming nature of the genre can negligibly bear the burden of attempting to legitimize the inherent conflict connoted by racial difference. The task of concluding with a picture of communal harmony and reestablished status quo becomes problematized when racial difference becomes part of the equation. *Flower Drum Song*, *Porgy and Bess*, and various early

African-American musicals such as *Moon Over Harlem* (1939) and *Stormy Weather* (1943) place non-white characters in mono-racial/mono-ethnic worlds. Otherness must not compete with or negotiate the dominant groups because that group remains absent throughout the film. Films such as *Road to Hong Kong*, *Show Boat*, and *Hit the Deck* present racial difference within the white world, but do so in a manner that relegates otherness to a secondary position. Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and Joan Collins don yellow-face in *Road to Hong Kong*, trivializing racial difference, while *Show Boat* and 1955's *Hit the Deck* relegate non-white characters to secondary roles which can easily be separated from the main narrative and its ideological stakes. In the case of *Hit the Deck*, a group of African-American servants arbitrarily appear to hoof it up and accompany the white sailors in a rousing version of "Hallelujah."

Many ambivalent musicals introduce more integrated ensembles but seldom address the topic of difference. *Godspell*, *Sweet Charity*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Lost Horizon* present multicultural casts without addressing difference, while (again) *Sweet Charity*, *Tommy*, and *The Pirate Movie* (1982) present ethnic difference as a definitive exotic, threatening, or humorous other.¹⁸ *Sweet Charity*'s Daddy, *Tommy*'s Acid Queen, and *The Pirate Movie*'s jive talking pirate activate racial and ethnic stereotypes for an effect of humor or danger.¹⁹ Though the first group surpasses the arcadian musical in a minimal attempt to include ethnic and racial difference in the dominant society by creating some kind of melting pot ensemble, *Zoot Suit* and *Hair* tackle such issues head-on.²⁰ *Zoot Suit* attacks both political and racial injustice through the semi-biographical story of Henry Reyna and his involvement in the Sleepy Lagoon

Murders, Zoot Suit riots of the 1940s, and the ensuing trial of mostly Mexican-American young men. Far from subsuming the protagonist into the status quo, the film depicts him as a victim of a corrupt and racist judicial system. Though using various members of the press and political advocacy members as narrators, the film focuses mainly on the struggle of Reyna (Daniel Valdez) and the mythic presence of his alter-ego “El Pachuco” (Edward James Almos). The story emanates from inside the Latino community, engaging with its language, customs, and concern for cultural appearance both inside and outside of the community. Unlike films such as *Flower Drum Song*, the ultimate goal is not an embracing of American consumerism, American-Anglo dress, and/or a blending into or invisibility within American-Anglo culture. El Pachuco, who performs the majority of songs and constantly speaks with Henry (only to be seen or heard by him), continually challenges the decisions—both helpful and hurtful—being made by white lawyers, legal aides, and judges. He recurrently situates Latinos as Other, not in such a way that marginalizes their importance or presence in a dominantly Anglo society or exoticizes them but rather stresses their specificity and history. Far from the conclusive and conciliatory ending of the arcadian musical, *Zoot Suit* presents several possible endings for the film: criminal, patriotic, and/or political. This inconclusive ending challenges dominant stereotypes of the Latino convict, yet simultaneously resists a full recuperation into dominant society. Suggesting Henry may have become a war hero, criminal, or family man of educated and culturally proud children challenges the assuredness of a musical conclusion and the pessimism of a social problem film.

Though *Hair* fails to interrogate deeply the politics or backgrounds of its hippies, socialites, farmers, or soldiers—a pitfall of much film and the musical specifically—the film’s music and overall narrative probe farther and more overtly into American generational and political dissent than most film musicals before or since. Using the romance plotline to provide access to class conflicts, Berger and the others crash a party given by Sheila’s parents and horrify the upper-class with their carnal verve for life in the number “I’ve Got Life” (which includes a party guest played by Charlotte Rae grabbing Berger’s blue jeans-clad butt). While most of *Hair*’s musical numbers present tongue-in-cheek examinations of racial, political, or generational conflict, the narrative also avoids idealizing the accomplishments or personal value systems of the hippies.²¹ The African American member of the group, Hud, possesses a *groovy* quality as he rebukes racism by reappropriating terms in “Colored Spade” singing lyrics such as:

I’m a Colored spade, a nigra, a black nigger,
A jungle bunny, Jigaboo coon, Pickaninny, mau mau
Uncle Tom, Aunt Jemima, Little Black Sambo
Cotton pickin’, Swamp guinea, Junk man, Shoeshine boy.²²

However, unlike the groovy Sammy Davis, Jr., character of Daddy in *Sweet Charity*, Hud avoids being either totally exoticized by his race or idealized for his political voice.

Rather, unexpectedly his fiancée and young son appear to the group. Hud attempts to use his counterculture clout and associated heightened state of being to rationalize the abandonment of his family to the horror his hippie comrades. Ultimately, the fiancée forces her way into and becomes part of the group. Though this shows signs of the conciliatory happy resolution, it remains a complication of racial integration in the genre. Neither ignored, idealized, or villainized, Hud’s shortcomings add to both the roundness

of his character and the overall complication of the social issues the film seeks to interrogate. The film ends—following Berger’s death, killed after being shipped to Vietnam when mistaken for Claude during a prank—with the ensemble standing over Berger’s grave in Arlington National Cemetery. Neither altogether optimistic nor hopeful, neither idealizing accomplishments of that specific cultural movement nor denigrating them, *Hair* concludes with questions, rather than answers.

The ambivalent musical, much more than the arcadian, presents narratives which denaturalize heterosexual coupling and domestic monogamy. While challenging the assumptions which lie at the base of the arcadian articulation of the genre, these films often further complicate the very idea of a stable and knowable society. Integrating diversity and uncertainty regarding love and life on a much larger scale than earlier musicals films, the ambivalent musical discards the safety of an *Oklahoma!* or *The Wizard of Oz* for the uncertainty and chaos of *Tommy* and *All That Jazz*.

We Won’t Just Entertain You

The ambivalent musical additionally challenges trends established in the arcadian musical by placing a more critical eye on the business of entertainment. While scholars such as Jane Feuer and Altman have cited the musical as carrying the banner for the glorification of its own artistic expression, the ambivalent musical often places entertainment and entertainers under the microscope and situates it and them as sources of corruption and overall luridness.²³ From the earliest days of the musical, entertainment settings have been used as a means to legitimize the performance of song and dance. These narratives often served as articulations of a “the show must go on” or

“let’s do it for the team” mentality. Pulling together against all odds, Broadway, summer stock, and community theatre casts are often more resilient than the postal system when it comes to seeing a project through to the end.

Though a number of the musicals of this time period maintain the myth of entertainment as possessing magical powers that free the soul, several also use the business of entertainment as a symbol for declining cultural standards and moral values.²⁴ One version of this critique of entertainment uses the traditional professional versus amateur or high art versus low art oppositions found in films such as Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers *Swing Time* (1936) or *Shall We Dance* (1937). Both the Sonny and Cher vehicle *Good Times* (1967) and *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Heart’s Club Band* deal with some form of corruption connected to the “big time.” With a rosier outlook, Sonny and Cher—playing themselves—debate over whether or not they should enter the motion picture business. After dreaming about possible motion picture vehicles, the big movie producer hands them a pre-written script which they find artistically insulting and overall uninspired. As their love hangs in the balance, tested by fights about the film, they find artistic integrity. Differing from the arcadian musical only in that the two groups do not come together in the end, Sonny rejects the offer and opts instead for ice cream with Cher. The greater community remains divided. Entertainment as an art form remains suspect, but love survives.

Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Heart’s Club band retains a similar arcadian ending, but again presents an irresolvable rift between big business and homespun music. In this instance the mythic powers of entertainment take monumental stature, as the instruments

themselves possess powers capable of extreme good or evil. In the case of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*, not only does the possible destructive nature of music come to the fore, but also the inherent evil of corporate entertainment rears its ugly head. Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band (Bee Gees and Peter Frampton) sign with a major label; they become drug addicts and sex fiends; an evil genius steals their magical instruments; the boys' hometown (a.k.a Hometown USA) transforms into a den of inequity; evil doctors (Steve Martin), musicians (Aerosmith), and comparable mind-controllers (Alice Cooper) attempt to use the musicians to take over the world; and the evil genius kidnaps lead singer Billy's love interest, Strawberry Fields, who is ultimately killed in a freak Aerosmith accident. Though all is recuperated in the end through the magic of deus ex machina Billy Preston and his magic coronet plus an extra-diegetic star-studded rendition of the theme song, the narrative maintains the corruption of big business and its implications on wholesome rock-n-roll music.²⁵ Depictions such as these and the bizarre Eric Clapton-led healing cult of Marilyn Monroe which appears in *Tommy*, infidelity and dream-orgy associated with the diegetic stage production in *The Boy Friend*, and the overall lasciviousness of Joe Gideon and the heartlessness of his show's backers in *All That Jazz* present a much more perverse and insidious show business than those in which the understudy magically becomes a star in films such as *42nd Street*.²⁶ Along with the overall cynicism of the ambivalent musical, show business itself loses its gleam.

In addition to presenting a narratively corrupt show business, the ambivalent musical also adopts a trend of framing narratives within performances. Going beyond

just putting on a show, as many backstage musicals do, films such as *Godspell* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* place the storytelling process within some form of audience-less performance. The former includes skits of parables performed *by* the ensemble *for* the ensemble and the latter a full blown theatrical performance—framed by the cast members constructing the stage and donning costumes—staged in the desert for no one. As *Godspell* begins, John the Baptist magically appears to each member of the ensemble. Leaving his/her current life—student, waitress, parking lot attendant, cab driver, garment worker, dancer, model—each runs to the Central Park fountain and musically washes away his/her sins. From that point on, the film is comprised of performances by the ensemble and for the ensemble as no additional New Yorkers appear until the crucifixion of Christ brings uniformed police officers to drag him away. Not until the ensemble members joyously carry Christ over the Brooklyn Bridge do New Yorkers—at the beginning of the film an integral part of the ensemble members’ unfulfilling lives—reappear to repopulate the city. This type of performance places into question the role of the diegetic audience. Scholars such as Feuer and Altman cite connections between the diegetic and theatrical audiences, claiming the response to and identification with the performance by the diegetic audience carries over into that of actual spectators.²⁷ The removal of this diegetic audience further distances the narrative from an overt reestablishment of the status quo by removing those individuals representative of social norms. The very place of performance comes into question in the performance for performance’s sake. The communal power of song and dance falls on deaf ears in these already ideologically conflicted narratives.²⁸

Actual diegetic audiences appear briefly in *A Little Night Music* and *The Boy Friend* while the reality of the performance slips away to varying degrees.²⁹ The film version of Steven Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* begins with a theatrical performance. As the story starts, the audience fades away and the sequence of events—mainly revolving around a variety of infidelities—takes the shape of a fully realized and thus no longer stage-bound film narrative. In *The Boy Friend*, a convention resembling perverse exoticized versions of the traditional dream ballet erases the diegetic audience from the theatre-bound narrative as the diegetic show's numbers transform the actors into toga-wearing members of an orgy, dancing gnomes, and giant sexualized Roles Royce hood ornaments. The seemingly innocuous and mediocre stage performance occurring in front of a basically empty house leaves the reality of the moment to embrace the excessive carnal world not overtly articulated in the idealized world of the arcadian musical. As the audience disappears during the dream sequence, they need not identify with or support the sordid world depicted by the imaginings. The constructed reality of stage performance and the role of the audience continually slip to the background as these films, indicative of entertainment-focused musicals of this time, foreground the depravity of entertainment and its residual effect on a character's craft.

The State of Community and a Utopian Future

The ambivalent musical bucks the arcadian musical by unsettling the notions of a joined community (often joined by the successful romance) and a conclusion which implies the possibility of some form of utopia. As Schatz describes in his genres of social integration and Altman shows with his discussion of the dual hero, the successful

joining of the romantic couple also brings about a unification of differing social groups.³⁰ Be they cowboys and farmers, professional entertainers and amateurs, the rich and the poor, or the military and civilian, these potential lovers bring with them the possibility of creating great big happy communities out of two heretofore battling or incongruous groups of people. As individual love overcomes personal difference and social stratification, the greater community sees past their own differences to come together as one. Problematizing or sidestepping the concept of romance, the ambivalent narrative outcomes of these films progress with more cynical or inconclusive notions regarding the possibility of a unified community and a consequential utopian society. With more complicated narratives which cast aspersions at the possibility of knowledgeable, sensitive, inclusive, and honest societies the simplistic conclusions promulgated by many arcadian musicals become improbable. This communal dysfunction manifests itself in varying forms: shattered, dishonest, divisive, delusional, and invisible societies at large.

Some musicals of this period such as *Half a Sixpence*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Doctor Dolittle*, *Hello Dolly!*, *Scrooge*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Bugsy Malone*, *Grease 1* and *2* [1982], and *The Pirate Movie* present communities which ultimately overcome their differences—class, violence, or cliques—and conclude with fully bonded groups which see the possibility of a utopic future. As with the arcadian musical, *Bugsy Malone*'s two feuding gangs (after an all-out war with pie throwing and splurge-gun firing) realize the error of their ways. The final moment brings together all races, the disenfranchised and impoverished, and competing war lords when in a resounding rewrite of a song sung earlier by shifty gangsters, "Bad Guys," they laugh at the sight of their whipped cream-

covered enemies and innocent bystanders, throw their arms around each other and sing about being “good at bein’ good.” Similarly, *Grease*’s goody two-shoes and greaser pairs find some sort of compromise—involving lost virtue and the buying of tight pants, and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*’s struggling romances find success when the evil white slave trade is defeated and all confusion dissipates as Millie’s love interest reveals his true persona, not a flighty office supply salesman, but a real life millionaire. In an arcadian manner, such films solve their conflicts and romantic barriers in simplistic fashions, and utopian societies are born. These films reinforce the notion that society can and will persevere and love and logic can conquer all.

A larger group of musicals produced during this period, however, retain some form of dissent. Some more overt than others, these films project a cynical or ambivalent concept of the genre and the worlds it seeks to replicate. The complexity and skepticism of ambivalent narratives and their ensuing implications of societal unity often results in storylines which conclude with splintered societies in which the protagonist foresees some kind of utopian future gained through loss. Rather than competing groups overcoming their differences to create one welcoming blended group, films such as *Sweet Charity*, *Camelot*, *Paint Your Wagon*, and *Lost Horizon* find narrative resolution in forever divided worlds. Though Charity’s and King Arthur’s stories end as they regain a twinkle of hope, neither character truly exists in a society capable of making his/her dreams come true. As Charity crumbles after being left at the altar by Oscar who is unable to accept her sordid past and finds herself unable to confront her friends with the reality of yet another failed love, a truly ambivalent ending appears inevitable. Rather,

though depressed she dons a smile while watching couples spoon in the park. Perhaps more disheartening than Charity accepting her defeat, this ending presents a protagonist glued to social conditioning regarding love and marriage in a society which shows no evidence of providing her with such an end. King Arthur's twinkle seems similarly hopeless as he hangs his resolve on the knowledge that his kingdom, now crushed under the weight of his wife's and best friend's infidelity and an impending war, will be remembered for what it once was. Such a conclusion presents no utopian end, only a delusional hope for others to dream about one. Cultural mores toward proper sexual behavior for women and the insurgent revolution make these narrative realities incongruous with the protagonists' dreams. Like the arcadian musical, the hope for a utopian future exists, but in these worlds of ambivalence this optimism appears more fruitless as reality crushes the dream. Similarly, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* conclude with a united community that has overcome all impending conflict; however, in both of these cases, the incompetence/obliviousness and dishonesty of the respective communities provide no logical means for the maintenance of a well-running society. Though all members of *Forum*'s village resolve their problems through a wild series of coincidences—many mistaken identities, long lost family members, et al.—these revelations do not alter the underlying treachery on which every relationship in the film is built.

Lost Horizon's Richard and *Paint Your Wagon*'s Pardner and Rumson also illustrate the ambivalent musical's negotiated relationship with community and the notion

of *happily ever after*. Each finds some form of satisfaction, but hopes for utopic futures only exist with the loss of family, society, love, and partnership. Richard must abandon the society he knows and has fought as a diplomat to preserve to return to the tranquility of Shangri-La (in addition to accepting the loss of his brother who dies attempting to return to civilization) while Pardner and Rumson must part ways, unable to live with Elizabeth in a socially scorned threesome. Rather than bringing these worlds together, the protagonists find satisfaction by resigning to keep them separate.³¹

The possibility for a blended community or peaceful bonding of once divergent groups altogether dissipates as some narratives retain a stronger cynicism toward the future. One articulation of this premise lies in narratives which end inconclusively. Rather than closing with a grand (though perhaps premature) celebration which reinforces the newly created blended community, they wrap up with a question mark. With narrative societies unable to secure any form of future assuredness, *At Long Last Love*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *1776*, *Man of la Mancha*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Xanadu*, and *Zoot Suit* end as they began, in media res. Both *At Long Last Love* and *Xanadu* present unclear romantic conclusions, still unsure whether or not the lovers will find happiness, while both *1776* and *Man of la Mancha* present a supposed moment of hope which implicates various layers of impending dissent and uncertainty. Just as the signing of *The Declaration of Independence* occurs with conflicts regarding slavery and regional interests hanging in the balance, *Man of la Mancha* fades as Cervantes marches out of the prison—in which he has won over his fellow inmates with his stories of Don Quixote—to an uncertain fate at the hands of the Inquisition.

Eschewing the premature utopia associated with the arcadian musical, which closes the book on the narrative before the married couple divorces or the newly bonded community begins another feud, these narratives present small victories which are quickly subsumed by ever-looming additional worries. Overall, the narrative subject matter and structure of the ambivalent musical lends itself to conflicts and conclusions unruly to the dictates of the arcadian musical. Bereft of the conciliatory romance and resistant to the cleanly blended communities which result in a new, more giving and accepting societies, the hope for a utopian future often fades before the credits roll.

Though perhaps presenting a chicken-egg quandary, the decline of the concluding production number accompanies the decline of a represented sense of harmony. Often connected to the concluding celebration, a large production number with excessive displays of performance and merrymaking stands as the final moment which brings the communities together in one big shebang. A reprise such as *Oklahoma!*'s "Oh What a Beautiful Morning," unites the ensemble in celebration of their new unified community. This tradition fades in the ambivalent musical as many narratives end with splintered groups, rather than bonded. Those films closely resembling arcadian musicals most often end with reaffirming production numbers, *Popeye* ending with a resounding rendition of "Popeye the Sailor" as Popeye saves Olive Oyl, Sweet Pea, and the rest of the town of Sweethaven from the treacherous Bluto, and *Hello Dolly!* concluding with four happily joined couples and a bouncy reprise of "Hello Dolly." Similarly, the romantic and otherwise contented conclusions of films such as *Half a Sixpence*, *Can't Stop the Music*, the *Grease* films, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, and *The Pirate Movie* wrap up with

some giant celebration—the latter two with actual weddings. Films such as *Goodbye, Mister Chips* and *Lost Horizon* conclude with moments implicating the loneliness of their protagonists. After the death of his wife, Chips stays on at the boys' school at which he has long been teaching. Without connections outside of the school, he retires only to live on the campus, blending generations upon generations of boys, confusing grandson for grandfather. In the end he takes a solitary walk down the town road to “Fill the World With Love.” *Lost Horizon*'s Richard treks through the Himalayas without regard for his own safety, only focusing on his return to Shangri-La. As he discovers the signpost marking the entrance to Shangri-La, the maudlin Bert Bachrach theme song “Lost Horizon” plays in voiceover. Similarly, only Arthur sings the final reprise of “Camelot,” the rest of his followers preparing for war as he hangs on to his dream of his once successful kingdom. The unwillingness of the narratives to unite the entire group is implicit in the final moments of a protagonist's isolation.

Other ambivalent musicals conclude with the remaining members of a devastated community expressing a lament over losing someone or something and/or hope for a different tomorrow. The original theatrical version of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* included a final number, “Super Heroes,” which depicted the remaining, live ensemble members crawling in the rubble of the destroyed castle, while *Hair* concludes with the living members of the hippies, Sheila, and Claude singing “Let the Sunshine In” at Berger's grave as the camera pans out to a present-day peace rally in Washington, D.C. Society has not overcome its propensity toward violence; the counterculture must continue to fight. Overall, the ability to conclude these films with joyous narratives

inversely relates to the level of dissonance, pessimism, or inconclusiveness. *Xanadu*, *At Long Last Love*, and *Jesus Christ Superstar* express the unclear nature of their narratives by ending sans music. In the first two, the films end not with a joyous production number celebrating the committed relationships of their respective couples but three couples uncertain of their futures and the overall questioning of the love and romance. These conclusions relegate music to underscoring. Though *Jesus Christ Superstar*'s final number "Superstar" bears the signs of an all out production number with glitzy costumes, a big dance number, and the entire ensemble, the actual film ends as the youth pack up the trappings of their play and ride off in their bus—everyone except for the man who played Jesus. The relegation of the production number to the position of second to last refocuses the ambivalent position of religion, the story, and the cultural divisions which remain today.

The ambivalent musical deviates from the arcadian at its most basic narrative level. By subverting the very stability of the romance plotline, the ambivalent musical challenges the inevitability of finding suitable solutions to the conflicts which hamper a unified society. By challenging the naturalness of monogamous romance, subverting romance as a natural and supreme path, and additionally challenging the stability and overall goodness of music and show business, the complications existent in these societies become foregrounded as the possibility for some form of social utopia fades to the background. As these films broaden the acceptable and *expected* narratives for the musical genre, social problems are interrogated in more complex ways. By allowing for unanswered questions, wider expressions of individuality, and social conflict, the social

issues interrogated may not resolve in a society-affirming manner but certainly provide more complex answers—or lack thereof—than the arcadian storylines of the past.

AESTHETICS: CAMERAWORK, EDITING, AND MISE-EN-SCÈNE

As with narrative structure and resolution, trends in aesthetics choices regarding mise-en-scène and camerawork alter the overall connotation of this alternate musical formula. While the arcadian musical often supports its overarching project by creating a perfect and simplified visual world (one which would account for the idealism of the characters), the ambivalent articulation of the genre often presents more *realistic* visual representations of its topics. Altman discusses mise-en-scène of the arcadian musical as being either exoticized or nostalgized, distancing from reality by placing the narrative in a mysterious other world or situating it in a world known but rearranged to a point of nostalgia and safety.³² For example, Technicolor and contrived color schemes of arcadian films such as *Guys and Dolls* and *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* aid in rendering less threatening supposedly seedy or rough surroundings. The gangsters of New York take on a goofy and hapless feel as they cavort in their Technicolor wonderland. Similarly, the rough backwoodsmen of *Seven Brides* don ice cream-colored outfits as they capture the hearts of their sweeties. Along with an increase in location shooting, the move toward visual realism in much of the ambivalent musical better connects with the more complex narratives which comprise this version of the genre.

Additionally, cinematographic choices help in not only focusing on the emotions of the characters—again attempting to connect to a more nuanced version of humankind rather than a utopic one—but also in legitimizing the inclusion or exclusion of

performance via the ways in which the camera captures musical numbers. The ambivalent musical deviates from traditional self-effacing Hollywood camerawork. Rather than editing in such a manner which renders the means of production invisible, the ambivalent musical—even more so than the arcadian—uses special effects, subjective camerawork which reproduces visual depictions of the characters’ emotional states, and Hollywood montage sequences to heighten the artifice or foreground the realism. Choices in camerawork further aid the ambivalent musical in legitimizing spontaneous performance—the element of the genre most often tied to a lack of realism. Choices in cinematography which accompany choices in performance create overall more realistic contextualizations of character performance and thereby distance these genre films from the often derogated practice of random people bursting into song and/or a choreographed hoedown.

Throughout these films, visual choices reinforce the accompanying generic changes. Without altogether changing the genre and removing performance elements often considered suspect by viewers, the ambivalent musical presents new visual norms which aid in the construction of these films as more nuanced, natural, and real. In terms of dress, setting, and cinematic frame, these films remain recognizable as part of the musical genre, but create a new set of norms or expectations which aid in the articulation of a more contemporary musical.

Camerawork and Editing: I Can See Right Through You

Cinematography and editing practices in the ambivalent musical adopt en vogue visual techniques of the period which aid in adding to the representation of more

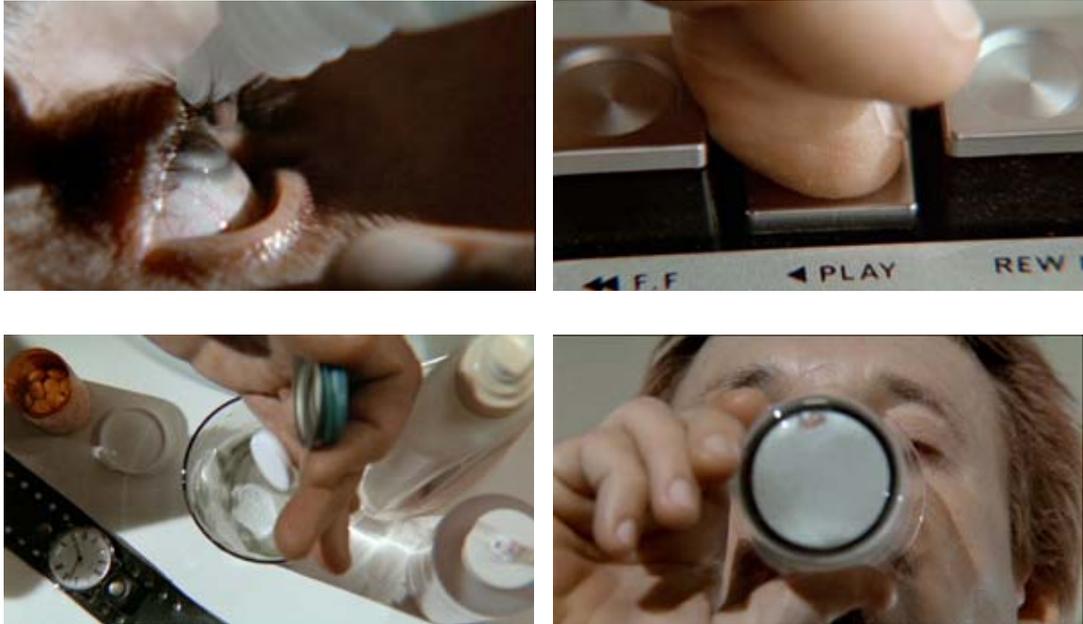
complexity to a character's story or emotional process. In addition, these techniques can further theatricalize the overall product and thereby either visually attempt a self-referential narration, as is the case with the stage-bound *Zoot Suit*, or naturalize the spontaneous performance of song or dance by shifting visual performance of the body to that of the camera.³³ Busby Berkeley's camerawork choreography accomplishes a similar task by minimizing the effect of one body and instead uses the camera to capture the overall picture being created by the combination of moving bodies. The types of camerawork used in the ambivalent musical may often detract from bodily performance, but not to a similar end as Berkeley. Rather, the camera may diminish the performance act of the individual and the group, encroaching on the space such that the dancing bodies are de-centered, their actions appearing as natural energized movement without the distance needed to project a stylized, premeditated choreographic design.

While the Hollywood musical can be considered a genre to stray greatly from the edicts of classical Hollywood cinema technique, visual choices in the arcadian musical often adhere to the conventions of continuity or seamless editing, de-emphasizing the work of the cinematographer and editor. Despite the fact that musical films do draw attention to the convention of ordinary people bursting into song and dance, the technical choices may be more self-effacing. In the arcadian musical more obvious choices in visual technique commonly occur in the dream ballet, thereby drawing attention to the fantasy of the dream. In the ambivalent musical, however, visual choices *often* exist outside flights of dreamlike fancy, drawing more attention to the choices as they transcend generic norms and expectations. In addition to foregrounding deliberate

technique, these choices complement narrative practices popularized in this phase of the genre. Techniques such as the zoom, jump cut, extreme close-up (ECU), and still photographic images aid in connecting the visual representations of characters to the emotional experiences which accompanies them. Similarly, elements such as quick cutting and shooting which replicates the character's point of view from an odd or particularly active position assists in capturing the immediacy of a moment or visually depicting the heightening of the character's stakes. Also, certain articulations of the ambivalent musical use self-referential techniques to pull away from the fluid internal narrative and interrogate the stakes implicit therein. Thus, these devices serve primarily compositional, realistic, and aesthetic ends.

Films such as *Sweet Charity* and *All That Jazz* illustrate the possibility of using gimmicks such as the zoom, ECU, freeze, or still photography to emphasize further the emotional state of the characters. All of these establish conventions which tie visuals to inner struggles being experienced by the main protagonists. In *All That Jazz*, special techniques— both visual and aural—depict Joe's out-of-control lifestyle and declining health. Multiple times throughout the film, he returns to his bathroom where through a series of ECUs he is shown imbibing his morning cocktail which includes classical music, eye drops, Dexedrine, antacid, a shower, and a cigarette. The close proximity of the shot to the drugs, his hands, and his bloodshot eyes create a heightened sense of chaos (only momentarily stifled by his routine of stimulant ingestion). Rather than depicting Joe reaching from one item to the next, the items themselves are shown. Only Joe's hand can be seen ritualistically going through the motions. By repeatedly showing this

Camerawork, Editing, and Character Development



In *All That Jazz*, Joe Gideon's (Roy Scheider) reckless lifestyle is repeatedly depicted through quick cut close-up shots of his morning maintenance routine. This visual hysteria aids in creating the fully developed character's imperfect and self-destructive life.



Illustrations 3.1 through 3.7, left to right from top

ceremony, the film emphasizes the ritual of his out-of-control life and the hackneyed means used to maintain it.

Sweet Charity uses similar techniques to express characters' emotions or to highlight the logical thought processes which drive their actions. Unlike arcadian musicals where the outcome appears to be predetermined by its very existence as a genre piece, ambivalent musicals are suspenseful and may include more overt nods toward the complicated processes which lead to life events. *Sweet Charity* begins with a series of freezes within a stylized opening credit sequence. As Charity gleefully shops and otherwise skitters about town, the frame—with varying solid tints of pink, blue, and green—freezes with her in various stages of joyous leaps. Shifting from one extreme emotion to another, the convention is again used after Charity's boyfriend Charlie throws her from the bridge as he steals her money. Through still photography, the film illustrates our heroine in rather un-Hollywood musical situations. She eats, walks, feeds the pigeons, stands in the rain, and window-shops—all alone. In varying stages of grain and blur, the photographs focus in on the isolation felt by the heroine and the very process of everyday life which carries on as the hope for love dissipates. Throughout the film, this convention of still photography and freeze-frames helps to slow down the narrative process and hone in on the minutiae of life, not merely that which leads to musical displays of joy or directly leads to a negotiation of the romance. This convention of using still photography to capture private moments returns toward the end of the film. As Oscar and Charity attend her bachelorette party at the club, the screen freezes on the instances which slowly lead Oscar to a realization that he cannot marry Charity: Charity

receiving a slap on the bum from one of the men and the “Charlie” tattoo on her shoulder. In each case, an unusual cinematographic technique draws attention to minor moments which greatly impact upon the emotional and consequently narrative development of the characters. In narratives which ultimately defy the assumed marital bliss of the arcadian musical, such disruption of the continuity editing helps to communicate visually the complicated character motivation and emotion in the ambivalent.

In addition, films such as *All That Jazz*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *Man of la Mancha*, and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* use a form of subjective narration which attempts to replicate visually the emotional state of the character in question. When *Forum*'s slave Pseudolys takes the Prince Hero to the neighboring Grecian whorehouse, the camera zooms in and out and shakes about as exoticized, half-naked whores dance, visually recreating the men's unrestrained sexual stimulation.³⁴ Both *Man of la Mancha* and *All That Jazz* accomplish complex character development or articulation through such camera tricks. *Man of la Mancha* uses camera techniques to embellish the experiences of Alonso Quijana (whose alter ego is Don Quixote), making him appear out of touch with reality yet sympathetic. This can be seen when Quijana's Quixote brazenly attacks an oncoming giant—or a windmill. The camera appears to be shooting from Quijana's point of view as he spins in the air, trapped on one of the spinning arms of the windmill/giant. Later, quick cutting and jump cuts are used when the Knight of Mirrors forces Quijana to face his decrepit self and accept that he truly is no knight errant. As he sees himself in shields of mirrors, the camera jumps quickly as the character's mind spins in an attempt to escape reality. In a similar fashion, *All that*

Jazz uses both visual and aural gimmicks to represent Joe's heart attack. While running a rehearsal, suddenly diegetic sound fades away. The only sounds to be heard are those Joe produces. The camera continues to cut from cast member to cast member as they laugh hysterically at the new script being read. The cuts between close-ups of muted yet hysterically laughing individuals and Joe's sweating face, coupled with the sound of Joe's breathing and cigarette lighting recreate the internal and completely self-focused nature of his heart attack. The visual and sound tracks are able to reverse the presentation of one's inward self outward. In all of these cases, the visual choices attempt to replicate the internal emotional workings of the characters, rather than photograph events from a good narrational perspective. Such techniques draw on the characters' complex inner lives and the complicated decisions required for these narratives.

Camerawork and Musical Performance

In addition to using such overt camera and editing techniques during spoken segments of the films, many ambivalent musicals use self-conscious narration—through cinematography, editing, and special effects—to serve musical numbers. While critics or naysayers of the arcadian musical often point to the unrealistic manner in which regular people spontaneously burst into song, musical numbers in the ambivalent musical respond to this critique in one of several ways. First and as discussed in the prior section, they often reveal the character's internal complexity. Doing this in a song also creates a more realistic depiction by pulling focus away from the performance and pushing it toward characterization. Projecting characters' subjective emotions via shot movement, distance, and duration, films delve into character complexity through song, allowing

musical numbers to function as more than fluff pieces which further elucidate an already predetermined narrative. Choices in camerawork project the emotional process and conflicts of the characters onto the screen.

Second, films use various techniques to detract from the performances which are occurring. To call attention to them, several films use special effects to pull these incidents further away from the image of normal people randomly bursting into song. Special effects can be used to foreground the performance and set it aside as something unnatural. Additionally, ambivalent musicals frequently use the practice of underscoring sections of Hollywood montage with musical numbers, neither showing the characters sing nor dance. Such self-conscious techniques directly address the awkward presence of song and dance, visually de-emphasizing the appearance of people randomly bursting into song. This topic will be addressed further in Chapter 5 which focuses on the bodily *performance* of song and dance. In this chapter, however, these topics will only be addressed with regard to ways in which cinematography affects the presentation of performance, not the ways in which song and dance are actually executed.

Motion pictures commonly use montage sequences to condense a longer period of time and actions down to the most relevant moments. A passage of years can be shortened into a minute using key moments which include signposts denoting the actual time and order in which the events take place. As dance becomes less prominent in the ambivalent musical, montage sequences often serve as a means to tie musical moments to plot development and detach them from unrealistic performance of song and dance. Films such as *Tommy*, *Godspell*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*,

Camelot, and *The Pirate Movie* use this technique to differing ends. Both *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and *The Pirate Movie* use the montage sequence in self-conscious ways, making the musical number appear even more unreal by drawing attention to the conventions of the films themselves and the genre in general.

Complementing the film's farcical nature, both appearances of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*'s love song "You're Lovely" use a montage sequence in lieu of actual dance. In the song's first appearance, master Hero and Philia the virgin/courtesan serenade each other, extolling their growing love. As the song plays in voiceover, a montage shows the two running through the woods and Hero attempting to impress her by swinging from trees and playing the harp. Through this process, the film shifts attention from the actual singing to moments other than dance which depict the narrative goals of the song. The film includes a reprise of the song much later, but this time as a duet between two men—Pseudolus and Hysterium—as Pseudolus tries to convince his fellow slave to disguise himself as Philia to prevent her from being sold off to a traveling captain. In this version, the two men—Hysterium dressed as a woman—frolic through the woods mimicking the actions of the young lovers.

The Pirate Movie includes a similar number, "How Can I Live Without Her," which uses a montage sequence to satirize the romantic solo. The teenybopper rock-n-roll version of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* starring 1980s teen stars Kristy McNichol and Christopher Atkins overtly parodies the musical genre and contemporary popular culture in general. The aesthetic treatment of this love song matches the overall look of the film. As Freddie (Atkins) learns that he cannot stay with

Mabel the young maiden (McNichol) with whom he has fallen in love, he sings this solo. Through a montage sequence similar to that of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, flashbacks of Freddie show him attempting to woo Mabel through a goofy series of antics. Freddie's disembodied singing face appears in double exposure over the scene. As Mabel and Freddie dine on the shore, a waiter in tux and tails emerges from and returns to the water as he serves them. During the sequence, Freddie stares into a basin of water and sees Mabel looking back as the face in the basin responds to his singing. This montage sequence and the series of self-conscious scenes contained within act as an overt signpost highlighting the insincerity of the moment. This cinematic technique allows a space for further foregrounding of the musical's falsity and provides a strong narrational commentary about the events. Real people do not randomly burst into song; rather, fake people in contrived worlds "play act" roles in a story. In both of these cases, the narration stands at a distance from the actions portrayed in montage sequences. This specific utilization of such a device provides a space—outside of a narratively linear presentation of song and dance—to announce preexisting generic codes and the overall fantasy of the narrative moment, creating a cynical narrational voice.

Camelot uses montage sequences to a less humorous effect. Almost completely free from dance of any kind, *Camelot* accompanies Lancelot's "If Ever I Would Leave You" with a lengthy sequence depicting his courtship with Guenevere. Though little of their actual romance is shown in the film, this montage sequence deepens the narrative development of their relationship while simultaneously visually de-emphasizing Lancelot's performance of the song. Rather than emotion being displayed though

spontaneous song and dance—qualities connected to the mythicization of music in the arcadian musical—the film uses narrative detail to explain the (no longer predetermined) story.

The ambivalent musical also frequently uses static camerawork to replace dance and foray into the emotional impetus for the music. Rather than depicting emotion through dance, an extended stagnant camera focuses attention on the face of the performer. By remaining on the character, the story of the song is told through the facial expressions of that character—much like in *real* life. Various versions of this minimalist editing and still camerawork can be found in films such as *Camelot*, *Lost Horizon*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Again, these ambivalent musicals use such techniques to remove the sole focus from the outward performance and surface narrative of the films and allow further investigation of the intellectual process and internal struggles that guide the narratives. *Camelot* repeatedly uses a shift between static close-up and medium shot. In both Arthur's and Guenevere's opening numbers the camera remains almost, if not entirely, on the character singing. It does not pan to an ensemble surrounding him or her. It does not track out to capture the movement of the character or his or her bodily performance of the number; rather, the focus remains largely on the face of the singer. In "I Wonder What The King is Doing Tonight," Arthur sits in a tree reflecting on his position as king and his concern for his impending marriage to Guenevere sight unseen. He overtly breaks the fourth wall by looking directly into the camera for the entire number. By focusing solely on a rather bodily-restrained king, the number visually draws attention to the internal struggles he experiences: excitement, panic, nervousness.³⁵

Without much movement, Arthur conveys his emotions and true temperament. Similarly, Guenevere's opening number "The Simple Joys of Maidenhood" uses comparable camera distances and angles as Arthur's opening.³⁶ She rides in her carriage bedecked in a ridiculous amount of fur, followed by a large entourage who almost entirely remain out of the frame as she sings. The camera focuses mainly on her face—and an eerily tiny dog. Both of these numbers function more as soliloquies. In fact, when other members of the ensemble do enter the frame in Guenevere's song, they appear completely unaware of the singing.

Fiddler on the Roof and *Lost Horizon* use similar visual techniques to turn the narration to the internal workings of the characters and the difficult—rather than predetermined—process of decision making. Similar to a combination of Arthur's and Guenevere's introductory songs, Richard's and Elizabeth's twin soliloquies of "I Might Frighten Her Away" play-out as the camera focuses in on the apparently speechless bodies. Bereft of dance and performed in voiceover, the songs function as internal monologues as the camera simply shifts between the two characters as they consider the possible outcome of their impending picnic. *Fiddler on the Roof* takes the performance of internal monologue to a higher level, repeatedly employing a visual technique meant to imply a stoppage of the narrative action and an engagement with the thought processes of Tevye. Multiple times, Tevye steps away from the action. While actually spatially quite close to those with whom he talks, the camera shows the others far in the distance as he looks directly into the camera and addresses his present conundrum. An example of this occurs when his daughter Hodel and Perchik the revolutionary decide to marry regardless

Visual Introspection



Both *Camelot* and *Fiddler on the Roof* use cinematographic techniques to focus attention on the emotional development of the characters rather than present elaborate production numbers.

Above: Arthur's and Guenevere's opening numbers employ similar shots to introduce the characters in mind and body.

Below: Tevye's mental processes are depicted as an internal monologue parlays into visual devices. These distance him in body from his daughter and fiancée and superimpose his thoughts over the action as he struggles internally with contradiction between tradition and emotion.



Illustrations 3.8 through 3.14, left to right from top

of tradition or the feelings of her father. Tevye drifts into soliloquy and ultimately Perchik and Hodel are shown in long shot and focus as Tevye remains also in medium close-up to create a deep space configuration. As he breaks the fourth wall, looking directly into the camera and up toward God, the individuals who comprise the reality of the moment fade in the background. The camera visually distances the real world as Tevye goes inside himself to consider the quandary placed before him. In addition, this scene uses the technique of superimposition to draw further attention to Tevye's thoughts. As he thinks about his daughter and considers the look in her eyes as she stands with the man she loves, onto the screen dissolves in ECU Hodel's eyes over the scene depicting her father's soliloquy.

Visual techniques such as the montage sequence, superimposition, deep space, and static camerawork both further the musical artifice and visually aid in constructing narratives which foreground interior emotions and thoughts of characters. While musicals often include solo numbers which express the inner feeling of their singers through song and dance, the ambivalent musical employs techniques which consciously wash away the surrounding world and—without resulting to the inner-self revealing dream ballet—place focus on the characters and their complex lives.

Mise-en-scène: It's the Real Deal Right Here in River City—Well Maybe

While the arcadian musical often includes an idealized mise-en-scène associated with a nostalgic period or simpler time, the ambivalent articulation of the genre alternately uses various levels and combinations of realism to aid in the presentation of more ideologically problematic—or narratively complex—conflicts. This push toward

realism, however, does not imply that all Hollywood musicals of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s illustrate a complete break from the dominant form. As with textual and visual narrative means, traits associated with the arcadian musical remain present to varying degrees in ambivalent musicals. For example, nostalgic and exotic locales often associated with the fantasy or safety-affirming status quo still occur in films such as *Grease*, *Grease 2*, *The Pirate Movie*, *Oliver*, *Doctor Dolittle*, *Half a Sixpence*, and others.³⁷ The settings of many of these films visually and ideologically represent a simpler version of the American (or European) past. While slightly edgier with risqué content, *Grease*'s soda shop version of the 1950s does not differ greatly than the equally nostalgic—though perhaps even then self-aware—version presented in the Elvis parody *Bye, Bye Birdie*. Straying little from traditional poodle skirts, leather jackets, high schools, and drag strips presented in film and television vehicles attempting to capitalize on the sanitized notion of the period, *Grease* and *Grease 2* use this romanticized notion of a simpler 1950s to rationalize the idealized resolution of the conflict. Arcadian musicals such as *Oklahoma!*, *The Music Man*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Court Jester*, and *Gigi* use idealized notions of the past to create safe spaces to work through foregone conclusions which ultimately reinforce the contemporary status quo. Altman points to the reactivation of this type of nostalgia in what he terms the “folk musical” or that which presents American ways of life in the idealized pictures of the past.³⁸ Narratively and aesthetically, these create simplistic paintings of their periods rather than detailed, realistic recreations.

While elements of an idealized historical short hand can still be seen in ambivalent musicals, various changes occur which further complicate the musical and strengthen its ability to depict more ideologically ambiguous stories and images. An increased presence of realism as well as boldly theatrical mise-en-scène and self-conscious parody of Hollywood conventions combine to distance a significant portion of these films from images of unimpinged paradise or wholesomeness. Films such as *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Hair* move toward realistic presentation of elements such as setting and costume to highlight narrative honesty or musical irony respectively; *Xanadu* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* switch between periods and visual styles to illustrate the complex relationships between reality, utopia, and the façade of performance; *Bugsy Malone*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, and *Pennies From Heaven* use established generic conventions to serve their respective generic critiques; *Tommy* and *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band* use heightened stylization to complement the ideological and emotional excess present in character types—both good and evil appear even more so when distanced from a knowable universe; and films such as *Zoot Suit* use a structured performance within a performance to foreground further the ideological constructs being investigated within their narratives. In contrast to the mise-en-scène most often associated with the arcadian, these choices aid in foregrounding ideological complexity and narrative contradiction, as well as critiquing existing generic simplification.

As narratives shift toward those which confront more complex or ideologically conflicted types of subject matter, choices in mise-en-scène complement this turn toward psychological realism or complexity by using a combination of realism, a contemporized

nod toward historical fashion, an ironic or parodic stylization, and/or self-aware theatricality. Problems arise with the use of the term realistic. The very process of design and the intentional choices made for a specific effect preclude the possibility of any film's setting, costumes, or lighting being *natural*. Designers make these choices to create a specific image. In the ambivalent musical, this specific image often appears less artificial or deliberate. While many films foreground their design scheme—Fosse films *Sweet Charity* and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* both include designs rich with concept. Line, color, texture, and form come together to create very specific visual pictures. The characters do not simply wear clothing, but clothing that aids in the creation of very specific, and readable as such, screen images. *1776*, for example, uses a visual style most specifically associated with the famous John Trumbull painting of the signing of *The Declaration of Independence*. However, while costumes and settings are accurate in terms of period, they appear pristine, lacking the dirt or clutter present in life but absent from the painting the film sets out to challenge. As the film complicates the mythos of *The Declaration of Independence* as a unanimous and noble move toward independence, the excessively pristine aesthetics constantly recall the whitewashed version taught in every grade school history class. Similarly, films such as *Camelot* and *Lost Horizon* play on historical accuracy and current-day fashion trends. *Camelot*'s mod costumes infuse contemporary fashion trends into period dress while *Lost Horizon* blends various Asian traditions to create the everyday dress of Shangri-La—Pacific Islander tribal dress, Middle Eastern caftans, Cantonese collars and fasteners, and

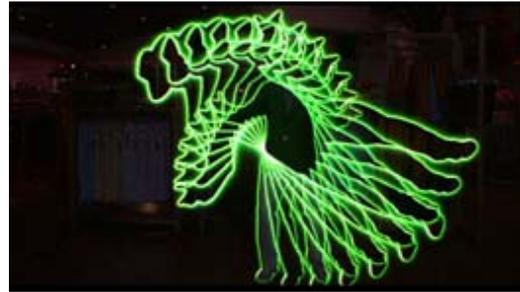
Realism and Special Effects in Mise-en-scène



The ambivalent musical spans various levels of representation of realistic mise-en-scène.

Above: (clockwise) While *Grease* maintains an arcadian sense of nostalgic 1950s style, *How to Succeed in Business*'s stylized color scheme of corporate regimentation and *1776*'s riff on John Trumbull's painting of *The Declaration of Independence* apply varying degrees of realistic representation to convey social critique.

Below: *Xanadu* (top) and *Godspell* (bottom) attempt to infuse problematical reality with idealistic fantasy through special effects, computer generated neon wipes, and childlike visual decoupage.



Illustrations 3.15 through 3.21, left to right from top

Tibetan religious wear to name a few. Concurrently hearkening to a period and tying to a vision of present day, these films self-consciously reference their periods.³⁹

On a Clear Day You Can See Forever, *Godspell*, *All That Jazz*, *Can't Stop the Music*, *Xanadu*, and *Man of la Mancha* vacillate among different aesthetic styles within the same film. Minus *Man of la Mancha*, these films tell contemporary tales by using aesthetics which connect to the present. Set in contemporary big cities—the first four in New York and the last in Los Angeles—each film uses the chaos of the city to establish the pace and attitude of the film. *Godspell* begins surrounded by the bustle of New York City. The narrative introduces the ensemble members as they function in their daily lives. Shot on location, the opening shows the characters surrounded by crowds and noise. Horns honk. Music blares. In the midst of this commotion, each member sees a vision of John the Baptist, abandons his or her mundane life, and rushes to the Central Park fountain to wash his or her cares/sins away. Depicting the crowds and hassle of New York initially provides a contrast for the remainder of the film. After the ensemble members are swept into the world of John the Baptist and Jesus, the realism of the city—and the presence of any other people—disappears until the end of the film. Instead, a childlike stylization becomes the overwhelming aesthetic. Resembling hippies/clowns/children in a world of found objects which magically transform into playthings and props, the characters become completely separated from their previous selves. Wearing face paint and layered found articles of clothing, they travel around a New York City absent of any other people. This contrast of real and fantastical aids in the creation of an ideal world inside the real world; rather than the film consistently

existing within a world which distances itself from the real, *Godspell* proposes the integration of ideals promulgated by the ideal world *into* the real. Whereas the arcadian musical tends to present unrealistic solutions to real problems, a film such as this proposes ideals which can possibly help one to function in a world which the film presents and accepts as flawed.⁴⁰

This separation of the real self from one which dons the trappings of a stylized world appears in each of these films. *Can't Stop the Music*, *One from the Heart*, and *Xanadu* use splits between reality and fantasy, though both present reality as a less complex system than many ambivalent musicals. While the former resigns itself more easily to idealistic characters, limited character development, and flights of fancy, the latter two propose fictional worlds within the real. *One from the Heart* shows both the emptiness and glitz of Las Vegas, constantly shifting between fantastical glittery clubs and neon signs—which appear as the separated lovers find momentary excitement in new (and ultimately unsatisfying) sexual conquests—and the simple and disheveled “fixer-upper” which houses the dissatisfied lovers Hank and Frannie. Club Xanadu, much like the abandoned New York City in *Godspell*, appears limitless in its possibility for building cultural and generational bridges. The muse Kira appears to both Sonny, the young Andy Gibb-esque artist, and Danny, the retired clarinetist. She has been sent to Earth to function as Sonny’s muse. *Mise-en-scène*—both in terms of costume and setting—shift to the fantastical which connect with Kira and the possibility of art transforming an otherwise mundane, materialistic society. When she appears, special effects, as well as the presentation of life in the club, etc. shift to bright colors and stylized fashions

denoting stereotypical notions of late 1970s' rock-n-roll and 1940s' big band.

