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Joshua Rashon Streeter

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**The Thesis Committee for Joshua Rashon Streeter
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**Broadway Junior:
Musical Theatre for Youth Performers**

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Supervisor:

Roxanne Schroeder-Arce

Stacy Wolf

**Broadway Junior:
Musical Theatre for Youth Performers**

by

Joshua Rashon Streeter, B.A., M.A.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Brett Scrafford.

Thank you for sitting at the piano and playing through scores with me.

Thank you for reminding me that my work in musical theatre and education matters.

You are missed.

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Abstract

Broadway Junior: Musical Theatre for Youth Performers

Joshua Rashon Streeter, MFA

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Supervisor: Roxanne Schroeder-Arce

This MFA thesis identifies the junior musical as an umbrella term for commercial American musical theatre adapted for youth performers and explores the value of these adaptations in schools. Interviews and survey responses comprise this qualitative study that examines interest in and opportunities created by Broadway Jr., a specific musical theatre program for middle school students. Through an analysis of current practices and statistics in performance and education, this thesis positions the Broadway Jr. program as an educational theatre model that flexibly responds to the needs of the particular schools and communities it serves. Findings invite practitioners and scholars to consider what comprises quality musical theatre education for young people in schools in the twenty-first century.

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Chapter One

“Into the woods, without regret, the choice is made, the task is set.

Into the woods, but not forgetting why I’m on the journey.”

- *Into the Woods*, Stephen Sondheim

Growing up I did not have access to theatre education as a young person. Rather, I learned about musicals through annual Tony Awards telecasts and old VHS tapes of *The King and I* and *A Chorus Line*. I would rewind and replay the dance sequences alone in the living room. I imagined the day that I would see a live musical, never considering that I could be in one or even have a career in the theatre. I do not know what attracted me to this particular form of theater, but the musical provided an escape into another reality—a reality much different from the one in which I was living.

My experience as a young person influenced my current scholarship and practice. The need for theatre education in public schools and my interest in musical theatre intersect via educational theatre. I balance artistry and teaching to provide quality arts experiences for young people.¹ At the heart of my work is an interest in the relationship between process and product. Although the process of putting on a musical with young people can be challenging, it also provides rich learning moments. Theatre scholar Helen Nicholson reminds theatre practitioners that, “The complexity and messiness of theatre-making can produce new matters of knowledge, unexpected insights, as well as creative

¹ I use the term young people, as opposed to the term children, in order to position a young learner as an individual who has their own thoughts, beliefs, and understandings of the world, which may vary from their peers or family members. A young person is a term that encompasses a range of ages, from small children to young adults in college.

moments of unknowingness and confusion” (9-10). Engagement in a creative process yields numerous opportunities for dimensions of learning beyond discrete skills within an art form. As a theatre educator, I believe that the process of creating theatre with young people is as important as the product.

I argue that youth adaptations of Broadway musicals assist theatre educators/directors to successfully produce musicals in schools.² Nurturing a quality process while producing a musical remains a challenge for many theatre educators/directors. In a complex art form like musical theatre, the process of breaking down, understanding, and reassembling a musical is a daunting task. For an educator/director this process requires possession of specific artistic skills and time to dive into the material with young people. In my experience in educational theatre, developing and sustaining a quality process tends to get lost in producing the musical itself. I have observed young people frustrated by not only the process but also the selection of the musical. Young people who are excited by specific stories and shows are more likely to participate in educational theatre programming and be motivated to engage in a creative process in order to produce a quality product.³ Finding the balance among education/artistry and process/product within an educational setting is challenging. Complicating the problem is the identification of musical theatre titles that serve the students’ and the community’s individual needs.

²I use the term “educator/director” to identify the dual role that fine arts educators play within secondary theatre education and recognize that these two roles are fluid in pedagogy and practice within the field of drama/theatre education.

³ I use the term “show” to mean a musical. When discussing a show that is not a musical, I clearly explain its theatrical form (e.g., play).