Fantastical costumes are used to illustrate the possibilities that exist in an otherwise dull world. The dance number "All Over the World" uses bright colors, live mannequins, special effect wipes, and life-size pinball machines to move the story outside of the mundane as Sonny and Kira try to purchase a suitably groovy outfit for Danny. The stylized moments of this film illustrates a hope for a more perfect society, a hope which dwindles with Kira's eventual departure.

Man of la Mancha's practice of combining realism and stylization serves a different end than highlighting the incongruities within one world. The two styles denote two *actual* worlds, that of Cervantes and the fictional one of Quijana. The world of Cervantes employs visual styles not commonly associated with the Hollywood musical. Throughout, the lighting, costumes, and setting are quite dark. Rather than representing an idealized world where the Inquisitors would most definitely set Cervantes free, the world of the prison allows for a continued sense of threat, unease, and oppression. While costumes and settings appear to represent actual period objects, the fake world infuses these items with a fantastical sense of Quixote. His unending optimism shines through in the lighting contrasts between the worlds. Aside from Quixote, the characters appear to be dressed in replications of period dress. Quixote wears theatrical makeup and a piecemeal costume denoting the attempts of Quijana to don a knight's armor. Much like *Godspell*, this blending of styles allows for an interrogation of the ways in which the two worlds coexist and yet preclude each other. The dreams of Quixote bring hope to the dreary lives of the worlds of both Quijana and Cervantes, in both cases raising the

whore/criminal (Rachel Welch) to the position of self-possessed woman as Cervantes casts her and as Quixote dubs her Dulcinea, his love and lady.

Many ambivalent musicals also appear to have design concepts which draw attention *away* from themselves. Rather than focusing on ways in which setting, costume, and lighting create individual screen images, they attempt realism. Several films of this period include a visual aesthetic which mirrors either a contemporary society or a historical period. By drawing more fully on trends which accurately represent the real, these films situate their narratives in spaces which appear to have the potential to house *real* actions. Films such as *Hair* and *Fiddler on the Roof* stick to more realistic costuming and settings when not immersed in a dream sequence. As both films struggle over the changing state of generational rifts and political developments, their *mise-en-scènes* reflect a similar complicated reality. Both films avoid the highly colorful palettes often associated with the communal celebration of musicals. *Fiddler on the Roof's* settings and costumes are comprised mainly of earth tones, simultaneously suggesting a sense of historical realism and a solemn or restrained atmosphere. With the exception of "Teveye's Dream," this realism remains throughout the film.⁴¹ Similarly, *Hair* depicts an overall sense of realism, excluding the drug-induced sequence "Hari Krishna." Using the differentiation within New York City to locate an active youth culture, major draft board, and upper-class society, the film uses real locales to bring these groups together. Though these hippies may seem to resemble one's stereotypical notion of *hippie*, a significant difference can be seen between these hippies and those exaggerated versions present in Fosse's *Sweet Charity*. *Sweet Charity's* hippies appear groovy, but lack the mess, dirt,

and eclecticism which would be connected with a large group of people implied to be living outside of mainstream society and, in the words of *Hair*, “ain’t got no money.”⁴²

While *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Hair* both attempt to present visuals which accurately reflect their respective time periods, the visuals in *Hair* are more often used to evoke a sense of irony or sarcasm with regard to the subjects being represented. The “White Boys” and “Black Boys” numbers, for example, are sung partially by the officers at the military reporting station. Clad in their dress uniforms, a sense of irony attaches to the military as the men sing the virtues of the inductees, referring to them as “chocolate flavored treats.” Throughout the music contrasts to or reflects upon the visual images being shown. Lilted melodies coupled with realistic images of soldiers being trained for war highlight the savagery of the situation. By avoiding a cartoonization of the characters and their surrounding, the seriousness of the situation remains, while allowing sardonic comments.

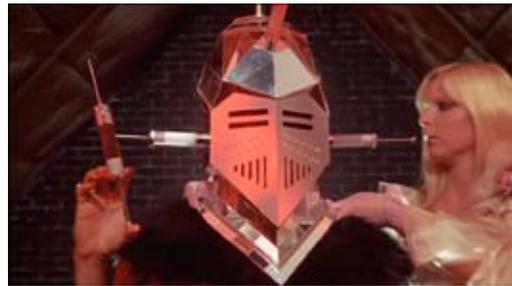
Though films such as *Hair* and *Fiddler on the Roof* use close representations of the real to complement their complex narratives, many ambivalent musicals place a parodic or ironic twist on reality. Whether creating largely stylized worlds to play out grandiose versions of real life conflicts in films such as *Tommy*, *The Wiz*, or *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Heart’s Club Band*, using a satirical attitude toward Hollywood genres in films such as *The Pirate Movie*, *Bugsy Malone*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Pennies from Heaven*, or *At Long Last Love*, or taking an critical view of history such as in *1776*, many films use irony or parody to complement their critiques of society or generic simplicity. Aesthetically, films such as *Tommy*, *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Heart’s*

Realism, Stylization, and Cultural Critique



Above: *Hair*'s use of understated “realistic” mise-en-scène complements its complex social critique. While realistic military dress allows for stark contrast with the hippies, it also provides for unexpected satire when officers (top right) extol the sexual virtues of “White Boys.”

Below: (clockwise) *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heartsclub Band*'s evil doctor and *Tommy*'s Acid Queen assume larger-than-life stylization to present their exaggerated social critiques; whereas *The Wiz*'s jive crows and a garbage stuffed scarecrow add an urban and African American specificity to a formerly white rural musical vehicle.



Illustrations 3.22 through 3.28, left to right from top

Club Band, and *The Wiz* most closely adhere to the practices of the arcadian musical. These films use artistic flights of fancy to create cartoonish worlds which visually emphasize the possibility for extreme evil and in some cases extreme good. *Tommy* exists in a place which resembles the real but is infused with highly stylized images, forcing a skewed perception of Tommy's life. After the sight of his mother's lover murdering his father renders Tommy blind, deaf, and mute, his sensory deprivation is visually heightened via the use of highly stylized imagery. While the boy sees nothing, the world of the film blows everything up to epic proportions. Whether highly colorful and idealized images of Christmas, the giant boots of the pinball wizard, Cousin Kevin's torture devices, or the bizarre hypodermic needles, snakes, and bodily twitches of the Acid Queen, the world seems impossible to control.

However, unlike the arcadian musical using stylization to represent an idealistic or nostalgic world, these musicals use such techniques to comment on significant world or personal conflicts. *Tommy's* stylized depictions of life, surroundings, and characters allow a satiric articulation of issues regarding family, money, and religion. Instead of telling small stories which interrogate small problems, such films convert small problems into epic conflicts which visually attack the senses. For example, the film conveys Tommy's mother's skewed sense of motherhood and materialism through excessive jewelry, furs, etc. During the number "Champagne" she watches television in an all-white room in a trashy net pantsuit and floor length white fur. Ultimately, the television explodes, spewing all of the advertised goods she had seen on commercials, leaving her writhing around in a sudsy chocolate lake of beans. The perversity of her social

positioning and role of mother come together in an outlandish display of materialistic simulated sex. Later, in the same room, she seductively rubs against Tommy and throws him through the mirror, the only object aside from pinball which has ever interested him. His expulsion from the room and immersion in the water below miraculously recover his senses. While the overall meaning of much of this can be disputed, the over-the-top visuals telegraph societal conflicts, making it difficult for the story to overwhelm these strong images and present a conclusion which erases the conflicts which drove the tale.

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band uses similar extreme images while *The Wiz* uses African American culture as source material for the fantastical world of Oz. Graffiti, art, lingo, and music are used to convert Oz into a racially specific land. While overall confronting the same simple issues regarding friendship, trust, and family as the original *Wizard of Oz*, *The Wiz* creates a world particular to those who inhabit it, visually supporting the move toward racial and ethnic specificity in the ambivalent musical.

Another subgroup of ambivalent musicals uses *mise-en-scène* as a means to communicate a satiric take on Hollywood genre. By using narrative conventions and visual expectations of established genres, films such as *Bugsy Malone* (gangster films), *The Pirate Movie* (pirate films), *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (B-sci-fi), *Pennies From Heaven* (musicals), and *At Long Last Love* (also musicals) add an additional layer of critique to their stories. In *At Long Last Love* Bogdanovich attempts to present an homage or satire of the 1930s' Cole Porter musical,⁴³ while *Pennies from Heaven* uses visual and ideological norms of the same period to critique the film's characters. The visual conventions of the musical used by *Pennies from Heaven* aid in the execution of a

narrative which contradicts the rosy outlook of the genre. As characters suffer negative life experiences, the dismal realities of their surroundings are immediately transformed into glamorous visuals associated with musicals of the 1930s and therefore worlds which can supply idealistic outcomes improbable in the characters' real lives. As Arthur fails to secure a loan for his record business, the film shifts to a reality reminiscent of a 42nd *Street* production number. Now wearing matching stylized costumes, dancing on giant coins, and shot in grand Berkeley-esque fashion, people and the world around them abandon a life where dreams do not come true for one which guarantees they will. Throughout the film, as lives become more lurid and hopeless, optimistic musical numbers spring from the unexpected: Eileen's students become members of a tiny big band playing "Love is Good for Anything that Ails You," the front of a diner disappears and presents a stage filled with raining coins as the drifter sings "Pennies from Heaven," and a rundown house transforms into a glitzy elevator to play out Arthur's "between floors" sex-capade. The fantasy of arcadian conventions cuts through the gloom to present the impossible ideal which only this genre can supply. These stylized visual utopias continue to appear, even using a screening of Astaire and Rodgers' *Follow the Fleet* as a backdrop for a final grasp at impossible happiness. In contrast to the films they mimic, the use of the arcadian musical's conventions only highlights the hopeless desperation of actual lives.

Likewise, *The Pirate Movie* uses norms of pirate or adventure films to critique the genre's conventions and foreground the constructedness of movie fantasy itself. Through constant visual and narrative references, the film repeatedly announces its position as a

product of a long history of Hollywood film. It opens with stock footage from a pirate movie, ultimately zooming out to reveal the footage being played on a small television set. By establishing the rowdy, masculine, throat-slitting ways of the Hollywood pirate, the dream world presented through the film—Mabel has been hit on the head by a windsurfer and dreams the majority of the film—exists in contrast to the world initially established. The film uses recognizable costume pieces (Indiana Jones's hat, whip, and leather jacket, Christopher Atkins's loincloth from *Blue Lagoon*, Inspector Clouseau's hat and trench coat) and sight gags (pie fights, visual poses of movie romance, and groovy modern versions of pirate dress) to highlight the film's disassociation with reality and immersion in fabricated popular culture. Rather than aiding in the presentation of a simple world where real problems can be solved, *The Pirate Movie* foregrounds the continuous false worlds created in Hollywood film as the only possible locales for such ideal living. This parodic nod toward genre provides a means for the ambivalent musical to telegraph its skepticism of a musical utopia.

In addition to using stylization and realism, ambivalent musicals show a trend in using overt theatricality as a means to foreground the construction of the film. By drawing attention to the films' fictions and not attempting to present seamless presentations of idealistic worlds, vehicles such as *The Boy Friend*, *A Little Night Music*, *Zoot Suit*, and *Jesus Christ Superstar* use the theatricality of the stage to legitimize their musical performances and situate their narratives within the constructed world of presentation. *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Zoot Suit* commit most fully to this kind of self-referential framework, the former developing a *mise-en-scène* which mixes periods and

aesthetics and therefore drawing constant attention to its own artifice. By beginning with the actors constructing the set and unloading their costumes, no pretense is made regarding the authenticity of this version of the story. Instead, Norman Jewison infuses the ancient locales of Israel with contemporary 1970s fashion and sensibilities. The colors and cuts of costumes evoke a sense of the present and the social mores that go along with it: sexual, gendered, and generational. Settings which combine real Biblical locales with modern props and scaffolding constantly reference the film as a production. For example, depicting Jesus' destruction of the corrupt temple markets in a scene which includes modern gun trading, whores, and other "hot" goods ties the corruption of the narrative to the present. This theatrical combination of period, a practice that occurs throughout the film, prevents a seamless presentation of narrative action as representative of a realistic period.

Zoot Suit takes place within an actual theatre, beginning outside of the building, following audience members in, and then proceeding in such a manner that never implies the story is taking place in a fully realized world. Sparse, non-realistic scenery and limited space force a restrained form of stage action. This presentational style foregrounds the calculated choices made within the film, as a fully-developed or realistic mise-en-scène gives way to minimal stage pieces: a jail, a witness stand, a car. The theatricality allows for more rational inclusion of random musical numbers. In the case of *Zoot Suit*, musical numbers either stem from dance numbers, the carnival atmosphere of the courthouse or white society, or asides from El Pachuco. This visual style helps underscore the biases of the social system by presenting that system not as a realistic

whole, but as a caricaturized body, as the scarcity of setting pieces places importance on those few present. The various courtroom positions take on more symbolic or iconic statuses when detached from a *real* world. Using highly theatrical set pieces such as giant newspaper flats, the film unambiguously directs attention to the overarching social meanings of the film, rather than allowing it to function on a solely character-driven narrative level. Implicated as part of the *mise-en-scène* and ensuing social drama, the diegetic theatrical audience (and therefore according to Feuer the viewing audience) appears alongside the diegetic courtroom audience who sits in the first few rows of the theatre watching the injustice unfold. Instead of welcoming all with the passed-along-song, the film implicates everyone in the reigning social injustice by invading spaces generally reserved for the invisible moviegoer. Through a heavy-handed visual style and the blending of actor and audience space in such an ideologically loaded narrative, the story becomes secondary as the larger social issues visually take the fore.

As it does with narrative, the ambivalent musical pushes past simplistic approaches to *mise-en-scène* common in the arcadian version of the genre. Instead, through choices in setting and costumes many of these Hollywood musicals of the 1966-1983 period toy with levels of realism and parody to heighten either their association with real (rather than nostalgized) worlds and conflicts or underscore the predetermined ideological bent of Hollywood generic conventions. By also increasing levels of stylization in parts of the cinematic whole, these films usher in exaggerated aesthetics—which compliment their exaggerated emotional or moral stakes or separate idealized from rational worlds—and overt theatricality, highlighting both artifice and creating a space

Theatricality and Mise-en-scène



Above: *Jesus Christ Superstar* foregrounds the use of theatrical set pieces on location and provides a combined aesthetic of contemporary and period dress and props to denaturalize the Christ narrative and situate it within its current relevance.

Below: *Zoot Suit* uses theatricality to center the greater social problems over the Henry Reyna story. Simultaneously, the film dissolves the line between participant and observer by making the theatrical audience participants in the action.



Illustrations 3.29 through 3.36, left to right from top

for self-conscious social critique. These types of aesthetic choices visually foreground the ambiguity and ambivalence implicit in this new incarnation of the genre.

CONCLUSION

Both visually and narratively, the ambivalent musical deviates from the arcadian, presenting more complex representations of human experience. Unfettered by the conciliatory endings and nostalgic sense of space common throughout the genre, these films buck the idealistic traditions of the musical by infusing them with irresolvable social problems, greater cultural diversity, and a more ambiguous sense of closure. By broadening the spectrum of acceptable narrative contexts and presenting ambivalence as the status quo, these films create a new incarnation of the genre rife for intricately interrogating social crisis and the everyday struggles of life—without the inclusion of a final kiss and community chorus line. Complimenting these narrative shifts in generic form, styles of cinematography and *mise-en-scène* disengage the musical from its prior association with the idealized or nostalgized; rather, new generic norms stylistically draw out the inanity of life, present nuanced problems within the real, or foreground the complex mental processes involved in the decision-making process. Through highly communicative camerawork, use of still photography, unrealistic diegetic sound, voiceover, parodic use of the montage sequence, and variations of reality and theatricality, these films coalesce to create a new generic variant capable of combining music with stories which break through the ideological limitations previously set out for the genre.

Chapter 4: The Musical Male Stars

While genres maintain their connotations by the repetition of visual and narrative devices, they further maintain a sense of stability and iconicity through the reappearance of film stars whose very personae become embedded with the ideals promulgated by the films they frequent. The sauntering gait of John Wayne brings with it an implication of the tensions of the Hollywood Western: man versus nature, society versus frontier, and man versus beast. Within the genre which he came to personify, his image conjured up a history of Hollywood Westerns and the stories they repeatedly told. Humphrey Bogart and his raked fedora and raincoat inject the mysterious allure and danger of film noir, just as actors such as Edward G. Robinson and James Cagney imply the violence, isolation, and imminent defeat common to the gangster films. Actors such as these, who develop a close professional association with a specific film genre carry with them the connotations of that genre. A hard-edged, conniving Bogart in the romantic comedy *Sabrina* brings with him the noir characteristics of the actor's earlier performances, making his eventual emotional reversal even doubly surprising and seemingly out of character in the end.

A similar phenomenon occurs with regard to the Hollywood musical. As performers such as Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, Maurice Chevalier, and others appear and reappear in the formative days of the arcadian musical, their star personae become extratextually linked with the characters they play and the narratives which they articulate.¹ As the ambivalent musical takes shape and becomes the dominant form of the musical (over that of the arcadian), industrial and perhaps economic circumstances create

a rift in this process of congruous meaning-making where past narrative and popular constructions create a cohesive (and harmonious) image. As the number of musicals declined, so did the presence of musical-specific star. (It is difficult to become newly and inextricably linked with a film form which appears to be waning.)

In addition, as the star system and associated stables of studio groomed stars waned, the musical stars associated solely with and trained specifically for Hollywood musicals become more and more scarce. Instead a roundup of the usual suspects—Astaire, Kelly, Chevalier, Howard Keel, Gordon McRae, and even popular music imports such as Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby—the ambivalent musical includes stars not previously—or perhaps ever again—associated with the Hollywood musical. Whether comics, rock-n-roll or Broadway stars heretofore unseen in Hollywood products, or stars slumming from more “serious” genres, the men who populate many ambivalent musicals present possible challenges to these films’ narratives. Musical star/comic or rock star or tough guy, these actors lack the specific musical connotation of a Kelly, Keel, or Astaire; rather, they carry narrative, gendered, and cultural associations which lead to a less one-dimensional identity.

As this chapter will illustrate by briefly examining stars of the arcadian musical and then focusing on the ways in which new star types take hold in the ambivalent musical, the stars not only assume generic meaning but help solidify just what that meaning is. By interrogating the various types of stars who populate the changing genre, I will show the congruity between the extratextual meaning of these stars and the ways in which the genre’s narrative conventions shift during this time period. While female stars

of the musical also change—as Mary Martin, Jeanette McDonald, and Jane Powell give way to Kristy McNichol and Terri Garr—the adjustment is less drastic. Many women who populate the ambivalent musical either *have been* previously associated with the musical (Barbara Streisand, Ann Reinking, Bernadette Peters, and Julie Andrews) or are associated with less incongruous genres or celebrity personae (e.g. pop or soft rock artists such as Linda Ronstadt, Petula Clark, and Diana Ross or romance/comedy stars such as Cybill Shepherd, Mary Tyler Moore, or Shirley MacLaine). More significantly, because of the ambivalent’s narrative focus on the male and his quests or failings and because of the more problematic assimilation of male celebrity into the genre, I focus my analysis on men. I will be studying mainly three types and two case studies within each—comics Steve Martin and Robin Williams, jumpers from more traditionally masculine genres Clint Eastwood and Burt Reynolds, and rock/pop stars The Who and The Village People—I will further interrogate the varied way in which the genre itself shifts as its various components take different shapes.

Scholars such as Christine Gledhill, Andrew Britton, and Richard Dyer elucidate the interplay between star and genre, highlighting the unspoken reciprocal agreement which exists between performer and film.² As the performer cannot escape the accumulated baggage of the movies in which s/he has appeared, the genre cannot escape actors who have previously graced its films. Britton states:

The personae of John Wayne, Gary Cooper, James Stewart, Henry Fonda and Clint Eastwood are all quite distinct, but none of them can be discussed significantly without reference to the concept of the Western hero which they have at various times embodied, or to the tensions within the myth of the White American history, refracted through a specific contemporary moment, which the genre articulates.³

Additionally Britton concludes that a performance within a genre can only be read with regard to the actor's other performances within a specific genre. Neither the actor nor the genre can wholly escape the performance or connotation. Similarly, Gledhill establishes the inevitable link of star, genre, and character in the melodrama and cites Colin McArthur's contention in *Underworld U.S.A* that:

Men such as Cagney, Robinson, and Bogart seem to gather within themselves the qualities of the genres they appear in so that the violence, suffering, and angst of the films is restated in their faces, physical presence, movement, and speech...each successive appearance in the genre further solidifies the actor's screen persona until he no longer plays a role but assimilates it to the collective entity made up of his own body and personality and his past screen roles.⁴

In the case of the Hollywood musical, this particular type of linkage between star and genre occurred effectively within the *arcadian* musical; only then was meaning extracted from the recurrence of the star within the musical genre. Similar faces failed to reappear in similar vehicles as time went on. Because of this waning of both genre and genre-defined star, complications with regard to incongruent celebrity connotation arise in the theories of stardom and genre. However, following the same logic, this process would lead to a situation where the ambivalence of late 1960s through early 1980s musicals would be compounded by the coexistence of a genre unable to shed fully its past connotation and new stars who bring with them subtexts born of repeated performances *outside* of and perhaps *adversarial* to the musical genre.

ARCADIAN MUSICAL STARS

In the early years of the Hollywood musical, various stars became associated predominately with that genre, each actor developing—along with the vehicles

themselves—a new content and context based on the emerging conventions of the genre itself. Often singers, dancers, and performers were pulled into Hollywood from other musical outlets such as vaudeville, nightclubs, radio, or Broadway, and they helped construct a generic formula reliant on the performance of and a reverence for the entertainment industry and its denizens. While many men populated the formative years of the genre, a handful of names have come to personify the leading musical male of the arcadian integrated musical. Examining these actors and their interaction with generic formula can create a benchmark against which ambivalent musicals push as they lose the stability often present in the earlier incarnation of the genre.

Chevalier, a staple in the Hollywood musical from as early as 1929 in *Love Parade*, appeared repeatedly in vehicles which showcased his suave French allure. Launching his musical career as a café singer and performer at the Folies Bergère, his schtick consisted of lecherous banter and frequent sexual innuendo. This same image would follow him to Hollywood where his characters repeatedly bore a somewhat toned down (though striking) resemblance to his café persona. Constantly breaking the fourth wall, Chevalier would underscore his sexual gaities with a wink and a nod to the cinematic audience.

Starring in films such as *Top Hat* (1935), *Anchors Aweigh* (1945), *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), and *The Bandwagon* (1953), Astaire and Kelly have become synonymous with the genre. While the two portray significantly different images of the musical male—one graceful and debonair and the other an acrobatic everyman—they serve as similar types of musical males both textually and extratextually. Both recognized for

their dancing abilities and individual choreographic styles, they combine to create a large body of work between the 1930s and 1950s which establishes the height of the featured male movie musical dancer. Aside from large production numbers or Busby Berkeley visual dazzlers, Astaire and Kelly stand as two of the most recognizable and iconic images of the Hollywood musical. They serve as two efficient sites to examine the relationship between the musical vehicles and the actors who drive them.

Born in Nebraska (and seemingly in a trunk) in 1899, Astaire entered show business at the age of five, dancing in vaudeville with his sister Adele. By the late teens, the Astaires were performing in Broadway revues such as *Over the Top* (1917) and *The Passing Show of 1918*. They continued dancing on Broadway until the early 1930s, starring in George and Ira Gershwin musical comedies such as *Lady Be Good!* and *Funny Face*. Though identified more for their dancing than their acting abilities, it seems sensible that Fred would make the transition to Hollywood after he and his sister parted ways during an initial boom in the film musical. By 1933's *Flying Down to Rio*, Astaire had been paired with Ginger Rogers, who would become his most famous female partner. He would continue to make musical movie after musical movie through the 1950s, often appearing in his iconic top hat and tails and playing some sort of dancer, teacher, or entertainer. Through the narrative, his character often uses dance as a means for personal, professional, and romantic expression, succeeding in his career, illustrating the exuberance with which his characters approach life, and convincing his resistant soon-to-be partner that both he and his style of dance are made for her.

Similarly, Kelly came to Hollywood via hard work, dues paying, and Broadway success. A fellow Midwesterner, Pittsburgh-born Kelly carved a place for himself not on the vaudeville stage, but as a dance instructor in his native Pennsylvania. Called to Broadway in 1936 for an assumed choreographic opportunity, Kelly dashed to the Great White Way only to discover he had made the trip under false pretenses, wanted only for a featured dancer role in the show. Three years later he would return to New York and embark on a rising career as a dancer and choreographer which would eventually take him to Hollywood. By the 1940s he was headlining musical motion pictures such as *For Me and My Gal* and *Cover Girl* (the former being his first of six film appearances with Judy Garland). More of an everyman and less high-toned and debonair than Astaire, Kelly performed in films where he would dance his athletic style of tap with common people. Whether with people on the street, fellow soldiers, animated mice, or other entertainers, his characters often exhibited the sheer joy of the dance. Master of the dream ballet (for better or worse, would *An American in Paris* be the same without one?) his films served as special vehicles for his own personal celebration of dance.

Such leading men as MacRae and Keel emerged in the 1950s, reprising similar roles in multiple musical vehicles. Neither boasted the impressive theatrical backgrounds of Astaire or Kelly, but nonetheless created an air of professionalism associated to musical performance. After short stints as a singer, Broadway performer, and radio personality, MacRae signed with Warner Bros. and spent the 1950s appearing in their musical vehicles. He would come to be one of the major faces of the Rodgers and Hammerstein movie musical, playing both *Carousel*'s Billy Bigalow and *Oklahoma!*'s

Curly. Similarly, Keel bounced from job to job before taking up the Rodgers and Hammerstein gauntlet, replacing John Raitt in the Broadway production of *Carousel* and playing Curly in the London staging of *Oklahoma!* His face would become synonymous with the MGM musicals of the 1950s, starring in at least one musical film each year between 1950 and 1955. From *Annie Get Your Gun*'s Frank Butler to *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*'s Adam Pontipee to *Kismet*'s poet, he became the staple baritone for the 1950s. While neither Keel nor MacRae gained the prominence of an Astaire or Kelly for their dancing, their voices characterize some of the defining musical texts of the period. As the booming voices of the period known mostly for full integration of music and lyric, they personify the arcadian musical male.

By looking at these five performers, the reciprocal nature of star/genre meaning-making in the arcadian musical becomes evident. As their pre-Hollywood accomplishments mingle with the emerging standards of the musical genre, the celebration of music and performance are reinforced. Kelly's, Astaire's, and Chevalier's extensive performance backgrounds translate to their characters' execution of song and dance, creating both textual and extratextual contexts which lend legitimacy to the arcadian dictates of musical celebration. As Kelly and Astaire dance and Chevalier croons, their histories lend credence to their characters' actions. Keel and MacRae, though not bringing as well known past careers to the screen, function similarly by their repeated presence in the genre and their positions as *real* singers. As Keel moves from film to film his characters reinforce generic structures as Adam, Frank, Bill (*Calamity Jane*), and Petrucchio (*Kiss Me Kate*) struggle to win the love of a troublesome woman.

As their adversarial personalities work themselves out through song and dance, the community unites and the romance reigns supreme. As these characters reenact similar stories, Keel himself begins to connote the successful attainment of heterosexual romance through song and the unity of community as a result of both. As each new Keel vehicle carries with it the existence of the prior, Keel himself becomes the musical. Repeatedly showing up in vehicles with similar narrative structures and ideological projects, these actors aid in solidifying the structure of the burgeoning Hollywood genre.

By no means do these five performers encompass the whole of musical male performance in the arcadian musical. Crossover stars such as Bing Crosby, Dean Martin, and Frank Sinatra appear in multiple arcadian musicals. Though men such as Sinatra and Martin brought to the pictures star personae perhaps looser or more sexually dangerous than the aforementioned stars, they too assimilate to genre norms. While still bringing their extratextual meanings to the films, the genre simultaneously acts *on* them. Unable to erase Sinatra's groovy suaveness, *Can-Can* co-opts his actions in such a way that they ultimately serve the narrative formula as he forgoes his swinger ways to make an honest woman of Can Can dancer Shirley MacLaine. As he performs next to Kelly in *Anchors Aweigh*, *Take Me Out to the Ballgame*, and *On the Town*, his star persona cannot wholly escape the genre itself. Similarly, Martin's *Bells are Ringing* uses his star image to serve as a springboard for the character shifts which ultimately allow his and Judy Holiday's characters to live happily ever after in true musical style.

The performances and personalities of these male stars reinforced the arcadian musical's ideological bent and narrative formula. As professional musical artists made

their ways to Hollywood to try their hands at a new medium, their backgrounds set the standards for male performance. As they influenced the genre, their very presences came to connote the standards of the vehicles they themselves had helped to define.

As the genre waned in the 1950s and 1960s and stars ceased to be contracted to specific studios which had previously tailored their performances to specific star and genre vehicles, the image of the musical male star lost its defining edge—in terms of narrative role, performance expectation, and extratextual professional position. With no emerging Kellys, Astaires, or Keels on the horizon, the floundering genre peopled its communities with different types of performers. Part of this transition included the ushering in of non-singing, non-dancing stars. As narrative and aesthetic conventions shifted, as discussed in Chapter 3, the textual pressure to adhere to a specific notion of musical performance too diminished. With less stringent rules of romance, gender, and community, the characters strayed from the reaffirming, utopic goals of their predecessors. The actors who carried out these new narratives would bring with them professional baggage which, unlike Kelly and Astaire, often ran contrary to the ideals of romance, entertainment, and community. Servicing the shift to the ambivalent musical, they participated in the destabilization of the musical male.

NEW STARS: THEY LAUGHED, CRIED, AND TRIED TO PUNCH EACH OTHER'S LIGHTS OUT

Just as stars of the arcadian musical go beyond the familiar images of Kelly, Astaire, and Keel, the men who populate the ambivalent musical come with a wide array of intertextual connotations and career backgrounds. While this chapter will focus on

comedians, rock/pop stars, and genre jumpers, the men who brought song and dance (or lack thereof) to the musical of the sixties, seventies, and eighties far surpass these three simple labels. The contextual confusion created by the demise of studio star contracts aided in the creation of a space where these musical projects no longer textually adhered to the norms previously established. Through interrupting the narrative repetition established in the first thirty or so years of the Hollywood musical, these films compound their ambivalence through the unpredictable and multifarious casting of various types of performers. Casts are fleshed out by Broadway stars heretofore untested or at least uncommon to the screen, no-name stars who bring with them little or no popular personae, serious men of the theatre, and even the occasional leftover from the arcadian musical; each brings his own social relevance or cultural connotation.

Like both Kelly and Astaire, many actors made an eventual trip to Hollywood, but unlike these two most visible stars of the earlier musical period, few established a body of musical films to provide them a readable frame of musical-ness. Robert Morse of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* brought his gap-toothed googly-eyed Tony Award winning performance direct from Broadway. Prior to his film turn in this Bob Fosse romp, he had appeared in Hollywood fare such as the bizarre and maudlin *The Loved One* (1965), guest-starred on various television shows, and been nominated for both musical and non-musical performances on Broadway. *1776*, *The Pirates of Penzance* (1983), and *Zoot Suit* brought the bulk of their Broadway casts to the big screen, *The Pirates of Penzance* almost wholly converting the production lock, stock, and barrel—though ditching Estelle Parsons (Academy Award winner for *Bonnie and Clyde*)

for stage and screen star Angela Lansbury. While *Pirates of Penzance*'s cast consisted of fleeting teen idols (Rex Smith), pop superstars (Linda Ronstadt, who seems not to know she is actually in the movie), and staples of the big screen such as George Rose as the Major General, few brought with them the Broadway stripes associated with the earlier Broadway defectors. As the social significance of the Broadway musical waned in the late 1950s and early 1960s, along went the recognizable viability of its actors. In contrast to the ubiquity of a Rodgers and Hammerstein original cast recording, neither film cracked the top forty, *1776* peaking on the Billboard charts at 176 and *Pirates of Penzance* at 174.

Along with Broadway musical transfers, “men of the theatre” or serious actors made star turns in various 1966-1983 vehicles. Richard Harris (*Camelot*), Peter O’Toole (*Goodbye, Mister Chips*, *Man of la Mancha*), Sir John Gielgud (*Lost Horizon*), and Albert Finney (*Scrooge*, *Annie* [1982]) in all of their English- and Irishness came from more dramatic roles on stage and screen. Contrasting with the musical comedy backgrounds of arcadian men of the theatre, before appearing in the musical remake of *Lost Horizon* Gielgud ran the gamut of Hollywood productions of theatrical classics, appearing in Shakespeare’s *King Lear* (1963), *Romeo and Juliet* (1964), *Richard III* (1965), and *Hamlet* (1964) as well as George Bernard Shaw’s *Saint Joan* (1957), Jean Anouilh’s *Becket* (1964), and even playing Anton Chekov in *From Chekov with Love* (1968). O’Toole’s appearances in dramas such as *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Becket*, and *Lion in Winter* preceded his performances in *Goodbye, Mister Chips* and *Man of la Mancha*. These types of roles bring with them an implication of dramatic gravity. Unlike Kelly or

Keel whose vitas read like histories of the musical comedy and musical play, such men of the theatre connote not a celebration of entertainment and joyous union of couple and community but social problems of historical and classical dramas. Their previous roles evoke characters of substance. Not easily assimilated into the traditional arcadian narrative, these serious thespians convey a complexity of character and gravity of tone.

The films often considered most indicative of the counterculture movements of the 1960s built casts around individuals who neither conformed to the image of the traditional musical star nor challenged it. Films such as *Godspell*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Hair* were largely comprised of then no-name actors and actresses. Bringing little public image to the roles they embodied, they served as almost blank slates on which to write the cultural critique of the narratives. *Hair*'s John Savage and Donnie Dacus saw careers blooming concurrent with the release of the film, the former breaking through as the physically and emotionally wounded Vietnam vet in *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and the latter joining the rock band Chicago in 1978. Emerging into their own, their forming star personae add flavors of youth rebellion and Vietnam street credibility which reflect directly on their characters. The actors who starred in both *Godspell* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* remain largely unknown. Their "every-youth" status uncomplicates their positions as proponents of social change and critique. Not saddled with contradictory commercial baggage, their anonymity allows for a neutral engagement with the film's narratives.

Finally, the men of musical theatre make a few appearances in the ambivalent Hollywood musical, though they often function mainly as bittersweet reminders of a

genre gone by. Kelly's appearance in *Xanadu* recalls his heyday as he dances to big band and integrates contemporary rock-and-roll into his repertoire. Sporting the same "you can do it kid" idealism associated with his earlier films, his character appears uncomplicated and unphased by the bizarre goings-on and troubling ending. His presence confounds the ambiguous ending and unsatisfying conceptualization about the healing power of music. Astaire's appearance in *Finian's Rainbow* serves as a similar arcadian reminder—though in the case of this particular film, the style itself adheres more closely to the arcadian than the ambivalent. Astaire sings a bit, dances a jig or two, unites the community, and ultimately dances off into the sunset as the town is left free from bigotry and joyously reeling from its climactic wedding.

These various actor types add in their own ways to further articulating the goals or emerging formula of the ambivalent musical. Whether by placing the antiquated context of the arcadian musical in its manifestations, bringing a hint of gravity to the narrative through association with actors more commonly donning weighty crowns rather than tap shoes, or simply peopling the narrative with faces heretofore unseen by the viewing audience and uncomplicated by complex professional histories in the entertainment business, these performers bring or withhold extratextual information which acts upon the films' narratives. Providing irony or legitimization, this interaction between star and genre aids in the further solidification of the ambivalent form and formula. The comic, tough guy genre jumper, and rock/pop star are three major types which recur in this stage of the musical genre. Not able to escape wholly the history of musical performance, Steve Martin, Burt Reynolds, or Rodger Daltrey must contend with or recontextualize the

expected behaviors of a MacRae or Astaire. As the dictates of the narrative shift and challenge the culture-stabilizing stories often associated with the genre, the new musical performers bring with them complex backgrounds, further complicating the possibility for a clean, wholesome, and logical resolution. By investigating examples within each of these performer types, this chapter will illustrate the broadening of narrative scope via the insertion of a different sort of performer.

Funny Men

As the traditional musical male performer became an anomaly while the idea of a traditional musical waned with the transformation of the genre, various funny men became the new heirs to the Hollywood musical throne. Spanning vaudeville, television, silent, early sound and contemporary film, as well as standup, performers such as Phil Silvers, Jack Gilford, Buster Keaton (all appearing in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*), TV writer and performer Sid Caesar (*Grease* and *Grease 2*), George Burns (*Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*), and ubiquitous 1970s game show favorite Nipsey Russell (*The Wiz*) became the new featured men of the genre. Their comic backgrounds brought connotations of witty confounded banter which could only be found in the likes of the nonsensical stories of *The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show* (1950-1958). Like Burns, many of these comedians were past their primes when entering into the musical genre. Robin Williams and Steve Martin, however, took their star turns in musical vehicles when their stardoms hit their initial zeniths. Williams appeared in *Popeye* during the run of the popular television show which shot him to stardom, *Mork and Mindy*. Martin appeared in *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*

at the height of his standup career and *Pennies from Heaven* just one year after his popular coup as writer/star of *The Jerk* (which, like *Pennies From Heaven*, costarred his real life girlfriend and rising Broadway diva Bernadette Peters). Like Kelly and Astaire, their pre-film musical careers followed them into their film musical performances. Constantly covered in the popular press, their associated careers oozed social irreverence and unpredictability, both qualities congruent with the ideological turn of the genre, as new musicals leaned toward critiques of the status quo and at times inconclusive endings.

Steve Martin

Martin's appearances in *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Pennies from Heaven* coincided with the Martin-mania of the late 1970s and early 1980s. With white suits, arrows through the head and "well excuuuuuuse me" becoming ubiquitous in American culture, the comedian turned actor broke through from unknown comedian and bit television player to major comedy star. His burgeoning bizarre star persona would lend to the musical genre a leading man who deviated from both the stars and characters of the arcadian period of the genre. Antithetical to a tidy community-reinforcing representative of traditional, monogamous, breadwinner American manhood, the films' narratives would appropriate his star image as a further indication that the old rules no longer applied.

Prior to Martin's appearance in these musicals, he was working throughout the entertainment business, both in front of and behind the scenes in television, motion pictures, and the stand-up comedy circuit. Receiving his first major break in the late 1960s, Martin worked as a writer for such shows as *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*

and *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour* and appeared as a regular performer on *The Smothers Brothers Show*, *The Ray Stevens Show*, and *The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour*. By the early 1970s, Martin had become a frequent guest on *The Tonight Show*, appearing as guest host in 1978. Simultaneously, he became a common face on the provocative new live sketch comedy show, *Saturday Night Live*, hosting the show eight times between the show's debut in 1975 and the opening of *Pennies from Heaven*. On *SNL* he appeared in sketches with Dan Ackroyd as one of the lecherous, swinging "Czech Brothers," where he appeared in garish polyester "sexy slacks" and gold chains spouting broken English chock full of malapropisms and misspoken colloquialisms. Martin was also known for a dance routine performed with Gilda Radner in which the two floated back and forth between a graceful ballroom dancing act and out of control pseudo-dancing which ultimately had Radner painfully upside down and dragged across the stage. Establishing recognizable characters through repeated work in a combination of controversial, irreverent, edgy, mainstream television shows (even singing and playing his banjo on an episode of *The Muppet Show* in 1977), Martin developed a televised image which familiarized and naturalized his wacky characters and irreverent style of humor.

Concurrent with Martin's appearances on television, he built an extremely successful touring career with an act consisting of crackerjack banjo playing accompanied by comical songs and substandard whistling, bizarre sketches such as cat handcuffs, construction of misshapen balloon animals or venereal diseases, happy feet dancing, and his trademark bunny ears and arrow through the head. The act quickly

parlayed its way into successful sales of his comedy albums and a *Billboard* top twenty pop song, “King Tut.” His 1977 and 1978 albums *Let’s Get Small* and *A Wild and Crazy Guy* went platinum, both cracking the top ten album charts.

By 1979 his stage and television work would culminate in the release of his first major motion picture *The Jerk*. Written by and starring Martin, the film centers around Naven Johnson, a white man adopted by an African American family, not yet aware of the fact that his skin will not one day turn the color of his family members. Deciding he must go off to seek his fortune—after feeling alive for the first time when hearing “white” music on the radio which set his toes to tapping—Naven enters into a series of bizarre jobs which eventually lead him to fame and fortune, only to be rendered impoverished and alone by the film’s end. Martin infused his character with the types of nonsense typical of his standup act. Unaware of the workings of the world, Naven misunderstands sexual advances by a sadistic carnival worker. Later he dashes to protect cans of oil, mistaking a sniper’s attempts on his life as actually being targeted at the cans (eliciting “he must really hate these cans.”) Finally, Naven earns millions via the accidental invention of a support device for the bridge of eyeglasses, only to lose his fortune when the device causes millions to go cross-eyed. Combining an endearing naiveté and nonsensical slapstick, *The Jerk* embodies the type of work for which Martin had become known.

Achieving a popularity and cultural position that surpassed his stage and screen roles, Martin was recognized by the popular press and touted as the new “wacko.”⁵ Popular journals focused heavily on the “anything for a laugh” silliness of Martin, citing

instances where he would unexpectedly jump into the audience, mocking their clothing in improvised punch lines (shouting “how many polyesters had to die for this windbreaker”) or offering backrubs as compensation for the price of their tickets.⁶ Known to run screaming through the auditorium and into the streets, Martin’s unpredictability was a major focus of the press. Prematurely grayed, his middleclass looks and off the wall, nonsensical jokes created a space where comedy sidestepped the political humor of Lenny Bruce or The Smothers Brothers and resituated itself as a site of pure unadulterated joy. *Rolling Stone Magazine* writer David Felton’s captivation with Martin could not escape the reader as he gushed over the comedian’s nonsensical jokes about the kinkiness of men wearing *men’s* underwear or the comparison of requesting permission to smoke and requesting permission to flatulate. Felton writes:

He kept performing here and there, but instead of acting funny in the traditional sense, he acted funny, in a bizarre and often disarming way that few had seen before. He insulted the audience. He made obscene gestures. He imitated Sammy Davis Jr., performing his entire Las Vegas act in one minute. They loved it...But jokers or not, traditional or far out, these foolish bits and pieces have two things in common; one, they are utterly without redeeming social importance; they’re like little pills you swallow that make you laugh—no message, no ulterior motive or purpose. And two, Steve doesn’t need them to be funny.⁷

Called “silly putty that talks in a staccato of non sequiturs,” a “West Coast wacko,” “a throwback to vaudeville,” and “a lunatic deluge of sight gags, super cool show-biz parodies, zany body language and well-paced one-liners” Martin’s bizarre behavior and audience-stroking antics endeared him to the popular press as they reinforced his public persona as a comic force with which to be reckoned—if not totally understood.⁸

Martin’s public and professional persona operates in direct contradiction to the dictates of the arcadian musical. The qualities which most often define his schtick run

counter to the arcadian musical's quest to maintain a society in which dueling sides can reach a somewhat logical and amenable compromise such that the community and couple can live happily ever after. Martin's penchant for nonsequiturs and apolitical yet anti-establishment tasteless humor are antithetical to the forward thrust of the arcadian narrative formula. Simultaneously, despite his adroit skills on the banjo, the means by which he executes musical performance gives a sarcastic wink at the idea of entertainment. Rather than taking the shape of a culture-blending, love-making, community-bonding art form, his maestro banjo playing is accompanied by simplistic sarcastic songs such as "Ramblin' Man." His onstage dancing outbursts defy the kind of organized dance via which Kelly would bring a community of everymen together or Astaire might unite a couple through the graceful union of bodies. Rather, Martin's musical incongruities combine to form an ambivalent perception of musical performance as out of control, unpredictable, unstructured, and nontraditional.

Martin's star persona facilitates the changing dictates of the musical as it shifts into the ambivalent period. Defined by its uncertainty, often withholding the communal and romantic resolution promised in its earlier incarnation, the ambivalent musical's narrative challenges the idea of a stable, unified society and the inevitability of the monogamous romance. Martin's act compliments the lack of stability and internal logic in the ambivalent musical. His star connotation can be seen to work with, rather than against, the narratives of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band* and *Pennies from Heaven*.

In *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*, Martin appears in one number, playing Dr. Maxwell, the criminal quack who obtains the magic coronet for use in the creation of handsome yet corrupt clones. The film uses the Beatles' "Dr. Maxwell's Silver Hammer" as the evil doctor's anthem. In a hospital-green tiled room with walls covered with signs reminiscent of a butcher's shop listing the day's specials "Excess Fat Removed," "Broader Shoulders, Price on Request," and "Brain Transplant: \$795 and up," Maxwell performs a bizarre soft-shoe. His male and female assistants accompany him as he transforms a conveyor belt of old men and women into a group of slim, young, identically dressed adults. In this number, Martin merely adapts his stage style and routines to the scene, using a comic singing voice reminiscent of his comic alter egos "Ramblin' Man" and "King Tut" rather than one more akin to the trained voices of Keel or MacRae or even the talk-sing of Rex Harrison. In addition, as the doctor's assistants and the newly formed clones dance in a somewhat Fosse-esque stiff-backed unison style, Martin's "happy feet" make an appearance as his performance contrasts those of the rest of the production. Mouth agape, knees bent, arms out and flailing, Martin moves around the set appearing the crazy man in a room full of zombies. At one point he even sports a white fedora reminiscent of his traditional white suit. Both in terms of his performance style and his place within the narrative—and this peculiar film overall—Martin's star image compliments the overall project of the film. As wacko and illogical, his extratextual connotation logically translates into a mad scientist within a wacky world threatened by rampant licentiousness and perversity.

Similarly, Martin's star image is well suited to the plot of *Pennies from Heaven*. His character, Arthur, the sheet music salesman whose heart and world are filled with the idealism of music, lives just outside of such a romantic existence. Trapped in a passionless marriage he attempts to force sex on his wife, encouraging her to use lipstick on her nipples—an idea she finds morally repellent. He falls in love with a virginal schoolteacher, lying to her about his marital status and ultimately impregnating her but giving her the boot by presenting her with a fake address at which to contact him. Ultimately, Arthur and the woman turn to a life of vandalism, prostitution, and utter desolation, still attempting to find joy in the music which almost brought light to their hopeless lives. When they perform the music, it only seems sadly ironic as it so fully contrasts with their lived situation. Conflicted about the virtues and vices of music and the entertainment industry itself, *Pennies from Heaven* openly critiques the arcadian musical as it places images of arcadian simplicity within an irrevocably corrupt world. The purity, optimism, and happiness of the music works against the pessimistic plot. Further, Martin's role as stand-up comic legitimizes the types of performances enacted in the film. As voices from recordings of old standards—the music in Martin's character's head/heart and in his sheet music—burst forth from the characters and the settings miraculously shift from a stylistic realism of 1930s urban America to that of 1930s musical spectacular, the nature of Martin's background works with the incongruity of the narrative, music, and mise-en-scène. The lack of logic or realism is status quo for a Martin routine. Words contradict actions. Voices contradict bodies. The ideal of entertainment falls flat in the face of harsh realism. Amidst this all, Martin stands as the

captain of incongruity and ushers in a sense of lighthearted humor as the narrative moves closer and closer to imminent destruction, to be saved just at the last minute by a musical respite. As the gallows fall and Arthur is executed, he and his schoolteacher-now-lady-of-the-evening girlfriend dance into the clouds, their real singing voices heard for the first time to the tune of “Glory of Love.”

In both films, Martin’s characters contribute to the overall sense of nonsense promulgated by the narratives themselves. The lack of logic and ultimately inconclusive narrative conclusions run congruent with the overall world view which drives Martin’s comedy routines. Trapped in a world where the notion of logic is a fallacy—popular magazine articles often restate his initial academic ventures into philosophy and his abandonment of them for comedy when he denied the existence of logic—his characters fit into conflicted worlds where their behavior suits the norm.⁹ While his happy feet, insane singing voice—or in the case of *Pennies from Heaven* someone else’s voice altogether—would seem incongruous in earlier films, they serve the lunacy well in these vehicles, further underscoring the unwillingness of such narratives to complete the tasks once laid out for them in earlier years of the genre.

Robin Williams

Similar to Martin though perhaps with less public exposure at the time, Williams took his star turn in the musical while in the first stage of his popularity. A rising celebrity, his emerging star persona complimented his performance in the live action *Popeye* musical. While working as a stand-up comic in Los Angeles, Williams caught his first major break after being observed by *Laugh-In*’s producer George Schlatter. The

Steve Martin and Robin Williams



Above: Steve Martin (top right and left replicating his standup act on *The Muppet Show*) built a career on absurd humor such as making unrecognizable balloon animals, chaotically dancing with “happy feet,” and picking banjo in the odd “Rambling Man.” These bits reemerge in his musical characters as seen in *Pennies From Heaven* (left) and *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Heart’s Club Band* (right).