BACKGROUND

Over the last two decades musical theatre's presence has increased in schools, specifically at the middle and high school levels. I have noticed this growth through the development of state standards in musical theatre, a larger interest in musical theatre programs at the undergraduate level, and the establishment of The National High School Musical Theatre Awards.

The junior musical, pioneered by Music Theatre International, has made musical theatre more accessible to young people in K-12 education in the United States. An increased awareness of musical theatre at the middle school level and the rise of interest in musical theatre at the high school level are associated with the development of adaptations of popular Broadway titles created specifically for youth performers. These "junior" musicals re-construct a Broadway musical into a format that is more achievable for young performers as compared to the title's full-length counterpart. Though many Broadway adaptations of popular musicals and stories exist specifically for certain age groups, most junior musicals are targeted primarily to middle school participants. Thus, the junior musical contributes to the rise of high school musical theatre programs, which subsequently funnel students into musical theatre studies at the undergraduate level. In 1996, theatrical licensing company Music Theatre International (MTI) developed the first junior musical; since that time, MTI reports, over twenty-five million individuals have seen a Broadway Jr. performance, five million students have been involved in a

Broadway Jr. musical, and over a half million Broadway Jr. productions have taken place in North America (MTI).⁴

In addition to the junior musical increasingly providing young people with musical theatre experiences, mainstream media and popular culture also boost awareness of musical theatre in the United States. Hit television programs (e.g., *Glee*, *Smash*), feature films with musical scores (e.g., *Into the Woods*, *High School Musical*), live TV musical productions (e.g., *The Sound of Music Live!*, *The Wiz Live!*), and reality TV featuring Broadway shows (e.g., *Legally Blonde: The Search for Elle Woods*, *Grease: You're the One That I Want!*) all serve as points of access to musical theatre for young people. Popular Broadway shows also develop fan bases through online supported communities wherein young people connect with Broadway shows through blogs, videos, photos, and audio recordings. Musical theatre historian Jennifer Ashley Tepper identifies this current phase as the “platinum age of musical theatre.” She explains that “musical theatre is no longer a niche market” due to the expansive forms it takes through film, television, and online media (Tepper). Tepper also points out that this media resurgence crosses back and connects to live theatre because original theatre productions are adapted into feature film or television specials and popular music albums or feature films are source material for stage musicals (Tepper). The popularity of musical theatre in the twenty-first century results in numerous connections between youth, education, and Broadway.

⁴ The Broadway Jr. musical is aimed at a middle school audience and is the specific title of the program licensed by Music Theatre International. In comparison, the term “junior musical” refers to any full-length musical adapted for youth performers regardless of target age group or licensing company.

This thesis seeks to understand musical theatre as an art form within an educational theatre setting by analyzing the junior musical. The adaptations of Broadway musicals for youth performers tap into the power of familiar stories. Knowledge of a specific Broadway show engages young people in the junior version of the same title. The junior musical serves as another point of access for young people to musical theatre.

SIGNIFICANCE

This thesis analyzes the growth of Broadway musicals adapted for young performers within the United States and identifies tensions within this work. Two case studies examine and document the use of Broadway Jr. musicals in New York City Public Schools, however this is the first study to look at the Broadway Jr. musicals in order to understand the intersection of youth, education, and commercial American musical theatre.⁵ In addition, this thesis assesses the junior musical from multiple stakeholders' perspectives in order to understand its influence on the field of drama/theatre education. This thesis recognizes the junior musical's integral place within theatre education by building upon research in performance studies and education.