Below: Williams’s childlike, alien star broke full force into the public consciousness as Mork’s egg burst open (top). The naiveté and caricatured performance of his television alien returns in *Popeye* (below, left and right) as he mugs, shuffles, and defies the laws of human physics.



Illustrations 4.1 through 4.7, left to right from top

producer stated, “I saw Robin doing a fragmented, free-association act that was very, very funny. He was doing what I’d call dirty material. He had a full beard and hair down to his shoulders, he was barefoot and he wore overalls and a cowboy hat. But his originality knocked me out.”¹⁰ Shortly thereafter Schlatter cast Williams in a brief 1977 revival of *Laugh-In*. The same year he would serve as a regular cast member and writer for the short-lived and controversial *Richard Pryor Show*. Like Martin, Williams gained his first national exposure during the 1970s demise of the variety show, but he would quickly parlay this exposure into major television stardom. One year after his work with Schlatter and Pryor, Williams landed a bit spot on the phenomenally successful *Happy Days*, playing an alien who does the unthinkable: freezes the usually cool Fonzie. Seven months later Gary Marshall, producer/creator of *Happy Days*, would spin off Williams’s character into his own television show, *Mork and Mindy*.

As part of the Gary Marshall 1970s machine—*Happy Days*, *Laverne and Shirley*, and *Mork and Mindy*—Williams’s new vehicle kicked off as part of a major network display of family-friendly television. Williams’s goofy Mork (from the planet Ork) enabled him to utilize his well-honed improvisational skills as he devised actions, gestures, and practices to represent those of a creature who had just come to earth. He illustrated his Earthling naiveté and alien status by sitting on his head, drinking through his finger (which was known to belch), talking to eggs, greeting everyone with his trademark “na noo, na noo”, and shouting his favorite Orkan expletive “shazbaht.” The show combined the childlike qualities of the naive Mork with the cloaked risqué repartee of two adults cohabitating in the late 1970s. The show not only cracked the Nielsen top

ten, ranking number three in the 1978-1979 season, but also thrust Williams into the public spotlight. (He even appeared as one of the hairier members of the ABC Battle of the Network Stars team.) Commercially, Mork became a highly viable icon. Mork talking dolls, action figures, watches, t-shirts, and his trademark rainbow suspenders, along with *Mork and Mindy* games, models, trading cards, and lunch boxes glutted the market. Williams's alter ego was everywhere.

Resonating with children via his goofy behavior, childlike view of Earth's reality, and moralistic attitudes, while engaging adults with his rapid-fire improvisation and risqué humor, Williams became a public darling. Often mentioning his Julliard training, his dancer wife, and meager material needs, the popular press also focused their pieces on Williams's energy and unpredictability. Discussing his on-set action—laughing spasms, wild improv, derriere-grabbing of Pam Dawber (Mindy)—they color him a “comic madman,” “playful spirit,” a “full tilt bozo,” and “sixty characters in search of a maniac.”¹¹ He is often described as only tentatively embodying his own persona, rather switching frantically from character to character both on set and in real life. *Ladies Home Journal* states, “In the course of the conversation, Robin flies from one character to the next, allowing only occasional glimpses of the brilliant comedian safely tucked away behind his crowd of imaginary companions.”¹² Compared to the likes of Peter Pan, Tom Sawyer, Jonathan Winters, Danny Kaye, and Daffy Duck, Williams's childlike innocence/precariousness teamed with an adult sensibility and sharp comic timing made him a 1970s cultural icon representative of high-octane apolitical fun. In 1980 this image would translate into his first major motion picture project, *Popeye*.

Like Martin, Williams brings a certain level of irreverence and unpredictability to the musical.¹³ Williams brings a childlike quality helpful to recreating such an iconic cartoon figure but also provides the facial, bodily, and comic unpredictability associated with the ambivalent musical. The film chronicles the arrival of the ever-popular sailorman to the fictional town of Sweethaven, a community riddled with fear and poverty as it cowers in the shadow of the greedy Commodore and his evil henchman Captain Bluto. When the dreaded tax collector meets Popeye as he ambles into town, he charges the sailor “docking, new-in-town, rowboat under the wharf, and leaving your junk lying around the wharf tax.” Williams trained heavily in acrobatics for his role in the film. His skills further emphasized his position as reality-defying performer. Pulling his penchant for caricature from his stage act to television to screen, he mumbled, shuffled, and sang in a froglike voice to impersonate the famous sailorman. Though the film’s narrative is actually closer to the formula of the arcadian musical than most films of this period, Williams’s star persona aids in maintaining a sense of instability. His characterization of the sailor, oddly influenced by his infamous improvisation skills (a characteristic addressed both negatively and positively—but consistently—by reviewers), denaturalizes the performance beyond the common levels of the musical.¹⁴ Not only does the film foreground performance via the spontaneous eruption into song and dance, but also through Williams’s over-the-top enactment of his character: shuffling, squinting, flexing, and mumbling. Rather than encouraging a resolution that deftly unifies two conflicting societal groups, the star persona of Williams defies stasis through its unpredictability and rejects reality through his star connotation and overtly self-conscious

performance of the sailor. While the film narratively concludes in arcadian fashion—with evil expelled, the town saved, and family and romantic duo united—Williams’s caricatured and chaotic performance (and extratextual association) complicate such an ending. As Wayne—in and out of context—always implies the Westerner’s isolation, Williams retains a sense of disruption and chaos.

In the cases of both comedians, the unpredictability connected to their comic star personae and the degree of irreverence implicit in their humor bucks the conventions of the waning arcadian musical while cooperating with the emerging variant of the genre. The very basis of comedy itself relies on social instability and the ability to mock, comment upon, or challenge the status quo. The presence of such “wacko” comics as stars or featured characters in the ambivalent musical allows for an extratextual boost in the rebellion against the established generic formula. Unlike arcadian musical comedy stars Stubby Kaye or Ray Walston, stand-up comedians such as Williams and Martin exude—through their previous projects and stand-up acts—a state of cultural unrest and chaos. Instead of connoting an entertainment which soothes conflict—as did the actors repeatedly related to the arcadian musical such as Keel, Kelly, and Astaire—they connote the disturbance itself and thereby underscore the narrative tendencies to challenge the status quo and conclude ambiguously. The social unrest and moral ambiguity in *Pennies From Heaven*, the bizarre vices and virtues of *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Heart’s Club Band*, and even the seemingly satisfactory ending in the bizarre world of *Popeye’s Sweethaven* all embody (and are compounded by) the star personae of their performers. In such

cases, the comic does not aid in relieving social tension in obviously problematic diegetic societies; rather, they help maintain a space which retains the chaos.

Tough Guy Genre Jumpers

Another type of ambivalent male musical star visits the genre from films more commonly associated with more masculine or aggressive narratives: Westerns, war films, action pictures, and film noir. Often contrary to the dictates of the arcadian musical, these actors bring a star power connected more closely to violence, destruction, social disorder, and death than the conciliatory heterosexual romance. Known for both their television and film work, actors such as George Kennedy (*Lost Horizon*), Lee Marvin (*Paint Your Wagon*), and Roy Scheider (*All That Jazz*) personify this type seldom seen in earlier musical films (with the notable exceptions of James Cagney in *Yankee Doodle Dandy* [1942] and Marlon Brando in *Guys and Dolls*).

Both Kennedy and Marvin bring a wealth of wartime and Western roles into the musical discourse. Commonly constructed as no-nonsense tough guys, their star personae work alongside the musical narratives to heighten the tensions already existent in the films' storylines. Kennedy's appearances in action films such as *Charade*, *The Killer Priest*, and the quintessential out-of-control father of the disaster film *Airport*, as well as war films such as *The Dirty Dozen* (in which he appears alongside Marvin), create a textual history of violence and struggle, characteristics which underscore his performance as the runaway engineer/businessman in *Lost Horizon*. Similarly, Marvin's appearances included Westerns such as *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* and *The Comancheros*, along with various war films and the television police drama *M Squad*.

Scheider too boasts a pre-*All That Jazz* career which leans toward the adventurous, playing spies (*Marathon Man*), cops (*The French Connection*), ex-cons (*Sorcerer*), and tacklers of the demons of the deep (*Jaws* and *Jaws 2*). While such previous roles may distance such stars from the norms established in earlier integrated Hollywood musicals, they support the tensions emerging in the ambivalent musicals in which they appear. Both complimenting the conflicts visible in the films or functioning ironically within a plot which works against their star images, the actors' personae provide an additional level of dissonance in the emerging generic formula of the ambivalent musical. Clint Eastwood's and Burt Reynolds's performances in the ambivalent musical exemplify the workings of such gendered and genre-related incongruities. Both tackling the musical relatively early after finding popular success, they come to the genre strongly linked to the types or roles which rocketed them to stardom, roles both contradictory to and ironically associated with their musical alter egos.

Clint Eastwood

Eastwood's 1969 appearance in Joshua Logan's Western musical *Paint Your Wagon* presents a case of conflicting generic iconicity and ideology coming to blows. Far preceding the renegade Dirty Harry vehicles, his goofy monkey-driven *Any Which Way But Loose* (1978) films, and his ultimate position as Hollywood double threat gaining respect as both an actor and director, *Paint Your Wagon*'s release coincided with the early period in Eastwood's career, a time which strongly anchored the actor to images of the West, violence, and virility. While Eastwood's television and film roles had situated him within the expanding history of the Western genre—a genre visually and

narratively emulated in the musical—the character types and specific value system connected to the genre differ greatly from that promulgated by the arcadian musical. As his previous work combines with both the history of the musical and the evolving state of that genre, his presence in the film underscores the very ideological generic shifts which were emerging.

Eastwood gained popularity in the 1960s as the televised *Rawhide*'s assistant trail boss Rowdy Yates. Remaining with the show through its entire run, his role became more dominant as the show was restructured in the mid-sixties. From running cattle to running the bad guys into the ground, his career took a turn with his participation in a number of Italian director Sergio Leone's "spaghetti Westerns": *Fistful of Dollars* (1964), *For a Few Dollars More* (1965), and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966).¹⁵ Playing a character often referred to as "the man with no name," Eastwood shifted from trail boss to cold-blooded killer. In *Fistful of Dollars*, his character ambles into town to find warring gangs, the acceptance of death, and families torn apart. Without a clear moral stance, he plays gang against gang, bilking both for as much money as possible. Starting out as a hired gun and ultimately masterminding a plan which would provide him with everyone's money and ultimately seal the downfall of both gangs, the man with no name defies the dictates of the Hollywood Western in which some sort of clear moral code—whether tied to acceptable social dictates or not—guides his actions. Instead, Eastwood's character plots murder for money, but simultaneously murders numerous bandits to free a woman who has been held hostage as a payment for a gambling debt. Repeatedly visually disgusted by the separation of the woman from her husband (the gambler) and

small son, he kills all of the men who hold her hostage, takes her to the husband and child, gives them his blood money, and gruffly sends them off to find safety elsewhere.

Combining a value system associated with the Hollywood Western—violence for personal gain, private code of honor, and outsider status—with a heightened level of meaningless violence, Eastwood’s clean-cut *Rawhide* textual persona developed an unpredictable edge. Following the Leone films and prior to his musical debut—not counting his singing stint on *Rawhide* or the 1962 release of the album *Rawhide’s Clint Eastwood Sings Cowboy Favorites*—he appeared as contemporary and period vigilante lawmen in *Coogan’s Bluff* (1968) and *Hang ‘Em High* (1968), further solidifying his burgeoning association with the renegade outsider.

The press created an image of a complicated man, neither portraying Eastwood as tantamount to or wholly separate from his characters. While acting in *Rawhide*, he was commonly described in terms of his All-American nature. *TV Guide* reported, “The name Rowdy fits Eastwood about as well as Pollyanna fits Alfred Hitchcock. Even when he is completely awake, his manner is mild to the point of being apologetic.”¹⁶ In the first year of the television show’s run, *TV Guide* dedicated an entire article to Eastwood’s tips on how to keep physically fit, stating, “Eastwood doesn’t know what viewers are doing about the bulges that come from moving only to change the channel, but he thinks they should be doing something.” Picturing him in a swimsuit doing pushups (two years later they would show him acrobatically performing a handstand), the article cites his past careers as a lumberjack and Army swimming instructor and details Eastwood’s helpful hints for keeping physically fit: stay away from carbohydrates, keep an eye on the scale,

get some sleep, be optimistic, eat fruits and vegetables, avoid excess alcohol, and routinely see a doctor.¹⁷ Whether detailing his exercise regimen, complaining about being forced to keep his hair long, or extolling the actor's early hopes to "be somebody" like his dad, his early *Rawhide* image is consistently linked to a wholesome mind and body.¹⁸

As *Rawhide* progresses and into Eastwood's association with motion picture vehicles such as the Leone pictures and *Coogan's Bluff*, the image presented of Eastwood becomes less choirboy and more powder keg. As the television show continued, publicity underscored his violent nature. Where once he was described as calm, cool, and collected, he becomes willing to turn to fisticuffs at the drop of a cowboy hat. Multiple instances of infighting on set are cited, often occurring because of the actor's quick logic-defying fuse. Near brawls with co-star Eric Flemming and debilitating brawls with friend and stuntman stand-in Bill Thompkins (who is quoted as saying that "Clint backs off from nobody" and beat him until he was black and blue) create an edgier Eastwood more comparable to the man with no name.¹⁹ An article featuring the man with no name shows close-ups of a torn up Westerner's face, Eastwood's wife drying off a swim trunk-clad husband, and a tough sunglasses-wearing Eastwood on his trusty Honda hog.²⁰

This emerging conflicting image of a volatile, health-conscious man and his motion picture vita of Westerns and action films comes into direct conflict with the dictates of the arcadian musical. Rather than uniting conflicting factions of a community, the Westerner conversely seeks to restore order, existing as a loner caught in flux between a frontier and civilization, neither of which serve as his home. Without home or

wedded partner, the hero is often destined to remain alone and separated from society as a consequence of the violence he perpetrates on behalf of others. The maintenance of the status quo common to most musicals falters in the action and Western films of Eastwood, as an amoral or vigilante sense of justice supercedes the law of the land.

These elements of generic logic come tied to the star image of the actor as he embodies the role of *Paint Your Wagon*'s nameless farmer-cum-pro prospector Pardner. Along with Ben Rumson, played by fellow Hollywood tough guy Marvin, Pardner negotiates the conflicts between the civilized world of the arcadian musical and the dictates of the West: romance versus action and community versus self. Featured in three singing numbers—solo ballads “I Still See Elisa” and “I Talk to the Trees” and jazzy group number “Gold Fever”—Eastwood croons to his heart’s content, compared to “an early Frankie Avalon” by *The New York Times*' Vincent Canby.²¹ Pauline Kael’s critique of new musical stars—specifically referring to Eastwood and Jean Seberg—underscores a reliance on arcadian norms and the shifting state of the musical as it turns toward ambivalence:

One of the reasons each blockbuster musical is such a gamble is that we need to build up familiarity with a voice and have our expectations satisfied from movie to movie, as we did with Astaire’s dances. The dubbed voices (like Jean Seberg’s) and the nondescript voices, like Eastwood’s, don’t carry over; the producers have spent twenty million dollars, and they haven’t even developed a singing star for *another* picture. Their methods are practically suicidal; they make each picture as if it were the last.²²

Along with Eastwood’s “nondescript” singing, he brings an understated acting style reminiscent of “the man with no name.” Kael refers to him as “sensitive in that deadpan way that is supposed to have mysterious powers at the box office” and controlled to a

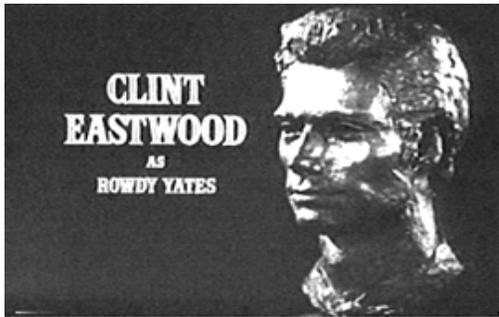
point of disabling emotion, while other reviews refer to his legitimate acting reputation and celebrity bringing the old story a “brand-new cool.”²³

While his style far from embraces previous notions of the genre, his understated performance style coupled with his edgy-cum-violent star persona add an additional layer of social introspection and unpredictability. Placed within a somewhat romantic plotline, these generic contradictions aid in the reinforcement of emerging expectations of the ambivalent musical. As the narrative pushes the boundaries acceptable in earlier musicals—with a story centering on the establishment and eventual denunciation of a ménage-a-trois—Eastwood’s star image further underpins the narrative conflicts by infusing it with extratextual information more equivalent to the anomalous asocial qualities of the diegesis than the ultimate resolution which includes the successful attainment of the companionate, monogamous romance. (In the end, Marvin’s Rumson leaves the trio for the next homosocial mining town—leaving Pardner and the missus to live happily ever after—and maintains his asocial standing as a “wanderin’ star.”) Eastwood provides an ambivalent combination of diegetic and non-diegetic calm, possible eruption, romance, and solitude, working alongside the emerging narrative, performance, and aesthetic norms to codify further the new generic formula which denies the utopia of the arcadian for an unsettled and unpredictable new tomorrow.

Burt Reynolds

Similar to Eastwood’s position in *Paint Your Wagon*, Reynolds’s performance in his first Hollywood musical—Peter Bogdanovich’s *At Long Last Love*—exists as a character built around a set of generic contradictions and ironic winks. Combining the

Burt Reynolds and Clint Eastwood



Above: Eastwood cornered the Western market in *Rawhide* (top left) and as Leone’s hardhearted “man with no name” (top right). That wild Western cachet underscores *Paint Your Wagon*’s more tame frontier role as he musingly sings to a woman he imagines he could love (bottom left) or jazzes his way through “Gold Fever” with fellow tough guy Lee Marvin (bottom right).

Below: Reynolds built his persona by capitalizing on his athletic prowess (*The Longest Yard*, top left) and sex appeal (*Smokey and the Bandit*, top right). His musicals capitalize on this image, while also using it as a source of parody as he awkwardly swims with a nose plug in *At Long Last Love* (bottom left) and jokes with Parton about his manly traits in *Whorehouse*’s “Sneakin’ Around” (bottom right).



Illustrations 4.8 through 4.15, left to right from top

suave musical hero of the 1930s with his cultural role as tough guy, athlete, and ladies' man, the film creates a character who constantly references Reynolds as the embodiment of his own contradictions. One of the top box office draws of the 1970s, Reynolds's star persona would be inextricably linked to the musical characters—*At Long Last Love*'s Michael Oliver Pritchard (MOP) and *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*'s Sheriff Earl Dodd—who, at different points, connote the tensions present in that very star persona. As Reynolds's popularity grew throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, his film vehicles, television appearances, and his popular press coverage would denote a conscious shift occurring in the desired perception of the star. Moving from tough guy to romantic comedy hero, the fluctuating image of Reynolds underscores his short career as a musical hero.

Like Eastwood, Reynolds came to motion pictures via television. A star athlete in Palm Beach, Florida, Reynolds attended Florida State on a football scholarship, only to find his career as a fullback blindsided by a debilitating car accident which left him with a broken knee and a nonfunctioning spleen. After wandering around Florida, Reynolds headed to New York where he began to study acting at New York's Hyde Park Theatre. After catching his first break in a production of *Mister Roberts* (1957), Reynolds segued into television. In the days of East Coast-based live television broadcasting, a strapping young man with athletic abilities and a penchant for small speaking roles could make a living as a stunt man. Appearing in anthology dramas such as *Playhouse 90* (1959), *Schlitz Playhouse of the Stars* (1959), and *Zane Grey Theater* (1961) he worked his way into the business by saying a few lines before being thrown through a window. Reynolds

eventually moved up the television ladder, arriving at a similar locale as fellow tough guy Eastwood: the television Western. After being featured on *Riverboat*, Reynolds first major recurring television role was a three-year stint (1962-1965) as the “half-breed” blacksmith—his actual heritage includes Native American and Italian—on the long running series *Gunsmoke*. Lead roles in ill-fated police dramas—*Hawk* and *Dan August*—would follow, each lasting only one season.²⁴

After appearing in various motion pictures and shortly after the demise of *Dan August*, Reynolds’s career took a decided upturn in 1972, the year which saw his emergence as a motion picture star, television personality, and a national sex symbol. While Reynolds’s professional projects had been finding less than shining success, he had been taking advantage of various variety and talk shows (*The Carol Burnett Show*, *The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour*, *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*) to develop a humorous, self-deprecating (but lovable) public persona which was at that point largely built on a television tough guy image. His defining *Tonight Show* moment included an exchange in which Reynolds claimed, “My movies were the kind they show in prisons and airplanes, because nobody can leave.”²⁵ Appearing alongside Oscar-winning Jon Voight in the Academy-Award-best-picture-nominated *Deliverance* (1972), he played hypermasculine weekend warrior Lewis Medlock who extols the virtues of the man-against-nature battle, murders a nameless mountain man who attempts to assault sexually Voight’s character, and ultimately finds himself in the role of helpless infirm as he crumbles into a sobbing mass after breaking his leg in a canoeing accident. The same year, after a chance *Tonight Show* meeting with *Cosmopolitan*’s Helen Gurley Brown, the

actor became the first nude male centerfold to appear in a mainstream magazine. While lounging in his birthday suit with his hand gingerly covering his manhood, Reynolds quickly became the housewife's pinup.

Reynolds hit the jackpot with commercial and critical motion picture success and found himself the darling of the talk show circuit and popular press. Over the next couple of years, he repeated his tough guy role in films such as *Shamus* (1973) and *The Longest Yard* (1974), while providing a knowing wink toward his burgeoning sex symbol status by playing a sperm in Woody Allen's *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex But Were Afraid to Ask* (1972). Successfully fusing his jocular image and rough exterior and cinematic history, his star persona would take a turn along with his choice in motion picture roles. Emerging from his tough guy cocoon, Reynolds began to take on action films which brought comedy into the mix. Films such as *W.W. and the Dixie Dance Kings* (1975), *Smokey and the Bandit* (1977), *Hooper* (1978), and *The Cannonball Run* (1981) established a devil-may-care, sexy, rambunctious film image which paved the way for his second ambivalent musical appearance as the kinder, gentler Sheriff Ed Earl to country music's buxom sex symbol Dolly Parton's Miss Mona.

Reynolds's shift in public and professional image did not go unnoticed by the popular press. Early articles on the actor focused mainly on his rugged Brando-esque good looks (claiming "what Burt projected was sheer animal sex"), athletic ability, brief marriage to *Laugh-In*'s "sock it to me" girl Judy Carne, and his emerging relationship with television's good girl nineteen years his senior) Dinah Shore.²⁶ The Shore relationship helped to complicate Reynolds's role of dashing animal bachelor, and the

contradictions in his star persona became difficult to resolve. Rather, as the seventies progressed, the contradictions in Reynolds life and his career became the foreground of press coverage. Article titles read “Burt Reynolds: Going Beyond Macho,” “Burt Talks About Loving and Being Loved,” “The Burt Reynolds Nobody Knows,” “Sex Star Comes of Age,” and “Life Isn't Always a Bed of Roses for an Actor Working on a New Image.”²⁷ The kinder, gentler Burt Reynolds came to the fore as he became a more established celebrity. The focus on the soft, intellectual side of this manly icon presents a new star image rife with its own contradictions—tough yet sensitive, romancing swinger yet associated with America’s good girl—and therefore well suited to the musical genre in its new paradoxical form.

The fusing of the kinder, gentler Reynolds image with this aggressively and sexually masculine icon provides the kind of enigmatic relationship which drives the ambivalent musical. Reynolds, like this emerging group of musicals, defies clear labels such as bachelor, sex symbol, action hero, etc. Rather, his earlier and later films of this era, as well as his centerfold and Dinah Shore beau statuses, connote a complicated star image not easily placed in a single box. This type of male star projects neither merely a playboy nor monogamous lover and neither solely brute strength nor sensitive intellectualism; rather, he presents a combination of traits once seen as mutually exclusive—and counterintuitive to the musical genre.

Reynolds’s star persona served the developing tenets of the ambivalent musical. Whereas Eastwood’s Western résumé came into play in *Paint Your Wagon*, here Reynolds’s earlier roles as a tough guy come into direct contrast with his character MOP,

the debonair, slightly prissy playboy—although the role fits the new retooled Reynolds. The story revolves around the frivolous escapades of the rich and their inability to maintain successful relationships. Contrary to the arcadian musical, *At Long Last Love* ends with a giant question mark looming over the four main characters, as a happy future for two sets of couples appears unattainable—Kitty loves Spanish and Brooke loves MOP while MOP loves Kitty and Spanish loves Brooke. Here, the extradiegetic status of Reynolds as playboy reinforces a conclusion which belies the naturalness and inevitability of monogamous heterosexual couples. His role as America's playboy saddles MOP, textually constructed as a playboy, with a similar connotation, making the possibility of a clean romantic conclusion incongruous anyway. Simultaneously, Reynolds's television and film image based on the action genre (which encompassed nearly all of his work at this point) is ironic when viewed in conjunction with the behavior of Reynolds's musical character. Not only do the actions of singing and dancing in tux and tail contrast with those of killing a man with a crossbow and burying him with his own hands in *Deliverance* or busting heads in *The Longest Yard's* convict football game, the choices made within the film ironically address Reynolds's public and professional persona. Whether wearing a nose plug when swimming (in a dashing one piece full body swimming suit), repeatedly cutting himself while shaving, or whining about roughhousing in a friendly football game played with the Kitty and Brooke, MOP's social graces and occasional delicacies draw attention to the contradiction of Reynolds behaving like such a high-toned man. These intertextual contradictions further legitimize the lack of domestic narrative closure.

In terms of performance, reviewers saw Reynolds's turn as MOP going both with and against his earlier intensely dramatic or action-based portrayals. Described in *Deliverance* as projecting a "self-satisfaction," a quality which returns in his portrayal of the Depression-era playboy, he is discussed (complimentarily) as being "low-key" and "detached."²⁸ The *Los Angeles Times* declares, "Burt Reynolds carries such a pre-image of robust assertiveness that the role of lackadaisical rich boy does not immediately fit well. Yet in the end the easy and quick-witted charm he has been able to show on television comes through and he makes an attractive lead."²⁹ Congruent with the rest of the performance in *At Long Last Love*, Reynolds also bears a seemingly self-conscious air as he delivers jokes, sings, and dances. Perhaps attributable to his acting ability or the overall direction of the film—since everyone appears to sound like they are delivering jokes—a calculated awareness of his character's goals and a comedic delivery exist throughout.³⁰ Kael derides Reynolds's singing, dancing, and overall performance: "Reynolds attempting to turn his deadhead status to some advantage, tries for super-relaxation, adopting the sloshed-yet-still-ambulatory style of Dean Martin, but he looks incredulous, as if he couldn't figure out how he got turned into such a lunk," while *Time* likens his (and the rest of the cast's dancing to) "a troop of hikers trying to extinguish a campfire."³¹ While valiantly attempting to sing (rather than character or talk sing) in numbers such as "Poor Young Millionaire," "At Long Last Love," and "Well Did You Evah?," Reynolds does not even prove to be the crooner found in the likes of Eastwood. He aptly (if stiffly) performs basic tap, soft shoe, and ballroom numbers but never seems to engage fully with the music or movement.³² While narratively he supports the

emerging dictates of the non-domesticated musical male, his performance in *At Long Last Love* goes against character, while never fully finding a unique voice of its own.

By the time Reynolds appeared in *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, his public image had undergone a further transformation. His star persona had expanded a bit from his *Cosmopolitan* beefcake image, having been connected to serious relationships with America's sweethearts (Dinah Shore and Sally Field) and shifting from full-out action or TV Western star to action-comedy (e.g. *Smokey and the Bandit*, *Cannonball Run*, and *Hooper*). Combining the rambunctious tough-guy images of the action-comedies and the sentimentality associated with his late 1970s/early 1980s work (e.g. *Starting Over*, *Paternity*), Reynolds emerges in a perfect position for the arcadian musical—the form more closely followed in much of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. While MOP's foibles and performance styles played ironically into and against the everyman tough-guy/playboy personae of Reynolds, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*'s Sheriff Ed Earl Dodd compliments the kinder and gentler Reynolds quite well. The film centers on the unlikely courtship of Sheriff Ed Earl and Miss Mona, the Madame of the Chicken Ranch, the town's famous house of ill repute. After a sleazy television activist Melvin P. Thorpe (Dom Deluise) strides into town singing "Texas has a whorehouse in it," local law, Texas government, and the ladies themselves are thrown into a tizzy as the local institution is forced to close its doors.³³ Ultimately, the whorehouse shuts down, the girls move on to greener pastures (but not before dancing a rousing number with the winning Texas Aggie football team), and Ed Earl and Miss Mona ride off into the sunset. An instance of the arcadian musical, the narrative provides a clean-cut conciliatory ending

and reinforcement of the status quo—whorehouses are not good, but good old fashioned romance is, and a happy couple can overcome social differences to meet in the middle with the language of love (and song).

In contrast to MOP, Sheriff Ed Earl retains Reynolds's good old boy charm. Relegated to one song and dance, the actor's performance style more closely relates to that presented in his comedy-action films—a combination of quiet, self-effacing down-home charm and explosive and reactive violence. While his portrayal of MOP depended on an ironic sense of high-falutin' class consciousness, delicacy, and high-toned singing and dancing to traditional Cole Porter numbers, Reynolds's musical performance in *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* appears congruent with his performances outside the genre. His one number—the duet with Miss Mona, “Sneakin' Around”—describes the joys of the Sheriff's and Madam's romantic liaison:

(Ed Earl singing into his toothbrush)
Well, I like beer and rodeos, detective books and dominoes
Football games and Cheerios, and Sneakin' around with you
(Mona and Ed Earl)
Sneakin' around with you, goin' a round or two
Doin' what lovers do, whenever they're sneakin' around.³⁴

Rather than waltzing or tapping in a tuxedo, Ed Earl clowns around their love nest in nothing but a towel, extolling his manly pleasures in more of a character-driven and almost talky voice (contrary to the one used in *At Long Last Love*) while dancing with Mona, singing into his toothbrush or a vacuum cleaner, or joking around with a can of aerosol deodorant. More than performing musically, however, Ed Earl jokes, defends the American way—well, the one that embraces whorehouses—and combats the ostentatious shoulder-padding, crotch-stuffing, corset-wearing consumer Thorpe who not only

threatens the livelihood of Miss Mona and the good name of Earl, but also all that is honest and right in the world of the film.

While the second phase of Reynolds's star image works to reinforce *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*'s narrative—in contrast to *At Long Last Love*—his overall public image infuses his performance with a sense of playfulness. Publicity materials and interviews of Reynolds and Parton highlight the lighthearted circumstances surrounding his performance. When asked about their professional relationship, Parton quipped, “We’re too much alike to appeal to each other romantically.” She followed up with, “We both wear a wig.”³⁵ An article in *California* also pinpointed the ironic inclusion of the two superstars in the film:

Though it has taken him nearly three dozen films and her only one, both Burt Reynolds and Dolly Parton have become such dependable draws that if they took it into their heads to film the Talmud with Burt playing Rashi and Dolly doing Hillel, few studios would hesitate to put up the money...Is it perhaps only fitting, then, that Reynolds and Parton, the king and queen of ersatz sexuality, should be in charge here? Not really, for *Whorehouse* is unfair to its stars, distorting the genuinely pleasing qualities that made them popular in the first place. By allowing themselves to be cast and directed so close to type—she the cartoon hooker, with breasts cantilevered into position like the guns of *Navarone*, he the good ol’ boy brimming with down home dialects—they have turned into national monuments, not people.³⁶

Extreme and almost satirical, labels such as “national monument” and “king of ersatz sexuality” highlight the power of the actor’s public persona. The characteristics which define his gender identity—highly sexual and a good ol’ boy—underscore every performance as his image emerges as an almost excessive presentation of itself.

Reynolds’s self-effacing persona and beefcake status combine to create both a snug fit with Sheriff Ed Earl and a self-conscious comment on the type of masculinity portrayed

in the film. While Kelly successfully played the everyman with sailors, soldiers, and hoofers, Reynolds brings an extratextual package which simultaneously reinforces and foregrounds this performance through his preexistent *excessive* performance of masculinity in real life. While his new persona and the film's storyline itself lean toward the reinforcement of arcadian norms, the portrayal again highlights the constructedness of the character and gender.

These types of tough-guys turned musical protagonists maintain the ambivalence of these new generic norms by infusing their stories with the social unrest of the action films and Westerns from which they transferred. Their associations with a volatile, solitary life—rather than one of romantic domesticity—support the shift occurring from romance to male melodrama or dramatic quest (or at least a problematization of romance as seen in both *At Long Last Love* and *Paint Your Wagon*). Not easily assimilated from their individual moral codes or their stamp of promiscuity, they infuse disruption or a sense of self-conscious masculinity into narratives which may lean toward a recuperation back into arcadian norms.

Rock/Pop Stars

The inclusion of male pop and rock celebrities as stars in the Hollywood musical did not emerge with the arrival of the ambivalent musical. From the Sinatra/Crosby crooners to Elvis, Fabian, and Frankie Avalon, popular music stars found the musical to be a natural extension of their singing careers. This did not change as the musical shifted in terms of connotation and type of performance. Rather, as the established Hollywood musical star suffered a serious decline in presence, music stars played a major role in the

new integrated musical vehicles from James Brown (*The Blues Brothers*), Ritchie Havens (*Catch My Soul*), and The Bee Gees (*Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*) to harder-edged rockers such as Eric Clapton (*Tommy*), Aerosmith, and Alice Cooper (both in *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*). Along with the shifting connotations of many of these films' narratives, the entrance of these musicians alongside an already ambivalent storyline aids in producing films which no longer reinforce but challenge or flat-out defy a dominant ideology of heterosexual romance solving all problems. Far from the bubblegum, boy-next-door quality attached to earlier 1960s pop stars, many of those who segued into the Hollywood musical from the late 1960s through the early 1980s brought with them severe critiques of or threats to the establishment and/or music which challenged the curative powers professed in the arcadian musical. While Havens starred in the rock-n-roll remake of Shakespeare's *Othello*—scorned by Judith Crist with, "I refuse to go into details on dialogue that joins bastardized Shakespeare with 'man' and 'dig it' jargon"³⁷—his star image was also inextricably linked to his opening performance at Woodstock, a moment in music history forming an apotheosis of popular music as a site to challenge rather than reify the hegemonic norm. Similarly, acts like Aerosmith and Alice Cooper bring a drunken/drug-induced sense of violence not associated with earlier Hollywood musical stars. Cooper's dark and violently disturbing and devilish stage show was far from amenable to a *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*-esque musical; rather, it fits well within the ambivalent musical *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, as his character sets out to brainwash the youth of America. The musicians who take the screen in this period bring with them an asocial generational rebellion or anger which

compliments the ambiguous narratives they inhabit. Among these, The Who's appearance in their own rock opera *Tommy* and The Village People's sexually ambiguous position within the overly perky and seemingly arcadian *Can't Stop the Music* serve as ideal examples of the function of the rock/pop star within these new narratives.

The Who

In 1975 the British band The Who brought their stage rock opera *Tommy* to the big screen. Like many of the popular singers who joined the ranks of film musical stars, they brought with them a growing career and individual and group star images based on the characteristics which represent the very opposite of the arcadian musical ideals. Rather than uniting battling factions of society, through their cultural associations, musical lyrics, and public performances they created an image which directly challenged the establishment. Far from using music as a force to unify the old and the young, The Who's music punctuated a historical moment based on generational and ideological upheaval. This historical moment, though somewhat concluded by the release of *Tommy*, remains at the center of the film's message.

Formed in England in the mid 1960s, The Who was popularly introduced via the British television show *Ready, Set, Go!* as part of the commercialization of the thriving Mod culture.³⁸ The Mod movement—defined by its association with the drug and music underground as well as its organically emerging sense of style and fashion—ran counter to both the establishment and the British greasy, leather-clad rocker. Sporting coiffed and trimmed hair and elegant clothing, the Mods defined appropriate style as dictated by the powers that be within the Mod ranks, not any commercial or popular source—at least

until the media cashed in on the latest sellable trend.³⁹ The Who was comprised of tiny but powerful vocalist Roger Daltry, guitar smashing windmill of a guitar player Pete Townshend, bass player John Entwistle, and volatile drummer Keith Moon. Moon describes their association with the Mods as forced on them, stating they were all sent to a hairdresser by their manager and then to buy clothing which would suit the Mod “uniform.” “Most of our audience were Mods, pill-‘eads like ourselves, you see. We weren’t into clothes; we were into music.”⁴⁰ Playing mainly Rhythm and Blues to Mod crowds in England, the group first came to the United States as part of a 1967 Easter multi-band show. In this first U.S. performance, Townshend ceremoniously destroyed his guitar and the surrounding equipment after their performance of their soon-to-be youth anthem “My Generation”:

People try to put us down, Talkin' 'bout my generation.
Just because we get around, Talkin' 'bout my generation.
Things they do look awful cold, Talkin' 'bout my generation.
I hope I die before I get old, Talkin' 'bout my generation.⁴¹

A few months later they would return to the United States to perform at the Monterey Pop Festival, the event which featured the first major American performances of both The Who and Jimi Hendrix. Both of them would destroy their instruments on stage, be captured on the 1968 documentary film *Monterey Pop*, and come to personify the late 1960s youth culture movement. A similar performance would be captured on film for the 1970 documentary *Woodstock*. Performing a festival of guitar feedback, acrobatics, and hostility, while sporting long hair and fringe and looking the part for the psychedelia of the period, they maintained a hard edge which separated them from much of the popular music associated with the hippie movement.

Over the next few years The Who would become famous for their stage antics, drunken binges (Moon was known to take a hatchet to hotel rooms), and guru worship, as well as their music.⁴² The Who released their concept album/rock opera album *Tommy* in 1969, touring concert venues and opera houses, and then recreating it with a full orchestral production on the London stage in 1972. The cast included Ringo Starr, Steve Winwood, Rod Stewart, and Davos, all of whom would be replaced for the film.⁴³

Released in 1975 and directed by Ken Russell (who also directed the ambivalent *The Boy Friend*), *Tommy* visually and textually assaults the senses. Structured around the spontaneous loss of sight, speech, and hearing of a boy who witnesses the murder of his father by his mother's lover, the film combines grotesque emotional abuse with a story of redemption, rebellion, and rebirth.⁴⁴ At times confusing and convoluted, the film ends after the destruction of the religious utopia created by its Christlike hero, Tommy—who, upon becoming a pinball champion and subsequently regaining his sight, hearing, speech, manages to reform his corrupt mother and lure the masses to his pinball/sensory deprivation-based religion. Along with the simultaneous condemnation of religious zealotry and capitalistic corruption, the film examines the failure of family (through Tommy's mother, sadistic Cousin Kevin, and molesting Uncle Ernie) and the seemingly incompatibility of society's factions. The music of The Who—dissonant, rebellious, and volatile—further complicates a narrative rife with ambiguities and concluding with a somewhat ambivalent image of Tommy, arms raised in triumph after the physical destruction of everyone and everything close to him. Like the comedians of the musical who bring a sense of chaotic irreverence to the genre, rock and roll groups like The Who

The Who and The Village People



Above: The Who embody their aggressive rock personae in *Tommy* as Daltry takes charge of the counterculture pinball cult (top left), Moon portrays perverse Uncle Ernie (top right) and destroys his drum kit (bottom left), and Townshend—in classic form—destroys his guitar (bottom right).

Below: The Village people—balancing a gay cachet and mainstream (straight) appeal—walk the line in *Can't Stop the Music*, combining disco-infused male stereotypes (top) and hip shaking and male bonding with overt heterosexual imagery as the construction worker fends off a bevy of vixens in “I Love You to Death” (bottom left) and the whole gang cavorts in the YMCA hot tub with their female benefactor (bottom right).



Illustrations 4.16 through 4.22, left to right from top

come saddled with their counterculture, youth rebellion, volatile (or in the case of Townshend, spiritually peaceful) selves. Rising from an antiestablishment musical genre aggressively challenging the status quo, such a band extratextually denies a conciliatory ending which reinforces stasis (as in the arcadian musical). By their very nature, they connote rebellion and change.

The Village People

Much less aggressive than The Who or various other Hollywood musical-visiting rockers, The Village People, by the very nature of their image and early persona, brought an element of social dissent and rule breaking to the otherwise arcadian musical *Can't Stop the Music*. The band emerged out of the disco era of the 1970s. French impresario Jacques Morali produced the prefab group as a response to seeing gay men costumed and dancing in bars. Creating a singing group based wholly on the visual image, Morali combined a cowboy, Indian, construction worker, leather man, policeman, and army man to present a chorus line of American male stereotypes. Their first album in 1977 included a series of gay-themed disco tunes—"Fire Island," "San Francisco," "In Hollywood," and "Village People"—and was performed by a set of studio musicians while the cover bore a series of male models. Ultimately the studio musicians failed to pull off any type of widely marketable live performance, the type of publicity needed to further a disco group at the time. Morali recast the group, ultimately settling on a combination of the originals (Broadway performer/cop Victor Willis, club dancer/Indian Filipe Rose, and backup singer/army man Alex Briley) and new additions (unemployed Broadway performer/construction worker David Hodo, professional dancer/cowboy Randy Jones,

and toll collector/leather man Glenn Hughes). Together the group created a singing and dancing machine which took the Village People outside of the gay clubs, finding widespread popular success.

With the release of their second album, *Macho Man*, the group landed its first two top forty hits: “Macho Man” (#28) and “Y.M.C.A” (#2). As “Macho Man” crossed over into the mainstream audience, the gay overtones of the lyrics were lost on many. Realizing the advantage of avoiding branding as a “gay group,” the group shelved their non-normative sexual overtones. According to a 1979 interview in *Rolling Stone*, this newfound mainstream success led Morali and the band members to reconsider their “out” status. Though they retained their campy hyper-masculine look, the press coverage and even Morali’s rhetoric avoided any admission of homosexuality within the band. The band’s producer would ultimately recant on previous statements regarding band members’ sexual orientation. Instead, the men danced around issues of sexuality, foregrounding the advantage of mainstream appeal. When questioned about the idea that gay activist groups were incensed about Casablanca records closeting the group to keep them “safe for straights,” Hodo stated, “Gay activists wonder why they aren’t getting anywhere, and it’s because they have no goddamn sense of humor...We as a group don’t like labels, don’t like black-white, gay-straight, disco-rock & roll. Whatever. We’re not Joan Baez.”⁴⁵ Ultimately, their “straight shooting” paid off. The group became a mainstay on television in the late 1970s and early 1980s, appearing on such wholesome shows as *American Bandstand* (1977, 1979, 1981), *Midnight Special* (1978, 1979, 1980), *Soul Train* (1980), and *The Love Boat* (1980).⁴⁶

In the midst of identity politics-policing and damage control, the group added *Can't Stop the Music* to their growing resume. While disco culture was waning and pop and new wave were rising, the Village People played the film as if disco were the one true savior of society. Harkening back to the musical's arcadian roots, the film tells the story of a young man in search of his one true love: a successful music career. Stacked with every possible musical cliché and largely holding true to the ideological formula laid down by the musicals of yore, *Can't Stop the Music* presents a culture-uniting, dream-achieving, musical romp which defies the curative and capitalistic virtues of disco music. A young songwriter (Steve Guttenburg) sets his sights on the big time. With the help of his fashion model roommate, he creates a band from random acquaintances in Greenwich Village—ergo The Village People. Throw into the mix a bumbling record producer (Paul Sand), a lumbering and square Midwestern lawyer (Bruce Jenner), an overbearing stage mother (June Havoc, the real life daughter of *Gypsy's* Mama Rose), an opportunistic modeling agent (Tammy Grimes), a successful record deal, and a few glitzy, sexy, sexually non-threatening numbers, and you have *Can't Stop the Music*. Like any good arcadian musical the fashion model wins the lawyer, the songwriter bonds with his mother, and the New York Village freaks (The Village People) are melded with West Coast society matrons, and it is all because of the restorative powers of music and musical performers.

While the story largely adheres to the dictates of the arcadian musical—decidedly more than many musicals of this era—the prefabricated images of The Village People work against the clean conciliatory ending presented in the film. Press reactions to the

film illustrate the difficulty in staving off the homosexual overtones of the performers and their performances, despite co-screenwriter Bruce Vilanch's claim that "*Discoland* was never conceived of as a gay project... Trying to have a gay hero is the easiest way to write yourself a flop."⁴⁷ (Truly, how could one perform a straight reading of the *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*-like beefed up performance of "Y.M.C.A.?" With slews of men wrestling, dancing, diving, and skipping rope, one would be hard pressed to allow the lyrics and images to deny the obvious subversive meanings). Only Hodo's performance of the sadistic "I Love You To Death" while dressed in a glitzed-up version of his traditional construction worker gear and flanked by scantily dressed slithering women truly enters into the realm of overt (hetero)sexuality. While the public awareness of the band members' true sexualities remained in question, press response to the film highlights the possible disruptive quality of the group's sexual connotation to the film's overall message. Reviews quipped, "If *Can't Stop the Music* had the nerve to be the first big-budget musical to accept what it hints at, it might—just might—have been interesting,"⁴⁸ and "It's a rather tall order, turning a group of leering homosexual fetishists into the Mousketeers, but producers Alan Carr... would seem just the man for the job."⁴⁹ By casting into the mix of unity and narrative closure the structuring absence of the extratextual connotations of homosexuality, the overt images of a harmonious society are refuted by the cultural and ideological contestations associated with non-heterosexual identification and non-monogamous relationships.

CONCLUSION

As the structure of the film industry shifted, the men who populated the Hollywood musical shifted in turn. With this influx of non-Hollywood musical males populating the genre's products, inherently the associated star connotation added to the texts of new films. Tough guys, rock stars, and comedians brought with them professional and personal histories incongruous to the earlier incarnation of the genre. Reynolds brought sex, Williams contributed inanity, and groups such as the Village People and The Who brought various seeds of cultural discontent. This influx of cultural, moral, and generic incompatibilities furthered the ambivalent musicals' thrust toward a generic formula which dismissed the notion of an inevitable societal harmony for one which contends with the inevitability of conflict, contradiction, and chaos. As in the narratives in which they circulated, both character and star would find the possibility of the arcadian "happily ever after" no more than a fleeting ideal. Even narratives which held promise for the conciliatory ending and the bonded community would become complicated and fractured by the star personae who enacted them.

Chapter 5: The Performance of Song and Dance

By virtue of its very nomenclature, the Hollywood musical relies on the significant inclusion of song and dance in its narratives. These pictures run the gamut of the backstager, when the show-as-life metaphor provides a space for professional (or amateur) performers to strut their stuff, kick up their heels, and express heartfelt emotion both on and off the stage, to the integrated musical where life becomes inextricably linked to the performance of song and dance as it become seamlessly blended into the everyday activities of the characters who find it the best or only way to express life, love, or communal bonding, to films which lie beyond the borders of the integrated musical such as Berkeley-esque spectacles or narrative-lite films which provide vehicles for the talents of various musical stars. Whether integrated or not, these films embody “the musical” because of their reliance on music as a major means to communicate or entertain.

With the coming of sound, the motion picture industry gained a means to showcase singers in ways heretofore impossible. Broadway crossovers such as Fred Astaire, Eddie Cantor, Mary Martin, and Ethel Merman brought the legitimacy of the live theatre to motion pictures, transferring from a form bereft of a camera or sound editing to alter their song and dance quality. Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, and Doris Day brought popular music to the genre in films such as *Birth of the Blues*, *Pal Joey*, and *Love Me or Leave Me* respectively, while hoofers both drawn from other avenues of performance or schooled by the studio system stables brought mastery of various styles of dance to the

screen via the help of Broadway choreographers such as Michael Kidd (*Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Guys and Dolls*), Agnes DeMille (*Carousel*, *Oklahoma*), and Robert Alton (*Barkleys of Broadway*, *Call Me Madam*).

As has been discussed in previous chapters, the 1960s brought a shift in the types of productions making their way to the screen. Whether due to modifications in the acting pool, a dearth of new viable Broadway projects, or the ensuing move in narrative structure and focus in these films, a decided change in performance style can be seen in the musicals of the 1966-1983 era, which further solidifies a definitive ambivalent phase of the genre. Not all films of this era stray from forms of performance popularized in the arcadian period; rather, varying levels of change emerge throughout different vehicles. Those films more closely adhering to the ambivalent dictates laid out in this project and those which fall more closely to those of the arcadian period both illustrate shifts away from the inclusion of performance elements—song and dance—as projections of an inner truth, joy, and communal harmony. By examining elements such as vocal quality, means of presenting the sung word, dance style, and the context of both types of performance, this chapter interrogates the shifting significance of the inclusion (or exclusion) of song and dance in musical motion pictures of this time period.

PERFORMANCE IN THE ARCADIAN MUSICAL

As integral components of both the arcadian and ambivalent musical—whether through their presence or structuring absence—song and dance serve as the base of these genre films. Many musicals of the earlier period, often strongly resembling the dictates of the arcadian musical, use these performance practices in ways which underscore the

overall ideological project of the films themselves. While I do not mean to imply that these performance arts have totally changed or become insignificant in the ambivalent musical, it becomes quite useful to observe the contrast in styles and effect between the two forms of the genre. The existing scholarship which describes song and dance within the genre largely focuses on the performances and narrative positioning in the earlier films.