Access to the fine arts and the quality of arts learning opportunities for young people remain issues in American education in the twenty-first century. Theatre is an often-overlooked subject in K-12 education in some areas of the U.S. In *Signs of Change* theatre educator and scholar Joan Lazarus explains that, though many states develop standards in the arts, "theatre as an academic subject is not mandated to be taught, and, in

⁵ The term "American" refers to the United States.

fact, is a classroom subject rarely offered in many states” (31). This problem affects not only access to theatre for young people, but also the experience, training, and expectations of theatre educators in school settings. Lazarus argues that U.S. secondary theatre education is at a “crossroads”; some educational theatre programs are “removed from contemporary practices in theatre and emerging theories and methodologies in education” (31). She contends, “Focus in some schools is almost exclusively on production of plays and musicals from the Broadway and regional theatre repertoire, more often than not unrelated to the lives of the majority of students in the school community” (31). While I agree with Lazarus that certain schools focus on such full-length productions, I argue that the junior musical signifies a shift within the landscape of theatre education.

The junior musical assists schools with producing a Broadway-style musical and supports a positive educational process due to the accessibility of the adapted material. Further, the junior musical interests youth through the use of popular Broadway titles. In comparison to their full-length counterparts, the material in a junior show is achievable for young performers and its stories, themes, and characters are relatable to middle and high school audiences. Additionally, I believe that the resource materials (e.g. director’s guide, choreography DVD, media disc) provided with junior musicals support educators/directors with emerging theories and methodologies in the fields of musical theatre performance and education. Although multiple forms of educational theatre can be used to engage young people in relevant topics, musical theatre offers unique learning opportunities. The American musical, which includes the score and the book, explores

story in a specific way through a form distinct from other genres of theatre. An exploration into how musicals can be relevant today with young people is needed.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As a scholar, educator, and director I am fascinated with Broadway's power as a tool for engagement, storytelling, and artistry. The Broadway Jr. musical provides a platform from which we may investigate the intersection of commercial American musical theatre and current models of practice within an educational setting. This thesis attends to the question: *What is the value of Broadway adaptations created for youth performers?* My research is guided by four sub-research questions that consider the *value* of these adaptations:

1. *What is Broadway's place in youth culture?*
2. *How is the Broadway Jr. program situated within the larger context of educational theatre and professional theatre?*
3. *What is the relationship between process and product in a Broadway Jr. musical?*
4. *How do students and educators/directors articulate the value of the Broadway Jr. program?*

The primary research question and four sub-questions guided a qualitative research project that investigated the junior musical, musical theatre, and theatre education in the twenty-first century.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project included a yearlong investigation of the Broadway Jr. musical through partnership with iTheatrics, a New York City theatre company whose work focuses on the art form of musical theatre as an entry point to theatre education for students and educators. This company adapts and pilots Broadway musicals into youth versions, and writes all of the supporting materials to accompany the junior show. These supporting materials help schools and community groups with successfully producing the musical. Additionally, iTheatrics offers unique musical theatre performance opportunities to youth and professional development opportunities to educators/directors across the country. For my research I attended the 2015 Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta, Georgia, an annual festival organized by iTheatrics, and the pilot workshops of *Little Women Jr.* and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Jr.* in New York City in summer 2015. The project also included conversations and interviews with multiple individuals involved in Broadway Jr. musicals. These interviews helped me identify tensions and positive features of the Broadway Jr. program.

RESEARCH APPROACH

This research is situated in a socio-constructivist worldview, which means “individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences” (Creswell 8). Through this worldview, I understand that individuals construct different perspectives on the Broadway Jr. program and junior musicals via their own context and experiences. In my research I wanted to privileged the voices of the individuals working with the Broadway Jr. musicals while underpinning the findings with empirical evidence and my own

understandings of the presented work. Therefore, in this thesis document I focus on the voices of others rather than my own personal narrative.

I acknowledge my own positionality as researcher within the fields of musical theatre and education. My own practice moves between the fields of performance and education in order to understand current practices within each field that together inform the field of theatre education in the U.S. The focus of my practice-based scholarship examines K-12 school contexts, including both in school and extra-curricular activities led by educators during the regular academic year. My positionality helps me move between these two fields as I wrestle with, borrow, and adapt theories and practices in order to strengthen the field of K-12 educational theatre. For this reason, I use specific frameworks from fine arts education and performance studies to analyze the Broadway Jr. program.