As discussed in the previous chapter, types of performers—both male and female—changed over the years. The arcadian musical abounds with the energy of the trained singing voice. Whether Martin, Sinatra, Merman, or Keel, the voices themselves became synonymous with the genre as a whole. These *real* singers brought an energy connected to the trained voice. The songs spoke through their melodic and passionate articulations of the characters' experiences. Frequently written to transfer easily into the American popular music market, these songs and singers often lent a sincerity and legitimacy of the craft. This said, I do not mean to imply that these early films were without their non-singers. Stars such as Audrey Hepburn (*Funny Face*, *My Fair Lady*), Rossano Brazzi (*South Pacific*), Christopher Plummer (*Sound of Music*), and Rosalind Russell (*Gypsy*) grace the musical without actually carrying their own tunes. However, as Marsha Siefert discusses in her scholarship on vocal dubbing, the types of dubbing often associated with the early musical (or here the arcadian musical) seeks to mask its own artifice.¹ While Brazzi or Plummer may not be singing “Some Enchanted Evening” or “Edelweiss,” it appears as if their characters could be. Voice and body seem to merge

easily, one flawlessly implying the other. This attempt at congruity avoids detracting from the performances at hand.

Along with the actual bodily performance of song in the arcadian musical, importance rests on the narrative responsibility of the singing. What did it mean to sing within the narrative? Scholars have repeatedly connected the inclusion of song to the furthering of the romance plotlines and an overall expression of joy, truth, and naturalness. Rick Altman's very concept for the musical relies on the existence and simultaneous performance of the romantic couple. Through similar solos and ultimate duets, the inevitability of the couple's union came to the fore. In his example of *Gigi*, dueling solos—"I Don't Understand the Parisians" and "It's a Bore"—foreshadow Gigi's and Gaston's ultimate romance.² As the two articulate through song their feelings about life and love, their differences and eventual similarities become obvious. In such films, song and the use of recitative—or the seamless transition from spoken word to song—simultaneously disrupt and forward the narrative, allowing the character to drift into more detailed monologues which elaborate on their motivation in ways unlikely in "realistic" dialogue or contrived asides. The arcadian use of song often results in continuous understated conversions from speaking to singing voice.

Altman ties the easy transition from speaking to singing to the overall naturalness of song in the musical. Constructed as something connected to the ultimate truths, joys, and emotions, song blends into the narrative not only through recitative, but also through the merging of the sung melody to the "rhythm of life." The sounds of the city—racetracks in *Guys and Dolls* or crowded trains in *The Music Man*—or country—the clip

clap of horses in *Oklahoma* or whips in *Calamity Jane*—provide sounds of life which then merge into the sung tune. *The Music Man*'s "Rock Island" combines the traveling salesman's lyrics with the sounds of the train as the quick bounces (with the repeated use of the word "cash" mimicking the turning of the wheels and "whatayataalk" replicating the bounce of the railcar) and whirs (shh shh shh) punctuate the tempo of the singers:

Cash for the hogshead, cask and demijohn.
Cash for the crackers and the pickles and the flypaper
Look whatayataalk. whatayataalk, whatayataalk, whatayataalk, whatayataalk?
Weredayagittit?
Whatayataalk?
...
But it's different than it was.
No it ain't, no it ain't, but ya gotta know the territory.
Shh shh shh shh shh shh shh.³

Rendering life and song synonymous, such onomatopoeia and rhythmic articulation situate the musical performance within the reality of the diegetic world. Such choices further highlight the continuity and calm of the narrative. Through vocal transition/quality and narrative intention, sung portions of the arcadian musical support the overall utopian notion of easily solved conflicts and united communities.

Similarly, the early or arcadian musical uses dance as a compliment to song in the quest to unite the community, render natural these seemingly disruptive performative arts, and demonstrate the internal joy of those who people the fictional communities. Both through style and narrative positioning of dance, the arcadian musical further supports the notion that the narrative community rests on the attainable brink of utopia and peaceful cohabitation. Many of these films use pure or synthesized forms of ballet, ballroom, or folk dancing. As with song, dance often emerges out of the mundane: horse

riding, house cleaning, or wood chopping. Life evokes the physical performance of dance as daily activities easily merge into syncopated bodily movement. Expressions of joy, sorrow, or confusion become heightened as dance—as with song—more fully expresses the emotion or character intention than day-to-day movement can.

Both Jane Feuer and Altman discuss the smooth transition from everyday activities to dance through discussions of tinkering or bricolage and the response to the innate rhythm of everyday activities. Altman discusses the naturalization of dance through its representation as a logical extension of life.⁴ As *The Music Man*'s trains become song, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*' barn raising becomes an extended dance number and *Damn Yankee*'s baseball players turn sport into a dance of celebration. Dance merely articulates the heightened dramatic moments of reality. Feuer points not to the rhythmic sounds of life as the syncopated rhythms of movement, but the musical's ability to produce seemingly spontaneous dance numbers through the integration of everyday objects.⁵ In *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, Molly suddenly dances with the accoutrements of royalty in "I Ain't Down Yet" as she and her brothers gather a blanket, bucket, and broom to create a costume. Gene Kelly was particularly apt to convert everyday items into tools for a dance number, as garbage can lids become overblown tap shoes in *It's Always Fair Weather*. Such devices simultaneously imply the normalcy or naturalness of the dance and its unpremeditated nature. The dance was neither planned nor choreographed by professionals; rather it sprung from the activities of the lives of normal members of the community. Deviating from the notion of dance as a professional

private activity and reinforcing it as a communal public practice, tinkering latches the dance to the ordinary.

While such films naturalize dance by integrating it into everyday life, they simultaneously prioritize the dancing event as one which highlights the communal significance of the act. While the passed-along-song brings the community together in voice, various types of dancing bring that same group together through the physical expression of joy and togetherness. Whether a giant Charleston/traditional Asian folk/square dance in *Flower Drum Song* which celebrates the Chinese-American's assimilation into American society or a rousing folk-dance inspired romp of a picnic in *Carousel* or *The Pajama Game*, large dance numbers which include significant factions of society can visually illustrate an exuberant unity more concisely than the spoken word. Conversely, such displays—exemplified by *West Side Story*'s balletic rumbles and disputes over the virtues of Puerto Rico versus “America” or *Oklahoma*'s raucous hoedown about whether “The Farmer and the Cowman”—provide heightened moments of physical action to play out the overt conflicts existent between rivaling factions of the society which must ultimately be overcome through the magical resolution of conflicting ideologies.⁶

Both Steve Cohan and Altman point to the presence of dance as a method to develop visually the courtship of the musical's romantic couple—they who ultimately embody the virtues and vices of the opposing communities. A means to construct the erotic and emotional bonds between characters at a time when such visual suggestions were often kept from the delicate eyes of viewers, dance serves as a physical

manifestation of various levels of the courtship ritual. In his discussion of the narrative disintegration associated with the spectacle of many Fred Astaire dance numbers, Cohan additionally discusses their narrative utility as vessels for demonstrating eroticism, courtship, or gendered binaries or homogeneity. Whether dancing on a relatively equal basis with Ginger Rogers or schooling a young Leslie Caron (*Daddy Long Legs*) or Audrey Hepburn (*Funny Face*), Astaire uses dance to establish the bounds and rules of the budding romance.⁷ Altman too points to Astaire/Rogers in describing the evolution of dance through his subgenre of the fairy tale musical. Mimicking the courtship ritual, the dancing duo must move through various stages including the conflict oriented “challenge dance” and ultimate “romantic dance.” Such dances not only provide narrative progression but also highlight the characters’ personality-based conflicts which the narrative must ultimately resolve.⁸

Along with these seemingly diegetically-driven numbers, the arcadian musical also relies on the narrative work accomplished through the dream ballet, a vehicle used widely by Gene Kelly (*On the Town*, *An American in Paris*, *Singin’ in the Rain*) and others (*The Girl Most Likely*’s “The Happiest Girl Alive,” *Oklahoma!*’s “Out of My Dreams,” *Flower Drum Song*’s “Look Away”). These numbers function as a means for the dreamer to recognize conflict and seek out resolution in ways s/he is unable to accomplish while awake.⁹ The dream ballet provides a magical insight unavailable to the waking mortal. Additionally, the arcadian final production number, often in the shape of a wedding or some other form of celebration, halts the narrative and floods the screen with performative excess at the moment of conflict resolution. Films such as *Billy Rose’s*

Jumbo use the final production number not to naturalize the in-fact tenuous resolution of dueling sides but to remove magically the conflict altogether. Though the film concludes with Sam (Jimmy Durante) losing his circus to the big business circus owner, upon regaining possession of his prize elephant Jumbo, Sam, Max (Stephen Boyd), Kitty (Martha Rae), and Sam's daughter Lu (Doris Day) join together in a rousing production number celebrating "What is a Circus." Rife with singing, dancing, bizarre circus-themed costumes and gags, the number ultimately concludes the narrative on a high note when, in actuality, Sam remains without ownership of his circus or a means to retrieve it. The performance and celebration of the two couples (Sam and Kitty/Max and Lu) and the glory of circus life overshadow the ultimate failure of the narrative's hero and heroine to attain what they physically (beyond romantically) desire: their successful and family-run business. Whether through traditional folk dances which link the dancers to the social ideologies over which the narratives struggle to preserve or amalgamations of dance styles (jazz, tap, ballet, ballroom, soft-shoe, etc.), these narrative moments provide visual reinforcement of the ultimate narrative goal of the arcadian musical, the magical resolution of the utopic conclusion, and a seemingly uncomplicated combination of conflicting value systems and social practices.

While scholars such as Altman, Feuer, and Cohan have examined the functions of bodily performance in the musical, their study has largely revolved around those vehicles which by narrative structure fall under the category of what is termed here the arcadian musical. Serving to celebrate the abilities of the actors themselves, to unite the couples, and answer the unanswerable—while simultaneously manifesting itself in such a way that

its incongruity to everyday life is masked through natural integration into the world of the diegesis—song and dance have served as a significant means to accomplish the narrative project of the arcadian musical: the attainment of a cultural utopia.

As the ambivalent musical deviates from this overall goal, so does the performance of song and dance serve a separate diegetic function. As a result of story types, actors' abilities, and en vogue musical and cinematic styles, the performance and narrative function of song and dance in the musical shifts to underscore the darker and more inconclusive worlds portrayed in the ambivalent Hollywood musical. While by no means do all musicals of the 1966-1983 era totally abandon characteristics such as the integration of song and dance into the natural rhythms of characters' lives and an articulation of group conflict and congruency, the dream ballet as source of internal knowledge or problem-solving, or the presence of "real" singers and dancers who lend credence to the legitimacy of performance through their extratextual association with and diegetic grace in execution of musical performance, ambivalent musicals do illustrate a significant displacement of dance, rearrangement of the function and presentation of song, and an overall shift in narrative utility of the two forms of performance.

WANNA SING: AH, I'M AMBIVALENT ABOUT IT

While the Nazi-free hills had once been alive with the "Sound of Music" and songs such as *Silk Stockings*' "Red Blues" had been able to turn any musical Commie into a red-blooded blues fan and devotee of the U.S. of A., many of the films of the 1966-1983 period, those herein termed the ambivalent musicals, often abandon the association of song with the unity of both body and community. Though films such as *Hello Dolly!*,

Funny Girl, *Half a Sixpence*, and *Thoroughly Modern Millie* maintain their associations with both “real” stage and screen singers (Barbara Streisand, Michael Crawford, Tommy Steele, and Julie Andrews) and include plots which to some extent mirror those of an earlier time—whether because of rampant integration of song being sung by the actual onscreen performer or because of the utopic and conciliatory ending often associated with the genre—a larger number of films take on the project of integrating song into the musical narrative in ways which diverge from those of an earlier era. Various tactics are implemented to distance the performance of song from the actual narrative, actors, and characters. To varying results, these types of performance—voiceover, non-singers, and foregrounded dubbing—aid in further distancing the attainment of the social utopia once encouraged by the inclusion of integrated song in the musical. Rather than, as suggested by Altman, melding into the everyday lived performances of the characters, these methods of performance stand outside of those lives. Communal bond no longer appearing inevitable, song stands as a further means by which the musical itself begins to point to the very improbability of social rest or the unlikelihood of happily ever after. Simultaneously, the emergence of rock-n-roll as a dominant musical form and therefore performance mode infuses the conciliatory generic ending with a musical genre rife with ambivalence and upheaval. As once soothing tones are replaced by screeching voices in problematic situations, the voice itself discourages the safety and resolution once associated with the genre.

Voiceover

Whether because of a decline in the participation of skilled singers or just a change in moviemaking style, the ambivalent musical shows a significant inclusion of voiceover singing. Films such as *The Jazz Singer*, *Alice's Restaurant*, and *Phantom of the Paradise* fall just outside the bounds of the integrated musical by virtue of their penchant for voiceover singing. In all three films, musical numbers are split between show numbers—those during which the performer actually performs the music to a diegetic listening audience—and voiceover singing—those numbers which underscore the action of the film and appear to be sung by a character in the film but are not sung by the character within the diegesis. The types of numbers, which in the arcadian musical serve to either further the narrative or glean additional insight into the thoughts and desires of the characters, are transformed into numbers ultimately disconnected from the bodies of those responsible for their performances. As *Phantom of the Paradise* tells the story of the disfigured composer who sells his soul to the devil and his torturous unrequited romance with the woman he desires to sing his music, the songs which embody his passion and anguish are not sung by the character, rather separated from him.¹⁰ A barrier erupts between the emotive power scholars once associated with the performance of song in the arcadian musical and the member of the diegetic society which ultimately must resolve or remain bound to social conflict. The song plays under the onscreen action, thereby removing its real participation in the social drama. Not only is the Phantom's song never heard by the community to which he dreams of belonging, but his feelings are not truly expressed in the world of the film; rather, they circulate

outside the cinematic drama as a lingering yearning which cannot and will not find satiation.

Lost Horizon, *Goodbye, Mister Chips*, and *The Little Prince* exemplify the ambivalent films of this period which often forego the onscreen performance of integrated musical numbers for the voiceover. *The Little Prince*, a film mostly involving the misunderstood pilot and the lonely Little Prince, uses voiceover repeatedly for both sung and spoken word. As the film begins, pilot (at that point merely a boy himself) narrates his own alienated childhood. Misunderstood by grownups who mistake his drawing of a boa constrictor having swallowed an animal for a hat, he withdraws into his own isolation. As the film shifts to his adult life, musical numbers sung by the pilot are repeatedly presented in voiceover. Not integrated into society or simultaneously present in voice and body, his words of desperation (in “I Need Air,” “I’m on Your Side,” and “Little Prince From Who Knows Where”) and even ultimate joy and camaraderie (in “Why is the Desert”) remain within his own mind. Not truly even expressed to the boy who brings him out of his isolation, the pilot’s emotions never fully manifest in the world of the real. In the same film, however, those engaged in life on their own specific planets sing their songs aloud and therefore explicitly espouse their ways of life, ones which they (the King, historian, and soldier) wish others to adopt. Similarly, the fox and the snake—characters created for the boy through the pilot’s drawings—engage emotionally and outwardly with the Little Prince and ultimately encourage him to abandon the sullen pilot for their company, acts which lead to a heartfelt relationship with the fox and ultimate death at the hands of the snake. This desire for worlds to come together or for deviant

characters to conform to the norms of society guides the arcadian musical. Here, the pilot remains on the outside, unable to and uninterested in joining forces with those just as closed-minded and undesirable as the grown-ups who rejected him in his youth. His withdrawal from the world around him—except for his desperate need to care for the Little Prince—illustrated via his musical estrangement with reality ultimately leads to his further isolation. Not until the end, as he realizes his need for the dying Little Prince’s laughter does he fully perform his music diegetically—though again in absence of any real company.

Goodbye, Mister Chips provides a similar type of engagement with song. Comprised of a combination of show numbers sung by Mister Chips’s (Peter O’Toole) love interest and eventual wife (Petula Clark), integrated numbers sung by boys at the school, and voiceover numbers sung by the protagonist Chips, it uses the bodiless performance of song to demonstrate varying stages of Chips’s isolation. Based on the 1939 drama of the same name starring Robert Donat, *Goodbye, Mister Chips* recalls the story of Mister Chipping, an English boy’s school teacher. Progressing from early middle- to old-age, the film follows Chips’s career as a disliked, persnickety professor at Brookfield Academy, through his uptight first meeting with showgirl Katherine (Clark), through his loosening-up leading up to and during their marriage, past her tragic death during World War II, and his ultimate retirement from and continued living at the school. Though constantly surrounded by bustling life, the character of Chips begins and ends rather introspectively, not realizing his impact on the lives of the boys until his retirement. Chip’s strict and stately English manner prevents him, through the majority

of his life, from expressing extreme emotion of any kind. Aside from his passion for his wife—which he must work through as her showgirl lifestyle and flamboyant behavior come into direct conflict with the life he has created at Brookfield—he remains reserved. Replicating this constant undercurrent of reserved Englishness, almost all musical numbers (aside from those performed on the stage by Katherine) are presented in voiceover.

As with *The Little Prince*, this choice creates a situation which denies the overall integration of the protagonist into the surrounding society. By virtue of his reserved nature and the traditions associated with the Academy, Chips maintains physical and emotional distance from the boys as well as fellow faculty members. Often presented as haughty, hypocritically self-righteous, or emotionally unavailable, other adult members of the school neither fully engage with nor approve of Chips. His marriage to Katherine, whose questionable past tarnishes the good name of Brookfield, further forces the exemplary professor outside of the favor of the powers that be (as Chips was both overlooked for the position of head master and nearly forced to leave his post altogether). This tertiary positioning within society and overall introspective tack toward life and personal interactions bespeaks through the repeated choice of presenting song through voiceover. Both through sadness or nostalgic longing—“Where Did My Childhood Go”—and romantic joy—“What a Lot of Flowers”—O’Toole’s Chips stops short of expressing emotion outwardly.

Whether expressing character’s personal or social isolation, the technique of using voiceover and banishing the physical body from the musical equation presents a direct

affront to the generic project of song-as-communal bonding. By disconnecting the performance from the community or members within, the song fails to serve as a catalyst for unity. Surpassing the introspectiveness of songs used as personal asides or private proclamations (*South Pacific*'s "Cockeyed Optimist," *The Sound of Music*'s "I Have Confidence," or *Gypsy*'s "Rose's Turn"), these musical numbers fail to drive the character forward into engagement with the real diegetic world, instead allowing him/her to remain on the sidelines of his/her society, neither fully engaging nor seeking to align one's self with an alternative society. These performances, following the goals laid for the ambivalent musical's narrative, situate their performers within a space not wholly integrated into or separated from the norm. This ambivalence toward the world prevents an ultimate utopian conclusion where the protagonist melds with the society around him/her. Instead, like Chips's and the pilot's performances, they remain on the outside of externalized reality, society, and ultimate happiness.

Non-Singers

Also by virtue of the shifts occurring in casting, a declining favor toward characters randomly and inexplicably bursting into song, and/or a changing fashion in motion pictures overall, non-singers populate many integrated musicals produced during this period. Unless ultimately dubbed by the vocals of a trained singer, this practice often results in an abandonment of singing for "talk-singing." A practice exhibited earlier by stars such as Chevalier, the talk-sing (like the voiceover) diminishes the integration of the fantastical world of magic resolution and the real world of complicated problems. While not every song performed less heartily than those by a MacRae, Keel, or Nelson Eddy

automatically equates to the loss of a narrative utopia, when combined with storylines common in the ambivalent musical, such choices in singing style pull the performance further away from one which embraces the utopian fantasy associated with the arcadian style of the genre. Additionally, the inclusion of the non-singer increases the presence of lead characters who seldom sing and thereby remain somewhat attached to the real.

Actors such as Rex Harrison (*Dr. Doolittle*), O'Toole (*Goodbye, Mister Chips*, *Man of la Mancha*), Richard Harris (*Camelot*), Lee Marvin (*Paint Your Wagon*), and Walter Matthau (*Hello Dolly!*) forego traditional singing styles, almost wholly speaking their lyrics. *Dr. Doolittle* rests in an awkward position. Blocked from being perceived as a call toward realism—two-headed lamas/pushmi-pullyus, Great Pink Sea Snails large enough to transport comfortably three people back to England, and Giant Lunar Moths abound—the film balances visual fantasy with an approach to song in which the main protagonist never fully engages with the music and abandons the spoken word of the real world. Much like the two-headed lama, this pushmi-pullyu method of visual/aural reality/fantasy creates an ambivalent position for the singer, song, and narrative's hero. In the case of *Doolittle* himself, the blasé world of human interaction pales in comparison to his life with the animals. His performance in songs such as “Talk to the Animals” and “In Your Eyes” (both of which are directed to or sung about the animals), more aurally connected to the world outside of musical reality, serves as a kind of half-life. Like the pilot in *The Little Prince*, he fails to engage fully with society beyond his animal friends. Often sung in isolation from humans, his subtle departure from full-on speaking falls shy of actualizing the attainment of joy and communal harmony proposed by scholars as one

project of song in the musical genre. Ultimately, Doolittle finds joy beyond the bounds of the animal world, as he falls for Emma, a stowaway on his quest for the moth and snail. Their love is never, however, visually requited as she departs on the snail to be followed by Doolittle on the moth. No song accompanies the trip home, leaving them both visually and musically separated at the conclusion. Though theoretically they will be united at a later date, the unstable position of the relationship rests as the lingering visual and aural device deny performative recuperation.

Camelot engages with song on a similar level. Non-singers embody the dual protagonists Guenevere (Vanessa Redgrave) and Arthur (Harris). Like *The Little Prince* and *Doctor Dolittle*, the film tells a story which runs counter to the dictates of the arcadian musical. Dependant on marital infidelities, political failures, and uncertain futures, the narrative confounds the social unity and personal satisfaction which comprises the genre's conciliatory endings. Neither Redgrave nor Harris possesses the musical prowess to belt his/her musical numbers with joy and conviction. Instead, both entertain varying levels of talk-singing in their performances. Unlike in the arcadian musical, their respective songs do not ultimately build to happiness. Rather, as Guenevere shifts between weak singing and talking as she plans to prove Lancelot's weakness in "Then You May Take Me to the Fair," the song drives the narrative forward with the early stages of deception which ultimately lead to her infidelity. Similarly, as Arthur talks his way through (umpteenth versions of) "Camelot," "How to Handle a Woman," and "Guenevere," his restraint or ambivalent commitment to actual song forces him to remain distant from the accomplishments the arcadian musical proved possible

through song. As he sings of his political dreams and romantic desires, his songs serve as mere shadows of the joy he wishes he could achieve in a utopian world of fidelity, military strength, and familial and political harmony. As he loses his land, wife, and best friend while being betrayed by his bastard son, Mordrid, the exuberance of musical performance cannot save his floundering life. Even Arthur and Guenevere's talky attempt to recapture the simplicity of a life once happily lived through their duet "What the Simple Folk Do" stops short of granting them an escape from their lives; trapped within the unkind reality of sins which cannot find release in a world which must suffer the real results of one's actions, their talky performances grounded in the real do not warrant a rescue via song's deus ex machina.

In cases such as *Lost Horizon*, *Goodbye, Mister Chips*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *On a Clear Day Your Can See Forever*, *Xanadu*, *All That Jazz*, and *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* the non-singer protagonist—at least one member of the romantic duo if one exists—almost evades singing altogether.¹¹ *All That Jazz* just squeezes into the category of integrated musical with the extended death/dream sequence at the end of the film. Not until this sequence does Joe Gideon (Roy Scheider) sing or dance. Musical performance is otherwise reserved for the women in his life: ex-wife Audrey, mistress Kate, and daughter Michelle. Until this final death extravaganza during which the women—along with various other scantily clad lovelies—perform various song and dance numbers telling Joe of his betrayals and warning him of his impending fate, song remains tied to stage-bound performance and underscoring of montage sequences (hospital, audition). Whereas the arcadian musical uses song to work through the internal

conflicts of the characters and their respective societies, as well as to activate the courtship ritual through dueling solos, *All That Jazz* (which defies the notion of the conciliatory heterosexual monogamous romance) places song in the hands (well, mouths) of the women as they express their dissatisfaction regarding Joe's actions. Joe only sings "Bye, Bye Love" as a duet with the entertainer O'Connor Flood (Ben Vereen) as he narrates his own death and farewell at the hands of his second and fatal heart attack. Rather than using song to work through the social problem, it emerges only at the conclusion seemingly to bring to a close all of his untidy relationships: family, sexual, and business.

Xanadu and *One from the Heart* go another route by replacing the majority of musical vocal performance with underscoring of Electric Light Orchestra (ELO) and Tom Waits and/or Crystal Gale respectively. Marginally an integrated musical, *One from the Heart* includes just two non-voiceover numbers, one appearing in a dream sequence. Ultimately, Frannie cites Hank's inability to sing—as she leaves him for the lounge singer Ray (Raul Julia)—as a source of their breakup. (Hank pitifully states that it is not that he *will not* sing, but that he *cannot*.) In the end he wins her back with a pathetic rendition of "You Are My Sunshine." In *Xanadu*, aside from Kira's (Olivia Newton John) musical numbers—most of which are either show numbers or non-character specific voiceover—only Danny (Gene Kelly) sings an integrated number as part of his (ubiquitous) dream ballet duet with Kira, "Whenever You're Away from Me." The transference of music to the disembodied voice—and in this case not even piped-in through a character's voiceover—to that of the non-diegetic musical group completely

removes the narrative stakes from the musical actions of real characters. Like many musicals of this period, the break between music and character coexists within a world which refuses to negotiate successfully social conflict to an end of communal harmony. Rather, Danny, Sonny, and Kira remain in a state of limbo at the narrative's conclusion. The final production of "Xanadu" unravels as a glitzy production number performed by the club's patrons, but Sonny—who has been disconnected from the musical spectacle through the majority of the film—finds no bonding of the real and ethereal; rather, he appears unclear of the past, present, and future as he blankly stares at the waitress who may or may not be Kira.

By either eliminating integrated song altogether or presenting music in a voice which more closely replicates everyday speech, these films deny the musical narrative device which consistently served to activate the utopic qualities of the arcadian musical. Bereft of the magical cure, these characters—already existing in worlds more complex and ambivalent than the nostalgic world of the arcadian—often lack the spectacle and unexpected and almost excessive emotional drive to escape their seemingly insurmountable problems. Ultimately, they must remain irresolvable. Arthur and Guenevere flounder and self-destruct. Joe must die. Doolittle may or may not find his love. Sonny must pine for Kira. Without the music as communal glue and personal catalyst, the problems of the real world are unable to exit their natural realm.

Overt Vocal Dubbing

The two films most closely associated with overt vocal dubbing or dubbing used for narrative effect, *Bugsy Malone* and *Pennies From Heaven*, use this device as a means

to foreground the artifice of the narrative and pre-established conventions of the parodied or critiqued genre (gangster and musical respectively). Whereas the practice of dubbing had been used for decades to make up for the vocal shortcomings of a star, more closely situate the actor/actress's vocal quality to the one already popularized through the Broadway cast recording, or more solidly anchor the vocal quality to established gender norms, films which dubbed for the aforementioned reasons did so with an ultimate goal of cloaking or minimizing the break between the voice of the actor/character and the actual sound being produced.¹² Ambivalent musicals *Bugsy Malone* and *Pennies From Heaven*, however, go for the opposite effect: an unmistakable projection of the mismatched voice. As with the voiceover and talk-sing, this contrivance creates a divide between the magical musical cure and the diegetic production and personal agency which creates it (and therefore reaps its rewards).

Instead of producing a vocal quality which replicates the expected, *Bugsy Malone* uses voices which in no way match the bodies of those diegetically producing them, but rather ones which articulate gendered stereotypes used to activate the film's satirical narrative. Cast completely with children—starring a teenage Scott Baio in the title role and a young Jodie Foster as the gangster moll/vampish lounge singer Tallulah—the film uses the voices of adults to simulate the musical performances (but not spoken dialogue) of the child actors. Set in a city which has been wholly scaled down as to appear proportional to its inhabitants, the film revolves around two rival gangs trying to corner the market on the latest weaponry, the cream-shooting splurge gun. Bugsy, a down-and-out but good-hearted lackey drives for the gang lord Fat Sam—owner of the Fat Sam's

Grand Slam—and ultimately brings victory to the gang after engaging the help of a simple-minded tough-guy/potential boxing champ and a host of homeless men to overwhelm and outsmart the rival mob. Throughout, the story depicts the hopelessness and seediness of gangster film characters: shiftless and inherently dastardly thugs, showgirls trapped in a bum juke joint or attempting to steal another dame’s fella, racial minorities relegated to a service profession, and seemingly white ethnics (as they ultimately dance a number similar to an Irish jig) down to their last cent and driven to despondency or crime. The plights of the characters emerge through the bodily performances of children inherently imbued with a sense of innocence and vocal performances more closely associated with the stereotypes promulgated by the satirized Hollywood gangster genre.

By presenting singing voices as inauthentic to the visual, they break the contract which naturalizes performance and blends music into the diegetic world. Instead, these types of contrivances implicate the position of the “real” sung vocals in their investment in the narrative. The social problems presented in the film lose the softening touch of being associated with fresh-faced children when the film beckons attention to—rather than acceptance of—the performance. For example, the night janitor and hopeful someday tap dancer performs the forlorn “Tomorrow” after he finds himself once again denied an audition for the club. As the child dances, a soulful adult voice painfully sings the words:

Tomorrow
Tomorrow never comes
What kind of a fool
Do they take me for?

Tomorrow
A resting place for bums
A trap set in the slums
But I know the score
...
I won't take no for an answer
I was born to be a dancer now, Yeah!¹³

The desperation of adult loss commingles with the physical presence of a young boy's seemingly endless reserve of potential, creating a paradox which begs an interrogation of the devastating social reality connected to the adult vocal performance. Similarly, numbers such as "Down and Out" sung by a chorus of baritones and basses and "Ordinary Fool" sung by Blousy—Bugsy's girl and desperate could-be movie star—aurally force adult pain into the mix. In the former, the repeated resonance of the adult male voices, as with the janitor in "Tomorrow," creates a more hopeless and disheartened tone than would the lilting high pitched sounds of pre-adolescent boys.¹⁴ As the boys in "Down and Out" chant "down, down, down" in reference to their social position—they all currently reside at a soup kitchen—Bugsy attempts to drive them to social action to help themselves and others.

You don't have to sit around
Depressed about the way that luck deceived you
Fortune sailed away, you missed that boat
And found that you'd been left behind
Fight and fight some more
Until you know the world is ready to receive you
Lady luck is fickle
But a lady is allowed to change her mind.¹⁵

Throughout, whether conveying the traumatic loss of sustenance, dreams, or morality, the adult vocals halt the seamless naturalization of the integrated musical numbers (more traditionally integrated in this film than many of the aforementioned films which rely on

talk-sing or voiceover) and point to the social reality and shattered dreams of the adult world. Though ultimately concluding with an arcadian reconciliation—as the entire cast, covered in whipped cream after an all-out brawl sing a rousing rendition of “You Give a Little Love”—the film’s internal contradictions combine with its contradicting childlike innocence and graphic violence (as cast members actually “die” after being hit with the whipped cream) to leave a resonating unsettledness. Contrary to the arcadian musical, the social problems have not wholly been resolved, as the complications created by the vocal disconnect become even further foregrounded when the adult vocals are only abandoned for the final arcadian finale.

Pennies from Heaven accomplishes a task similar to *Bugsy Malone* through its use of original recordings of 1930s songs such as “Yes, Yes,” “Did You Ever See a Dream Walking,” and “Let’s Misbehave.” With a narrative more akin to those of the ambivalent incarnation of the genre—infidelity, murder, abortion, prostitution—the plotlines are a far cry from the more easily negotiable “boy meets girl/boy and girl must negotiate simplified difference” conflicts of many earlier Hollywood musicals. Rather, the severity of the characters’ transgressions and the narrative’s unwillingness to find simple resolutions for them lead to situations seemingly too transgressive to be recuperated through the inclusion of music and the magical production number. The rift between performer and heard vocals here emphasizes the inability of traditional generic techniques to result in a utopic resolution. By hailing the ghost of the Hollywood musical’s arcadian past through both visual and aural presentation of musical performance, *Pennies from Heaven* not only highlights the impossibility of music to

solve the diegetic conflicts within the film, but also the illogical nature of traditional notions of the genre itself.

Throughout the narrative, as characters burst into song the actors lip sync to original recordings of the numbers which have now been integrated into the plot, at times resulting in full-blown production numbers and others as personal asides. Often, these recordings were sung by individuals of the opposite sex of those singing in the diegesis. For example, as the bank turns Arthur down for a loan, the setting magically transforms into a Berkeley-esque production number, rife with giant coins and tap dancers. Arthur and the male bank manager lip sync the number “Yes, Yes,” originally recorded by Sam Browne and The Carlisle Cousins as Arthur takes the lines of the male singer and the bank manager the female. The foregrounding of artifice underscores the separation between the characters’ real life situations and their dream lives, here Arthur’s dream of receiving the loan (one ultimately unfulfilled by the narrative). Similar sex reversal occurs when Arthur sings “I’ll Never Have to Dream Again” (originally recorded by Connie Boswell) and “It’s the Girl” (originally performed by The Boswell Sisters with The Dorsey Brothers Orchestra) and Tom—Lulu’s first trick—and his boys sing “Let’s Misbehave” (originally performed by Irving Aaronson and His Commanders—as well as a bevy of female backup singers). In each of these cases, the music interrupts moments of conflict or distress. The songs hearken to a simpler time, but the narrative pushes forward, denying the simple resolutions or innocent dalliances implied by the lyrics. The evident lack of congruency in voice and body, as with *Bugsy Malone*, forces this irony to the fore. The bodies and characters which continually strive to better their situations by

believing in their dreams—as many of the musical numbers appear as personal dreams or asides, a task often fulfilled in musicals of the 1930s and 1940s where Depression doldrums could be overcome by personal wherewithal; however, in the ambivalent musical the musical performance resists merging dreams and real life through a successful negotiation through music. Unsettling the dictates of the arcadian musical via drawing attention to the unauthentic production of music and disturbance of sex norms—norms which continually reinforce themselves in the arcadian musical through the conciliatory romance—*Pennies from Heaven* uses musical performance in conjunction with complex and irresolvable diegetic tensions to deny the goals once foremost in the musical genre: the magical synthesis of opposites, contentedness, and monogamy. While as with *Bugsy Malone*, the *actual* actors perform the final number, “Glory of Love,” this does not occur until the characters fail in achieving their dreams and Arthur swings from the gallows for a murder he did not commit. Not only can the music not save the community from its ills, but it cannot save its inhabitants from crimes they did not commit.

While *Pennies from Heaven* and *Bugsy Malone* best typify this type of performance style in the ambivalent musical, other films employ techniques less severe but still similar in style and result. *Camelot*'s Lancelot (Franco Nero), for example, does not do his own singing but lip syncs to dubbed vocals. While not uncommon in the history of the Hollywood musical, as the only main character dubbed and the only main character whose numbers fully invest in sung rather than spoken vocals, Lancelot's performances appear less than earnest within the context of the film. Next to Arthur's

and Guenevere's underplayed musical numbers, the over-sung and almost histrionic vocal and visual performance of Nero as he lip syncs to "C'est Moi" renders his performance stylistically incompatible with those of the other two lead actors. Not only will Lancelot disturb the kingdom through his adulterous affair, but also his mere presence as articulated through singing style sets him apart from the norms previously established for the kingdom. Similarly, films such as *The Wiz*, *Tommy*, and *Popeye*, while using the vocals of the actual performers, present the music in such a way that the vocal track sounds disconnected from the singer. The lack of realism in the cartoonish *Popeye* repeatedly emerges as Popeye's mumbled singing only occasionally matches the character's moving mouth. *Tommy*'s perverse Uncle Ernie appears completely disconnected from his own vocal track, and throughout *The Wiz*, vocals seem spatially disconnected from the characters. Though Michael Jackson, Nipsey Russell, and Diana Ross are, in fact, singing, their voices appear to be emanating from somewhere outside their actual bodies. While not presenting music as artifice quite as solidly as the first two films, these examples still accomplish disruptions in the presentation of vocal music which thereby call into question the natural place of music within the diegesis and, therefore, its overall transformative powers.

Rock Music

Along with shifts in vocal quality and presentation, the musicals of the 1966-1983 period also illustrate a shift to rock, pop, and disco which bring with them shifting connotations and tenors of vocal style. Although many earlier non-, borderline, and fully integrated musicals had incorporated rock-n-roll into their narratives—Elvis and Beach

Party films, *Rock Around the Clock*, *Hard Day's Night*, *Bye-Bye Birdie*—this later period shows an increase in the presence of rock-n-roll music in the integrated musical. No longer just a plot device or representation of a musical style specifically addressed as youth oriented, rock-n-roll became a style of music used to communicate the narrative rather than that crazy music the kids listen to. Films such as *Tommy*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*, *Can't Stop the Music*, *The Wiz*, *Catch My Soul* (Ritchie Havens), and *Xanadu* use rock music tied to popular rock musicians, and films such as *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* use rock as a means to communicate without the necessary association to already popular rock stars; regardless of their connection with one star or another, both types of film use a hard rock edge, groovy disco beat, or synthesized pop sound to convey their narratives. The hard edge of rock style vocals and the cultural association of rock music with youth rebellion, social unrest, and anti-establishment imbue the rock musical with connotations contrary to the social utopia of the arcadian musical.

The Pirate Movie, *Xanadu*, and *Can't Stop the Music* more closely present music familiar to disco and teen pop. *Hair*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*, and *Tommy* use a definitive rock tone and occasional shrieking vocals to present a sound which disrupts the safety and calm of musical narrative. Not only do these voices deviate from a normal spoken tone to elevate themselves into another realm where the transcendence of “normal” life is possible, but also they do so in such a way that pushes them toward social transgression rather than unification. The types of music—and thereby vocals—used in the self-proclaimed rock opera *Jesus Christ*

Superstar couple with the youth-outsider construction of the performance within a performance cast members and the socially contentious story of betrayal to create a heightened sense of immediacy and conflict. Dividing type of vocal performance by character, the film reserves the hardest rock vocals for Judas and Jesus, the two who experience the highest level of conflict and inner struggle. The priests, to the contrary, use largely talk-sing combined with seemingly affected basso profundo and falsetto voices while Herod performs a vaudeville-esque comic number. The majority of group numbers sung by the followers and the solos, such as “I Don’t Know How to Love Him” by Mary Magdalene, circulate on a plane more closely akin to harmonious sung performance. Though differing in pace—a faster beat in songs such as “What’s the Buzz” and “Everything’s Alright” and a more ballad-esque pace in “Hosanna” and “The Last Supper”—the songs which narratively attempt a unified community sound most similar to those found in the arcadian musical. Those most ideologically divergent bring with them an intensified edgy vocal.

The specificity of the vocal qualities of the film’s protagonist and antagonist—Judas and Jesus—can be seen throughout the film. Judas opens the film with “Heaven on Their Minds;” shifting between almost spoken monologue, passionate shouting, and lingering high-pitched shrieks, the immediacy, pain, and contentiousness of the moment conveys through his performance. Similarly, Jesus’ disruption of the moneychangers at the temple takes the form of a curt visually and vocally violent outburst, as do multiple direct confrontations between Judas and Jesus throughout the film. This choice in vocal

style contrasts heavily to the traditional style of the arcadian musical, one more calming and consoling than *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Along the same lines, films such as *Tommy* and *Hair* infuse their narratives with faster, less graceful, and more aurally assaultive singing styles. Along with Alice Cooper's seemingly drug-induced, brainwashing "Because" in *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*, *Hair* uses the aural quality of psychedelic rock in numbers such as "LBJ/LSD" and "Hashish," replicating both a specific counter-cultural moment and physical state of being. *Tommy* brings drugs to the fore in a more threatening manner with Tina Turner's "Acid Queen." As *Hair* and *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band* present characters and lyrics which move in a dreamlike fashion, respectively attempting to escape a repressive society or manipulate a passively impressionable mass, "Acid Queen" incorporates Turner's facial twitches and powerful shrieked vocals with visuals of Tommy's manipulated innocence, as images of snakes, skeletons, war, and stigmata create an anarchic space in which civilization and a unified and helpful community seems impossible. While the films' narratives stress social division and moral bankruptcy, the music assumes forms related stylistically to anti-establishment and libidinal tendencies and aurally more aggressive or delusionally passive than the assertive and crisp passed-along-song of the arcadian musical (a device absent from the majority of ambivalent musicals in which music often divides the community or highlights the groups' inability to communicate).

While musical styles and modes of performance in the ambivalent musical do not always diverge wholly from the norms established in the arcadian, presentation styles

influenced by casting choice, cinematic style, and/or contemporary musical tastes often add to narratives which already present roadblocks to the goals scholars have discussed as fundamental to the project of musical integration. The joy, communal bonding, and resolution of inner-struggle associated with the arcadian version of the genre become minimized in narratives whose cores depend on the maintenance of social unrest and the ultimate uncertainty of existence. By employing methods of musical performance which disintegrate the music from the community at hand (voiceover), lessen the magical position of song as an heightened source of knowledge or insight (talk-sing), underscore the overall artifice of the seemingly resolvable social problem (overt-dubbing), or shift song to something aurally aggressive rather than joyous or harmoniously unifying, dissent or disconnect—qualities common in the musical films of this time period—punctuate the narrative progression.

AMBIVALENT DANCE: LEAVE YOUR PARTNER AT THE DOOR

As with song, the many musicals of the 1966-1983 period deprioritize or rearrange dance. Scholars such as Feuer, Altman, and Cohan have pointed to dance—in conjunction with song—as a means to bring individuals and community together as duets and large group numbers enact conflicts and mutual desires present in diegetic relationships. Dance raises tensions and resolutions to a level separate from the reality of daily life, while simultaneously integrating them into that selfsame realm. Blending fluidly by transforming everyday activities or movement into choreography, using celebrations as a locale for large dance numbers, or integrating the dream ballet into the diegesis as a means to unravel—for both the character and viewer—ensuing narrative

conflicts, the arcadian musical uses dance or choreographed bodily movement as a means to move toward the resolution of seemingly irresolvable narrative and social conflict.

As with song, many musicals of the period include dance quite similar to their arcadian counterparts. Films such as *Funny Girl*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, and *Goodbye, Mister Chips* almost wholly reserve dance scenes for moments in which individuals perform for a diegetic audience. In Fanny Brice's roller-skating number, Millie's performance at a Jewish wedding, or Katherine's show numbers on stage or at school, such films restrict dance to locales where such a performance would exist within the *normal* world. Often just tangentially integrated musicals, dance integrated into life gives way to stage-bound performances. Additionally, films such as *Grease*, *Hello Dolly!*, and *Half a Sixpence* often integrate dance into the diegesis by constructing such performances as natural expressions of life's experiences. Tommy Steele's performance in *Half a Sixpence* repeatedly features his dancing abilities alongside his vocals. Rife with large production numbers—"Money to Burn," "If The Rain's Got to Fall," and "Flash Bang Wallop"—the movie repeatedly uses dance as a means to bring together various factions of the community and illustrate Artie's passion for love and life, respectively passing the dance onto show people, the neighborhood children, and the newly married Artie and Annie's friends. Artie's exuberance for the moment gradually morphs his everyday actions into full-blown choreographed production numbers. While the group number or passed-along-song appears to wane in musicals of this period, films such as these retain the device, thereby creating a visual excess capable of bringing people together in expressions of joy which can—at least momentarily—cloak or

overshadow lingering narrative conflicts such as poverty, class distinction, or sustenance. *Hello Dolly!*'s "Before the Parade Passes By," "Hello Dolly," and other non-song related dance numbers illustrate a similar connection of dance to communal bonding and personal expression. Throughout, the lovers—together and separate—use dance as a means to express their longing or courting. Bodies commingle, the conflicting groups in question are brought together in unified motion, and individuals project their heightened emotion through bodily excess. As with the earlier films more commonly associated with the arcadian, such later films employ dance to articulate emotion, romance, and unification.

Rather than serving as a communal or romantic unifier or a short-circuiting of a logical narrative closure (e.g. through the production number), dance in the ambivalent musical—as with narrative and aesthetics—often serves to aid in a compounding of communal estrangement or representation of an ultimate inability of various social factions to integrate successfully. Whether through the use of arcadian folk numbers to a divisive effect, production numbers as a means to highlight the improbability of clean narrative closure, or a performance within a performance to highlight didacticism rather than narrative integration, these films employ dance for purposes which run counter to the dictates laid down by the arcadian. Further, with the influx of choreographers such as Bob Fosse and Twyla Tharp, dance assumes both a mechanical stylization which reinforces the estrangement of the ambivalent social structure and a fluidity which simultaneously isolates one faction of society from the staid lives and performances of the other. In various forms, ambivalent dance works against the dictates of the arcadian

to foreground the constructedness of the narrative, reinforce social division and incompatibility, and explore the narcissism of the main characters.

Outweighing these occurrences of dance mirroring those portrayed in the arcadian Hollywood musical, far more often—as with song—dance becomes infrequent, distanced from natural movement and disconnected from displays of romantic love and communal harmony. *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Dr. Doolittle*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *Camelot*, *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever*, *Man of la Mancha*, *A Little Night Music*, and *Popeye* include no more—and several fewer—than two integrated (or non-show) dance numbers. Such narratives which deny the ultimate and concrete reconciliation of conflicts, bonding of battling groups, or narrative unification of lovers, simultaneously decenter a major element of the Hollywood genre which served visually to encourage such resolutions. As with voiceover and talk-sing, such a redirection in musical content denies the reparative qualities of elevated human, bodily interaction.

Along with an overall waning of dance, the musicals of this period also exhibit a decline in two major dance devices integral to the ideological recuperation of narrative communities: folk dance and the final production number. While folk dance of different cultures once functioned in the musical as a means for the diegetic community to express a unified society even among current battling factions and provide a bodily hope for ultimate reconciliation, folk dance, along with such unification, falls to the wayside. The more arcadian vehicles of the time period—*Grease*, *Song of Norway*, and *Scrooge*—employ moments of folk, while films such as *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *1776* use folk dance to exhibit a separateness rather than overall sense of unity.

The Jewish wedding establishes Millie as an outsider, while the folk dancing in *Fiddler on the Roof* both sets the Jews apart from the Russians and establishes them as outsiders to the dominant structure in their own communities. Only after their large display of otherness through dance and religious ceremony does the military disrupt and destroy the wedding. *1776* employs a similar use of folk dance as separating rather than unifying; southern congressmen carry out the largest dance number, performing the minuet to “Cool, Cool, Considerate Men” as they ideologically contest propositions made by the northern representatives. The visual display of haughty otherness compounds their sung words of personal-absorption and self-aggrandizement.

The overblown excessive dancing production number—the manifestation of the conquered narrative strife—declines in during this period. Few musicals of this period end with an integrated production number which incorporates dance into its presentation, and even fewer use the device as a means to project the conquering of narrative derision. Films such as *Godspell*, *Zoot Suit*, and *All That Jazz*, while retaining final large production numbers, use this device, solidifying the instability and inadequacy of their respective worlds. Whether through the death of a Messiah in an abandoned Manhattan, the multi-tiered narrative fates of Henry Reyna, or the ultimate death of Joe Gideon, these numbers fall short of providing the narrative closure and community unification provided by *Oklahoma*’s “Oh What a Beautiful Morning” or even *The Pajama Game*’s “Pajama Parade.” While battling factions of the community are present in these concluding numbers, they fall short of overcoming the conflicts which initially divided them. *Sgt. Pepper*’s *Lonely Heart*’s *Club Band*, *Bugsy Malone*, and *How to Succeed in Business*

Arcadian Style and Folk Dance



Above: Dance is everywhere and all-knowing when the arcadian musical blends it with everyday chores in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*'s "Lonesome Polecat" (top left), uses its magical powers to foretell the future in *Oklahoma*'s "Out of My Dreams" (top right), and highlights and/or works through narrative conflict in *West Side Story*'s "When You're a Jet" (bottom).

Below: To foreground the arcadian contrivance of the cure-all production number *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (top left) and *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band* (top right) push the number outside the diegesis. Ambivalent folk dance highlights community division, *not* unity in *1776* (bottom left) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (bottom right).



Illustrations 5.1 through 5.7, left to right from top

Without Really Trying bring the greater ensemble together in their closing moments in ways which foreground the narratives' ultimate unwillingness to reconcile the irresolvable—through a non-diegetic star-studded rendition of the title song, by abandoning vocal-dubbing devices maintained throughout the narrative and bringing the ensemble together outside the narrative setting, on a soundstage, and in front of the film's logo. Coupled with the films' narratives, the alteration of these standard musical devices underscores or compounds the overall distancing from the goal of social equity, harmony, and fraternity.¹⁶

While dance does not always altogether disappear, often replacing the romantic couple in choreographed courtship, communal oppositional or consensual dance number, or transformation of daily action into fluid choreography, the ambivalent musical incorporates denaturalized stylized movement, various types of modern dance, and various means to distance integrated dance from the reality of the diegesis. Such techniques highlight contrivance of the moment, pull the danced performance away from acts which can ultimately visually reinforce an integrated society, and detract from the natural, fluid movement of the human body.

Distanced in Context

The position of dance shifts in the socially contentious form of the ambivalent. Aside from occasionally erasing dance altogether, when the ambivalent musical does include it, it does so in ways which contextually remove the dance from the “real” diegetic world. Going beyond transferring dance into the trancelike conflict-resolution state of the dream ballet, various ambivalent musicals place dance within either the

performance within a performance or as an aside rather than incorporate it narratively. As discussed in Chapter 3, *Zoot Suit*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *A Little Night Music*, and *Godspell* use the technique of foregrounding the film's narrative within a second performance; by virtue of the disappearing or nonexistent diegetic audience, some films additionally stray from the show musical. In presenting these narratives as contrived performances—whether the camera shows the audience or not—dance remains outside of the characters' everyday behaviors. People never truly transcend their positions as actors and therefore the dance performances continually stand as theatrical rather than the natural expression of characters' emotions.

The performance of dance in *Zoot Suit*, for example, takes two forms. One, the members of the ensemble repeatedly attend a club at which they swing dance. Two, the story as told by El Pachuco—the character most identified with the contrivance of the narrative—often emerges through song as the diegetic ensemble or additional mythic chippies dance. Complicit in a narrative whose structure highlights the instability of individual lives, these dances and dancers aid in conveying a narrative wary of the possibility of social integration. The non-swing dance appears at moments such as Henry's initial beating by the police. Pairs of dancers whirl around him as he lies battered on the stage. Henry's boys dance across the stage as the mobile set spins to reveal the new locale, the jail. El Pachuco's three back-up singers dance around him in "Zoot Suit Boogie" and "Handball." Instances such as these—those most frequent in the film other than the moments of swing—use dance as a means to augment El Pachuco's asides or negotiate the stage space.¹⁷ In conjunction with the multiple possible endings

presented and thereby the inconclusive place of Chicanos in American society, the positioning of dance in this narrative fails to merge with a natural space where it could serve as a stabilizing or unifying force. Rather, it remains outside reality, further announcing the artifice of performance and lack of resolution of the narrative.

Similarly, *Godspell's* and *Jesus Christ Superstar's* narratives emerge as overt performances within performances. Though both are packed with dance numbers, the structures of the films' narratives force dance to the outside of the real. The performed narratives never wholly express themselves as real events, but enacted ones. In these enacted scenarios, dance cannot fulfill the task laid out in the arcadian musical. Never smoothly integrated into the narrative, the immersion of dance into society and its ability to bring divisive factions together—whether the romantic couple or entire community—becomes problematized. As characters in *Godspell* take on new roles with each parable, they sing and dance for the other members of their group (or no one at all). This dance cannot bring the community together. It does not serve to unite the characters. Bonded at the story's start and away from the mysteriously absent New Yorkers, the performers reinforce their *own* chosen ideology through dance. Preaching to the choir—so to speak—they come together in voice and body to bolster the importance and legitimacy of the *Bible* stories they tell...to themselves. In cases such as these, the narrative structures which precede choices in performance style provide a disconnect between dance and any kind of diegetic community, as that community has already been deemed fallacious. While internal conflicts can be resolved—though the ambivalent musical often stops

short of such conclusions—dance cannot solve a community’s “real” problems when the community itself has been constructed as imaginary.

In cases such as *Zoot Suit* and *Godspell*, the performance within a performance structures the narratives as an educational device, each clarifying an ideological point/points rather than focusing on detailed and linear storytelling. Here, the performative excess of the dance remains on the outside and serves as a didactic tool—rather than integrating fully into the story. Whether the stylized “whack-a-mole” performance of the accused in *Zoot Suit*’s courtroom or Job-like soft-shoe in *Godspell*’s “All for the Best,” the spectacle of these numbers help to underscore or draw attention to the lessons being taught through the films’ narratives but do not serve the traditional functions of the arcadian musical’s dance.

Fosse

One of the significant choreographers crossing over from stage to screen, Fosse’s motion picture work bridges the arcadian and ambivalent phases of the Hollywood musical genre and illustrates the stylistic shifts within. After receiving his first major breakthrough when tapped to choreograph the Broadway production of *The Pajama Game* (1954), Fosse’s work became iconic and recognizable for its use of small, tight groups and crisp, in depth manipulation of the body through dance, slow movement, and meticulous attention to detail. Though Fosse’s style of choreography does not encompass the entire body of musicals produced from the late sixties to the early eighties, his work reappears in various high profile films indicative of the ambivalent form. Prior to 1966, however, Fosse choreographed arcadian vehicles such as *My Sister Eileen*, *The Pajama*

Game, and *Damn Yankees*. While these films displayed the crisp, stylized movement later associated with their choreographer, they more heavily favored dance reminiscent of traditional musicals. *The Pajama Game* includes both the syncopated, halting ensemble movement of “Racing With the Clock” and the frolicking, skipping, and jumping acrobatic group number “Once-a-Year-Day” which, bringing the lovers and company together, could easily have merged with choreography of an *Oklahoma!* or *State Fair*. Similarly, *Damn Yankees* includes the raucous baseball number “Heart” wherein the baseball players lean together to harmonize about their beloved profession and then convert their ball playing into a naturalistic dance routine reminiscent of earlier conversions of everyday activities into choreographed movement. Also in attendance, however, are numbers more reminiscent of the eroticized and mechanized latter day Fosse, “What Lola Wants” and “Who’s Got the Pain?” In these films, more stylized and sexualized moments occur at times of narrative conflict, when social unity appears least likely. In *Damn Yankees*, Lola—sent by Mr. Applegate/Satan to prevent Joe’s happiness—embodies such movement, while in *The Pajama Game*, moments of transgression, both romantic and professional, take such a shape.

The latter day Fosse films (*How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *Sweet Charity*, *The Little Prince*, and *All That Jazz*) contain more concentrated moments of stylized performance not common in the arcadian musical. More decidedly erotic in nature and mechanized in performance, the ambivalent Fosse film presents performing bodies aesthetically contrary to the harmonious dictates of the arcadian movement. Foregoing bodies which comfortably merge in a vision of romantic love and move

Fosse, Before and During



Above: Choreography for the *The Pajama Game* balances an arcadian style which visually unites the community and romantic couple in “I’m Not at All in Love” (top left) and “I Knew a Man” (top right) with numbers such as “Racing With the Clock” (bottom), more reminiscent of Fosse’s later highly mechanized work.

Below: In later years, he breaks the bounds of arcadian conciliatory heterosexuality in *All That Jazz*’s gay, lesbian coupling/grouping in “Air-otica” and restrains/contrives bodily movement to replicate social estrangement in life and love in *Sweet Charity*’s “Rhythm of Life” (top left) and “Rich Man’s Frug” (top right) and “Air-otica” (bottom right).



Illustrations 5.8 through 5.14, left to right from top

together in a fluid revelation of harmony, films such as *Sweet Charity* and *All That Jazz* sidestep romance for anonymous eroticism. Typified by “Big Spender” and “Air-Otica,” these dances present the body as a vessel for lurid and faceless sex and deny the unified, graceful movements common in the choreographed coupling of Astaire and Rogers or the dancing couples of *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* as they contort and obscure the body. “Big Spender” presents a line of taxi dancers bent in unnatural bodily positions, with arms, legs, and hands poised in ways which force the viewers to rationalize such movement. As Chita Rivera’s seemingly disembodied right hand mysteriously taps her left hip from behind, a sense of perversion or aberrance emerges. The women move simultaneously, but not in unison, as they beckon the lecherous clients laying in wait. Ultimately, the individuals move in slithering motions until they break their line to entice their clients. Far from using ballroom or folk dance to glide into the arms of their carefully leading partner, far from gracefully gliding across the floor as an fatefully joined couple, the women’s performances foreground their severity, lack of authentic emotion, and overall social deviance.

Through “Air-Otica,” which retains unified—at times balletic—movement, the shift in narrative goal from marriage to promiscuous sexual congress clearly creates an eroticism of the visual. The first half depicts an upbeat, while somewhat slithery and wispy, introduction to the airline motif of the number. Using minor sexual visual puns such as a male flight attendant sliding through the legs of a female attendant while thrusting a tray in front of her crotch as he offers the passengers snacks, the group shifts among various male-female couples and quintessential Fosse slow-moving syncopated

movement, snaps, and jazz hands. The second phase of the number transforms the plane into a locale for sexual exploits. As they undress, the dancers announce their names as they reach out to their new partners. Shifting between ballet and movement akin to gogo dancers in a strip club, the number displays heterosexual, gay, lesbian same and interracial couples, as well as varied numbered groups engaging in simulated sex. Wearing dance belts, thongs, and see-through tank tops—if not bare-breasted, the dancers wrap their naked bodies around one another until the number takes a second turn and the members begin announcing their names as an actor states “don’t forget about our group fun, fun, fun plan” and the dancers converge upon each other, wrapping their bodies around one another, slowly opening and closing each other’s appendages to expose sensually various body parts, climaxing in a group assault on a piece of upstage scaffolding which holds a topless female dancer thrashing against the scaffolding as would a stripper against her pole. As the dancers mutter their names and sheepishly turn away from their sexual conquests, a voice reads, “Not once during any of our flights did we have the crash of any real humankind or the bumpiness of any real human communication. Our motto is: We take you everywhere, but get you nowhere.” As the piano runs, the dancers again collect center stage, underlit by flashlights, near-nude bodies side by side in two rows, appearing almost ghoulish as they glisten in the dark, dry-ice filled space.

Not an integrated number, but a show number for the Broadway show being rehearsed in the film, this piece nonetheless represents the move in the musical from physically reinforcing romantic and communal unity to an influx of sexual options

transgressive of and contrary to the ultimate narrative goals of the arcadian musical. Such fleeting sexual encounters never stemming from or leading to romantic involvement underscore the alienation of humankind. While these bodies often move gracefully in unison, they continually establish transgressive and multiple partnerships and conclude—as “Big Spender” began—with inhuman forms existing as separate and unsettling figures.

Aside from the overtly erotic choreography of Fosse, his less sexually explicit numbers further foreground the divided nature of humankind. As with “Big Spender,” multiple numbers not directly associated with the romantic entanglements of narratives present dancing communities poised in unnatural and mechanical positions. Though often moving as one, these groups of dancers portray a society which functions by rote rather than emotion. If the arcadian musical uses dance as a means to express uncontainable joy and emotion, the ambivalent choreography of Fosse further reinforces the lack of emotion and meaningful social interaction present in societies where feelings of love and companionship pale to actions predetermined or prioritized by a superficial culture or mechanized bureaucracy—part of the social criticism of many ambivalent musical narratives. *How to Succeed in Business*’s “A Secretary is Not a Toy” and the secretaries’ choreographed morning routine as well as *Sweet Charity*’s “Rhythm of Life” or “The Richman’s Frug” again present a company moving in unison but almost in zombie-like fashions. Heartlessly and mindlessly submitting to company doctrine, the white- and pink-collar sheep of the World Wide Widget Corporation move together as cogs in the proverbial machine, combing their hair, applying makeup, and overall avoiding their work until their coffee break. The company’s men and women move as a

well-oiled instrument, divided by sex and echelon, neither needing nor desiring to know what the other is doing. Even as they shuffle across the screen, bodies stiffly leaning backward one against the other, they neither touch nor aid the other in execution the movements. Similarly, *Sweet Charity*'s "Richman's Frug" and "Rhythm of Life"—in satirical performances of modern popular dance—enlist dancers who move while never engaging with each other.¹⁸ Whether part of an almost identically dressed pretentious mob at a swanky nightclub or a member of a bogus religion based on marijuana and muscatel, their personal obsessions with their individual countercultures outweigh the need for any personal engagements with others. Club-goers, constructed narratively and visually as the social elite, perform exaggerated movements—men walking with cigarettes and women slinking about—as they dance "The Aloof," more interested in being seen than seeing and climaxing with similar stilted movements which increase in pace. Fosse's inspired depiction of the characters' self-absorption leads to meticulous simultaneous movement in which the perfection of the dancers overrides any investment in human contact. Eyes cast forward or down, they pose for the nightclub audience as they enact the dances their statuses denote they perform. The members of the Rhythm of Life church worship satirically decked-out hippie, Daddy (Sammy Davis Jr.), as he sings:

Daddy started out in San Francisco
Tootin' on his trumpet loud and mean
Suddenly a voice said go for it daddy
Spread the picture on a wider screen
And the voice said daddy there's a million pigeons
Waitin' to get hooked on new religions
Hit the road Daddy, leave your common-law wife
Spread the religion of the Rhythm of Life.¹⁹

This opening to the number highlights the insincerity or lack of true faith involved in the group. Merely a moneymaking scam undercutting any value of this particular counterculture movement, neither the members nor leaders engage fully with each other. As in the nightclub, the members—seemingly overtaken by hallucinogens—move as zombies (arms outstretched and eyes wide-open), use each other as rowboats, and stand still suffering convulsions.

In such diegetic societies rife with self-absorption, these dance numbers brilliantly reinforce the mechanical and posturing nature of those involved. Not developing meaningful romantic relationships, displaying communal bonds which strengthen their overall union, or even serving to activate the conflicts within such communities, Fosse's dance numbers most often further emphasize the sense of social estrangement, libidinal desire, and disregard for any true union of groups based on anything more than bureaucratic policy. Through simulated sex, a lack of bodily and ocular engagement between dancers, and contrived jerky, non-human movements, these numbers compliment their respective narratives' implications of flawed societies.

Modern Dance

Aesthetically separate from the robotic movement of Fosse, various types of modern dance infuse the musicals of this later time period to similar ends. Both the modern dance of Tharp and contemporary dance styles associated with rock-n-roll create additional images of social anarchy and aggressive social and sexual activity.

Abandoning classical dance for more modern or popular styles, films such as *Xanadu*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*, *The Wiz*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Hair*

create varying levels of hostile or serene anarchy, eroticism, or contemporary disconnect from the diegetic time period. As with all dance, the style alone does not dictate the overall connotation, but rather the ambivalent musical's conjunction of narrative, aesthetic, music, and dance combine to create an overall ideological discourse. For example, the stage performances in *Xanadu*'s "Xanadu" and *Can't Stop the Music*'s various show numbers add a contemporary flavor and a hint of libidinal desire but in the context of their narratives—especially with *Can't Stop the Music*—cannot overcome the overall optimism of the narrative. Through congruity or contrast with the aforementioned elements, contemporary dance can underscore already functioning tensions within the films' narratives. *The Wiz* uses contemporary dance associated with African American culture. This choice maintains the overall shift in storytelling from a white rural tale to a contemporary African American interpretation; on the yellow brick road, in Emerald City, or Poppy's Perfume Company staging shifts among runway modeling, ballet and ballroom, modern, contemporary disco, and early break dancing. Choreography of numbers such as "Emerald City" and the poppy dance number appear part Donna Summer video, part Broadway production number. An accompaniment of aggressive movement to aggressive conflict places dance as a source of reinforcement of preexisting tensions—as the arcadian musical uses classical and folk dance to assuage conflicts which progressively find resolution through visual, aural, and narrative means. *Jesus Christ Superstar* integrates numbers such as "Superstar" with dance more closely associated with contemporary youth culture, the classical ballet, or traditional stage. As the silver glittery angel-like women who surround the white-fringed Judas twist, swing

their arms, and bump their hips, the visual more closely associates with a dance club than the crucifixion. Conceptually congruent to the greater film, numbers such as this reinforce a distance between the film's diegesis and the story it recounts. (Is this a retelling of the Christ story or *Saturday Night Fever*?) In addition, while this crucifixion dance party presents the visual excess and celebration of the arcadian musicals, its abrupt beginning and conclusion—ultimately ending with the return to the outer frame of the performance within a performance and the cast and crew's dismantling of the set and return to their bus—coincides with the disruption of the communal conclusions of the arcadian formula.

Tharp, choreographer of *Hair*, part of the avant-garde modern dance movement, and known for combining ballet technique with natural movement, often augments traditional classical pieces with those choreographed to popular music or jazz. Her amalgamation of classical dance and freeform movement simultaneously produces visually tight and fluid screen images. In *Hair*, these images create a sense of mutability associated with the counterculture ensemble floating on the edges of society: more in tune with their bodies than their society and more sensual than romantic. These hippies move as an amorphous mass in spaces they inhabit but cannot truly usurp from those in power. While groups and duos in many arcadian numbers dance as unified groups or pairs—bodies merging as they smoothly execute classical or folk-style choreographed movement—reinforcing their heterosexual romance and utopian sense of community, and Fosse's ambivalent numbers use mechanical, jerky individual movements to reinforce the narrative's sense of social estrangement, Tharp's choreography articulates both *Hair*'s

image of social division through the visual presentation of opposites—between the organic movement of the hippies and the staid physical actions of powers that be—and a choreographic style which embodies an almost organic union within a youth culture which lies outside the regimented laws of the society they subvert.

Hair begins with a shirtless African American man and White woman swaying to “Aquarius” as, facing one another, their arms entwine. Next, an Asian woman executes martial arts movements in a slow choreographed fashion. The draftee Claude stumbles upon a group of multi-ethnic hippies slowly bumping and grinding with their backs to him. As he sees them, they—in unison—turn to stare at him. The camera then turns to two hippies mimicking the horses ridden by the mounted police. As they execute movement, the horses follow in turn—to the consternation of their riders. The choreography of one group of dancers morphs into the next group as the sensual grinding becomes leaping becomes marital arts. This opening moment typifies Tharp’s choreography throughout the film. Dance stands outside of and disrupts social order. While including an internal logic or methodology itself, the dance and dancers stand in visual contradiction to the society connected to money, military, and social order. The flowing, sensual, and unstructured movement in which bodies—unlike those in Fosse’s numbers—fully engage with one another almost to an extent of losing bodily boundaries visually replicates the sense of oneness within its diegetic executors. Continually leaping, falling, and enveloping into each other’s arms while maintaining eye contact, the dancers visually communicate their emotional and social investments in each other. Numbers such as Claude’s drug-induced wedding hallucination/pseudo-dream ballet,

“Manchester,” “I’m Black,” and “Hare Krishna” which further draw on the cohesion of the small or larger ensemble include this type of fluid choreography combining ballet movement and modern dance.

“I Got Life’s” choreography reinforces the narrative division between socially sanctioned and socially derided groups. As Woof, Claude, Berger, Hud, and Jeannie crash the party given by Sheila’s socialite parents, dance as practiced by the rich and (according to this narrative) morally constipated stands in stark contrast to that performed by the crashers. Before the entrance of the hippies, partygoers slow dance, preteens ballroom dance, fashionable ladies stand alone and clap to the music, and an old man in a tuxedo sleeps as the subdued partying carries on. Berger et al. disrupt the ensuing dinner party, and as Sheila’s father attempts to remove them from the premises, Berger performs “I Got Life.”

I got my tongue, I got my chin, I got my neck,
I got my tits, I got my heart, I got my soul,
I got my back, I got my ass, . . .
. . .
I got life (life), Life (life)
Life (life), LIFE!²⁰

During the song, he mounts the eloquently set dining room table and sensually touches his own body as he traverses the length of the table. Appalling the crowd by his lack of decorum and unseemly appreciation of his own body, he swerves, leaps, casts aside table wear with his dirty Converse tennis shoes, engages a fellow partygoer (an excitable Charlotte Rae) to join him on the table, and swings from the chandelier until he lands crotch first in front of Sheila. His movements both support his song’s investment in the

Modern and Contemporary Dance



Above: Twyla Tharp's choreography for *Hair* highlights the sensuality and oneness of the diegetic hippie counterculture by melding bodies into one in "Aquarius" (top) and creating distinct contrast between dance styles associated with the stodgy establishment (bottom left) and Berger (in "I've Got Life" bottom right).

Below: Contemporary dance styles infuse *Can't Stop the Music*'s "Milk Shake" (top right), *The Wiz*'s jive dancin' "Mean Ol' Lion," and *Jesus Christ Superstar*'s groovy satin, feathered, and fringed "Superstar."



Illustrations 5.16 through 5.21, left to right from top

life pumping through his veins and contrast with the stoic and staid movements of the socially respectable guests.²¹

To varying degrees, such non-classical movement and association with more avant-garde or contemporary popular dance styles work with the films' narratives to establish a sense of period associated with or contrary to the diegesis itself. Further, such choices in movement create a new sense of unification both within factions of and against the overall societies presented as in conflict. Like Fosse, such divergent styles of dance refocus visually on the erotic, exotic, and social upheaval which defines the arcadian musical, abandoning the organized dancing duos and unified communities of the arcadian.

Reflexive Use of Arcadian Technique

Some films of the 1966 to 1983 period adopt dance styles common to the arcadian musical to further the project of narrative closure and harmony; others greatly deviate from such styles, but a third group takes on arcadian style to divergent ends. Films such as *At Long Last Love*, *Pennies From Heaven*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* include various dance numbers which reflexively illustrate the choreographic style and connotation of earlier musical stage or screen. The first three end with decidedly unsettled conclusions—unrequited love, death, and death—while bringing with them the false hope of musical resolution and social utopia held out by dance styles reminiscent of the arcadian musical. Where dance once functioned to urge such a utopic conclusion, these films contextualize arcadian dances in

ways which highlight dance's inability to do just that. It does not and cannot resolve the conflicts present in the films' narratives.

Most overtly using this device of internal contradiction and intertextual referentiality, *At Long Last Love* and *Pennies From Heaven*—through musical style and vocal devices—consistently hearken to the arcadian musical. As stated earlier, *Pennies From Heaven* uses the arcadian-style production number alongside extraordinarily dark plotlines to highlight false promises held out by the early musical. Dance numbers such as “Yes, Yes” which recall the excess of visual and economic excess of Berkeley utilizes the common style of tap to imply resolution through association with previous arcadian vehicles. Later, Arthur and Lulu perform an Astaire-Rogers duet—in front of a movie screen showing *Follow the Fleet*'s “Let's Face the Music and Dance”—as their depressing fates become clearer. Throughout, excessive and upbeat styles of vaudeville, Astaire, and Berkeley invade the dream sequences of characters destined to lives of despair, thereby revealing dance as a wolf in sheep's clothing or yet another false hope held out to people who are truly victims of their own unwavering destinies. These numbers falsely promise the joy and happy endings implied through glamorous/reality defying production number, only to lead to ultimate disappointment in a world where music and dance—emphasized by Arthur's broken and ultimately destructive dream to sell music—can change nothing in or for the newly impregnated schoolmarm, a stuttering murderous drifter, or a callous banker. In the end, the romantic foursome in *At Long Last Love* find themselves dancing a similar hopeless dance. They go through the motions of dancing cheek to cheek, hoping for an ultimate romantic breakthrough, only to find

Use of Reflexive Arcadian Style



Above: Ambivalent use of arcadian technique highlights the ineffectiveness of dance in containing narrative unrest. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*'s "Wild and Untamed Thing" nods to the studio system and its underwater arcadian musical vehicles just prior to its hero's destruction (top).

Below: Both *Pennies from Heaven* and *At Long Last Love* bring constant reminders of the promises and excesses of the arcadian musical through satire and homage. In a narrative rife with romantic and communal failures, *Pennies from Heaven*'s "Yes, Yes" and "Let's Face the Music and Dance" cast reminders of the ineffectiveness of dance as a recuperative device. Similarly, *At Long Last Love*'s opening and closing moments use dance styles common to the arcadian musical to illustrate the improbability of happily ever after, as the dance continues as an act of futility.



Illustrations 5.22 through 5.27, left to right from top

disappointment in the reparative once linked to dance and Cole Porter. As with the music box in the opening and closing credits, the foursome find themselves left moving aimlessly without requited love.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show, a narrative based on communal annihilation and death, makes use of numbers reminiscent of early Hollywood musicals just prior to the ensemble's ultimate destruction and disillusionment. Following Frank-N-Furter's capture, sexual conquest, and petrification (literally) of Brad, Janet, Columbia, and Rocky, Frank-N-Furter costumes them in sequined corsets and gloves, boas, and fishnet stockings and places them on a heretofore unseen stage for what he dubs "the floorshow." The characters reveal musically and via dance their true feelings about their recent experiences in true musical fashion. All forever changed by their sexual escapades and varying levels of escape from "civilized" society, they awkwardly sing and dance looking like decrepit, horny members of a chorus line. This number flows into the film's most unveiled reference to film musicals of yore. As the curtain rises, a backdrop with a radio tower and letters reading "An RKO Radio Picture" appears. Standing in front of the drop, Frank-N-Furter stands in a fur stole, full makeup, corset, gold sequined gloves, fishnets, garters, and heels as a diving board appears in front of him. As he dives off into the fog covering the hidden pool—which bears an reproduction of the Sistine Chapel's God and Adam on its bottom—and appears in an inner tube singing his hopeful tune, "Don't Dream It, Be It," the rest of the costumed foursome join him in the water to perform a lascivious Esther Williams underwater number. As the group performs their own special version of the breaststroke—once again breaking the goals of heterosexual

union and monogamy, the music suddenly changes up tempo as Frank-N-Furter pops out of the water (on the unseen shoulders of Rocky) and sings “Wild Untamed Thing,” joined by the others kicking in the pool. This number and the following perky chorus line, in conjunction with the visual codes employed from a kinder gentler day of the musical create an opening for reconciliation. This contradiction in narrative overtone and choreographed connotation produce a conflicted expectation of things to come. Will they live happily ever after? Well, they are dancing like they will. Ultimately, the music and dance fail to maintain the brief spark of communal unity produced between the once adversaries/contentious lovers, and the number almost directly leads into the deaths of Frank-N-Furter and Rocky (killed while climbing the RKO tower), the destruction of the castle, and expulsion of Brad and Janet. As with *At Long Last Love* and *Pennies From Heaven*, arcadian dance styles in the end highlight the resistance of the ambivalent musical to accomplish successful recuperation of the narrative in diegetic societies which move away from unity rather than toward them. The failure of the dance further emphasizes that loss through broken expectations.

To various degrees, devices such as performance foregrounding, various forms of modern and contemporary dance, self-aware display of a failure of arcadian style, and an overall decline in dance further distance the musical from its once solid goals: social utopia and romantic heterosexual union. Combined with narratives which render such satisfactory conclusions unlikely, dance alternately through movement or historical source reinforces this unsettledness or serves as a reminder of a time when such unrest could easily be solved through a soft-shoe, tap routine, or water ballet. As goes dance, so

follows performed song in the ambivalent musical; the closeness of performance to a seamless diegesis gives way to narrative, vocal, and bodily disruptions indicative of stories which reinforce society's inability to overcome increasingly complex and contentious choices of their inhabitants. Though arcadian films such as *Annie*, *Half a Sixpence*, *Hello Dolly!*, and to varying degrees *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *Can't Stop the Music*, and *Bugsy Malone* reinforce the notion that music and movement can overcome adversity, cast out the baddies, and reaffirm individual, romantic, and social justice, song and dance in the ambivalent integrated musicals of 1966-1983 fade away from the earlier style which brought bodies and voices together in crisp unity as they foresaw their countrymen's or countrywomen's words and motions in a world which welcomed music and movement into the very nature of its reality. As the nature of social reality becomes disorderly, so follows the comfortable and amenable position of the song and dance which reflected and even aided in the maintenance of that social order.

Chapter 6: Masculinity in the Ambivalent Musical

Where do the generic shifts delineated in Chapters 3 through 5 leave the ambivalent musical in terms of implications of gender? As I stated at the beginning of this project, the bridging of gender and genre within the musical remains an oft-overlooked subject of study. Perhaps because of the gendered assumptions related to the genre as a whole—one associated with domesticity and performance practices feminized in the greater American culture—considerations of masculinity in relation to the larger genre seldom emerge. This chapter will serve to synthesize the observations made in the previous four chapters and illuminate the greater implications toward a construction of masculinity within the ambivalent form of the musical.¹

This project began with a discussion of the necessity of repetition in the creation and solidification of film genre. Without repeated storylines, character and setting types, and ideological goals, the genre cannot materialize. Only through the retelling of a similar story which hashes out unresolvable social conflict through recognizable textual and visual patterns can a group of films emerge and come to be known as part of a larger group of similarly driven vehicles. While the arcadian musical accomplishes this task through a combination of narrative types, ideological goals, and aesthetic selections, such cinematic choices—those which ultimately define the genre—concurrently establish norms of gender. As with genre, gender can only be articulated through the repetition of behaviors or actions which define that gender. As narrative norms come to fruition, so come gendered norms and expectations associated with those narrative choices.

Cinematography simultaneously frames the diegesis and constructs the meaning of those bodies circulating within it. As this project began with a challenge to the traditional or arcadian definition of the film musical genre, it will close with a look at just how the shifts which have occurred in the genre have consequently altered the overall treatment of the masculine. By examining the norms previously associated with the musical and the construction of the gendered self as laid down by Judith Butler, and considering how the norms established over the past four chapters culminate to create a repeated and recognizable form of masculinity—different from that associated with the domestic arcadian musical, the reconsideration of the musical genre via the dictates of the ambivalent asks the question, “in what ways and in what form does the ambivalent musical construct masculinity?” By interrogating generic norms—narrative, visual, performative, and intertextual—and the male characters beholden to them, masculinity surfaces as what?

Butler theorizes the process of gender performance and performance of “self” respectively as a process which recurs as a result of varying types of personal presentation. In *Gender Trouble*, she adheres to the notion of a socially constructed subject, but simultaneously sets out to question the very means of the existence of that subject. Butler’s theory of a performance of self relies not on an individual or isolated act but the contextual reiteration of a series of acts or performances which circulate within an overall discourse of gender. Through her discussion of performativity as the basis for social gender, she questions the very materiality of the body (though never wholly rejecting it) in favor of a sex whose legibility is reliant on socially readable

performative acts. If acts are legible as existing within social norms of a specific gender, the subject performs that social gender and expresses the associated sex. Prior to the repetition of these “correct” gendered acts, the subject (though physically materialized) cannot be read by other social beings; rather, the subject stands as an unclear and undifferentiated mass. The repeated performance of acts not associated with the “right” sex and gender work to highlight or critique the very absence of an essence or core.² By problematizing the corpus through its initial construction as a blank slate, this theory denies any inherent gender or social meaning tied directly to one’s sex and places the burden of articulation on the performance of gendered acts.

The musical genre stands somewhat akin to Butler’s material corpus. As the body itself means nothing, neither does the mere inclusion of music in a narrative context. Not until the body of similar films, repeating similar stories, visuals, and ideologies combine to create a patterned discourse can the genre truly take an identifiable shape. Only through articulating itself via the repetition of these characteristics can it perform as “a musical.” The differences occurring between the arcadian and ambivalent varieties of the genre illustrate the variant forms of that genre.

The ambivalent version of the genre itself emerges during the late sixties, seventies, and early eighties as a body articulated through the reiteration of a new set of actions, norms, or images. Along with this articulation of the genre, and resulting from the same repetition of visuals, ideologies, and performances, emerges a materialization of masculinity divergent from that created during the heyday of the arcadian musical. As

the genre redefines itself, those fictional individuals of the generic world too alter in characterization and embodiment.

While this Butlerian version of performance most clearly relates to the type of repetition necessary for the creation and maintenance of any film genre, it also speaks to the performative acts of hegemonic (if at times incongruous) masculinity within the genre itself. Perhaps more evident in the arcadian version—a period marked more heavily by its overt domestication of male characters via performances and narrative contexts—the musical male often found himself performing an assertive or proactive vision of masculinity through narrative frames: Westerners, gangsters, or military men. By visually performing these male icons, a masculinity associated with activity, assertiveness, and control emerges in contradictory narratives whose goals ultimately refocus masculinity on perhaps ideologically threatening performances of song and dance or the domestication of hearth and home. The repeated presence of such iconic male roles—cowboy, soldier, gangster—created an image of virile, utilitarian masculinity, while the dominant romance narratives promulgated by genre dictates projected an alternative non-hegemonic version. This shifts during the ambivalent version of the genre, as the dominant version of masculinity established by generic repetition changes, but along with those transformations come amendments related to the actors themselves as one's performative behaviors from previous genres follow him into the musical. Such behaviors—as rock stars, stand-up comics, or action heroes—may inform the acted façades being assumed by the characters within musical narratives.

PERFORMANCE OF MASCULINITY IN THE ARCADIAN MUSICAL

As the arcadian musical emerged as the dominant form of integrated Hollywood musical, a version of masculinity associated with that genre simultaneously surfaced. This masculinity, resultant of repeated narrative goals, performance types, and aesthetic choices, ultimately confined much musical masculinity to an image of domesticity and inactivity. As part of a body of entertainment defined by its similarities, the musical male assumes his gender identity a priori to the actual narrative performance. His inclusion in a musical associates him with a form of masculinity determined outside of an individual film narrative or performance, one identified comparatively or in relation to all past and present performances within that genre. As Howard Keel performs in the context of Gene Kelly, in the context of Fred Astaire, and in the context of Vic Damone, the choices repeatedly made as the genre comes to fruition mark the masculinity of the male agents within a given film. Through a series of similar stories—most often heavily reliant on the romance formula—a repeated version of proper masculinity emerges. In this context, future—and concurrent—musical males emerge in comparison to the protagonists and antagonists which recur throughout the genre. A view of hegemonic masculinity based on the singing, dancing, domesticated heterosexual breadwinner becomes the bar against which arcadian musical males will be measured.

As discussed in previous chapters and by scholars such as Rick Altman and Thomas Schatz, the arcadian musical narratively strives toward an end point of heterosexual and monogamous romance and a satisfactory reconciliation of any communal tension.³ With the romance structure underlying that of the musical, the lovers

repeatedly work their ways through a quest through various barriers—based on obstacles such as class, professional role, or defining personality type—to find ultimate truth and happiness in the arms of their beloved. Working through such obstacles eventually make the couple stronger and often more homogeneous in the eyes of the ever-important dominant community. While non-cinematic society had often historically constructed masculinity as something defined by utility, work, or rationality, the musical, by nature of its over-determined romance narrative, has contextualized work as that which serves the domestic—the ultimate locale for the successfully coupled duo.⁴ This redirection of the male character’s personal agency also emerges through what Stacy Wolf sees as the female focus in the arcadian musical. She identifies musicals—those falling under the category here discussed as arcadian—as largely revolving around the female lead, both in terms of narrative goals and overall performance space and time.⁵ While male characters may assume roles which demonstrate active or utilitarian masculinity (sailor, cowboy, gangster), those roles often serve as rationale for the activation of repeated romantic storylines. The activities culturally associated with those male-centered careers do not ultimately factor highly into the characters’ attainment of the goals which lead to the films’ resolutions. While the cowboys of *Oklahoma!*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, or *Calamity Jane* use their position to instigate fistfights, cavort with showgirls and Indians, perform roping tricks, and prove themselves a sure shot, those skills neither factor into the ultimate resolution of communal tension nor remain as necessary to the maintenance of the couple’s implied climactic domestic bliss. Rather, *Oklahoma!*’s Curly will forego his career as a cowboy to support his beloved as a farmer. In *Annie Get Your Gun*, Frank’s

vener of show business cowboy bravado must crumble to win his girl. Similarly, *Calamity Jane*'s Bill's cowboy trappings simply serve as a posture of active masculinity and a comparison to Calamity's masculine femininity.⁶ In none of these cases does the cowboy use his vocation to accomplish much more than a pose of male skill and dexterity, and in all three cases, this must ultimately give way as something foolish and pretentious if the cowboy wants to find the domestic bliss toward which the narrative has pushed him toward.

Films such as *Hit the Deck* (sailors), *It's Always Fair Weather* (soldiers), and *The Pajama Game* (businessmen) illustrate a similar trend; while the male protagonists embody the roles of active, brave, and effective men on the surface, their characters ultimately use those positions to land them some dames. As the sailors attract the fairer sex by virtue of their fancy dress whites, the role of soldier stands as an excuse to reassemble a group of underachievers years later, and business decisions are made as a means to reunite with a union-organizing sweetie, such films render the decisions or works of the active male secondary and use these traditional male positions to construct a specific (and physically powerful) hegemonic image of masculinity for characters whose ultimate goals lie somewhere on the homier side.

This construction of non-hegemonic masculinity—inactive or domesticated—further solidifies itself with the inclusion and contextualization of performance of song and dance. Again, positioned to highlight the conflicts and resolutions associated with the romantic and conciliatory narrative conclusions, bodily performance both stylistically and contextually often place the arcadian male in a position which subjugates his active

social role while featuring his predetermined domestic one. Augmenting the narrative progression toward the successful domestic relationship, the visual and performance-based excess of the final celebratory production number places narrative attention on the ultimate goal of marriage or communal harmony and detracts from individual needs and actions of the male protagonist. Whether or not he is bodily part of these excessive musical numbers through choreography, the male protagonist still emerges as defined by his joint participation in civil and social union. Though his profession may designate him as otherwise, the final number brings attention back to the union and creates another level of disruption of personal agency. Per scholars such as Schatz, this grand moment of performance and festivity halts the narrative prior to any complication of the utopically resolved narrative.⁷

Again, the relevant qualities foregrounded in the arcadian musical male include provider, partner, and status quo follower. While the clean ending may seem incongruous, begging questions such as “will the Nazis catch the Von Trapps” or “what will the Russians do when they realize that Ninotchka and her flunkies have all defected,” the final moment of visual excess and overall rejoicing detracts from any problems of “proper” masculinity. This narrative halt further denies the male opportunity for action and utility; he never needs to prove that he can solve greater social problems or successfully battle the side of darkness (fascism or communism), therein rejected as incompatible with the ensuing romance or worthy of any kind of compromise. In such cases, neither the male nor female must worry their pretty little heads over such

trivialities. Like the female, the male need merely learn to use his talents to serve within the domestic realm to attain proper genderization.

Associated with the visual excess and narrative short-circuiting of the arcadian musical, the types of performance included in this version of the genre add to the overall focus on the domestic and a positioning of musical masculinity within the traditionally feminine. As discussed in Chapter 1, the performance of song and dance—as well as musical theatre—culturally has been associated with the non-hegemonic or queered masculinity. As Steve Neale and Richard Dyer have pointed out, the physical display of the male body may lead to a cultural feminization or queering of the male. Neale cites feminized genres of the melodrama and musical as specularizing the male body, referring to both the physical exposure of flesh or a display through dance. He states such displays actively feminize—via putting on display—the male form.⁸ Similarly, Dyer’s early study on the male pinup examines the positioning of male models placed in a position at which to be looked. To avoid eroticisation or feminization and maintain their superior gendered position, they engage in “manly” activities or evade eye contact with the viewer.⁹

This type of recuperative mechanism of imposing traditionally masculine performance atop problematized actions can be found in the arcadian male’s performance of song and dance—behaviors traditionally disassociated with dominant masculinity. While these men often perform songs and dances directly associated with their traditionally masculine roles—“Heart’s” baseball activities in *Damn Yankees*, “Kansas City’s” horse roping and train catching in *Oklahoma!*, and “Lonesome Polecat’s” wood chopping and the barn raising in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*—the use of song and

dance is further used visually and aurally to connect the romantic duo. Through dual solos, duets, and battling dances which work through romantic conflicts, the couple becomes recognized through their musical performances. Here, the male protagonist's dominant masculinity not only comes under fire via his *performance* of song and dance—and notably, the arcadian musical focuses more heavily on the inclusion of such musical moments by virtue of its music-specific stars—but also as these perhaps gender-threatening moments become inextricably linked with narrative devices which similarly denote a dubious masculinity through its association with the private sphere and distance from the public (that often is associated with masculine utility). Through repeated articulations of the arcadian musical, virtuoso performances by actors already linked to questionable activities as singers and dancers place bodily actions within multiple layers of non-hegemonic masculinity. Simultaneously, performances of body and narrative squelch opportunities to establish masculinity as connected to the utilitarian.

AND THE AMBIVALENT MUSICAL

Along with the changes identified in the overall generic construct between the arcadian and ambivalent musical, associated shifts in the materialization of gender or masculinity surface. While the arcadian emerged as an entertainment form where the ideals of a successful status quo, utopian society, and companionate marriage/coupling abound and the prominent shape of masculinity appears as one which embraces breadwinning domestic bliss, I have described the ambivalent musical as a genre form which diverges from the idealism of its earlier form to turn toward an articulation of more complex societies, rife with irresolvable discord, a muddier sense of right and wrong, and

conflicted and alienated protagonists. No longer does an inclusion in the musical genre predetermine a conciliatory ending full of song, joy, bright colors, dancing, and marriage; this shift in overall ideological expression brings with it—through its repeated presentation of like narrative and performance elements—an associated heightened intricacy of male gendering. Instead of an expectation of successful romance and a bonded community, the ambivalent musical shifts from a narrative structure which often harkens to the romance to one more closely akin to the melodrama or personal quest. Whether in the form of a “fallen man” narrative (*Camelot*, *Pennies From Heaven*, *All That Jazz*), an overall critique of social morality (*How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Heart’s Club Band*), or a personal or religious quest (*Xanadu*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Tommy*) or a combination thereof, the ambivalent musical pulls focus away from the romance—which often still exists, if decentered or dysfunctional—and situates the main plot more firmly on internal or public conflicts and deeds which call into question hegemonic norms taken for granted in the arcadian.

The conflicts embedded in this newer form of the musical genre provide articulations of masculinity and complications previously disassociated from a genre derided for its social idealization and questionable/domesticated masculinity. Here, the sense of cultural and personal confusion and conflict leads to a repeated presentation of men and masculinity separate from the arcadian domestic breadwinner and handsome musical husband; gender takes on more inconclusive characteristics—an overall uncertainty in relation to masculinity, due not to a lack of repeated and recognizable

performances, but rather the very conflict in and foregrounding of male performance implicit throughout ambivalent musical. The results of these changes in form and budding generic norms lend themselves to a masculinity defined not as passive or by its relationship to domesticity or successful romance, but rather one which highlights its association with personal drives, a foregrounding of masculinity as performance rather than nature, and an overall troubled and varied association with sex.

As discussed in Chapter 2, part of this metamorphosis of masculinity occurs in response to an overall shift in the motion picture industry and United States culture. While cultural and industrial contexts may have colluded to alter the generic and gendered norms of the arcadian musical, so they accompanied changes which led to the more dystopian form of the ambivalent. The domesticated version of masculinity associated with the arcadian musical stems partially from the pre-film generic codes and cinematic industrial dictates which accompanied the transfer of the musical from stage to screen. While forms such as burlesque brought an equivocation of music and more sexually explicit or suggestive material, a dominant musical form such as the operetta—based on the romantic coupling in a fantastical or exotic land—provided a set of generic expectations reliant on the romantic union of the protagonist couple. The operetta, simultaneously, proved to be one of the most influential forms on what would come to be known as the musical play—most closely associated with the works of Jerome Kern and Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein. These types of works altered and defined the face of the Broadway musical nearly simultaneously with the emergence of cinematic synchronous sound and the *possibility* for a successful transportation of the musical to the

motion picture screen. Within these contexts of the genre, masculinity had already been defined as something inextricably reliant on a romantic entanglement and resolution with a female protagonist. Not overly concerned with actions which lay outside of the romance—contrary to earlier musical forms such as the ballad opera or minstrel show—these vehicles narratively and by virtue of their over-determined diegetic goals inevitably produced a masculinity commensurate with its form.

In addition to the generic precursors to and influences on the arcadian musical, the very dictates of the motion picture industry participated in the limited and perhaps domesticated construction of masculinity in the arcadian musical. When the genre first exploded on the cinematic horizon, films such as the grittier Warner Bros. musicals brought more sexually explicit plots less dependent on the ultimate resolution of diegetic complications in manners which reinforced domestic bliss and monogamy. With the lustiness of *a Chevalier* and the casting couch of *42nd Street*, these early film musicals created spaces for varied forms of acceptable or identifiable masculine behavior.¹⁰ As the Production Code developed in the 1920s and solidified in the 1930s, narratives shifted even more heavily toward companionate romance. The messiness of lurid or uncommitted sex took a back seat to plots which centered the musical couple as the eventual romantic one, a narrative constriction which led to a masculinity more heavily tied to the task and goal of wooing, winning, and hopefully wedding his intended. Plots connected more closely to male professions and therefore accomplishments and utility outside of the domestic sphere waned or became decentered in these narratives. So here, along with emergent norms in presentation of performance for the screen, motion picture

regulations pushed the performance of musical masculinity away from personal agency and social utility, thereby creating an overall limited notion of proper masculine behavior, goals, and conquests.

At the onset of the time discussed in the bulk of this project, 1966-1983, both the cinematic and regulatory norms of the motion picture industry experienced changes which would directly impact the definition of the musical genre and the articulations of masculinity it bore. These shifts allowed for more complicated and contentious representations of society overall and masculinity specifically. By 1966 the Production Code—after a period of diminishing adherence by producers—gave way to the MPAA rating system, opening opportunities for more overtly sexual and socially critical subject matter and ushering in films which challenged the stability, wholesomeness, and legitimacy of dominant society. Leading up to and including this time, avant-garde, French New Wave, and New American Cinema products popularized a view of masculinity which questioned the innate role of the breadwinner and the notion of an inherent strength/authoritative purpose associated with masculinity. Foreign and U.S. films such as *The 400 Blows*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *The Graduate*, and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* popularized a view of masculinity which placed dangling question marks where once resided indisputable answers.¹¹ Hegemonic masculine characteristics of stability, strength, and uprightness gave way to confusion, oppression, suppression, and an ultimate lack of clarity between good and evil. Cinematic masculinity no longer carried with it a definitive course of action, as men's very senses of

self—the qualities which once defined them as properly masculine men—came under fire in films as fallacious and unstable.

As well, shifting narrative and stylistic components of the (off) Broadway musical merge with the previously staid musical genre to foster an ambivalent space where society and masculinity emerge as simultaneously proactive and multifaceted. As this sense of social ambivalence toward some masculinities and conflict makes its way into the general cinematic consciousness, even traditional genres such as the musical illustrate the residual effects of an overall ideological shift in diegetic direction. Allowed to escape from the bounds of the simplistic successful romance—the ones films such as *The Graduate* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* debunked—these films resituate their narrative focus and intended outcomes. The over-determined nature of the conciliatory ending gives way to one more unsure and unsettled. Simultaneously, as discussed in Chapters 4, the new structure of the motion picture industry provides a dearth of musical male stars, thereby demanding a new form of musical male: tough guys, rock stars, and comics disconnected from the safety of the arcadian musical and more closely associated with extratextual materials which further complicate the ideological goals and masculine performances of the musical. These new men, types, and presentation of performance—dictated by ideological goals, cinematic trends, and actor's/singer's/dancer's abilities—place ambivalent masculinity at a distance from the acts once associated with dubious masculinity, and by creating a distance from the domesticated or queered or a hyperawareness to the self-conscious or ironic performance of masculinity, the associated implications of gender shift in the embodiment of song and dance. Actively pursuing

goals outside of romance and the maintenance of the status quo, the musical male hero repeatedly emerges as the embodiment of a conflicted, active, and ultimately ambivalent expression of masculinity. As films of this period of the musical repeatedly perform masculinity through moments of action, contention, and confusion, a generic notion of masculinity emerges as variant and contradictory, not by unclear or disjointed performance or establishment of standards, but by the very conflicted state of those oft-repeated norms.

Driven By and In Control of His Own Interests

Integrated musical vehicles of late sixties to early eighties repeatedly, through extratextual, narrative, and aural means, establish and reestablish an image of masculinity associated with the process of self-determination and self-actualization. While earlier films musically and diegetically tie masculinity to the breadwinner role, these films repeatedly and through various means pull gender away from such a constrictive definition. As romance becomes decentered, the focus turns away from the needs and actions of the couple to those of the individual (or community through the actions of the individual). Through personal and professional male-driven quests and/or journeys, these musical men determine their own destinies. They make choices which impact upon them and those around them, not only them and the women they hope to marry but also the society into which they hope to fit. This ambivalent musical male equates with action, utility, and autonomy; however, along with personal agency comes the possibility of unrequited goals or dreams.

Films such as *Fiddler on the Roof*, *1776*, *Hair*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *Lost Horizon*, *Tommy*, and *The Little Prince*—while often still including a subplot relating to romance—deprioritize the romantic and associated societal goals once integral to the enactment and resolution of the arcadian musical in favor of acts more closely linked to the utilitarian, moral, or spiritual needs of the male protagonists. As the romance takes a back seat, male action comes to the fore and repeatedly links the hero's masculinity to an active process of decision-making and social efficacy. Where once the male was generically predestined to meet and marry his musical soul mate, these films place different types of challenges before their leading men. While *Fiddler on the Roof* includes various marriages, the larger conflict engages more directly with Tevye's internal struggles regarding the shifting place of tradition in his culture and the changing political climate in Anatevka. More than activating the various pursuits of couplehood, the narrative defines this protagonist by his internal struggle and his active pursuit of a greater inner understanding of his own emotions and the actions occurring around him. Relatedly, Perchik's—the husband of Tevye's daughter Hodel—role as revolutionary functions as more than a narrative device for wooing women. His contentious political status serves as a locus for challenging both his marital relationship and the overall beliefs and actions of Tevye in relation to the changing world he lives in. While the various relationships—Motel and Tzeitel, Perchick and Hodel, Fyedka and Chava, and Tevye and Golde—drive aspects of the film's narrative, the ultimate conclusions do not rest on their successful unions or even the unions themselves, but struggles within the greater family unit and society as a whole.

Therein, as the men in these narratives develop throughout the action, their level of acceptability to the overall diegesis and diegetic community rests not solely on domestic entanglements, but on ways in which their actions as leaders—clearly driven ones or not—exist within the personal and greater social spheres. Redefining gender roles and the associated masculinity—from a position of ultimate and unquestionable power to one of contemplation and compromise—*Fiddler on the Roof* resituates hegemonic gendered norms.

Similar constructions of masculinity can be seen in *Lost Horizon*'s uses of the romance plotline as a device to drive plots associated with male utility. While Richard is torn over whether to stay in Shangri-La and assume the position of High Lama (and remain with Catherine) or attempt an escape with his brother, the romance neither restrains nor wholly defines his ultimate decision. Like the other male castaways—Harry who abandons his soulless life as a cheap lounge comic to assume a life as an educator and Sam who foregoes his self-seeking ex-patriot/fugitive life for the role of Shangri-La engineer—Richard's romance is secondary to the greater ideological changes which his character faces. Lives and choices are no longer bridled to brides, but guided by a sense of inner-direction.¹² *Camelot*, similarly, embroils the love plot in a story which depicts the success and failure of Arthur's own utopia. In this case, the failure of the romance and the ultimate expulsion of the romantic duo—Lancelot and Guenevere—allow the narrative to redirect to the public rather than private life of the king. It concludes with Arthur's decision—anomalous to the arcadian musical—to allow the adulterous pair to

go free as he charges headlong into battle with the hope that his beloved Camelot will at the very least remain as a shining beacon of past triumphs.

This shift occurring in masculine identity in the ambivalent musical foregoes—and yet complicates—the expectation of the male serving the needs of female and the greater society in general. Arthur's decisions are based on his personal needs and choices and contrary to the dictates of the status quo and thereby appear much more complex than the arcadian dictate to marry and support the community's goals. Adhering to this more complicated process of decision-making, characters such as those in *Lost Horizon* and *The Little Prince* shift to more self-centered positions while simultaneously serving the needs of others. *Lost Horizon*'s Richard, Harry, and Sam make narrative choices which serve both *their* inner needs—Richard to return to Catherine and his position as High Lama, Sam to help irrigate the community, and Harry to educate—and the needs of the greater community. Such men have shifted from a self-serving inner-directedness to one inclusive of the greater society. While in charge of their own destinies, they implicate those of others and better serve the community. *The Little Prince*'s pilot finds a similar end. Driven by his need to need and be needed—feelings avoided since his childhood—he attempts to comfort and aid the Little Prince. Through his attempted charge of others, he succeeds not in utilitarian tasks, but the satiation of a personal spiritual need through the care of another.

Because of the musical's redirection of male energy away from the domestic sphere and into the public and personal, masculinity itself becomes more linked to the proactive decisions of the male protagonist. Other narrative elements feed into this

Driven by His Own Interests



Above: Straying from the romantic celebratory ending, ambivalent musicals such as (clockwise from top right) *Camelot*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Lost Horizon*, and *The Little Prince* conclude with moments of isolated reflection or discovery.

Below: “Real-world” problems emerge in the disaster-ridden opening of *Lost Horizon* (top), while *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and *The Man of La Mancha* foreground personal—rather than domestic—wants and drives. Through short shot length, shaky camerawork, and reflective shields, Quijana’s deteriorating mental state visually emerges (bottom left), and Pseudolys’s and Hero’s sexual drives materialize through short shots and fetishizing framing (bottom right).



Illustrations 6.1 through 6.7, left to right from top

notion of masculinity as inextricably associated with male utility and male decision-making. Aside from the emergence of male work as an integral diegetic element—not merely a device to activate the romance or serve as a façade of more traditional masculinity—the overall inconclusiveness of the narratives themselves redirect the locus of masculinity. As these narratives no longer bear the predetermined conciliatory romantic conclusion, the choices and actions of men appear to factor more fully into the ultimate outcome of the stories themselves; at the same time, this increase in personal agency results in a heightened level of risk and possibility of failure. The couple will not necessarily, against all odds, arrive at a joyous place of marital bliss. Suspense ultimately trumps narrative over-determination in the ambivalent musical.

The visuals of the ambivalent musical support this subgenre's masculinity as the cinematic presentation of the male character shifts away from one centered on dance and visual coupling and toward an establishment or underscoring of male introspection. Films such as *Camelot*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *1776*, *Sweet Charity*, and *All that Jazz* employ varying types of visual technique to pull the presentation of its characters toward the meditative. Many of these narratives focus on the ultimate choices of their men and the associated visuals reinforce the diegetic decision-making process. *Fiddler on the Roof*'s use of double-exposure and deep focus in Tevye's contemplation of his second daughter's suggestion that she shall marry for love despite traditional dictates visually reinforces the narrative's focus on Tevye as a man struggling with altering tradition and his ability to function within this changing world. Techniques such as freeze-frame and cinematography, editing, and sound design replicate the mental processes and physical

behaviors of characters. *All That Jazz*'s Joe Gideon's quick-paced morning routine of stimulants and the presentation of his heart attack as bereft of diegetic sound outside those of his own making directs attention to his actual feelings, decisions, and internal processes. Rather than remaining "realistically" centered and presented as a member of the romantic couple, these techniques prioritize the personal needs of the male and defines him as one bound to an attendance to personal functions and desires and actively in pursuit of solutions to the situations presented to him. *Sweet Charity* uses still photography at the wedding party to foreground Oscar's realization that he cannot marry Charity. *Man of la Mancha* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, for example, use subjective narration to replicate visually the thought processes of their protagonists—as in Alonso Quijana's frantic moments when the rift between personae become evident or Pseudolus's and Hero's lust for the slaves. These types of visual gimmicks or devices emphasize the degree of introspection involved in the male decision to love, not love, or abandon love altogether for private or public pursuits. Men are no longer wedded—pun intended—to a predetermined station in life. The camera implicates the protagonist who now bears some control over his own destiny rather than merely replicating a fatalistic and predetermined end.

The visual representation through mise-en-scène furthers a definition of masculinity as linked to self-actualization and utility. Along with the narrative digression from the conciliatory ending and resulting implication of inevitable narrative closure, the recurring departure from a world of nostalgia and perfection reinforces the unpredictability of human reality. Films such as *Hair*, *Lost Horizon*, *Godspell*, *Can't*

Stop the Music, and *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever* use varying levels of realistic settings and costumes to tie their stories and the characters within a reality based on uncertainty. These depictions of the material world move toward a denial of the perfection—and therefore immutability—of the fictional world of the arcadian musical. The war-torn third world setting of *Lost Horizon*'s opening and the contemporary Manhattan of *Godspell* and *Hair* bring with them associations of conflict and upheaval. Unlike an idealized and stylized New York of *Guys and Dolls* or *It's Always Fair Weather*, no façade of social perfection or erasure of cultural rift exists. The goal of individuals, therefore, must be the active toppling of or challenge to such social strife, one ultimately overcome by the behaviors of diegetic heroes within those worlds. The idealistic sheen of a society without serious conflict disappears through the visible presentation of grime, unruly crowds, and real locales not set in idealized periods bereft of complication, and a need for diegetic confrontation or management of the contentious aspects in such societies arises. Masculinity constructed of usefulness and personal motivation meets such a challenge, while an arcadian masculinity would be left to create seemingly impossible ideal relationships in worlds which do not seem able to provide such contentment.

Along with emerging conventions of narrative and mise-en-scène, the very bedrock of the musical film—visual presentation and performance of song and dance—underscore the occurring shifts in masculinity within the genre. The arcadian musical, and musical performance in general, once brought with it a questionable masculinity. Both from the cultural connotations of the acts and the diegetic contextualizations of such

performances, song and dance saddled musical masculinity with labels such as domesticated or coupled. Through the presentation of song by professionally trained or groomed singers and the execution of dance as something most often tied to a specific performed masculine act—wood chopping or baseball playing—or associated with the narrative’s emerging romance—as the destined duo show their initial disdain, burgeoning love, or ultimate devotion through either early aggressive or ultimate graceful commingling of choreographed bodies implying the physical union heretofore forbidden from display on the cinematic screen—arcadian song and dance tied masculinity to such a predestined trajectory. Ambivalent musicals, however, present the two types of performance—stylistically and contextually—as severed from the seemingly indissoluble link between action and domesticated connotation. Dance declines in the ambivalent musical and much less often serves as a visual performance of ensuing couplehood. In addition, with the popularization of voiceover and montage sequences and the rising presence of talk-sing—and decrease in some cases of the singing male—the presentation of male-centered song and its physical performance take on a changing overtone. As in the cases of cinematographic introspection, *Lost Horizon*, *Goodbye, Mister Chips*, and *The Little Prince* use voiceover as a means to the further presentation of personal reflection. Whether tied to a budding romance in *Goodbye, Mister Chips* or related to personal emotional development in *The Little Prince*, these moments deny the diegetic performance of song and dance and forego a pandering plea to the community at large—one which the arcadian musical sees as integral to the solution of any narrative conflict.

These moments allow for a presentation of the significance of Chips's or the pilot's mental process and its association with the personal rather than the greater public good.

In addition to the updated visual and vocal presentations of song, the infusion of rock-n-roll into the genre conjoins masculinity with aggressiveness and personal agency. *Tommy*, *Hair*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band* place masculinity in a context of male vocal production culturally associated with less conciliatory or stationary visions of social interaction. Each of these films centers on the male protagonist and his religious, political, or professional quest contextualized within an aural realm of the counterculture. Contrary to the arcadian musical's status quo-reinforcing generic formula, the rock-flavored narratives of this stage of the musical culturally preclude such easily contained social harmony. Implying the rebellion of youth and through the hard-edge of the music itself, the sounds around which such films are constructed beg conflict. *Tommy* shows a male protagonist unable to control his own destiny, with rock-n-roll performances—such as Eric Clapton's "Eyesight to the Blind" and Tina Turner's "Acid Queen"—aurally replicating his silent struggle and heightening the stakes of Tommy's dependence. Upon gaining his eyesight, Tommy immediately bursts into "I'm Free." Throughout, the protagonist and those surrounding him use the aggressive tones and lyrics of the rock-n-roll genre to reinforce cultural and personal upheaval. These narrative disruptions must be *acted against* to discover any type of conclusive or even inconclusive resolution. Similarly, the immediacy, personal stakes, and personal power of Jesus and Judas repeatedly come to the surface in *Jesus Christ Superstar* through their respective solos and duets filled with rock-related vocal screeches

and shouts. Both culturally and aurally, rock music heightens the stakes of the conflict already explicit through the film's narrative. These two male protagonists (note the absence of any true female protagonist in this story) use heightened vocal stakes as aural weapons as they force their own viewpoints regarding their internal and external struggles and take charge of their own destinies—one actively taking his own life and one sacrificing his for others.

Not only the elements overtly present in the arcadian musical reinforce this notion of a more proactive masculinity; outside elements inextricably linked to the genre through intertextual means further this multi-layered performance and determination of gender. As discussed in Chapter 4, genres come saddled with each preceding performance of that genre. John Wayne and Edward G. Robinson embody the connotations of the Westerner and gangster they helped to define, and they bring these generic encrustations along as they travel to foreign generic vehicles. In the ambivalent musical, rock stars' (The Who, Alice Cooper, Aerosmith) or tough guys' (Burt Reynolds, Clint Eastwood, George Kennedy, Peter O'Toole, Lee Marvin) cultural and industrial overtones reinforce the narrative and visual presence of masculine utility *or* they implant one where narratively and aesthetically one may be lacking.¹³ Unable to deny wholly the actor's previously performed roles—at least in the case of such high profile performers listed above—the musical personae assumed in the ambivalent musicals of the sixties, seventies, and eighties take on a heightened presence of male utility by virtue of the increased number of musical male stars previously associated with genres ideologically incongruous to the dictates of the arcadian musical. While Peter O'Toole's characters in

both *Goodbye, Mister Chips* and *Man of la Mancha* at times display negligible levels of personal effectiveness or aggressiveness, compounding those characters' actions are those of *Lawrence of Arabia* or King Henry II of *The Lion in Winter* (1968) or *Becket*. The efficacy—or at least action—of those characters come to bear on the performances of the introspective boys' school professor and the ineffective dreaming knight-errant. Similarly, the war personae of George Kennedy (*Lost Horizon*) and Lee Marvin (*Paint Your Wagon*) intertextually undercut their respective characters' choices of passivity or domesticity, just as Clint Eastwood's asocial performances in *Coogan's Bluff* and the Sergio Leone Westerns create a rift with his domesticated performance in *Paint Your Wagon*. Though Pardner ultimately chooses to build a life as a farmer, breadwinner, and husband, the narrative remains infused with the inextricable connotation of an Eastwood protagonist: asocial, isolated, and driven to action by a personal code of justice or vengeance. Such tough guys, along with volatile rock stars such as Keith Moon, Roger Daltry, and Alice Cooper bring along with them star images which must either easily commingle with their onscreen characters or create tension between the two; in either situation this results in an overlay of a masculinity differing from that of that of the arcadian, a masculinity of action against or in defense of the greater society and for the good or self-destruction of the individual. In either case, a musical masculinity directed by self-interest rather than solely for others emerges.

Masculinity as Indefinable or Variant

As each element of the overall ambivalent musical product adds to the construction of gender divergent from the masculinity of the arcadian and brings to light

one founded on personal motivation toward internal and external goals (beyond domestic bliss and social utopia), it brings to the fore a complicated version of masculinity not tied to one specific characteristic. While the arcadian male clings to his innate drive toward marriage, presented as the self-made man, various conventions of the ambivalent musical—both narrative and visual/performance-based—detract from any one defining characteristic of successful or traditional masculinity. Rather, the very instability and indefinability of gender itself emerges as a trademark of the genre. No longer just the breadwinner and now encumbered with the unpredictability of narrative conclusions, the musical male's defining characteristics become less clearly demarcated. No one characteristic drives his actions, and quite to the contrary, the very core of masculinity comparatively emerges as fluid, constructed, and/or without a central essence.¹⁴

The increased variation in narrative goals and lack of assured closure (i.e., the dissolution of the foregone conclusion of a conciliatory and socially utopic ending) leads to the emergence of a space which fosters dissimilarity in masculine gender. No one definable characteristic will lead toward the acceptable narrative conclusion (in fact the genre no longer comes accompanied by such pleasing narrative resolutions).

Masculinities associated with homosocial bonding (*Paint Your Wagon*), social elitism or class distinction (*At Long Last Love*, *A Little Night Music*), professional pursuits (*Camelot*, *Xanadu*, *Dr. Doolittle*, *1776*), spirituality (*Tommy*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Godspell*, *Lost Horizon*), social and domestic behaviors (*Good Times*, *Hello Dolly!*, *Popeye*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*), asocial or lascivious desires (*All That Jazz*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*), or combinations thereof (*The Best Little*

Whorehouse in Texas, Bugsy Malone, Zoot Suit, The Pirate Movie) emerge equally throughout the ambivalent articulation of the genre to reinforce a gender inclusive of movement and discrepancy. Consequently, gender loses its association with the repeated performances which latched musical masculinity to a singular core and instead finds association with various types of repeated gendered drives and a multifarious notion of gender emerges for the ambivalent musical.

This surfacing manifestation of masculinity defined as something variable and situational becomes further entrenched as unstable and constructed through the appearance of men as visibly different from each other and contradictory within one's self. While the arcadian musical undeniably included tall, short, rich, poor, dancing, gun-sliding, and gambling men and many in-between, the need for ideological stasis and social reinforcement dictated by the recurring patterns within the genre led to a dearth of racial and ethnic variation. Dependant on the successful union of conflicting communities, the musical seldom forayed into issues of racial diversity—unless isolating racial others within their own vehicles (*Porgy and Bess, Flower Drum Song*) or relegating them to isolated minor roles (*Showboat, Hit the Deck, Road to Hong Kong*).¹⁵ Doing otherwise would force the narrative to confront social inequity or racial disparity perhaps too unruly to result in the utopic ending. Consequently, arcadian masculinity accompanies domesticity with a sense of Whiteness, though perhaps infused with a tad bit of white European ethnicity—Irish, Scottish, or French. Free to engage with interminable conflict, ambivalent musicals such as *Lost Horizon, Godspell, Jesus Christ Superstar, Zoot Suit* and *Hair* present racial/ethnically mixed ensembles and at times

engage overtly with racial conflict and foreground racial/ethnic-specific notions of masculinity visually and textually, while neither eliminating nor prioritizing white characters.

Zoot Suit's centering of the Chicano male struggle in the Zoot Suit riots and his oppression at the hands of a largely White dominated social structure presents a type of ethnically motivated conflict heretofore unexamined by the genre. With unruly social problems as a typical feature of the ambivalent musical, this narrative allows for the presentation of social norms contrary to those seen as reaffirming to the status quo. The Chicano masculinity of *Zoot Suit*, linked to his sense of self through clothing, machismo, and clique loyalty—and presented by the White ruling body as erratic, violent, and irredeemable, stands as something unique and ethnically specific, despite its positioning as outside of the social norm. Similarly, *Hair*'s “Colored Spade” foregrounds Hud's masculinity through the repetition of associated stereotypes and performed dance styles. Following the racial epithets spewed by Woof during a discussion about the uncertain paternity of Jeannie's baby (which could ultimately be White or of mixed race), the song serves as a rebuttal to the hierarchization of white masculinity and the derogation of anything other than. Only the new narrative norms of the musical could allow room for such irresolvable racial division and individuality.

One of the most defining characteristics of variable masculinity within the genre stems from the overwhelming appearance of overt *performances* of self in the ambivalent musical. Through the narrative device of performance within a performance, seemingly overt stereotypes of masculinity within film narratives, and actors' intertextual personae

that reflect on the musical male's gender, the very materiality or stability of masculine gender comes into question. Rather than a stable gender, as presented through the arcadian domestic provider, many repeated ambivalent performances of masculinity work to expose the very cultural construction or façade of masculinity deemed appropriate via various historical, cultural, or situational contexts. In doing so, masculinity itself comes into question: a costume being donned by yet another player in the real or diegetic world.

Films such as *A Little Night Music*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Godspell*, *Man of la Mancha*, and *Zoot Suit* present narratives within narratives, foregrounding the contrivance of the story being told. These films break the fourth wall by presenting the internal story as a performance put on by players; the actors take on roles laid bare for the audience to see, rather than assume ones naturalized by the self-effacing work of narrative and visual devices (even in a genre known for an overtly self-conscious narration). This process can be seen through the choreographed, proscenium-bound opening of *A Little Night Music* shifting into a circumscribed narrative of a hypermasculine and randy soldier, sexually frustrated and breast beating youth, and an older gentleman who seems to have found true—beyond carnal—love along with a state of peace and equilibrium with his own masculinity.

Similarly, the telling and performance of multiple parables in *Godspell* create an opportunity for multiple characterized performances of masculinity through physical posturing of muscle men or violent outbursts from deviants; gender appears as posturing in order to satisfy cultural expectations for character types of deeds. As the ensemble—both male and female members—strip themselves of their individuality to join John the

Baptist's merry group, they simultaneously strip themselves of individuality. Throughout the film, the members of the ensemble largely abandon any kind of individual personalities or gender traits (beyond those connected with biology); rather, they take on cartoonish gendered personae—thugs, cowboys, Mae West, cartoonishly voiced criminals—as they tell their stories. Humanity takes shape—rather than specific gender—as something modeled after the image of God and including the ability to love, forgive, and sacrifice.

Jesus Christ Superstar also projects this type of fallacious gender performance. Beginning the film with the actors “out of character,” they portray members of an acting troupe en route to perform the Christ story in the desert. From a somewhat undifferentiated mass of longhaired men and women working together to erect the settings, unpack properties, and don costumes, gendered stereotypes emerge through the putting on of metaphorical masks. A masculinity associated with force, violence, and the hard body—yet questioned by the presence of a purple tank top—surfaces as the Roman soldiers assume their positions. Wearing their tank tops, camouflage pants, combat boots, and shiny silver-painted combat helmets and carrying machine guns and long spears, they visually equate masculinity with contemporary and period images of socially sanctioned violence while punctuating the ensemble with incongruous shocks of ornamentality—linking more closely to a contemporary gay aesthetic and possibly pushing this construction of masculinity into butch queerness. The priests take on alternating basso profundo and falsetto vocal qualities, wavering between excessively masculine and implied feminine traits while wearing large black phallic and vaguely

Middle Eastern hats with bare chests negligibly covered by their leather and chains (again reminiscent of gay or straight leather or S&M culture). Both Pilate and Herod evoke various periods of ornamental masculinity, displaying their power through their bodily displays: Pilate wearing a purple velvet cape, toga, and golden laurel headdress and Herod sporting white shorts and a swinger-like gold medallion on his hairy chest (while his backup dancers—male and female—wear makeup, silver lamé briefs, blonde curly wigs, sparkly glasses and/or braids, and stroke him as he sings). Throughout, various periods and versions of masculinity collide within the same characters or scenes to foreground the overall trappings which must be worn to present a cohesive version of gender. The foregrounding of the playing of a part puts into question its very efficacy, while the more diegetically sympathetic (or at least fleshed out) characters assume a more androgynous face of gender. A soft-spoken—yet rock-edged—Jesus wears a flowing white robe and his followers wear their hair, including facial hair, natural with neutral flowing pants and shirts. Bereft of the trappings of masculine construction evident in the rest of the diegetic community, masculinity appears as something more subtle, contextual, or fluid with these characters. By presenting these performances within a performance in the contrived theatrical space, incongruous visual and aural presentations of masculinity emerge as diegetically sensical but simultaneously ideologically perplexing.

In addition to such unconcealed performances within a performance in *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Godspell*, additional overt presentations of masculinity repeatedly occur within ambivalent musical texts which lack such a circumscribed narrative. As the

aforementioned films highlight the baselessness or instability of masculinity, films including *Xanadu*, *Popeye*, *Bugsy Malone*, *Pennies From Heaven*, *The Pirate Movie*, and *Can't Stop the Music* include evident gendered contrivances within their singular narratives. By creating an obvious rift between types of gender identity through physical enactment, the donning and recognition of stereotypical images of masculinity, or drawing attention to tropes of constructed masculinity via the inclusion of visual and diegetic nonsequiturs, these films lay bare conscious choices made in masculinity and therefore distance gender itself from any stable and predetermined identity. Again, such variant means of gender performance do not disrupt the presentation of a stable and identifiable masculinity, rather through repeated presentation of such vagaries, they establish masculinities associated with change and production.

The performance conventions used in both *Bugsy Malone* and *Pennies from Heaven*—and discussed in detail in Chapter 5—aid in the separation of any stable presentation of gender and the characters enacting it. Both films' use of contrasting bodies and voices draws attention to the expected performance of gender, and by lending a notion of disappointment or surprise to something often presented as natural, instability becomes evident. *Bugsy Malone*'s boxers and gangsters wielding the weapons and singing voices of stereotypical aggressive masculinity—encased in a narrative which overtly critiques the violence associated with such a gender identity—simultaneously destabilizes gender and comments on the social expectation of masculinity as related to aggressive behavior and one-upmanship.

Masculinity as Indefinable and Variable



Above: Eschewing the stable straight and white masculinity of the arcadian musical, films such as *Zoot Suit* (top), *Xanadu* (bottom left), and *Jesus Christ Superstar* (bottom right) present gender as ethnicity-specific, fluid/androgynous, and simultaneously ornamentally queer and physically powerful.

Below: The ambivalent musical debunks the notion of an essential masculinity as *Can't Stop the Music*'s leather man scolds himself for nerves which belie his manly image and *The Best Little Whorehouse*'s Melvin P. Thorpe reveals the lies of his physique—shoulder pads, wig, crotch bulge, corset, etc. (top left to right). *Pennies from Heaven* (bottom left) and *Bugsy Malone* (bottom right) use overt vocal dubbing to draw attention to gender through mismatched sex and age respectively.



Illustrations 6.8 through 6.14, left to right from top

Similarly, *Pennies From Heaven* uses sex-inappropriate voices in the presentation of songs. By using standard recordings of classics and lip-synching by the film's characters, regardless of the original sex of the singer, an expectation of specific gender performances come to light. As Arthur's dream sequence begins and he and the bank manager sing "Yes, Yes" flanked by the visual excess of a Busby Berkeleyesque musical extravaganza, the manager takes both the vocal and visual role of the woman as they lip sync to the Sam Browne and The Carlisle Cousins recording. The number begins with the two men changing their initial body positions to match their newly assumed roles: leaning across the desk, kissing, joining arms, and making their way down the newly materialized staircase. The manager's enactment of the female-sexed position includes mincing steps, soprano murmurings accompanied by restrained hand waving, and extended clinging to his male dance partner, Arthur. As with *Bugsy Malone's* contradiction in visual and aural age, this act plays on expectations, a disappointment of which highlights a lack of predictability or genuineness in relation to gender; masculinity and femininity are instead relative behaviors assumed for individual complementary contexts. Tom's (Lulu's trick's) performance of "Let's Misbehave" creates a similar dissolution of gendered norms as the gangster/sleazebag bursts into a suave performance of song and a grandiose acrobatic tap number where he ultimately lands on the bar and strips away all but his boxers and garters to reveal a giant red heart tattoo reading "LuLu" on his chest. In the meantime, manly, blue-collar, drunken bar patrons switch between performing as bubbly female-voiced backup singers and male members of a big band, all the while sporting the same dirty pants, hats, and shirts, contrasting heavily to the

characters initially portrayed by those specific actors within the text and illustrating the ease with which gendered personae can take different shapes with minor changes in vocal quality and body position.¹⁶ This sex-swapping device simultaneously unsettles gender and genre. To challenge the musical genre as *Pennies from Heaven* attempts to do, the bedrock of the formula must be shaken: gendered and sexual norms which lead to the one clear conciliatory conclusion. By reversing sex and associated gendered behavior, the “logical” musical outcome too comes into question through the exposure of the fallacy (or constructedness) of its dictates. Will the boy get the girl? (Well, not if he keeps acting like that!) Contrary to the dictates laid down by the arcadian musical—where gangster, lover, or hooper all add up to the same lovable and loyal husband—the sexed and gendered shifts and movement in and out of reality and fantasy highlight the falsity of the promise of a musical utopia. At the end of the day, Tom *is* a sleazy bum and not an amiable Gene Kelly.

Combining narrative device and stylistic gimmick, *Can't Stop the Music*, *Xanadu*, and *The Pirate Movie* place masculine stereotypes at the fore by overtly announcing their trappings or randomly and incongruently implanting them into the diegesis. More than merely masculine characteristics, these films foreground fully produced hegemonic masculinities to critique or illuminate the construction of gender. Through the overt “putting on” of such guises or the illogical appearance of such images within a diegesis, the lack of substance to such images comes to the fore. The Village People perform this act through the very creation of their own gimmick. Dressed in the costumes of the Indian, leather man, cowboy, army man, and construction worker—while performing

within the androgen, queered, or ornamental genre of disco—they shake their tail feathers, chaps, and tool belts, defying the utilitarian and aggressive natures of their alter egos. In a moment which reveals the masculine façade, the leather man, at this point stripped of part of his leather gear and wearing a robe and slippers, confronts his own constructed persona as he—an Irish tenor in his diegetic audition—mutters during pre-show jitters, “Leather men don’t get nervous! Leather men don’t get nervous!”

Similarly, *Xanadu* announces the putting on of masculinity in the dance number “All over the World.” As Kira and Sonny help Danny find appropriate dress for the opening of *Xanadu*, Danny shifts from male type to male type through a stunning variety of costume changes. Macho Zoot Suiter, bib overall-wearing farmer, fringed and booted Texas millionaire, or suave tuxedoed gent, Danny identifies the costumes worn by men of various gendered connotations—lusty, earthy, ballsy and self-made, and refined. All the while, Sonny remains in his pink button-down with his flowing sandy brown hair as male and female backup dancers often wearing androgynous jumpsuits and slathered with dramatic makeup and brightly colored hair dye surround Danny, destabilizing the notion of recognizable and separable sex. Whether *Xanadu*’s costumes, *Can’t Stop the Music*’s repositioning of male stereotyping, or *The Pirate Movie*’s hypermasculine yet queered pirates and nonsequitured inclusions of Indiana Jones or a Sheik character as images of danger or salvation, these types of overt announcements of existing male stereotypes—not supported by narrative context as in *Guys and Dolls* or *Hit the Deck*—undermine the very materiality of those gendered generalizations.

Finally, as with the presentation of masculinity as utilitarian rather than domesticated, the pre-existing careers of the films' leading men work to destabilize any notion of consistent gender. With the foregrounding of the Village People's sexuality in the press preceding the release of the film, performances against type by Burt Reynolds and Clint Eastwood, and diegetic and nondiegetic performances of excess by actors such as Robin Williams and Steve Martin, the putting on of a disguise or character becomes evident throughout their performances. For example, Williams's well known penchant for overblown bodily humor parlays into his performance in *Popeye*. As his bizarre behaviors on *Mork and Mindy* drew attention to the need to learn earthling behavior, his cartoonish performance as Popeye—squinky eye, bulging arms and all—brought with it a similar denaturalization of gendered characteristics. While Mork foregoes sitting on his rear for sitting on his head, drinks with his finger, and talks to eggs, Popeye's clumsy and caricatured violence inflates characteristics commonly associated with masculinity: aggressiveness, chivalry, and action. Williams's history of overblown performances combine with this specific one to foreground further its contrivance.

Eastwood's and Reynolds's past performances too bring with them pre-established associations with aggressive masculinity, rendering more explicit the contrasts in gender between their musical alter egos and the men's men they portrayed in previous films. While *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* appears more congruous with previous Reynolds roles such as those in *Smokey and the Bandit* and *The Longest Yard*—both good old boys out to topple the bad guys for the hell of it or personal pride—*At Long Last Love*'s MOP stands in stark contrast. Afraid of a football, relegated to wearing

a nose plug for a casual day of swimming, unable to shave without cutting himself, and surrounded by the trappings of an inactive and pampered gentleman, this role's severe dissimilarity to previous roles forces a recontextualization and reformulation of masculinity. The contrast in MOP's qualities from *The Bandit and Crew* become even more evident in the shadow of Reynolds's existing cultural persona. Both cinematically and popularly constructed as tough, proactive, an irresistible ladies' man, Reynolds's celebrity masculinity presents rifts with MOP's foibles and wishy-washiness with Brooke and Kitty and his inability to woo back Kitty. The naturalization of violence and *personal* determination of right and wrong connected to Eastwood's earlier characters versus Pardner's agrarian and domestic desires, as well as his sense of responsibility to and alliance with Rumson, also illuminate the break between diegetic and celebrity masculinity.

Throughout this period of the musical, a sense of ambivalence toward the notion of a stable gender identity repeatedly comes into question through these narrative and extratextual conflicts in identity. While the arcadian musical presents masculine performances of cowboy, sailor, soldier, and lover as masks matching the setting for the heterosexual romance, these ambivalent vehicles by virtue of their narrative frame within a frame or performance gimmicks decontextualize such façades of traditional masculinity and consequently point to the very act of its construction and instability. In addition, the repeated performances of masculine tropes enacted by the male stars who abandon their traditional genres and male roles of utility and aggression, and the air of excess or gender reflexivity intertextually embodied by others, foreground the construction, dissembling,

and rearticulating of various masculinities. This establishment of gender construction as just that—a construction—creates a wider array of acceptable masculine behaviors, breaking down walls separating satisfactory and deviant notions of gender.

Sexual Being Beyond Domestic Monogamy (But Not That Far Beyond)

The very bedrock of the arcadian musical narrative and its definition of acceptable masculine behavior—the ability and desire to meet and marry a suitable female mate—comes under fire throughout the ambivalent phase of the genre. No longer saddled with the never-ending quest to find the perfect wife, masculinity and the construction thereof busts from the constraints of heterosexual monogamy to present a gender definition based on both an awareness of carnal lust and an identity readable in the absence of a female mate. In this incarnation of the musical, the shifting and reduced presentation of song and dance simultaneously severs the prior connotation of questionable heterosexuality and musical male performance and broadens appropriate types of masculine sexual behavior—though really still falling short of *advocating* alternatives to heterosexuality and monogamy. Deviating from the long line of extremely similar narrative trajectories, the ambivalent musical branches out beyond the conciliatory heterosexual and domesticated ending to incorporate into masculine gender identity sexual proclivities other than the singular version espoused by the arcadian musical. The ability to experiment with, fail in, and eschew sexual relationships in these emerging musical narratives enables the production of a masculinity based on a repeated set of *options*, rather than a singularly produced solution.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, while male performances in the arcadian musical and cultural expectations linked to the suspect performance of male song and dance produce a locus of aberrant masculinity in the context of the heterosexualized genre, the ambivalent musical's more restrained—visually, aurally, and numerically— inclusion of such performances reduce such a threat to heterosexuality. The waning of dance numbers and large production numbers as discussed in Chapter 5 and the influx of songs presented through voiceover (*Lost Horizon*, *Goodbye, Mister Chips*, *The Little Prince*, *Sweet Charity*) or montage sequence (*Tommy*, *Godspell*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Camelot*, *The Pirate Movie*) as discussed in Chapter 3, succeed in visually separating song and dance from the male performer and his consequent construction of gender. This shift from performance as being bodily enacted in the queer realm of song and dance to one more visually and narratively linked to mental processes, introspection, and action (*Camelot*, *Lost Horizon*, *Fiddler on the Roof*) bring masculinity back from the brink of problematization or queerness to the precept of male utility and self-actualization. For example, *Fiddler on the Roof* expresses Tevye's heightened emotion through double-exposure and personal asides instead of song or dance. His dream—a rationalization for Tzeitel to marry Motel instead of her previously promised butcher—emerges as one distanced from the male storyteller and sung solely by featured females with male and female chorus members distancing Tevye—here a seer instead of singer—from actual bodily performances. Adjoining such distancing of men from the production of song and dance, popular non-singers forego traditional notions of

singing for a spoken presentation of song, reducing their association with questionable forms of gender-associated performance.

A major means by which the masculine association with sex and sexuality expands is through the presentation of various modes of sexual expression and relationship forms. Through the decentering of sexual/domestic exploits and/or the questioning of the inevitable happiness associated with the heterosexual relationship between two seemingly compatible individuals, musical masculinity moves from inextricably linked to the breadwinner role to unclearly demarcated in relation to sexual and domestic behavior. Successful domestic monogamy certainly remains central in films such as *Half a Sixpence*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Good Times*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and *Hello Dolly!* and plays a side role in others like *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *Popeye*, while a significant portion of ambivalent musicals present other options—though often met with narrative difficulty—to the male protagonists. Despite narrative resistance to embracing such alternatives to heterosexual marital bliss, these repeated inclusions of options complicate the idea of a proper articulation of sexual and domestic relations in the context of a stable masculinity. As argued here, the stable or singular masculinity does not exist; such sexual options further cement this view.

The ambivalent musical presents various sexual options: elimination of sex as central to personal identification, promiscuity, and non-heterosexual or non-consensual sex. Distancing overall gender identity from sexual choice or behavior, films such as *Godspell*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Tommy*, and *The Little Prince* dedicate little if any

narrative time to the development of romantic or sexual relationships. Rather, as discussed earlier, they transfer the narrative drives to actions and characteristics more directly linked to the spiritual or literal quests and needs of the protagonists. While a film such as *Jesus Christ Superstar* includes a brief implication of a liaison between Mary and Christ, the relationship garners no screen time and does not factor into the overall goals of the diegesis. Wholly removed from the climactic moment, the relationship is relegated to the point of minor conflict for Mary, but distanced from the decision-making of the male and therefore not tied to his self or narrative construction of masculinity. Similarly, neither *Tommy* nor *Godspell* ties the spiritual journeys of their men to a form of self-actualization or social legitimization based on sexual behavior. While *Zoot Suit* surely implicates virility and heterosexuality in the construction of Henry Reyna—as he establishes relationships with both the Chicana Della and his Jewish lawyer Alice Bloomfield—the narrative outcome depends more on his process of personal discovery and sense of cultural heritage. The film concludes with three possible endings to the troubled life of its conflicted protagonist—dying a criminal, dying a decorated war hero, or marrying to raise five children; only one assimilates him back into the traditional domestic relationship, leaving options of both positive and negative identities based on non-eroticized or domesticated masculinity.

In addition to eliminating heterosexuality as the definitive quality of gender identification, the ambivalent musical further challenges the dictates laid out by the arcadian by presenting sexual lifestyles and behaviors running *counter* to the domestic bliss of the earlier musicals. While arcadian musicals included *Oklahoma!*'s prurient Jud

Frye and *Funny Face*'s scoundrel Beat poet Emile Flostre, these characters were presented as sexual predators and easily disposed of road blocks on the way to the real heroes' wedding parties. In the ambivalent musical, however, *All That Jazz*'s Joe Gideon and *Paint Your Wagon*'s Pardner and Sam Rumson are central male characters who make choices contrary to the niceties of monogamy. Suitable masculinities spread beyond the narrow definition articulated through previous norms. Joe's sexual promiscuity, though presented as a contributing factor in his failing health and unresolved relationships with his daughter, girlfriend, ex-wife, and a bevy of busty nurses and chorines, stands as a possible and legitimated characteristic of identity. Joe's sexual desires and lifestyle illustrate alternative performances of sexuality beyond the marriage bed. While the ambivalent musical's proclivity for contentious, irresolvable, or messy narratives often leads to such characters failing to find personal satisfaction in these relationships, possibilities within the complicated world of the diegesis still exist. After *Paint Your Wagon*'s ménage-a-tois, Pardner and Elizabeth remain together as Rumson heads off to the next homosocial mining town—homosociality emerging as another added choice—and in the end, *All That Jazz*'s Joe makes peace within his various relationships during his climactic deathbed finale.¹⁷

Similarly, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and (intertextually) *Can't Stop the Music* present male sexuality as fluid beyond even the bounds of heterosexuality.¹⁸ The queer visual excess of *Can't Stop the Music* and homosocial action—exemplified by the “YMCA's” never-ending display of male bodies in varying stages of physical contact—in the context of a homosexual intertext, brings to the fore the possibility of

Beyond Heterosexual Monogamy



Above: Many ambivalent musicals belie the heterosexual domesticity which forms the foundation of the arcadian musical. *Paint Your Wagon*'s ménage-a-trois (top), *All That Jazz*'s promiscuous Joe Gideon (bottom left), and *Pennies From Heaven*'s (bottom right) sleazy Tom cast marriage and/or monogamy to the wind in pursuit of physical pleasures.

Below: Homosociality, bisexuality, and gayness surface in *Paint Your Wagon*'s all-male mining town (top left), *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*'s aqua-orgy (top right), *Tommy*'s intertextually queer Pinball Wizard (bottom left), and *Can't Stop the Music*'s soapy extravaganza in "YMCA" (bottom right).



Illustrations 6.15 through 6.21, left to right from top

homosexuality even within a narrative which eschews the subject from its surface text. Somewhere between homosociality and homosexuality, the diegetic Village People and their bevy of bare-chested butches create a space acknowledging homosexuality as an option. While the film may forego any overt sexual relationships for the protagonist musical group, the combination of aesthetic and intertextual connotation implies what the film—per critics—feared to address and places their proposed gayness just under the surface. In this case, implied queer masculinity *can* succeed diegetically, as the film climaxes with the group winning a record contract and performing a glittery finale for the screaming throngs of San Franciscans.

More narratively contentious but equally relevant to the expansion of male gender identity, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* implicates its male protagonists in overt bisexuality. Brad, Rocky, and Frank-N-Furter engage in sexual activity with both men and women. Though Brad initially resists Frank-N-Furter's advances—upon discovering that he is in fact being seduced by Frank-N-Furter disguised as Janet—he quickly submits to his own physical desires. After much teeth gnashing regarding proper sexual behavior, all of Frank-N-Furter's converts (Brad, Janet, Rocky, and Columbia) relinquish their preconceived notions of proper sexual behavior to embrace both him and the type of sexuality and masculinity he embodies—one based on fluidity and an acknowledgement of the inescapability of carnal lust. The musical numbers leading up to the climax foreground this transformation in the male protagonists through a visual and spiritual shift in conceptions regarding their own masculinity and sexuality. Now wearing fishnets, corsets, and boas—trappings already adopted by Frank-N-Furter—both Brad

and Rocky warble their feelings about their emerging senses of self. Rocky begins “Rose Tint My World” with:

I'm just seven hours old
Truly beautiful to behold
And somebody should be told
My libido hasn't been controlled
Now the only thing I've come to trust
Is an orgasmic rush of lust
Rose tints my world
And keeps me safe from my trouble and pain.¹⁹

Brad follows with a verse of equal self-discovery and disalignment of sexual desire and gender identity.

It's beyond me
Help me, Mommy
I'll be good, you'll see
Take this dream away
What this, let's see
I feel sexy
What's come over me?
Woo! Here it comes again.²⁰

Initially disturbed by the changes he has experienced while at the Frank-N-Furter mansion, Brad opens with a tone of resistance only to begin sensually stroking his own fishnet bedecked leg and lapse into irrepressible convulsions as his uncontrollable feelings of lust rush over him. Readjusting their sexual norms to those commensurate with Frank-N-Furter's—illustrated further in the aqua-orgy of “Don't Dream It, Be It”—Brad and Rocky realign their identity visually (through their accepted and sensual donning of clothing culturally connected to a lusty or suspect femininity or a queered masculinity) and narratively (through their erotic engagement with other men and ultimate physical and emotional defense of Frank-N-Furter, their once corruptor and

oppressor).²¹ While Riff Raff and Magenta ultimately kill Frank-N-Furter, Rocky, and Columbia, and leave the rest of the erotic ensemble decimated in the rubble of the mansion, narrative sympathies lie with those killed and left behind. Trapped in the ambivalence of the genre's narrative conclusions, the sympathetic protagonists do not automatically overcome the actions of the antagonist; neither, however, do the actions of the slayed male leads lose their narrative and ideological impact. Though their expanded and more malleable sense of sexuality did not lead them to ultimate diegetic happiness (Who is really happy in the ambivalent musical anyway?), they nonetheless assumedly carry their newly developed sense of self in their post-diegetic lives and merge this new part of their identity into their ongoing production of their gendered selves.

As with the other elements of gender identity, established actors who dominate the ambivalent musical add to the notion that masculinity goes beyond the bounds of the committed heterosexual relationship. Sex symbols such as Reynolds, whose public persona and press coverage revolve around his ability to attract and hobnob with a multitude of sexy babes, and rock stars such as The Who or Aerosmith, who had been associated with a raucous rock-n-roll lifestyle often assumed to be rife with hotel room chaos, substance abuse, and groupie worship infuse the genre with more variant and sexually daring intertext.²² In addition, the Village People and flamboyant Elton John—though not publicly declaring his bisexuality until a *Rolling Stone* interview a year after the release of *Tommy*—infuse the ambivalent musical with a gay sensibility neither sidestepped by narrative marginalization or wholly erased by recuperation into diegetic heterosexuality.²³ These various actor types, as discussed Chapter 4, in contrast to the

dyed-in-the-wool song and dance men of the arcadian musical, brought sexualized personae to the films' narratives and placed that atop the already more eroticized and sexually variable characters which populated this incarnation of the genre.

Masculinity in the ambivalent musical textually based on character goals, variation in type, moral code, and performance style expands beyond the expectations laid out by and repeated throughout the earlier established musical format to produce masculine norms more variant. As generic norms repeat through the enactment of a recurring multiplicity of gendered identities, identity as a whole diverges from a point of stasis. Populating worlds much more ideologically complex and narratively irresolvable, men take on a broader and more fluid sense of self. Many of these ambivalent musicals create protagonists whose gender identities and associated sexual behaviors go beyond those deemed viable for the arcadian male hero, and simultaneously directly connect such behaviors with the fatal flaw of the male leads. This could beg an argument for the ambivalent musical truly making a backhanded plea for the reaffirmation of domestic monogamy. Regardless of the narrative outcome, these films still stand in stark contrast to their arcadian counterparts. The complex construction of social problems, unlikelihood of any kind of clean narrative closure, and the high probability of continued conflict between characters or within the main character himself (aside from the ways in which his identity relates to his sexual identity or sexual behavior) relieves this sense of expanded sexuality as the causal link to the failed utopic narrative. Rather, the more complex and fluid nature of gender identity via association with sexuality—gay, straight, bisexual, monogamous, or promiscuous—rests among various other characteristics

present in the decidedly imperfect world of the ambivalent musical. No one characteristic—as repeated throughout this incarnation of the genre—emerges as the one which prevents the attainment of a conflict free society.

Conclusion

Though with the emergence of synchronous sound in Hollywood motion pictures the integrated musical emerged as a highly profitable and high profile form of cinematic product, the years have shown staggering declines in its production. Despite contentions over the last forty years that the Hollywood musical had met its demise, the genre continued and continues in various versions to thrive. Whether teen rock-n-roll pics of the 1950s and 1960s, dance films of the 1980s, or non-integrated musical biopics throughout, the genre has maintained both presence and prominence in Hollywood. It is my hope that this study has shed further light on the widening scope of the integrated Hollywood musical's formal and ideological project. Both academics and the popular press have often categorized the musical as something being stuck in the past and incapable of change or lacking understanding beyond a human condition simplified through the romantic and cultural utopias. Responding to shifts in cinematic technique over time and evolving to represent greater ideological complexities, the musicals of the late 1960s to early 1980s—those mostly fitting under the category of the ambivalent musical—have proven the elasticity of this generic form. Shifts in narrative and visual form, performance style, and actor participation have aided in the creation of an alternate generic style capable of capturing more ambivalent or inconclusive slices of life. By creating a broader scope of narrative possibilities through shifts in form, the genre has ushered in more encompassing depictions of life, whether through the inclusion of

contentious themes, non-romantic plotlines, irresolvable social or personal problems, racial or sexual minorities, or more aggressive styles of music and dance.

Accompanying the broadening of the generic form during the late sixties to early eighties, an associated increase in gendered options emerge. Where scholars once summarized the genre as one tied to the conciliatory resolution of communal conflict through the personal resolution via romantic union, the ambivalent musical has opened up definitions of gender beyond such domestic bounds. While this project could have surely expanded beyond the newly manifest constructions of male associated masculinity into discussions of female masculinity and femininity, I believe this discussion of musical masculinity was the one most necessary. Because of the popular association of the musical as woman-centered or queer, a detailed discussion of the ramifications of masculinity—especially straight masculinity—in the context of this genre has been largely absent. Though addressed in part by scholars such as Steve Neale and Steven Cohen, a larger discussion of musical masculinity beyond looking relations and queerness was necessary. As a multitude of scholars have created detailed studies of the implications of masculinity in more traditional male genres—detective, gangster, Western—studies of the more traditional feminized genres often eschew examinations of masculinity beyond that of the domesticated, emasculated, or queered. How does the heterosexual male fare in cinematic forms commonly discussed only in terms of femininity or homoeroticism? I hope this project starts a much-needed discussion on the variant masculinities—queer and straight—pervasive in these genre texts. Presented at times as self-sufficient, inner-directed, and self-aggrandizing and at others as concerned

about others via romance or community service, ambivalent musical men and the masculinity which defines them defy the restrictions often asserted by the generic form in which they circulate. Here, as with the form itself, an expansion of gendered possibilities appears. As these emergent dictates in musical form solidify through repetition of performance and visual style as well as narrative structure and content, the norms of gender—repeated through the various sets of possibilities articulated through these new norms—surface as independent of domesticity and variable in number. Challenging cultural, racial, and internal conflicts surface in this new form which open up narrative possibilities and consequently encourage more complex constructions of masculinities, while stars such as The Who, Burt Reynolds, and Steve Martin infuse the genre with star personae incongruous to old generic dictates which further complicate the attainment of a closed and conciliatory ending. Whether recuperated into a happy narrative or left to languish in self-imposed uncertainty or failure, the ambivalent musical male—tough guy, rock star, or messiah—gains narrative legitimacy through his repeated appearance as complex and not wholly recuperable or definable.

WHAT'S HERE, WHAT ELSE, AND WHY THIS

Various issues I saw as integral to the study I wanted to conduct have simultaneously limited or tailored the results I have produced. While I wholly stand by my choice to restrict this study to 1966-1983—the years I see bookended by a musical boom and ultimate bust—they by no means define the genre itself. Popular discussion and scholarship often places the musical in crisis—if a genre can truly be in a crisis—in the 1950s and early 1960s as the number of Broadway transfers become exhausted. Also,

as I discussed in Chapter 1, the very notion of defining “the musical” presents problems and ultimately helps to determine the types study that will be carried out. Varying from Busby Berkeley spectacles, operettas, and revues, the musical’s overall structure, performers, and performances have been tailored to suit the specific incarnation of the genre it serves. In the case of this project, I chose to focus wholly on the integrated musical. Because of the deeper implication of performance to gender—as the performances of song and dance emerge as natural expressions of life rather than one’s diegetic life’s work—this form of the musical serves as the basis of this project. Therefore, excluded from such a project, biopics such as *The Coal Miner’s Daughter*, *Sweet Dreams*, and the *Buddy Holly Story* fall to the wayside; while such films provide an additional opportunity for the articulation of gender through the performance of music—and in these cases, one which can be compared to the real-life (or deceased) Loretta Lynn, Patsy Cline, and Buddy Holly—boundaries must be constructed in the dealing with such a diverse genre. In addition (and much to my personal preference and dismay), this definition of the musical excluded the inclusion of such sexually loaded musicals as the gender-bending *Victor/Victoria*—robbing the project of a discussion of a very unattractive Robert Preston in drag—and *Cabaret*, which flows well with the arcadian through its ideologically problematic setting in Nazi Germany and the inclusion of scandalous sex or sexuality from everyone involved. Similarly, I have excluded films which wholly relegate song to the voiceover, and though *Phantom of the Paradise* rails a scathing assault against entertainment and presents lascivious and androgynous images of gender and sexuality and *The Jazz Singer* could provide an interesting context for the

1970s musical as it rewrites Hollywood's first musical film, by stepping outside the boundaries of (diegetically) lived and spontaneous performance, such films' stakes alter. I believe the boundaries I developed have best served the project at hand, for always at the fore remained the question, "how does the spontaneous performance of song and dance affect or work with or against the films' narratives and performers?"

Just as important—or limiting—as the choice of type and type, my focus on the male creates additional limitations on the project's results. While the overall study of generic form encompasses ways in which narrative and performance relate to both musical men and women, my study of actual performers and then my concluding chapter of synthesis chooses to remain solely focused on the musical male. Because of generic preconceptions and cultural gendered stereotyping, I believe it was important to give the musical male his due. In the context of scholarship which often relegates discussion of the cinematic male to more manly diegetic endeavors or turns an eye toward more "feminine" genres only to discuss the problematic contextualization of the male—henpecked husband, impotent lover, dancing beau-intended—I think it was important to interrogate fully that which I see as having been sidestepped in the past. While this study does then avoid the accompanying changes with regard to women and femininity—as the shift away from the domestic narrative would inevitably affect both sexes—I believe it has addressed a topic of equal importance and one less often contemplated.

I do believe, however, that this project—through its illuminations and its limitations—points to additional venues of related scholarship. An alteration of scope through generic definition, choice of vehicles, or auteurs could provide additional

information relating to the shifting mores of the musical genre. As discussed earlier, by altering the definition of the genre within this time period, various additional vehicles—some congruous to this project's discussion and some divergent—enter into play. Also, a comparative study of different types of musicals could further the interrogation of the function of music within the changing musical genre. How does song and dance differ when performed on a diegetic stage for a diegetic audience? Do these changes affect the implication of gender within the narrative? Additionally, as was illustrated through the example of Bob Fosse's earlier and later work (*The Pajama Game* to *Sweet Charity* to *All That Jazz*), the study of a single choreographer or director over time could possibly illuminate greater changes (of course implicated in such a study would also be—as discussed here—shifting styles, industrial structures, etc., as no artist exists in a vacuum).

Along with interrogating the genre from different perspectives, another way to examine further generic changes within the musical and their overall ideological bent would be to place a greater emphasis on cultural context and actual viewer reception. This project engages with formal changes occurring within the genre itself, but place these changes within the actual society in which they circulated and the greater cultural ramifications of the cinematic musical come to the fore. How do these changing narratives coincide with actual emergent trends or cultural events? For example, during the period discussed in this project, hegemonic notions of masculinity circulate within a cultural context affected by the waning of John F. Kennedy's Camelot, the founding of the Black Panthers, the hippie movement (represented directly in *Hair* and *Sweet Charity* and aesthetically through the hippie-inspired dress in *Paint Your Wagon*), assassinations

of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr., and the burgeoning women's and men's movements. As presentations of masculinity diversify within the genre, how do they reflect the changing face of dominant and emergent masculinities? How do these representations translate to the musical? Are they part of the cynical downturn discussed here with regard to the genre? How do the comparisons between lived masculinity and musical masculinity relate? A companion study of American masculinity and the musical could further elucidate this topic while an associated reception study might bring forth ties between lived and presented masculinities. As the musical has been derogated in American culture and some scholarship as feminizing, how did the changing face of the genre sit with the actual viewers? A threat to masculinity? A renewed sense of self due to the revised narrative direction? A sense of greater realism with the world of the younger generation?

In addition, this project could expand through a wider interrogation of the performance of song and dance. Discussed here mainly in terms of narrative context and visual style as compared to the arcadian musical, through performance and dance studies, the investigation of dance throughout the film musical could be expanded. As cinematic technology matured along with the musical, an erasure of physical vocal production accompanied the effective projection of the singing voice; simultaneously the commingling of the dancing body and camera produce increasing possibilities for visually capturing (or obfuscating) the dancer's performance. A more detailed study of the musical's contextualization in the overall changing face of theatrical and professional dance could create another layer of analysis regarding use of the body and connotation of

the choreographed text. As Fosse and Twyla Tharp bear specific meanings with regard to theatrical and modern dance, the larger texts of those dance forms bring their own meanings which impact upon the meaning of the dance, gendering of the body, and overall connection to the American culture.

In light of the fact that, like any project, this one was unable to accomplish all things in all ways for all people, I believe this project has succeeded in bridging the gaps in scholarship I identified in the beginning. Hopefully I have opened the pathways for further investigations on musical beyond the period often deemed the classical period (here the early years of the arcadian period). The presence of the genre post-1950s, while perhaps not as evident through capital gains or sheer number of films produced, cannot be denied. Not as dead in the seventies and eighties as often claimed, the musical of the years between 1966-1983 illustrate an exciting innovation in the genre. Ranging from the economic success stories such as *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Funny Girl* to stylistic extravaganzas such as *Tommy* and *The Wiz* to the few that are perhaps best forgotten (What were they thinking when they made *Lost Horizon* anyway?), examples of generic tradition and innovation sprinkle this more than twenty-five year period. Perhaps not proving publicly palatable or happy-go-lucky as their predecessors, these films illustrate the resilience of the musical as a genre and its ability to articulate—through song and dance—ideological and cultural messages beyond those commonly found in its foundational years. During this fertile period of American film, this seemingly stagnant genre too possessed malleability in form and content to blend into the changing cinematic

landscape. Hopefully this study will bring well-deserved attention to this understudied period of the genre.

Second, I hope this project has been able to bridge existing gaps between the areas of film studies and gender studies. While the two disciplines have been deep in conversation for nearly thirty years and scholarship has turned to interrogate the once seemingly incongruous relationships between gender and Hollywood genre—such as male melodrama and female action heroes—gendered study of the musical had been largely relegated to discussions of queered masculinity, queer spectatorship, heterosexual romance, and the specularization of the female body through dance. While not dismissing importance of the works on masculinity in the film musical by Brett Farmer, Steven Cohan, Steve Neale, and David Gerstener (along with the works of D.A. Miller and John Clum on the theatre-bound musical), I hope that this project has pulled these two disciplines closer together exploring the largely uncharted waters where men dance the aqua ballet. Focusing not only on marginalized masculinities or the narrative threat implied through the musical formula, this work has set out to implicate the place, performance, and redefinition of hegemonic masculinities within the genre. Men need not be queered to sing and dance. Narratives do grow beyond that of romantic domestication. The identification and analysis of these emerging narrative strains and the visual and performative styles which accompany them bring to light a wider view of the circulation of men within a genre often separated from masculinity studies

All in all, my hope was to bring together issues of masculinity in the musical past their current point of engagement. Yes, the overall visual and performative excesses

associated with the genre surely bring multiple levels of joy to its viewers. How can one watch the visual dynamism of the *The Wiz*'s Tin Man's abandoned Coney Island or the fantastically exaggerated movement and social critique present in *Sweet Charity*'s "Rhythm of Life" (after all, Sammy Davis Jr. was groovy) without engaging on a purely aesthetic level? However, beyond the pure joy associated with the toe-tapping—yes, even in the cynical world of the ambivalent musical—music, and visual spectacle, these films go beyond the fluff and reinforcement of social norms often associated with the genre to present biting critiques of society and the gender identities of those living in it. This project has sought to make explicit both the changing shape of this oft-labeled traditionalist genre and the implications of masculinity which accompany its generic reconfiguration. Through the very nature of film genre, the repeated performance of narrative, stylistic, and ideological tropes commingle to establish a readable form known as the musical. My goal was to underscore both its non-static nature and the various industrial, ideological, and cultural forces which bore upon the ever-changing nature thereof. While many genres have been followed through their various historical incarnations, the musical—a foundational genre of the motion picture industry since the very emergence of sound—has perhaps been under-investigated, often relegated to discussions of social and sexual conformity. Moving past early socially biting vehicles of the ballad opera to the ultimate idealistic conclusions of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein and Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney and then back to socially contentious subject matter, the genre has gone beyond mere cultural back-patting to create overt critiques of the societies—and cinematic conventions—which once served as

its bread and butter. The emergence of the ambivalent musical, as discussed in this project, illustrates the various means by which genres alter both superficially and structurally to suit different needs, ideological *and* stylistic.

AND I CAN'T STOP SINGING

The norms highlighted in this project as indicative of the ambivalent musical of the 1960s to 1980s are by no means meant to stand as the new and definitive form of the integrated movie musical. Just as the genre shifted through multiple related forms—comic opera, ballad opera, burlesque, musical play—and responded to changes in Broadway products and regulatory and technical changes within the American motion picture industry, the genre (and its associated implications regarding gender) have continued to shift. While the integrated version of the genre—at least the non-animated variety—saw additional droughts between the early 1980s and the late 1990s, films such as *A Chorus Line* (1985), *Little Shop of Horrors* (1986), *Cry Baby* (1990), and *Newsies* (1992) appeared with various levels of commercial success. Since the mid 1990s, the genre has seen a modicum of heightened commercial success and further innovation. Ultimately becoming a reflection of the MTV generation rather than the Rodgers and Hammerstein set, the more recent integrated musical releases *Evita* (1996), *Moulin Rouge!* (2000), and *Chicago* (2002) have shown continuing innovation in style. An increased focus on quick cutting and a shift in choreography away from bodily movement to that performed by the camera, has further disassociated performance from the actual body of the dancer as fetishistic close-ups of body segments and twirling sets replace the performing body as central focus. At the same time, films such as *Moulin Rouge!*, *South*

Park: Bigger, Longer, and Uncut (1999), and *Cannibal: The Musical* (1996) have placed a more overt critique on the early incarnation of the genre through a high level of intertextuality and presentation of topics heretofore seeming unlikely—even in the ambivalent musical—for the form. With a romance between Satan and Saddam Hussein, Satan’s uplifting Disney-esque “Up There,” “La Resistance” (a *Les Misérables* inspired call to war against those holding Canadian flatulating celebrities Terrance and Phillip hostage), and vulgarity-filled numbers “Uncle Fucka” and “Kyle’s Mom’s a Bitch,” denying the sugarcoated love stories of the popular Disney musicals of the 1990s, *South Park: Bigger, Longer, and Uncut* has stretched the boundaries of genre topicality and made ironic use of past musical forms.¹ Similarly, *Moulin Rouge!* pushed into hyperawareness of intertextuality with songs comprised of the very pop music seen by some as replacing the popular tunes of the once lucrative musical soundtrack and cast recording, including lyrics from vehicles as disparate as “The Sound of Music,” Madonna’s “Like a Virgin” (sung by the owner of the Moulin Rouge in explanatory-turned-homoerotic production number with dancing waiters and a horny duke), and musical riffs poached from Gilbert and Sullivan. As such vehicles push the bounds of the generic form even further, they subsequently usher in even further critiques or parodies of the genre’s past presentations of gender identity.

Simultaneous to the turn-of-the-century appearance of multiple integrated screen musicals, Broadway—which has already proven a stylistic and narrative source for the Hollywood musical—has taken various turns. In addition to the constant stream of theatrical musical revivals, a current trend in converting non-integrated Hollywood

musicals into integrated stage musicals—*Victor/Victoria* (1982 and 1995), *Saturday Night Fever* (1977 and 1999), *Footloose* (1984 and 1998), *The Producers* (1968 and 2001), and *Hairspray* (1988 and 2002)—has reversed the traditional direction of flow of musical products.² Along with such motion picture conversions, the stage has seen a spate of off-Broadway to Broadway musicals which, through performance style, narrative convention, and subject matter, further push the original bounds of the musical play. Eschewing pleasant and resolvable plotlines—which like the arcadian musical narratively embrace the illogical nature of their clean endings—new Tony Award-winning musicals such as *Rent* (1996), *Urinetown* (2001), and *Avenue Q* (2003) use poverty, AIDS, homosexuality, and lurid sex (between puppets) with various levels of seriousness and irony.³ As *Avenue Q* combines live actors with randy puppets in a musical about struggling twenty- and thirtysomethings in a New York borough, capitalizing on the Generation X relationship with the televisuals and puppetry of *Sesame Street*, and *Urinetown* uses a Brechtian style related to agitprop theatre to highlight the conventions of melodrama and musical (not calling the audience to action), the genre moves even further into the type of reflective critique seen in the ambivalent film musicals of the sixties, seventies, and eighties.⁴ Along with these proclaimed self-aware and postmodern narratives, tropes of gender—both masculine and feminine—come under fire through the ironic presentation of genre-based stereotypes. Simultaneous to these new generic critiques, revivals such as *Cabaret* (1998) and *Assassins* (2004) are using the cultural cachet and ideological residue connected to Studio 54—the 1970s hotbed of sex, drugs,

and disco, now renovated into a theatrical performance space—to recontextualize their narratives.

As images created on the back and forth flow of stage to screen product move even farther toward social and gendered reflexivity, the genre seems to implode. Where it once contained social norms by seemingly naturally and neatly wrapping narratives up with a quaint marital bow, new vehicles continue to point out the fallacious and overt construction of the social norms implicated by the genre. Moving from naturalization to cynicism to overt parody and criticism, the genre continues to gesture toward a space where the conscious performance of song and dance—once rendered natural by its narrative context—has turned into the means by which social ills and confinement have been highlighted through these texts. While the musical has certainly produced decades of hoedowns, marital production numbers, and metaphorical group hugs, some new versions of the genre are meeting such events with cynicism and manipulating them to undermine the established generic form for its own self-exposure. No longer can Garland and Rooney put on a show to save the town. The town is unsalvageable (or at least unmanageable) and as the happy singers and dancers—perhaps HIV-positive, multiracial, queer, puppets—polka around the garbage heap, it becomes painfully or hysterically self-evident that a song and dance will not be able to do the trick.

NOTES

¹ All illustrations are VHS or DVD screen grabs taken from the author's personal collection.

CHAPTER 1:

¹ "I'm Mean" Lyrics by Harry Nilsson, © Famous Music Corp.

² During the late 1960s restrictions on content and film style both altered in ways which ushered in more risqué representations of sexuality, graphic notions of violence, and overall cynical versions of life itself. In 1968 the Production Code, which had strictly controlled images of violence, sex, and overall representations of narratively legitimated seediness, was replaced with the Motion Picture Association of America's rating system (G, PG, R, X). Simultaneously, the impact of the French New Wave and avant-garde was being felt on the American film industry, as youth-targeted anti-establishment films simultaneously topped the box-office and challenged the status quo.

³ Only four integrated musicals were released between 1983 and 1996, and not until 1996's mini-musical boom with *Everyone Says I Love You*, *Evita*, and *Cannibal: The Musical* did any given year see more than one integrated musical released.

⁴ In *Open a New Window: The Broadway Musical in the 1960s*, Ethan Mordden cites that decade as a turning point in the Broadway musical. He situates this shift within various shows which would ultimately come to screen by the 1970s, such as *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), *Man of La Mancha* (1965), *Camelot* (1960), *Cabaret* (1966), *Hair* (1968), and *1776* (1969). As the Rodgers and Hammerstein era ended with a particularly dark vehicle, *Camelot*, Broadway musicals began to show more edgy chops. With shows such as *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Man of La Mancha*, and *Cabaret* set in less utopic scenarios, *1776* de-romanticizing *The Declaration of Independence* while almost entirely eliminating dance and forever keeping its romantic couple separated, and *Hair* bringing rock music into the fray, the genre was demonstrating a significant shift from the standbys of a significant portion of musical theatre. Ethan Mordden, *Open a New Window: Broadway Musical in the 1960s* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

⁵ This is not to claim that the genre did not always include elements of distancing. The choreographed camerawork of Berkeley, the breaking of the forth wall, and the overall integration of the diegetic audience—all elements tied to the arcadian musical—admittedly achieved a similar distancing affect. However, the camera techniques in question here provide less *narratively* or *generically* motivated rationale for their choices. Similarly, the use of the Hollywood montage sequence exists in earlier films, but in the ambivalent form of the genre, this technique is often used to displace performance of real bodies and refocus on the aesthetics of setting.

⁶ Ironically, Susan Bordo names the mid-sixties—the period of the sexual revolution—as the time during which the male body went back underground in the cinema. While films of the 1950s flaunted and eroticized male bodies, those of the late 1960s “were fairly circumspect of with the male body, even with their more glamorous stars.” She cites films such as *M*A*S*H*, *Easy Rider*, and *The Graduate*—those most commonly associated with the American “edgy” modernist movement New American Cinema, which exploded the reign of the status quo as blockbuster—as prime examples of this new male cinematic modesty. Susan Bordo, *The Male Body: A New Look at Men in Public and Private* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1999) 110. For more on New American cinema see Peter Binkind, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex, Drugs, and Rock-n-Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998) and Robert Kolker, *Cinema of Loneliness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

⁷ Discussions of the feminization of dance can be found in works such as Studlar's chapter on Valentino, David Gerstner's “Dancer from the Dance: Gene Kelly, Television, and the Beauty of Movement,” John Clum's *Something for the Boys: Musical Theatre and Gay Culture*, and D.A. Miller's *Place For Us: Essays on the Broadway Musical* (a performative autobiographical account of the gay man's relationship to the Broadway musical). Gerstner chronicles Kelly's overcompensation for the cultural connotation of dance in Kelly's episode of *Omnibus* “Dancing: A Man's Game,” calling the show “a common strategic move in 1950s America: a male artist defending himself from powerful homophobic and misogynist accusations. Presenting himself as a dancer with whom men would feel ‘safe’ (a *commonsensical* balance between

creativity and masculinity, popular entertainment, and Art), Kelly refutes the cultural charges of effeminacy that, as he sees it, have debased the art of dance and stripped it of its masculine origins.” Clum, to the contrary, focuses on the connection of musical theatre to gay men as both fans and practitioners. His chapter entitled “Chorus Boys” discusses the “suspect dancing boy” and the very derogation of the term “chorus boy,” pigeonholing these male dancers as “male, but not quite men.” John M. Clum, *Something for the Boys: Musical Theatre and Gay Culture* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999) 197-209; David Anthony Gerstner, “Dancer from the Dance: Gene Kelly, Television, and the Beauty of Movement.” *The Velvet Light Trap* Spring 2002: 50; Gaylyn Studlar, *This Mad Masquerade: Stardom and Masculinity in the Jazz Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); D.A. Miller, *A Place for Us: Essays on the Broadway Musical* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1998).

⁸ Of nearly 150 films cited in Feuer’s *The Hollywood Musical*, only twelve musicals cited were made after 1965 and only eight of those twelve fall under the category of integrated musical. Altman’s *The American Film Musical*’s list of over three hundred musical titles cites forty-six films between 1966 and 1983, twenty-six of which are integrated. (This number also excludes listed animated or puppet-driven children’s films). In both cases, the overwhelming majority of extended examples address films which precede the mid to late 1960s and therefore do not wholly engage with the issues I am addressing. Rick Altman, *The American Film Musical* (Indianapolis and Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Jane Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical* (Indianapolis and Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

⁹ Altman 13.

¹⁰ Altman 28-45.

¹¹ Altman 5.

¹² Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking and the Studio System* (New York: Random House, 1981) 24-29. In *Hollywood Genres* Schatz also notes that this type of ending provides a false sense of security; ending at the moment of celebration, the narrative is not forced to contend with the hasty resolution of seemingly incongruous social types. The spectator dismisses the problems of the morning after in lieu of the joy of communal celebration. Schatz’s study also lays down four stages in the evolution of genre (36-41). The third and fourth account for the evolution of the genre past its initial deep structure. As the genre plays itself out, the questions or cultural tensions which once served as the basis for each narrative show themselves as culturally problematic. The cracks in the generic message begin to show until the cracks themselves become the basis for the narratives. Schatz uses examples such as *The Searchers* (1956) and its overall questioning of the civilization/savagery binary of the Hollywood Western. I believe a similar evolution occurs with regard to the musical, affecting a breaking down of Altman’s very basis for the musical (the romantically coupled pair) and the types of masculine images portrayed in the film’s narratives. Schatz 37-41.

¹³ Charles Wolfe, “What’s Entertainment? Recent Writings on the Film Musical,” *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* Spring 1985: 145; J. P. Telotte, “The Movie Musical and What We Ain’t Heard Yet,” *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture* 14(2): 511.

¹⁴ In Dyer’s discussion of the utopia created by the Hollywood film musicals, he is referring to utopia as feeling, rather than the utopic worlds discussed by individuals such as Sir Thomas More. Richard Dyer, “Entertainment and Utopia,” *Hollywood Musicals: The Film Reader*, ed. Steven Cohan (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) 175.

¹⁵ Dyer, “Entertainment” 182.

¹⁶ Altman 47-8.

¹⁷ Altman 50.

¹⁸ Feuer, *Hollywood*, 3, 13.

¹⁹ J. P. Telotte, “Ideology and the Kelly-Donen Musical,” *Film Criticism* 8(3): 37.

²⁰ Telotte, “Ideology” 44.

²¹ Feuer, *Hollywood* 32; Altman 75.

²² Dyer, “Entertainment” 20.

²³ Altman 69.

²⁴ Marsha Siefert, “Image/Music/Voice: Song Dubbing in Hollywood Musicals,” *Journal of Communication* 45(2): 44-5. This disconnect occurs when the music track overwhelms what would have

been considered a natural audio track. As the sound of the performer's voice and the sights of him/her dancing become the center focus, diegetic sounds of performance are often abandoned (e.g. the sounds of *dancing*, the vocal *exertion* of singing, the everyday sounds which would coincide with the action occurring, etc.)

²⁵ Leo Braudy, *The World in a Frame: What We See in Films* (Garden City, NJ: Anchor Press, 1976) 158.

²⁶ Marc Miller, "Of Tunes and Toons: The Movie Musical in the 1990s," *Film Genre 2000: New Critical Essays*, ed. Wheeler Winston Dixon (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000) 45-6.

²⁷ See Jane Feuer's *The Hollywood Musical*, Brett Farmer's *Spectacular Passions*, and Patricia Mellencamp's "Spectacle and Spectator: Looking Through the American Musical Comedy." Brett Farmer, *Spectacular Passions: Cinema, Fantasy, and Gay Male Spectatorship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Patricia Mellencamp, "Spectacle and Spectator: Looking Through the American Musical Comedy," *Cine-Tracts Summer 1977*: 44-63.

²⁸ Feuer, *Hollywood* 29.

²⁹ Mellencamp 34.

³⁰ Braudy 149-54.

³¹ Braudy 155.

³² Feuer uses the Levi-Strass term "bricolage" or tinkering to refer to the practice of creating impulsive dance from one's surroundings by converting everyday objects into useful props. She uses this term in her discussion of the perceived spontaneity of diegetic dance. Feuer, *Hollywood* 3-7.

³³ Feuer, *Hollywood* 15-6.

³⁴ Feuer, *Hollywood* 11.

³⁵ Feuer, *Hollywood* 4-9.

³⁶ Siefert 58.

³⁷ Siefert 57.

³⁸ Steve Neale, "Masculinity as Spectacle," *Screening the Male*, eds. Steven Cohan and Ena Rae Hark (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) 18; Steven Cohan, "Feminizing the Song-and-Dance Man: Fred Astaire and the Spectacle of Masculinity in the Hollywood Musical," *Screening the Male*, eds. Steven Cohan and Ena Rae Hark. (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) 46-69; Jeff Yanc, "More Than a Woman: Music, Masculinity and Male Spectacle in *Saturday Night Fever* and *Staying Alive*," *The Velvet Light Trap* 38 (Fall 1996): 39-50.

³⁹ Cohan, "Feminizing" 61-2.

⁴⁰ Cohan, "Feminizing" 55-9.

⁴¹ Yanc 39.

⁴² In "The Ballerina's Phallic Pointe" dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster discusses the gender politics of ballet. She states that while both genders may display equally dedicated performance, the female retains the center of focus, as the male becomes an "indispensable assistant, against which she sparkles." As she becomes the phallus, he "conveys her" and she "conveys desire." Susan Leigh Foster, "The Ballerina's Phallic Pointe," *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture and Power*, ed. Susan Leigh Foster (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) 2-3.

⁴³ Susan Leigh Foster, *Choreographing History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995) 3.

⁴⁴ Significantly, Foster points to the 1950s and 1960s as a period during which the body becomes constructed as "natural" or "responsive." Freed from the constraints of the mind—performer's or choreographers—the body expresses pure emotion. Foster, *Choreographing* 178-83.

⁴⁵ Susan Leigh Foster, *Reading Dancing* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986) 59-94.

⁴⁶ In the early twentieth century, Stuart Hall identified dance as "one of the best expressions of pure play" and an ideal means by which to exercise the mind via exercising the body. This definition of dance as free play situates dance in direct opposition to the utilitarian connotation of the male body in American culture. By 1903 New York public schools had instigated after school athletics programs. While boys participated in traditional athletics, within a year the ideal physical activity for girls was determined to be folk dancing, rather than team sports or skill-based contests. Linda J. Tomko, "Fete Accompli: Gender, 'Folk-Dance,'

and Progressive-era political ideals in New York City,” *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture and Power*, ed. Susan Leigh Foster (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) 160-1.

⁴⁷ Jane Feuer, “The Self-Reflexive Musical,” *Hollywood Musicals: The Film Reader*, ed. Steven Cohan (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) 37; Steven Cohan, introduction, *Hollywood Musicals: The Film Reader*, ed. Steven Cohan (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) 7; Christine Gledhill, “Signs of Melodrama,” *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: Routledge, 1991) 216; Arthur Britton, “Stars and Genre,” *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: Routledge, 1991) 202; Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: BFI Publishing, 1998) 126-31.

⁴⁸ Gledhill 215.

⁴⁹ Schatz 191.

⁵⁰ Cohan, *Hollywood* 12.

⁵¹ Britton 202; Dyer, *Stars* 126-31.

⁵² Britton 199.

⁵³ Britton 202.

⁵⁴ Dyer, *Stars* 20.

⁵⁵ Dyer, *Stars* 26-7.

⁵⁶ See Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1996); Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men* (New York: Doubleday, 1983); Peter N. Stearns, *Be a Man!: Males in Modern Society* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc.: 1990); Susan Faludi, *Stiffed* (New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1999).

⁵⁷ Kimmel 1-2.

⁵⁸ Stearns 14.

⁵⁹ Roger Horrocks, *Male Myths and Icons* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, and Hampshire: Macmillan, 1995) 1.

⁶⁰ Both Easthope’s *What a Man’s Gotta Do* and Horrocks’s *Male Myths and Icons* rely heavily on psychoanalysis as a methodology, resulting in somewhat generalized analyses of popular culture and its own sense of self-awareness. Anthony Easthope, *What a Man’s Gotta Do: The Masculine Myth in Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁶¹ Faludi 607.

⁶² Bordo 26.

⁶³ Easthope 51-4; Horrocks 150-1.

⁶⁴ Easthope 53.

⁶⁵ Faludi 38-9.

⁶⁶ Faludi 85; Ehrenreich 16-26.

⁶⁷ See Peter Lehman, *Running Scared* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993).

⁶⁸ Althusser defines the ISA as one of a “number of realities” (the church, schools, family, mass mediums, etc.) existent in society which function not by violence (as is the case with the Repressive State Apparatus [RSA]), but through the establishment of ideological norms and expectations. Kwai-Cheung Lo, “Muscles and Subjectivity: A Short History of the Masculine Body in Hong Kong Popular Culture,” *camera obscura* 39 (1996):141-4.

⁶⁹ Lo 108.

⁷⁰ Jeffords states, “In the hierarchy of the Reagan imaginary, the hard-bodied U.S. male is tougher even than God, for God might exhibit some of the weakness characteristic of the Carter presidency, particularly those of forgiveness and love...” Susan Jeffords, *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994) 47.

⁷¹ During the span of Valentino’s career, his contextualization as a dancer came into direct conflict with expectations of proper American masculinity. Bodies and activities of dancers were both feminized and exoticized by the popular press and cultural response to social trends such as ballet and tango teas. The ethnic Other was seen as a threat to the accepted notion of the American male as useful and economically productive. Studlar 150-3.

⁷² John Ellis’s *Visible Fictions* expands upon this identificatory theory. Not focusing wholly on the narcissistic aspect of identification, he describes a practice whereby the viewer accepts a certain level of flux in his identification with various characters within a film. Rather than constraining the identification

to one character, such as the male hero, the male viewer can simultaneously identify with a hero, heroine, villain, etc., recognizing various aspects of his psyche in each. John Ellis, *Visible Fictions* (London and New York: Routledge, 1982) 42-3.

⁷³ Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema," *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*, ed. Sue Thornham. (1975; New York: New York University Press, 1999) 63.

⁷⁴ Both Cohan and Neale stray from a straight psychoanalytic view of spectatorship, integrating notions of historicization while not wholly complicating the concept of individuated spectatorship.

⁷⁵ This notion of the male as ultimate bearer of the look has since been greatly critiqued by feminist film scholarship such as Mary Ann Doane's work on masquerade, Annette Kuhn's writings on the soap opera and melodrama, and even Mulvey's "Afterthoughts," a critique of her own canonical "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Mary Ann Doane, "Film and Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator," *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*, ed. Sue Thornham. (1982; New York: New York University Press, 1999) 131-45; Annette Kuhn, "Womens Genres: Meldorama, Soap Opera and Theory," *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*, ed. Sue Thornham. (1984; New York: New York University Press, 1999) 146-56; Laura Mulvey, "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* (1946)," *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*, ed. Sue Thornham. (1981; New York: New York University Press, 1999) 122-30.

⁷⁶ Richard Dyer, "Don't Look Now: The Instabilities of the Male Pin-Up," *Screen* 23 (3-4): 63-7.

⁷⁷ Dyer, "Don't" 61-73.

⁷⁸ Neale 12.

⁷⁹ Neale 15.

⁸⁰ Dennis Bingham, *Acting Male* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994) 4.

⁸¹ Bingham 219. Bingham also explores the minimalist qualities of Clint Eastwood and the early "naturalness" mythology of James Stewart as being relevant to their masculine identifications. Bingham 27, 174.

⁸² In *From Acting to Performance: Essays in Modernism and Postmodernism* Philip Auslander engages with an extended discussion of Brook, Artaud, and Grotowski. Philip Auslander, *From Acting to Performance: Essays in Modernism and Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

⁸³ Constantin Stanislavski, "When Acting is an Art," *Star Texts: Image and Performance in Film and Television* ed. Jeremy G. Butler (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991) 21.

⁸⁴ Bertholt Brecht, "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting Which Produces an Alienation Effect," *Star Texts: Image and Performance in Film and Television*, ed. Jeremy G. Butler (1940; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991) 75.

⁸⁵ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, and Auckland: Anchor Books, 1959) 9.

⁸⁶ Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) 30.

⁸⁷ Janet Staiger, *Media Reception Studies*. Forthcoming.

⁸⁸ I will attend to these films which the dissertation does not directly address in the next chapter's historical overview of the Hollywood musical.

⁸⁹ David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

⁹⁰ I was ultimately unable to obtain *Lost in the Stars* (1974) and *Catch My Soul* (1974). Additionally, popular film reviews and other magazine articles will be used to discuss the cultural constructions of male stars in Chapter 4.

⁹¹ With the success of the Elvis films in the 1950s, pop stars flooded the quasi-musical. Young men such as Frankie Avalon (*Beach Party* [1963], *I'll Take Sweden* [1965]) Pat Boone (*April Love* [1957], *State Fair* [1962]), Bobby Rydell (*Bye, Bye Birdie* [1963]), Fabian (*Hound Dog Man* [1959], *High Time* [1960]), and Bobby Darin (*State Fair* [1962]) entered the fray as clean-cut film heroes with a beat. Even Elvis appeared less racy as his cinematic self. Perhaps the traditional dictates of the genre itself led to this toning down of pop star sexuality. However, as the genre began to experiment with social critiques, the pop star made way for the rock star whose persona would have been more difficult to merge with the clean narrative closures

of the earlier films (perhaps why the toned-down yet still culturally volatile Elvis persona circulated in films which stood just outside of the integrated musical).

⁹² Feuer, *Hollywood 90*; J. P. Telotte, "The New Hollywood Musical: From Saturday Night Fever to Footloose," *Genre and Contemporary Hollywood*, ed. Steve Neale (London: BFI Publishing, 2002) 48; Feuer, "Self-Reflexive" 32.

⁹³ Per Dyer, connotation of the nonrepresentational elements of performance (melody, rhythm, dance style, etc) will impact upon the overall perception of the film. Through this logic, the presence of music containing a hard beat could lead to the overall unsettling of the narrative. Films such as *Tommy* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* possess a screeching rock sound which deviates greatly from the melodic tunes of the arcadian musical and create a sense of unsettledness. Dyer, "Entertainment" 20. Similarly, Feuer cites musical style as a defining element of character type. Again, in the context of the already established musical genre, the integration of these newer and harsher styles of music will be measured against those from earlier incarnations of the genre. Feuer, *Hollywood* 54.

⁹⁴ Again, Dennis Bingham stresses acting as "work" as the legitimate type to be performed by the male, while pretending or taking on of roles is associated with the female. Bingham 219.

⁹⁵ See Gersner, Clum, and D. A. Miller on the musical male.

CHAPTER 2:

¹ Though *Chicago* better fits the category of integrated films described in this project as ambivalent (problematic heroines, unresolved narrative, performance which pulls away from *realistic* integration toward the fantastical), the press has responded to the level of integration present in this film and absent from successful biopics, dance film, and music movies of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Jess Cagle, "And All That Jazz: The Movie Musical Gets a Shot in the Arm—and the Chest—in a Rollicking Big-Screen Version of *Chicago*," *Time* 16 Dec 2002: 68+; Carla Hay, "*Chicago* Boosts Film Musicals," *Billboard* 5 Apr 2003: 6; Mark Steyn, "That's Showbiz," *Spectator* 25 Jan 2003: 56-7.

² J.P. Telotte, "The New Hollywood Musical: From *Saturday Night Fever* to *Footloose*," *Genre and Contemporary Hollywood*, ed. Steve Neale (London: BFI Publishing, 2002) 48-6; Ethan Mordden, *The Hollywood Musical* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981) 151-2.

³ Richard Kislán refers to Jerome Kern's *Show Boat* as the first mature musical, a vehicle structured around a complex narrative, clearly motivated characters, and integrated song and dance. Richard Kislán, *The Musical: A Look at the American Musical Theatre* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980) 113-27. The term "book musical" will be used in this project to refer to a musical containing a well-developed narrative, not merely a thread of story punctuated by interchangeable musical numbers.

⁴ For more on the connection between film and these earlier musical forms, see Kislán; Gerald Mast, *Can't Help Singing: The American Musical on Stage and Screen* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1987); and Richard Traubner's *Operetta: A Theatrical History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983).

⁵ This chapter by no means covers all musical forms pre- or post-sound cinema. I will merely touch on those forms or moments in theatre/film history which I see as most relevant to the time period and type of musical which I will ultimately be discussing.

⁶ This type of vehicle satirized contemporary politics, social conventions, and contemporary dramatic practices such as excessive sentimentalism. Julian Mates, *America's Musical Stage: Two Hundred Years of Musical Theatre* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1985) 23.

⁷ This tradition was broken almost as soon as it begun. *Beggar's Opera* included some of George Handel's classical pieces, deviating from a restriction to the popular. Elise K. Kirk, *American Opera* (Urbana, IL and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001) 12.

⁸ *Flora*, also entitled *Hob in the Well*, tells the story of a country village mother who pulls her baby out of well and mistakes him for a monster.

⁹ Kirk 13.

¹⁰ Denny Martin Flinn, *Musical! A Grand Tour* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997) 82-3.

¹¹ Mast 8.

¹² The European grand (or serious) opera had made its way to the United States by the beginning of the nineteenth century; however, as in England, American composers failed to strongly take up the form and make it their own. Julian Mates cites Francis Hopkinson's *The Temple of Minerva* (1781) as the first American-born grand opera. During this period, some opera was performed in the United States by traveling troupes, used for pantomimes and ballets, and/or translated narratively or musically to fit the needs of individual companies and American audiences. Early American-made grand opera more resembled the styles of the plebian comic and ballad operas, eschewing the preeminence of music for narrative. By the mid 1800s, the grand opera had acquired an associated "snob factor" and split off from the ballad and comic, characteristics of which manifest themselves heavily in what ultimately became known as American musical theatre. Mates 55-65.

¹³ Kislán 15.

¹⁴ Traubner 358

¹⁵ While some of Offenbach's operettas had been translated into English, the result often was punned versions which more closely resembled burlesque in form.

¹⁶ Kirk 103.

¹⁷ Traubner 365-6

¹⁸ Though these types of shows were initially performed solely by whites in blackface, by the mid 1860s black performers began to organize their own troupes. Mates 85.

¹⁹ Kislán 32-3.

²⁰ Kislán 42.

²¹ Joseph Urban elevated the level of production design present on the day's stage. Integrating painting techniques such as spackling and trends such as art deco and art nouveau, he created a specific look for each scene, climaxing at the end of the revue. Unfortunately, because revues often changed the order of scenes, the rise to climax was often unnoticed. Flinn 105-6. For a more detailed discussion of burlesque, see Robert Allen, *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

²² While earlier operettas had included social issues as part of their narratives, scholars such as Mast and Flinn cite *Show Boat* as one of the first significant musicals to include such a topic without "reducing it to ridiculous claptrap." Mast 59; Flinn 175.

²³ This theory has been challenged on various fronts. Scholars of the operetta dub the musical plays of Rodgers and Hammerstein nothing more operettas with a conscience and they are quick to point out the anomalous waltzes occurring in such homespun shows as *Oklahoma!* Traubner 401-7. Regardless, a noted change can be seen between the shows of Rodgers and Hammerstein and the majority of operettas produced prior to their era. Also, while scholars point to this change in musical form as an elevation of the congruity of music and book, they also point to this moment as the decline of the marketability or cultural impact of *individual* songs from Broadway musicals. Where the Cole Porters and George and Ira Gershwin were creating shows built around marketable, character non-specific ditties, the music of Rodgers and Hammerstein was often too inextricably linked to the context in which it was intended to be performed. While individual listeners could still enjoy the music, only those familiar with the narrative would comprehend the very narrative-specific lyrics. The ultimate logic of this argument can be questioned when looking at the overall success of Rodgers and Hammerstein cast recordings and motion picture soundtracks. All found more than just marginal success. *Oklahoma!*'s and *Carousel*'s soundtrack went platinum, while *The King and I*'s, *The Sound of Music*'s, *South Pacific*'s garnered gold. *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, *Oklahoma!*, and *The Sound of Music* all hit Billboard's number one slot, and the five films plus *Flower Drum Song* spent a total of 1169 weeks on the Billboard top 200. Joel Whitburn, *Top Pop Albums, 1955-1996* (Menomonee, WI: Record Research Inc., 1996).

²⁴ This is in keeping with broader cultural trends in American literature and film. See Janet Staiger, *Bad Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995) 79-85.

²⁵ Kislán 143.

²⁶ This practice of collaboration would ultimately hamper the production process of Rodgers and Hammerstein vehicles on the big screen. Often attributed to their contractual creative control over the motion picture, all of their vehicles suffered aesthetically, resulting in uninspired stage to screen transfers

which lacked in the appropriation of cinematic elements. Rather, until the death of Hammerstein and the production of *The Sound of Music*, they remained loyal transfers bereft of location shooting or the visual tricks which the screen but not the stage could provide. Mast 217.

²⁷ This is not to suggest that Warner Bros. was the only studio vying for the lead in the business of sound film. Fox debuted its Movietone technology to great success, first appearing with the presentation of newsreel footage of a West Point military parade. For more on the connection between music and the early sound film wars see Richard Barrios, *A Song in the Dark: The Birth of the Musical Film* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 13-58.

²⁸ Mast 92. Also see David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

²⁹ Though *The Desert Song* and *Show Boat* were hailed on stage, their transitions to film were less than stellar. *The Desert Song* suffered the disease of many early Broadway transfers: too much Broadway and not enough transfer. Pained by the cumbersome technology and under-inspired by the cinematic possibilities and techniques available on the screen, *The Desert Song* emerged too wedded to its stage production both visually and textually. *Show Boat* suffered from a different malady. Plans for the film had emerged prior to the popularization of sound. Originally intended to be a silent adaptation of the book (not the Kern musical), Universal hurriedly tried to augment the proposed project by adding a few songs (not from the musical), some dialogue, and a sound prologue in which Ziegfeld, the producer of the stage version, introduced a medley of stage tunes. Barrios 90-2.

³⁰ Traubner 407-33.

³¹ Understandably, operettas went another way. Rather than naturalizing the moment, they often increased the drama to heights which would welcome the excess associated with characters bursting into song.

³² In this project, the term voiceover will be used to refer to the practice of using a sound track which presents music not simultaneously being performed by the character onscreen. This may manifest itself in voiceover singing concurrent with some kind of montage sequence or simply playing over a scene.

³³ Mast 114.

³⁴ Accompanying the changes in the romantic dramas of the operetta, the revue maintained popularity though the first twenty years of the genre, as well as showing itself in later incarnations throughout the years. This narrative-light format allowed the celebration of the studio's stables of performers, serving as straight-up revues (*Goldwyn Follies* [1938] or Arthur Freed's *Ziegfeld Follies* [1946]), excuses to tout popular radio stars with a loose radio plotline (*The Big Broadcast of 1936* or *The Big Broadcast of 1938*), or as sources of morale in WWII military revues (*Star Spangled Rhythm* [1942] or *Two Girls and a Sailor* [1944]).

³⁵ Lyrics by Al Dubin, © WB Music Corp.

³⁶ While the musical is often considered merely escapist, the Warner Bros. musicals—staying in line with their overall studio stamp—projected a more grizzly view of society. Acknowledging the hardships which existed in the Depression era, films such as *Golddiggers of 1933* (which also relieves the show of center stage and refocuses the narrative on the diegetic romance) simultaneously projects the idealism of the emerging Hollywood musical genre and the harsh realism of the culture in which it circulated. While the narrative included a go get 'em show in which everyone found employment and a love story to boot, musical numbers such as “Remember My Forgotten Man” infused narratives with the realities of poverty, displacement of returning soldiers, and expectations of a bleak tomorrow—all wrapped in a dazzling Berkeley bow of visual excess and escapism. Mordden, *Hollywood* 79-85.

³⁷ Between 1927 and 1932 the Payne Fund Studies produced popularly accepted evidence of motion pictures directly affecting the behavior and values of its viewers. Claiming children would transfer acts seen in films to their everyday lives, the study brought greater credence to the preexisting call for mandatory regulation. The code would remain firm through the 1950s. For more on the formation of the PCA, see Garth Jowett, *Film: The Democratic Art* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, and Company, 1976) or Frank Miller, *Censored Hollywood: Sex, Sin & Violence on Screen* (Atlanta, GA: Turner Publications, 1994).

³⁸ De-emphasizing the actual narrative importance of the show, films such as the Astaire-Rogers cycle, *Daddy Long Legs* (1955), and *Funny Face* (1957) function more as romantic comedies than backstage musicals.

³⁹ Evidence of this can be seen with Alice Faye and John Payne in films such as *Springtime in the Rockies* (1942) and *Hello, Frisco, Hello* (1943), Betty Grable's *Sweet Rosie O'Grady* (1943), Gene Kelly's *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), and Jane Powell/Mary Martin's *Hit the Deck*. Simultaneously evoking the "reality" of the stage and confirming the "naturalness" of romance and heterosexual union, these films continued to be a mainstay.

⁴⁰ Regardless of the degree of success found by the material or composers on Broadway, films often augmented Broadway transfers such as *Anything Goes* (1936) and *The Gay Divorcee* (1934) with new songs written specifically to be big-selling singles. Studios employed contract writers to pen marketable tunes for both motion picture originals and Broadway transfers. Unlike the numbers written for Broadway shows, the royalties for these added songs served as a source of studio income. See Richard Fehr and Frederick G. Vogel, *Lullabies of Hollywood: Movie Music and The Movie Musical, 1915-1992* (Jefferson, NC & London: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 1993). This practice became complicated by the character specific tunes of Rodgers and Hammerstein and other integrated musicals. Because the songs were written specifically for a unique moment in the narrative, adding a peppy, non-motivated number became more difficult, just as it became more difficult to pluck a song from these films and plug them out of context as singles.

⁴¹ The following serves as a brief outline of the arcadian musical and its source material. The author is fully aware that Broadway transfers were first created for the stage and only later arrived on the big screen. These products, however, existed alongside their filmic cousins circulating in the same society.

⁴² George F. Custen discusses Darryl Zanuck and the Twentieth Century-Fox musicals between the wars—films often set in nostalgic versions of the Midwest or Northeast—as the great unifier, while simultaneously highlighting its ability to erase or evade cultural conflict. He states, "Shirley [Temple] is so important because Zanuck uses her to show how amid these dualities and dissonances (that hint at darker schisms in American culture) and that some suggest are the musical's most prominent characteristics, balance can be achieved with seemingly unfit partners. Most Fox musical entertainment was a struggle to reconcile what Shirley's narratives almost always united: the values associated with urban, ethnic vaudeville and modernity and those extolled in a pre-Tin Pan Alley, all-white Protestant musical universe found most often in the rural small town." Temple could unite a country split by ideology and economic depression by creating unity through narratives which avoided topics of irresolvable controversy. Custen sees these nostalgic musicals as foregrounding an idealized notion of the past—a characteristic common throughout the arcadian musical—and therefore ignoring contemporary racial and economic conflicts. George F. Custen, *Twentieth Century's Fox: Darryl F. Zanuck and the Culture of Hollywood* (New York: BasicBooks, 1997) 199-205.

⁴³ The term recitative refers to the transitional stage where spoken dialogue is performed with a melodic variation as to ease into full singing voice (ex. "hmmm. Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens...").

⁴⁴ Bordwell, Thompson, and Staiger 12-69.

⁴⁵ The ambivalent musical will follow the lead of the arcadian, with regard to breaking the bounds of classical Hollywood cinema; however, it will even further belie the dictates of the closed narrative system, as ambivalent musicals present inconclusive or unsettling endings where the arcadian brought a status-quo affirming (if a bit contrived) conclusion.

⁴⁶ Mast 290-319.

⁴⁷ Rock-n-roll did appear on the Broadway stage as early as 1960 with the Elvis spoof *Bye, Bye, Birdie* (which would be remade into a film with teen idol Bobby Rydell in 1963). Musical plays such as *Hair* (1968), *Promises, Promises* (1968), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971), and *Grease* (1972) would follow, using rock-n-roll to evoke rebellion, nostalgia, contemporary social mores, and/or bring a fresh face to a religious epic.

⁴⁸ Mast 292-3.

⁴⁹ The practice of block booking enabled studios to package less desirable films with high-demand popular fare. This type of bundling forced exhibitors to purchase more of a studio's films in order to obtain the few

they desired. Blind buying refers to the practice of exhibitors buying films without having first seen them. Both practices enabled the studios to foist second-rate product on exhibitors.

⁵⁰ Arthur Freed served as the producer for a series of highly successful MGM musicals in the 1940s and early 1950s. At a time when the producer served as the unifying force of productions, Freed had the power to corral technical and creative talent and guide the aesthetic of his films. Producing films such as *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), *Yolanda and the Thief* (1945), *The Pirate* (1948), *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950), and *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), Freed brought together the talents of individuals such as Judy Garland, Stanley Donen, Gene Kelly, and Vincente Minnelli. After the demise of the studio system, the producer's power declined as studios were at times reduced to economic rather than creative forces.

⁵¹ Marc Miller, "Of Tunes and Toons: The Movie Musical in the 1990s," *Film Genre 2000: New Critical Essays*, ed. Wheeler Winston Dixon (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000) 46-6.

⁵² Rosalind Russell never ceased claiming she had performed all of her own songs and Christopher Plummer threatened to leave the film when told he would not be doing his own vocal work. After being talked into a trial period, Plummer heard his own playback and agreed to the vocal dubbing. Rosalind Russell and Chris Chase, *Life is a Banquet* (New York: Random House, 1977) 201; Max Wilk, *Overture and Finale: Rodgers and Hammerstein and the Creation of Their Two Greatest Hits* (New York: Back Stage Books, 1993) 175-6.

⁵³ Though location shooting had been practiced earlier in films such as *On the Town* which used actual New York locales, a two-dimensionality, perhaps tied to the attraction of nostalgia, had saddled the genre for years.

⁵⁴ The aesthetic and narrative conventions of the New American Cinema follow on the heels of a history of avant-garde film in Europe and the United States, as well as the more recent French New Wave, both of which stray from the self-effacing visual and overt causal and linear narratives of much Hollywood film. From Sergei Eisenstein's forays into dialectic montage—the editing together of seemingly incongruous shots—in the 1920s to the American boom of avant-garde in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s with the films of artists such as Kenneth Anger (*Fireworks* [1947] and *Scorpio Rising* [1964]), Maya Deren (*Meshes in the Afternoon* [1943] and *The Very Eye of Night* [1954]), and Stanley Brakhage (*Dog Star Man: Part I-IV* [1962-4]). To varying degrees, these types of films forego linear narrative (if not eschewing narrative altogether for more abstract or associational structures). Whether by using visual non-sequiters, porous narratives, or merely intense studies of a visual object, these films serve as precursors for the types of innovation seen in the New American Cinema of the 1960s and 1970s. For more on avant-garde or experimental film see P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-2000*, 3rd Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). The movement known as the French New Wave grew out of the work produced by a group of young film critics in the journal *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Founded in 1951, the journal produced influential work such as that proposing a director-centered or auteur notion of film production. These critics-cum-filmmakers such as François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard participated in this film movement marked by quick and cheap production of films which bucked the traditions of classical Hollywood cinema. In 1959 both Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* and Godard's *Breathless* were released. Foregrounding production techniques, focusing on the shot or mise-en-scène rather than the cut, and creating porous narratives, these directors forewent the singular, causal, linear conflict and resolution of Hollywood style, instead presenting narratives and visuals while foregrounded the injustice, confusion, despair, and absurdity of contemporary life. Troubling the viewing position by the use of the jump cut and absence of the establishing shot, these films create causal holes once effaced by visual technique and linear, closed narratives of much popular Hollywood film. The formal technique (or rejection thereof), aesthetic move toward social realism, and narrative challenge to the assumed ambivalent and therefore socially detrimental bourgeoisie established a cinematic precedent for the New American Cinema of the 1960s and early 1970s. For more on the French New Wave see Richard Neupert, *A History of the French New Wave Cinema* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002).

⁵⁵ Steve Neale, "New Hollywood Cinema" 117-8.

⁵⁶ Thomas Elsaesser, "The Pathos of Failure: American Films in the 70's," *Monogram* 6 (1975): 13-15.

⁵⁷ The mid 1960s also brought a time of musical experimentation off-Broadway. Shows such as *Man of La Mancha* (1965) and *Hair* (1966) tackled darker themes (insanity and death) and embraced burgeoning youth counter culture and rock music.

⁵⁸ Upon the first screening of *Rock Around the Clock*, reports were made of teens leaving the film in a hyped-up frenzy, vandalizing properties and “snaking” down the street. Thomas Doherty, *Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988) 82.

⁵⁹ In the *Beach* films of Avalon and Annette Funicello, the musical interludes would often occur at locations such as the local beatnik club or while Frankie and Dee Dee (Funicello) were in the midst of a fight. Music was continually framed as something around which controversy would surface; however, in the end, Frankie and Dee Dee would blissfully resolve their differences. The teen idol always returns to the image from which he originally came.

CHAPTER 3:

¹ Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres* (New York: Random House, 1981) 28-29; Rick Altman, *American Film Musical* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987) 28-32.

² Altman 277-8.

³ Schatz 27-8; Altman 154-7, 307-308.

⁴ Jackie Stacey and Lynne Pearce, “The Heart of the Matter: Feminists Revisit Romance,” *Romance Revisited*, eds. Lynne Pearce and Jackie Stacey (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1995) 15-7.

⁵ Schatz 28-34.

⁶ An addendum to such a list would include the larger group of films which conclude with an unhappy romance, but do not use the romance as the center of the narrative. Examples would be *Oliver!* (Bill Sikes murders Nancy), *Mame* (1974) (Beau falls to his death leaving Mame alone), *Scrooge* (Scrooge must relive losing his fiancé with no possibility of changing his actions), and *Lost Horizon* (Maria, who truly was in her eighties and merely preserved by the low-stress utopia of Shangri-La dies when she leaves the settlement to return to England with George. Upon seeing her dead, elderly body, George reacts by screaming and falling off a cliff to his death. His brother Richard must then turn back and trek alone to his abandoned love who waits inside the gates of Shangri-La.).

⁷ Altman 154, 307.

⁸ Fosse filmed an alternate version of the film’s conclusion, per the request of the studio. In this alternate version, Oscar is haunted by his loss of Charity and rushes to her as she stands forlornly on the bridge from which she had been pushed by Charlie. In ultimate arcadian style, they find each other in the end and (assumedly, though we have no visual proof) live happily ever after.

⁹ Lyrics by Cole Porter, © Chappell & Co., Inc.

¹⁰ Altman 158-200.

¹¹ Notable playwright and screenwriter Paddy Chayefsky penned the screen adaptation of *Paint Your Wagon*. Chayefsky’s other works appear incongruous to the arcadian musical and compatible to the ambivalent. His works often provided large- and small-scale social commentary. He garnered an Academy Award for the adaptation of his anthology teleplay *Marty*. Chayefsky would go on to write such films as *Network* and *Altered States*. In short, an “Oh What a Beautiful Morning” extolling Oscar Hammerstein he was not.

¹² Lyrics by and © Richard O’Brien. Notably, common audience participation for “Dammit Janet” replaces the tongue-in-cheek purity with overtly (deviantly) sexual lyrics. “Dammit Janet, I love you” is often replaced with “Dammit Janet, I want to screw” and “good, bad, or mediocre” is replaced with “gay, straight, or bisexual.”

¹³ *Pennies from Heaven* uses the gimmick of overt vocal dubbing and superimposing a dream world over musical numbers. Until the final song of the film, standard versions of the songs are overdubbed (often changing sexes between the actual singer and recorded voice) and the mise-en-scène switches to one of a dream world. This convention often connotes the utopic sense of romance associated with earlier musicals. This practice highlights the perversity of the narrative by placing it in tandem with one so traditionally associated with wholesome (or at least happy) endings.

¹⁴ Films fitting the dictates of the arcadian musical were not totally without social critique. *Show Boat*, often considered the penultimate integrated musical, attended to issues of slavery, as did Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I*. Similarly, films had dealt with mob activity, murder, racism, war, and poverty, but most such problems would easily be either solved through the power of joy and music or subsumed by the more dominant romance plotline. Seldom did narratives make the social injustice or unseemliness the center of the action without painting a rosy glow on top (ex. gangsters do not kill in *Guys and Dolls*; they are too funny!).

¹⁵ The film takes place as a sort of play within a play, as a busload of twenty-somethings unload props and costumes to perform the Christ story in an Israel desert. Just following the resurrection, the actors—minus the man who plays Jesus—reload the bus and leave.

¹⁶ While Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Lowe's *Brigadoon* presents a similar quandary of a protagonist literally torn between two worlds, the central focus of *Brigadoon*'s narrative and the deciding factor for the protagonist Tommy revolves around his desire to be with Fiona, not a choice between worlds and ideologies.

¹⁷ While *Flower Drum Song* conducts both cultural and ethnic balancing acts and *Porgy and Bess* depicts African American poverty, even pieces considered musical fluff such as the *Beach Party* series or *Bye, Bye Birdie* present generational conflicts. These films, however, present these problems in ways which are either easily dismissed or recuperated into the norm. The cultural and generational conflicts present in *Flower Drum Song* fade into the background as the couple—one member traditional and one contemporary—marries, while the generational conflicts of teen-oriented rock-n-roll films often becomes minimized or trivialized by the excessive characterization of the two groups (e.g. hysterical female fans vs. martyred parents or stodgy adults vs. teen beats or surfers).

¹⁸ Unlike many earlier musicals, these ambivalent pieces integrate their ensembles, supporting cast members, and choruses. *Godspell* is comprised of a largely Caucasian ensemble but also includes two African American members (Lynne Thigpen and Merrell Jackson). The construction of this ensemble attempts to level all characters (minus the white Jesus and John the Baptist) to equal roles as they each take on various parts telling the gospel according to St. Matthew. Similar color blindness occurs in *Sweet Charity*. Though Sammy Davis Jr. unquestionably functions with a degree of racial cachet in the groovy psychedelic production number "Rhythm of Life," Charity's two best friends, Nickie (Chita Rivera) and Helene (Paula Kelly), are played by Puerto Rican/Scottish and African American actresses. The film does not address their ethnicities, though one could point to this casting as naturalizing the lascivious nature of the ethnic other dime-a-dance dame. Both *Lost Horizon* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* include ethnically diverse choruses. The inclusion of this ethnic diversity in *Lost Horizon* attempts to encapsulate a utopic vision where all people can live in harmony. Ironically, an English school-educated Chang (played by Sir John Gielgud) serves as one of the most revered members of the community, with Charles Laughton as the High Lama. Similarly, *Jesus Christ Superstar* also walks an awkward line between integration and exoticization/villainization with a diverse chorus and group of disciples, the casting of an interracial love interest with a white Jesus and Hawaiian born Yvonne Elliman as Mary Magdalene, and the vilification of African American Carl Anderson in the role of Judas. While a number of these films surpass the arcadian musical vehicles in terms of racial and ethnic diversity, they still battle the demons of much mainstream film.

¹⁹ *Finian's Rainbow* falls somewhere between these examples. Revolving around a tobacco-growing co-op in Rainbow Valley Missitucky, a racially diverse community of sharecroppers battle a bigoted Southern senator—who magically turns black after the romantic heroine Sharon unknowingly wishes such on a nearby hidden pot of leprechaun's gold. In the end, racism is eradicated and everyone lives happily ever after. While explicitly confronting racism, in a traditional arcadian way *Finian's Rainbow* magically solves all social ills through a magical pot of gold and good old fashioned heterosexual courting. (The film ends with the dueling sides united as everyone—ex-bigots in faux blackface, now covered in soot from a recent fire—attends Sharon and Woody's wedding.)

²⁰ While the all-black *The Wiz* connects with racial issues through its engagement with African American culture (via slang, character types, musical and dance styles, and mise-en-scène), its overall narrative does

not investigate social issues associated with race, but rather focuses on issues of friendship and family, much like the film on which it was based.

²¹ The film includes songs such as “Black Boys” and “White Boys” sung at Claude’s appearance before the draft board and extolling the sexual prowess and desirability of the men. Accompanying women from the ensemble, African American and White Army officers sing suggestive and amorous lyrics as they inspect naked recruits. The film also includes numbers such as “Sodomy” listing various sex acts and their associated perverse connotation, sung as the character of Woof rides past Sheila’s crew on horseback. As the film vacillates between tongue-in-cheek and decidedly maudlin numbers such as “Ain’t Got No” and “Ripped Open” the film creates a balanced picture of social satire and biting critique.

²² Lyrics by Gerome Ragni and James Rado, © James Rado.

²³ Jane Feuer, “The Self-Reflexive Musical,” *Hollywood Musicals: The Film Reader*, ed. Steven Cohan (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) 32; Jane Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical* (London: BFI, 1982) 43-4; Altman 200-9.

²⁴ *Half a Sixpence*, *Goodbye Mister Chips*, *Xanadu*, and *Can’t Stop the Music* present musical performance as a means to free a trapped or otherwise stodgy soul. Even so, neither *Goodbye Mister Chips* nor *Xanadu* fully frees the entertainment business from causing pain to the main protagonists. While Mr. Chips does find love and a new form of personal freedom by marrying an actress—who must tame her ways to be accepted at the boys’ school—her role of actress ultimately leads to an untimely death as the film shows a missile’s eye view of the venue for her charity show being bombed. In *Xanadu*, the club partners find momentary satisfaction in the opening of the club Xanadu, but the disappearance of the owner’s muse Kira (Olivia Newton John) renders the club empty and thankless. The film concludes ambiguously with Kira reappearing and her love seeming not to recognize her. Has he forgotten? Has he lost the music? Was it all a dream? Is it really her?

²⁵ The film’s final number creates a production number to resemble aesthetically the cover of the Beatles’s *Sgt. Pepper* album. The following is a partial list of the credited “Guests at Heartland” who appear in the finale:

Stephen Bishop, Keith Carradine, Carol Channing, Donovan, Yvonne Elliman, José Feliciano, Leif Garrett, Heart, Etta James, Mark Lindsay, John Mayall, Curtis Mayfield, Cousin Bruce Morrow, Peter Noone, Robert Palmer, Wilson Pickett, Anita Pointer, Bonnie Raitt, Helen Reddy, Chita Rivera, Sha-Na-Na, Del Shannon, Connie Stevens, Tina Turner, Frankie Valli, Gwen Verdon, Grover Washington, Jr., Hank Williams, Jr., and Wolfman Jack.

²⁶ In *All That Jazz*, the financial backers of Joe’s new Broadway show deal with their director’s recent heart attack on a totally economic basis. While showing support to his face, they discuss their possible monetary outcome if Joe were to die, joking that being able to cash in the show’s insurance policy in the event of Joe’s death would make them the first Broadway show to make a profit without ever opening. This type of cold backstabbing deviates from the warmth and community often associated with the entertainment business in arcadian musicals. Further, the character of Joe—pill popping, smoking, screwing, and drinking—strays from heroes of such earlier show within a show vehicles. Neither rehabilitated nor altogether rejected, Joe escapes being dispelled narratively; despite his death, he remains the central focus and his death the production.

²⁷ Feuer, *Hollywood* 29-32; Altman 202-7.

²⁸ A slightly different, but related, occurrence appears in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* as Brad, Janet, Frank-N-Furter, Columbia, and Rocky perform to express hidden desires and attempt to save themselves from impending destruction by murderous Transylvanian siblings Riff Raff and Magenta. An audience of royalty briefly appears in the empty auditorium (only truly existing in Frank’s head) and congratulates Frank on a job well done. In the end, this audience again disappears and music fails to unite the diegetic community as Magenta mocks the assumed power of song declaring it “sentimental.” Ultimately, Riff Raff murders Frank.

²⁹ *Man of La Mancha* uses a similar play within a play technique but creates two complete different worlds. After being arrested for heresy and sentenced to stand before the Inquisition, Cervantes finds himself imprisoned with violent criminals. He must stand trial before them or suffer his fate at their hands. He does so by acting out the stories for which he had been arrested. The world of the prison and the fictional

world of Don Quixote are established as two fully developed worlds, the film crosscutting between the two. This film does not include the performance *without* a diegetic audience or in an actual dream sequence. It falls somewhere between the two, allowing theatre to stand as something both threatening to the status quo and liberating to the oppressed.

³⁰ Schatz 27-8.

³¹ Ambivalent musicals such as *The Little Prince*, *On A Clear Day You Can See Forever*, and *Goodbye Mister Chips* find similar resolutions as their characters find some degree of happiness and contentedness through the loss of love or death of a loved one. The knowledge of these past joys allow them to retain some form of solitary joy existing apart from the community which threatened them.

³² Altman 147, 277-80.

³³ As actual audience reception is beyond the scope of this project, the use of Brecht's theory of distanciation will be applied as it theoretically relates the visual choices made in staging. This does not imply that viewers will receive images in a certain way, but that the creators have constructed the visual image in such a manner that would connote such distanciation.

³⁴ The style of camerawork very much replicates that popularized on the late 1960s variety show *Laugh-In*. As a bikini-clad woman danced, the camera would zoom toward and away from their bodies, eventually settling on one of the woman's various painted-on tattoos.

³⁵ Although the breaking of the fourth wall also occurs in arcadian musicals as with Maurice Chevalier's performance of "Thank Heaven for Little Girls" in *Gigi* (1958), some ambivalent films eschew the humorous wink attached to such numbers. Instead, those such as *Camelot* use such moments to draw attention to emotional stakes and detract from bodily performance. When combined with minimalist editing, these songs appear as personal and private reflective soliloquies rather than public performances.

³⁶ Altman acknowledges this practice of tying the romantic duo together by aesthetically matching the musical numbers. Altman 16-27.

³⁷ *Grease* does add a drinking, smoking, and carousing edge to a nostalgized image of the 1950s. But only a musical can combine *Gidget* with *Blackboard Jungle* and eradicate all conflict and/or trauma.

³⁸ Altman 273-81.

³⁹ The fashion spread for *Lost Horizon* appeared in an issue of *Men's Wear* magazine, plugging the modern look for the relaxed new man. Publicity material for *Camelot* repeatedly refers to the film as mod or having "Mod Medieval Splendor" and J. P. Stevens and Co., who produced a line of lingerie and loungewear "inspired" by the Warner Bros. picture, capitalized on its contemporary flavor. Clipping Files, *Lost Horizon* Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, California; Press Book, *Camelot* Collection, 1967 Box 2 File 643A, University of Southern California Warner Bros. Archives, Los Angeles, California; Program for "Sounds of Trumpets," *Camelot* Collection, 1967 Box 1 File 14943A, University of Southern California Warner Bros. Archives, Los Angeles, California.

⁴⁰ While a similar technique can be seen in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) or in various musical dream sequences, *Godspell's* foregrounding of its own artifice, erasure of its larger community, and distance from a nostalgized setting (with chaotic New York City serving as the site for the outside narrative) create a more irresolvable rift. Through the recognition of her real life pals and enemies, Dorothy is able to see the good in her farm and family. The ensemble of *Godspell* is wholly removed from its greater society, finding peace only in each other and the empty streets.

⁴¹ In this number Tevye tells his wife a story about a dream. The dream serves as an omen which will rationalize him breaking his word to Lazar Wolf the butcher—to whom he has promised his eldest daughter Tzeitel's hand in marriage—and allowing him to grant his daughter permission to marry Motel the tailor.

⁴² When attempting to visually capture a group who has been so specifically idealized in history, it is difficult not to stereotype. This struggle can be seen within *Hair* and *Sweet Charity*.

⁴³ I believe the question of homage or satire remains to be argued. Because the film's peculiar timing, casting, and conclusion appear so tongue-in-cheek, one finds it awkward to comfortably apply the term homage.

CHAPTER 4:

¹ This chapter does not imply any direct audience response, more specifically, it addresses the ways in which musical actors are textually and extratextually constructed such that they become imbedded with genre-congruent or conflicting- connotations. While they will not always be interpreted identically by all or any actual spectators, their star personae nonetheless bear qualities which relate to or imply ideological, generic, and physical qualities.

² Christine Gledhill, "Signs of Melodrama," *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: Routledge, 1991) 207-27; Andrew Britton, "Stars and Genre." *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. Christine Gledhill, (London: Routledge, 1991) 198-206; Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: BFI Publishing, 1998) 126-132.

³ Britton 202.

⁴ Gledhill 215.

⁵ Maureen Orth, "Silly Putty," *Newsweek* 31 Jan 1977: 59.

⁶ David Felton, "King of Hearts Come Down and Dance," *Rolling Stone* 1 Dec 1977: 62.

⁷ Felton 60-61.

⁸ Orth 59; Tony Schwartz, "Comedy's New Face," *Newsweek* 3 April 1978: 61; "Comedians," *Time* 31 Oct 1977: 98. A more cynical view of Martin's style was captured by Ben Patterson in *U.S. Catholic* in 1980. Citing other comedians' and critics' pleasure with Martin's joy attained from the lack of sense in a basically illogical world and the refreshing quality of anger-free, politics-free humor, Patterson states, "I agree with Steinberg, when he says that there is no anger in Steve Martin's act. How can there be in his world? Anger implies the violation of rights, and there can be no rights in Bananaland. But no relevance? Martin is as relevant as the air we breathe, for his laughter is as joyless as the secular age in which we live." Ben Patterson, "Steve Martin: Wild, Crazy, and Empty," *U.S. Catholic* Jan 1980: 32.

⁹ Felton 60; Orth 59; Schwartz 64; "Comedians" 98.

¹⁰ Mary Ellen Moore, *The Robin Williams Scrapbook* (New York: Ace Books, 1979) 24.

¹¹ Eric Goodman, "Merry Mork," *McCalls* Dec 1979, 169; John Eskow, "Full Tilt Bozo," *Rolling Stone* 23 Aug 1979: 41; "The Robin Williams Show," *Time* 2 Oct 1978: 86.

¹² Stephen Decatur, "Robin "Mork" Williams Out of This World Charm," *Ladies Home Journal* Feb 1979: 33.

¹³ While the caricature-quality of the cartoon-based musical did not begin or end with *Popeye—Li'l Abner* had far preceded *Popeye* in translating cartoonish characters to the screen— it does lack the homespun idealism of its Al Capp predecessor. While both brought the broad characterizations of the comic strip to the screen, *Li'l Abner*—excluding musical mainstay Stubby Kaye—starred mainly performers unknown to the motion picture industry. Additionally, *Popeye* lacks a cynical edge, both narratively and aesthetically, separating it from its cartoon predecessor.

¹⁴ Reviewers often associate Williams's performance with his well-known stand-up and television improvisation skills. While *The Progressive* extols his deft use of them ("Robin Williams is an eminently suitable, raspy-voiced Popeye, who enlivens his performance with a constant stream of apparently improvised asides and fractured oaths"), reviews such as that from the *New York Times* which focuses on his struggles when estranged from his improvisational sitcom persona, *Mork* ("Playing the title role is Robin Williams [*Mork and Mindy*], a terrifically funny actor, especially when he is free to work variations on his material, something that, obviously he could not be allowed to do here...[Popeye] is a performance, but it has the effect of being an inhibited impersonation."). Michael H. Seitz, "Musclemen," *The Progressive* Feb 1981: 50-1; Vincent Canby, "The Sailor Man Sails," *The New York Times* 12 Dec 1981: sec. 3 p. 5.

¹⁵ All three films were released in the United States in 1967.

¹⁶ "This Cowboy Feels He's Got it Made," *TV Guide* 4 Feb 1961: 8.

¹⁷ "How to Keep Fit," *TV Guide* 15 Aug 1959: 20-21.

¹⁸ "This Cowboy," 10; "Some Typical Longhairs," *TV Guide* 10 Mar 1962: 12; "Clint Eastwood is an Explosive Combination of Contradictions Attached to a Short Fuse," *TV Guide* 1 Dec 1962: 26.

¹⁹ Arnold Hano "How to Revive a Dead Horse, or *Rawhide* Rides Again," *TV Guide* 2 Oct 1965: 21; "Clint Eastwood is an Explosive," 25.

- ²⁰ “New Formula for Violence,” *Life* 14 Apr 1967: 95-6.
- ²¹ Vincent Canby, “Lerner-Loewe Musical Adapted to Film,” *The New York Times* 16 Oct 1969: 56.
- ²² Pauline Kael, “Somebody Else’s Success,” *The New Yorker* 25 Oct 1969: 178.
- ²³ Kael, “Somebody Else’s” 176-77; Canby 56; Kael, “Somebody Else’s,” 178.
- ²⁴ Originally aired by ABC, both series would ultimately appear on competing networks as reruns to capitalize on the rising star of their leading man. After its four month run on ABC in 1966, *Hawk* appeared as a summer replacement on NBC. Similarly, after *Dan August*’s ill-fated run in the 1970-1971 ABC schedule, CBS reran the series in the summers of 1973 and 1975 to much higher ratings. Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh, *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows* (New York: Balantine Books, 1995) 236-7, 444.
- ²⁵ I am unclear exactly on which *Tonight Show* appearance this occurred. While cited in multiple popular articles of the early to mid-1970s, the date is never stated. It is clear, however, that this occurred on one of his guest spots between 1970 and 1972—of which there were seven.
- ²⁶ Fritz Goodwin, “What Makes Burt Brood?” *TV Guide* 17 Oct 1970: 32; “Cosmo’s Playmate of the Year!—Why?” *Cosmopolitan* Apr 1972: 185-187; “Frog Prince” *Time* 21 Aug 1972: 43.
- ²⁷ Barney Cohen, “Burt Reynolds: Going Beyond Macho,” *New York Times Magazine* 29 Mar 1981: 18, 52-7; Gwen Davis, “Burt Reynolds Talks About Loving and Being Loved” *McCall’s* Mar 1975, 16, 22-8, 146; Claire Safran, “The Burt Reynolds Nobody Knows,” *Redbook* Jan 1974: 72-3, 110-12; Cliff Jahr, “Burt Reynolds: A Sex Star Comes of Age,” *Ladies Home Journal* Sept 1979: 69-71+; “Life Isn’t Always a Bed of Roses for an Actor Working on a New Star Image,” *People* 25 Dec 1978: 114-15.
- ²⁸ Stephen Farber, “‘Deliverance’—How it Delivers,” *The New York Times* 20 Aug 1972: sec. 2 p. 7; Vincent Canby “Not So Bad, Not So Good” *The New York Times* 16 Mar 1972: sec. 2 p. 17; Vincent Canby, Rev. of *At Long Last Love*, *The New York Times* 7 Mar 1975: 22.
- ²⁹ “Bogdanovich’s Cold Porter” *Los Angeles Times*. Clipping File, *At Long Last Love* Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, California.
- ³⁰ Pauline Kael addresses a similar self-awareness resulting from the contemporary connotation of the Cole Porter music, stating that “at the time the songs were written, the people who sang them felt daringly naughty; when they’re performed as they are here, with every last syllable of chat in place, their antique smartness sounds smug.” Pauline Kael, “The Rear Guard,” *The New Yorker* 24 Mar 1975: 93.
- ³¹ Kael, “The Rear Guard” 93; Jay Cocks, Rev. of *At Long Last Love*, *Time* 31 Mar 1975: 6.
- ³² Reynolds’s own dissatisfaction with the production emerges in a 1979 interview in *Ladies Home Journal*. In a discussion of his past vices he states, “I gave up liquor three or four years ago when I was up to a fifth of vodka a day. Nobody ever knew...I never slurred a word. Never forgot a line. I was just happy. Nice to be around. It began with *At Long Last Love*. I wasn’t really thrilled with that picture so what started as a screwdriver eye-opener every morning wound up by the tenth week as a straight shot of vodka. It was the only way I could make it through the day.” Jahr 70.
- ³³ Lyrics for “Texas Has a Whorehouse in It” by Carol Hall, © Shukat Music and Daniel Music, Ltd.
- ³⁴ Lyrics and © by Dolly Parton.
- ³⁵ The same story appears in *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* reviews in *Hollywood Studio Magazine* Sept. 1982 and *LA Herald-Examiner* July 24, 1982. Clipping File, *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, California.
- ³⁶ Kenneth Turan, Rev. of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, California* Sept 1982. Clipping File, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, California.
- ³⁷ Judith Crist, Rev. of *Catch My Soul*, *New York* 25 Mar 1974. Clipping File, *Catch My Soul* Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, California.
- ³⁸ Nicholas Schaffner, *The British Invasion* (New York: McGraw-Hill Company, 1982) 114.
- ³⁹ Schaffner 114-15.
- ⁴⁰ Jerry Hopkins, “Keith Moon Bites Back,” *Rolling Stone* 21 Dec 1972: 43.
- ⁴¹ Lyrics by and © Peter Townshend.
- ⁴² See Hopkins 42-6; Peter Townshend, “Meaty, Beaty, Big and Bouncy,” *Rolling Stone* 9 Dec 1971: 36-8; Pete Townshend, “In Love With Meher Baba,” *Rolling Stone* 26 Nov 1970: 25-7.

⁴³ For more on the stage version see Paul Gambaccini, "Tommy Premieres on a London Stage," *Rolling Stone* 18 Jan 1973: 6-7; John Atkins, *The Who on Record: A Critical History, 1963-1998* (Jefferson N.C. & London: McFarland and Company, 2000) 100-38.

⁴⁴ Ironically, the original concert/album version has the father murdering the lover, rather than vice-versa, leaving Tommy to be raised by his biological parents.

⁴⁵ Abe Peck, "The Cartoon that Conquered the World: The Village People," *Rolling Stone* 19 Apr 1979: 14.

⁴⁶ *TV Tome Website*. 12 Feb 2004 <http://www.tvtome.com/tvtome/servlet/PersonDetail/personid-66369/>; *Internet Movie Database*. 12 Feb 2004 <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0075529/guests>.

⁴⁷ Vito Russo, "The Closet Syndrome: Gays in Hollywood," *Village Voice* 25 Jun 1979: 77.

⁴⁸ Sheila Benson, "Whither the People and the Music?" *Los Angeles Times* 20 Jun 1980: pt. VI, pg 13.

⁴⁹ David Ehrenstein, "Can't Stop the Closet Power," *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* 20 Jun, 1980: D8.

CHAPTER 5:

¹ Marsha Siefert, "Image/Music/Voice: Song Dubbing in Hollywood Musicals," *Journal of Communication* 45(2): 57.

² Rick Altman, "The American Musical as Dual-Focus Narrative," *Hollywood Musicals: The Film Reader*, ed. Steven Cohan (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) 48.

³ Lyrics by Meredith Wilson, © Rosemary Wilson.

⁴ Rick Altman, *American Film Musical* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987) 307.

⁵ Jane Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical* (London: BFI, 1982) 3-7.

⁶ Altman discusses Agnes DeMille's introduction of the folk-infused ballet number into the Broadway and Hollywood musical. This new combination of styles allowed for simultaneous interpellation of the diegetic and theatrical audiences via the presence of folk dance and the narrative progression allowed through a more literal style embodied by the classical movement of ballet. Altman, *American* 281-285

⁷ Cohan 88-94

⁸ Altman, *American* 63-67.

⁹ Altman, *American* 188.

¹⁰ At the hands of the sinister record producer and music thief Swan, the Phantom has been physically mangled and left without functioning teeth or vocal chords. Unbeknownst to him, Swan too has signed his soul and talents to the devil. With physical defect complicating the erasure of the singer's voice, the Phantom's music emerges through both synthesizer and voiceover—though it is often unclear which of the tormented, Swan or the Phantom, the songs represent.

¹¹ Note *Lost Horizon*, *Goodbye Mister Chips*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *All That Jazz*, and *Xanadu* were written for the screen, not transferred from the stage. One may then assume that the music exists in tact per the original intention (excluding the extensive cutting from *Lost Horizon*, which initially ran much longer for the road show than later releases showed). All of these films include non-singers who are displaced diegetically into voiceover (*Goodbye Mister Chips*, *Lost Horizon*) or erased altogether and replaced with non-character motivated underscoring (ex. the majority of *Xanadu* is comprised of songs by Electric Light Orchestra).

¹² Siefert 58.

¹³ Lyrics and © Paul Williams.

¹⁴ While a film such as *Oliver!* too creates an air of desperation and loss, the cherubic Oliver's voice implicates a concurrent sadness and hope via his childlike innocence. Even the Artful Dodger maintains a certain level of innocence as an actual voice of youth projects his position as scalawag.

¹⁵ Lyrics and © Paul Williams.

¹⁶ Both *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Xanadu* include large production numbers just prior to the conclusions of the films. In both cases, these production numbers are followed by moments of narrative disrupt—*Jesus Christ Superstar*'s dismantling of the performance within a performance, abandonment of the Christ actor, and departure from the desert and *Xanadu*'s ambiguous ending where Sonny sees a waitress (played by Olivia Newton John) who looks like Kira but appears unaware of her identity. In both cases, the final dramatic moments upset the narrative closures created by the final production numbers "Superstar" and "Xanadu."

¹⁷ On stage more than in film, dance is used as a way to negotiate scene shifts. Often a character sings in front of a drop suggesting a street scene or otherwise vague location or alongside moving scenery to serve as a transition from one scene or site to the next. *My Fair Lady*'s "A Street With No Name" or *Annie Get Your Gun*'s "There's No Business Like Show Business" served such purposes, allowing for complete scenery changes behind the drop. Not using a realistic mise-en-scène, *Zoot Suit* uses methods other than mere cuts to change locales. Like in the stage-bound product it mimics, dance is used to move characters through a not wholly realistic means to the next scene.

¹⁸ In "The Art of Exaggeration," a short documentary on the production design of *Sweet Charity*, Edith Head discusses the satirical goals of the film's creative team. The dances, as costumes, function as a satire of modern life. Numbers such as "The Rich Man's Frug" employ exaggerated versions of popular dance to compound the social critique of the characters themselves—in this case, the bored, self-absorbed social elite. "The Art of Exaggeration," *Sweet Charity*, dir. Bob Fosse, 1967, dvd, Universal, 2003.

¹⁹ Lyrics by Dorothy Fields, © David Lahm & Eliza Lahm Oprava.

²⁰ Lyrics by Gerome Ragni and James Rado, © James Rado.

²¹ Various films of this period employ such modern dance technique. Robert Iscove's choreography of *Jesus Christ Superstar* includes movement similar in its fluidity. Christ's followers—prior to the crucifixion—embody some of the same types of aesthetics connected to the hippies. Like in *Hair*, this faction of the ensemble functions on the outside of sanctioned society. Their amorphous, iconoclastic movement reinforces their narrative social standing. Similarly, *The Wiz*'s playground-based "He's the Wizard" relies mainly on common body movement—leaps, rolls, cheers, marches, etc.

CHAPTER 6:

¹ While an associated and independent femininity too emerges through this phase of the genre, this chapter will table that issue, not because of its lack of import, but because of this author's desire to focus more fully on a musical gendering most universally disassociated with the Hollywood musical. Certainly, an associated interrogation of femininity would be highly valuable at another juncture—especially in light of the shifting notions of femininity in society itself during the materialization of this incarnation of this once female-dominated genre. In addition, this chapter will not deal directly with female-sexed masculinity, but rather for the reasons stated in this chapter, focus on the performance of masculinity by men.

² Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990) 134-41.

³ Admittedly, acceptable masculinity differs by culture and by time period. As discussed by Barbara Ehrenreich in *The Hearts of Men*, postwar masculinity was inextricably linked to the notion of the successful breadwinner. The successful attachment to and support of a suitable mate could save the male from association with deviant sexual behavior or an overall appearance of stunted mental capacity. However, she also describes this period of masculine identification as one rife with complications. Resisting the term crisis in masculinity—as masculinity is always in flux—she does highlight this period as a significant and difficult realignment of masculine dictates in comparison to traits heretofore associated with the self made man: utility, self-motivation, and independence. This time of male domesticity also coincides with a rise in male-focused entertainment, such as western films, television shows, and novels, which engage with images of traditional masculinity. As with the arcadian musical, a hegemonic masculine façade is placed over the threatening interiority. Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men* (New York: Doubleday, 1983).

⁴ See discussions on utilitarian masculinity by scholars such as Susan Bordo and Susan Faludi. Susan Bordo, *The Male Body: A New Look at Men in Public and Private* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1999) 26. Susan Faludi, *Stiffed* (New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1999) 607.

⁵ In *A Problem Like Maria*, Stacy Wolf contextualizes the woman's place in the musical, stating: "Most of the shows focus on women, and they tend to be the stars—think of Merman then Martin in *Annie Get Your Gun*, Merman in *Gypsy*, Martin in *The Sound of Music*, Andrews in *My Fair Lady*, and Streisand in *Funny Girl*, to name a few." Stacy Wolf, *A Problem Like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002) 16.

⁶ This type of masculine façade or surface structure of traditional masculinity does not altogether disappear from the ambivalent musical. *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, for example, includes an extended

musical number performed by the double whammy of football playing cowboys. As the Texas A&M Aggies defeat the University of Texas Longhorns, the team bursts into a locker room-originating song and dance ending in their victorious arrival and alcoholic and erotic imbibement at the whorehouse. While they do not ultimately fall in love and marry their respective ladies of the evening—and in fact, the lead dancer is a bit on the effeminate side—neither do their traditional cloaks of masculinity play an integral part in the overall narrative; however, they do make for a dynamic performance of football-hoedown celebration of aggressiveness and virility.

⁷ Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres* (New York: Random House, 1981) 24-29.

⁸ Steve Neale, "Masculinity as Spectacle," *Screening the Male*, eds. Steven Cohan and Ena Rae Hark (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) 18

⁹ Richard Dyer, "Don't Look Now: The Instabilities of the Male Pin-Up," *Screen 23* (3-4): 63-7.

¹⁰ While occasional exceptions to the rule may have occurred in the fully developed arcadian musical, such as *Oklahoma!*'s murderous Jud Frye or *Road to Hong Kong*'s or *Damn Yankee*'s effeminate villains, exceptions to the monogamous and ultimately somewhat domesticated male were presented as anomalies or threats to the diegetic hero. Even stars who entered the diegesis with Casanova personae—Frank Sinatra or Dean Martin—must ultimately find happiness within the confines of the successful romance.

¹¹ Genres such as film noir, male and family melodrama, and social problem films had presented problematic or unsavory images of masculinity. At this time (and in the musicals of this period), non-hegemonic masculinity is associated not with an individual flaw, but the very instability and unpredictability of gender (and life) itself.

¹² Structural functionalists, such as Talcott Parsons, had designated males as being "instrumental" in their roles. They were straightforward, rational, and task-oriented. The post WWII "other-directed" man assumed the qualities of the structural functionalists' female who was driven by emotion and the needs of others. While the pre-war male was identified by his self-directedness or his desire to serve himself, the post WWII male shifted. Through his role as bureaucratic cog and domestic breadwinner, his actions—both at home and on the job—served the needs of others. His ability to serve himself fell to the wayside. Talcott Parsons, *Family: Socialization and Interaction Process* (New York: Free Press, 1989) 23.

¹³ Here, as discussed with regard to the repositioning of male ventures beyond the realm of romance, the profession of rock star means something more divisive than in the arcadian. As the cowboy was used in the arcadian musical as a disguise of traditional masculinity within a domesticating narrative, the rock star shifts from a whipping boy (*Bye, Bye Birdie*) threatening the social order to one more aggressively challenging that social order. While real singers associated with excessive, wild, or asocial behavior (Elvis, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin) appeared in the arcadian musical, they were most often tied directly to the reinforcement of the breadwinning status quo. Toned down and often coupled up, these singers circulated in narratives which actively sought to neutralized their extratextual connotations which ran counter to the dictates of the arcadian musical. To the contrary, musicians such as The Who, Aerosmith, Alice Cooper, Elton John, Eric Clapton, and Ritchie Havens embody narratives which thrive on their deviant and aggressive personae. This type of complimentary participation between star personae and narrative development only works to compound the restructuring of masculinity beyond that evident in the arcadian musical. This is not to imply, however, that all appearance of rock or pop stars in the arcadian musical served as reinforcement of antisocial behaviors. *The Wiz* places teen idol Michael Jackson in a socially reaffirming role of the scarecrow while *Can't Stop the Music* takes the sexually marginal position of The Village People and neutralizes it through desexualization and heterosexualization of the band through its social-bonding narrative.

¹⁴ Again, this is not meant to imply that there is no there there, but rather that which is there repeatedly proves its own social construction though the overt performance of masculinity within the narratives themselves.

¹⁵ *Flower Drum Song*, while wholly peopled by characters of Asian descent, presents a narrative in which many characters strive to disassociate themselves with their own ethnicity and assimilate fully into a white middle class American social and cultural structure.

¹⁶ Dance does not immediately equate with feminization or gender incongruity. The dance performance of *Pennies From Heaven*'s Tom deviates from performances commonly used in the arcadian musical. In such

films, the types of dances performed most often associate congruently with the character type performing them. For example, Fred Astaire's suave gentleman will often perform graceful ballroom dances which in terms of body movement and pace appear congruent with his character, while films such as *It's Always Fair Weather* or *Oklahoma!* will place their male characters in situations where their dance steps reflect their masculine fronts of soldier or cowboy respectively. In *Pennies From Heaven*, Tom's performance—though punctuated with lascivious gropings of his female backup dancers—works in direct contrast to his established personality type. Shifting from gruff to suave vocally and producing an exuberant burst of choreographic energy where once stood a seething, controlled, violent undercurrent, Tom's striptease foregrounds expectations for gender-specific sexually explicit behavior. Rather than a busty broad with gorgeous gams, Tom leaves us with a skinny man with oversized boxers and garters. More unsettling and awkward, the hooper, lover, and sleazebag do not immediately and comfortably coexist in the same body.

¹⁷ While the arcadian musical most often ends with the happy couple taking hands and literally or symbolically pledging their lives to each other as all narrative conflict falls to the wayside, *All That Jazz*'s ambivalent narrative too uses the final production number as a time to wash away conflicts between Joe, Audrey, Kate, and Michelle. Rather than leading to a life of marital bliss, however, this ambivalent magical conclusion can only happen in death. The domestic resolution either cannot or need not exist to define Joe in memoriam.

¹⁸ Visual displays of masculinity exceeding the bounds of heterosexuality appear in the performance of queer-associated visual and physical traits. Most often occurring as a means to further Other a character who stands as threatening to the protagonist and his narratively sanctioned relationship, these characters appear as the effeminate Mr. Applegate in *Damn Yankees* or the eerily effeminate—and doubly Russian—aliens who plan to take over the world in *Road to Hong Kong*. Rather than legitimizing additional or expanding the bounds for gender performances, these inclusions of queered characters demonize any behavior beyond heterosexuality without even first presenting it.

¹⁹ Lyrics by and © Richard O'Brien.

²⁰ Lyrics by and © Richard O'Brien.

²¹ As with *All That Jazz*, the expansion of sexual identity and legitimate performance of masculinity occurs within the climactic musical number. As the deviant connotation of Joe Gideon's promiscuity dissipates as the finale includes reconciliation between him and his various female relationships, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*'s Brad and Rocky verbally express and physically display their broadened senses of self within the climactic musical moment, again replacing the arcadian conciliatory and marital resolution with one which legitimizes sexual and gender identity contrary to the heterosexual domestic.

²² Reynolds's relationship with Dinah Shore throws a minor wrench into this public conception of Burt. Early press had focused on his athleticism, physical prowess, and attractiveness to women. During his relationship with Shore, articles begin to reframe Burt's lifestyle. Is he truly the swinging bachelor we thought? Is he more tame than originally considered? The May-September romance with a squeaky American icon problematized his position as single, swinging sex symbol and member of the young partiers. As his career continued through the seventies and into the eighties, a decided shift occurred in his public personae, one distancing him from the solitary role of sex symbol. This was encouraged by the changing choice in motion picture vehicles, as diversified from action genre.

²³ "Elton John: It's Lonely at the Top," *Rolling Stone* 7 Oct 1976, 11, 16-7.

CONCLUSION

¹ Animated musicals have not been addressed in this project, but the formal critiques leveled by *South Park: Bigger, Longer, and Uncut* make it a unique musical cartoon and a significant vehicle overall when discussing shifts occurring during the turn of the century.

² A motion picture remake of the stage version of *The Producers*, with the Broadway stars Matthew Broderick and Nathan Lane has since been announced.

³ Though yet to bring it to the screen, Miramax and Tribeca Pictures won the rights to film *Rent* in 1996.

⁴ Charles Isherwood, Rev. of *Urinetown*, *Variety* 24 Sept. 2001: 37.

Appendix A

Integrated Musicals 1966-1983

Date	Title	Director	Male Star(s)	Producer	Distributor
1966	<i>A Funny thing Happened on the Way to the Forum</i>	Richard Lester	Zero Mostel, Jack Gilford, Buster Keaton, Phil Silvers, Michael Crawford	Quadrangle Films	United Artists
1967	<i>Camelot</i>	Joshua Logan	Richard Harris, Franco Nero, David Hemmings	Warner Bros.	Warner Bros.
1967	<i>Doctor Dolittle</i>	Richard Fleischer	Rex Harrison, Anthony Newley, Richard Attenborough	20th Century-Fox	20th Century-Fox
1967	<i>Good Times</i>	William Friedkin	Sonny Bono	MPI	Columbia
1967	<i>How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying</i>	David Swift	Robert Morse, Rudy Vallee, Anthony "Scooter" Teague	Mirisch Corp.	United Artists
1967	<i>Thoroughly Modern Millie</i>	George Roy Hill	James Fox, John Gavin, Jack Soo, Pat Morita	Universal	Universal
1968	<i>Chitty, Chitty Bang Bang</i>	Ken Hughes	Dick Van Dyke, Lionel Jeffries, Benny Hill	Dramatic Features/Warfield	United Artists
1968	<i>Finian's Rainbow</i>	Francis Ford Coppola	Fred Astaire, Tommy Steele, Don Francks	Warner Bros./Seven Arts	Warner Bros./Seven Arts
1968	<i>Funny Girl</i>	William Wyler	Omar Sharif, Walter Pidgeon	Columbia	Columbia
1968	<i>Half a Sixpence</i>	George Sidney	Tommy Steele, Cyril Ritchard	Paramount	Paramount
1968	<i>Oliver</i>	Carol Reed	Ron Moody, Oliver Reed, Mark Lester, Jack Wild	Romulus Productions	Columbia
1969	<i>Goodbye, Mister Chips</i>	Herbert Ross	Peter O'Toole, Michael Redgrave	MGM	MGM
1969	<i>Hello Dolly!</i>	Gene Kelly	Walter Matthau, Michael Crawford, Tommy Tune, Danny Lockin, Louis Armstrong	20th Century-Fox	20th Century-Fox
1969	<i>Paint Your Wagon</i>	Joshua Logan	Clint Eastwood, Lee Marvin, Harve Presnell, Ray Walston	Paramount	Paramount

Date	Title	Director	Male Star(s)	Producer	Distributor
1969	<i>Sweet Charity</i>	Bob Fosse	John McMartin, Stubby Kaye, Sammy Davis Jr., Ricardo Montalban	Universal	Universal
1970	<i>On A Clear Day You Can See Forever</i>	Vincente Minnelli	Yves Montand, Jack Nicholson	Paramount	Paramount
1970	<i>Scrooge</i>	Ronald Neame	Albert Finney	Cinema Center 100 Productions/ Waterbury Productions	20 th Century-Fox
1970	<i>Song of Norway</i>	Andrew L. Stone	Toralv Maurstad, Frank Porretta	ABC Pictures Corporation	Cinerama Releasing Corporation
1971	<i>Bedknobs and Broomsticks</i>	Robert Stevenson	David Tomlinson, Roddy McDowall	Walt Disney	Buena Vista
1971	<i>The Boy Friend</i>	Ken Russell	Tommy Tune, Christopher Gable	MGM-EMI	MGM
1971	<i>Fiddler on the Roof</i>	Norman Jewison	Topol, Leonard Frey, Paul Michael Glaser, Paul Mann	Mirisch Company	United Artists
1971	<i>Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory</i>	Mel Stuart	Gene Wilder, Jack Albertson, Peter Ostrum	David L. Wolper Productions	Paramount
1972	<i>1776</i>	Peter L. Hunt	William Daniels, Howard DaSilva, Ken Howard	Columbia	Columbia
1972	<i>Man of La Mancha</i>	Arthur Hiller	Peter O'Toole, James Coco	Produzioni Europee Associate Production	United Artists
1973	<i>Godspell</i>	David Greene	Victor Garber, David Haskell, Merrell Jackson, Gilmer McCormick, Jeffrey Mylett	Columbia	Columbia
1973	<i>Jesus Christ Superstar</i>	Norman Jewison	Ted Neeley, Carl Anderson, Barry Dennen, Josh Mostel	Universal	MCA/Universal
1973	<i>Lost Horizon</i>	James Jarrott	Peter Finch, George Kennedy, Michael York, John Gielgud, James Shigeta, Bobby Van, Charles Boyer	Columbia	Columbia
1973	<i>Tom Sawyer</i>	Don Taylor	Johnny Whitaker, Jeff East, Warren Oates, Noah Keen	Readers Digest	United Artists

Date	Title	Director	Male Star(s)	Producer	Distributor
1974	<i>Catch My Soul</i>	Patrick McGoohan	Ritchie Havens, Lance LeGault, Tony Joe White	Metromedia	20th Century-Fox
1974	<i>Huckleberry Finn</i>	J. Lee Thompson	Jeff East, Paul Winfield, Harvey Korman, David Wayne	Reader's Digest	United Artists
1974	<i>The Little Prince</i>	Stanley Donen	Richard Kiley, Steven Warner, Gene Wilder, Bob Fosse	Paramount	Paramount
1974	<i>Lost in the Stars</i>	Daniel Mann	Brock Peters, Clifton Davis, Paul Rogers	American Express	American Film Theatre
1974	<i>Mame</i>	Gene Saks	Robert Preston, Bruce Davison, John McGiver	ABC/Warner Bros.	Warner Bros.
1975	<i>At Long Last Love</i>	Peter Bogdanovich	Burt Reynolds, Duilio Del Prete, John Hillerman	20th Century-Fox	20th Century-Fox
1975	<i>Funny Lady</i>	Herbert Ross	James Caan, Omar Sharif, Ben Vereen	Columbia/Rastar Pictures	Columbia
1975	<i>The Rocky Horror Picture Show</i>	Jim Sharman	Barry Bostwick, Tim Curry, Meatloaf, Richard O'Brien, Johnathan Adams, Peter Hinwood	20th Century-Fox	20th Century-Fox
1975	<i>Tommy</i>	Ken Russell	Roger Daltrey, Kieth Moon, Elton John, Peter Townshend, John Entwistle, Oliver Reed, Jack Nicholson, Eric Clapton	Hemdale Film Corporation/ Robert Stigwood Organization	Columbia
1976	<i>Bugsy Malone</i>	Alan Parker	Scott Baio, John Cassisi, Martin Lev	Goodtimes Enterprises//Robert Stigwood Organization	Paramount
1977	<i>A Little Night Music</i>	Harold Prince	Len Cariou, Laurence Guittard, Christopher Guard	Sascha-Wien Film	New World
1978	<i>Grease</i>	Randal Kleiser	John Travolta, Jeff Conaway, Sid Caesar, Edd Byrnes, Frankie Avalon, Sha-Na-Na-Na	Paramount	Paramount

Date	Title	Director	Male Star(s)	Producer	Distributor
1978	<i>Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band</i>	Michael Schultz	The Bee Gees, Peter Frampton, Frankie Howerd, Donald Pleasence, Steve Martin, Alice Cooper, Aerosmith, George Burns	Robert Stigwood Organization	Universal
1978	<i>The Wiz</i>	Sidney Lumet	Nipsey Russell, Michael Jackson, Ted Ross, Richard Pryor	Universal	Universal
1979	<i>All That Jazz</i>	Bob Fosse	Roy Scheider, Ben Vereen	Columbia/20th Century-Fox	20th Century-Fox
1979	<i>Hair</i>	Milos Forman	John Savage, Treat Williams, Dorsey Wright, Don Dacus	CIP Film Produktions GMBH	United Artists
1980	<i>Can't Stop the Music</i>	Nancy Walker	The Village People, Paul Sand, Bruce Jenner, Steve Guttenberg	EMI	EMI
1980	<i>The Blues Brothers</i>	John Landis	John Belushi, Dan Ackroyd, James Brown, Cab Calloway, Ray Charles, Henry Gibson	Universal	Universal
1980	<i>Popeye</i>	Robert Altman	Robin Williams, Ray Walston, Paul Dooley, Paul L. Smith	Paramount/Walt Disney	Paramount
1980	<i>Xanadu</i>	Robert Greenwald	Gene Kelly, Michael Beck	Universal	MCA-Universal
1981	<i>Pennies From Heaven</i>	Herbert Ross	Steve Martin, John McMartin, Christopher Walken	MGM	MGM
1982	<i>Annie</i>	John Huston	Albert Finney, Tim Curry, Geoffrey Holder	Columbia	Columbia
1982	<i>The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas</i>	Colin Higgins	Burt Reynolds, Dom DeLuise, Jim Neighbors, Charles Durning	RKO	MCA-Universal
1982	<i>Grease 2</i>	Patricia Birch	Adrian Zmed, Maxwell Caulfield, Sid Caesar, Tab Hunter	Paramount	Paramount

Date	Title	Director	Male Star(s)	Producer	Distributor
1982	<i>One from the Heart</i>	Francis Ford Coppola	Frederic Forrest, Raul Julia, Harry Dean Stanton	Zoetrope Studios	Columbia
1982	<i>The Pirate Movie</i>	Ken Annakin	Christopher Atkins, Ted Hamilton, Bill Kerr	Joseph Hamilton International Productions	20 th Century-Fox
1982	<i>Zoot Suit</i>	Luis Valdez	Daniel Valdez, Edward James Olmos, Charles Aidman	Universal	Universal
1983	<i>Pirates of Penzance</i>	Wilford Leach	Kevin Kline, Rex Smith, George Rose	Universal	Universal
1983	<i>Yentl</i>	Barbara Streisand	Mandy Patinkin, Nehemiah Persoff	Barwood	MGM/United Artists

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