This research considers the Broadway Jr. program as musical theatre pedagogy. Within this thesis I explore musical theatre as a unique art form, which offers specific learning opportunities that differs from the singular study of music, theatre, or dance. Like other art forms, musical theatre requires a distinct set of skills and understandings in order to engage in the work. Within this thesis I position musical theatre as a field of study with its own history, practices, tensions, and considerations.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research studies the Broadway Jr. program. I survey a wide-range of individuals involved in the Broadway Jr. program. In order to look at the relationship between product and consumer, I interviewed individuals developing adaptations of

Broadway musicals for youth performers and people using the materials within their schools. I conducted personal interviews with staff from Disney Theatrical Group, MTI, and iTheatrics and collected data from students and educators/directors through online questionnaires and e-mail communication. Technology allowed me to gather information from a wide-range of individuals across the U.S. As the principle investigator, I collected, coded, analyzed, and interpreted the data. I then identified the value of the work from different stakeholders' perspectives. Data analysis identifies the tensions that exist between adults and young people, Broadway musicals and youth adaptations, and educational theatre and professional musical theatre practices, pointing to the value of such work.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis examines the intersection of youth, education, and Broadway. I look at the role of musical theatre in youth culture. I also consider young people's access to musical theatre in the twenty-first century and examine the current state of theatre education in K-12 schools. I position the Broadway Jr. musical as an experience that occupies a space between theatre performance and education, both concerned with development of skills within the art form and the by-products of engagement in an art-making process.

ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

Ten years ago, I was first introduced to the Broadway Jr. program through the documentary *Children Will Listen*. This film captures the process of young people designing, rehearsing, and performing *Into the Woods Jr.* At the time this documentary

impacted my work as an undergraduate student and influenced my decision to study drama/theatre education. The metaphor of the woods and the understanding of a journey speak to me as an artist and educator. I have taken my own journey through the woods in order to explore the junior musical. Throughout this thesis I use selected lyrics from *Into the Woods* to illustrate my process as I wrestle with and consider the value of youth adaptations of Broadway musicals.

Findings are presented in four chapters. Each chapter explores a different intersection that correlates to a sub-research question. The table below outlines the organization of the chapters:

Major Research Question		
<i>What is the value of Broadway adaptations created for youth performers?</i>		
Chapter Number	Sub-Research Question	Intersection Explored
Chapter Two	<i>What is Broadway's place in youth culture?</i>	Musical Theatre and Youth
Chapter Three	<i>How is the Broadway Jr. program situated within the larger context of educational theatre and professional theatre?</i>	Educational Theatre and Professional Theatre
Chapter Four	<i>What is the relationship between process and product in a Broadway Jr. musical?</i>	Skill Developed within the Art Form and the By-products of Engagement in the Arts Process and Product
Chapter Five	<i>How do students and educators/directors articulate the value of the Broadway Jr. program?</i>	Students and Teachers/Directors

Table 1: Sub-Research Questions and Intersectional Studies

In chapter two, I offer a brief historiography of American musical theatre and analyze the art form of musical theatre in order to understand its distinct characteristics and unique features. I then introduce and explore the term “commercial American musical theatre” in order to identify specific pieces of work that match a set of defined characteristics. Next, I analyze how Broadway and commercial American musical theatre are represented within mass culture and serve as a community for young people as they form their identities and find their own interests. This chapter concludes with a discussion

of young peoples' access to Broadway and representations of young people on stage in contemporary musical theatre.

In chapter three, I analyze the intersection of educational theatre and professional musical theatre. I highlight the current state of U.S. theatre education and analyze the educational theatre market. I focus on the development of the junior musical and consider the junior musical a tool for learning for students and educators/directors. Finally, I examine three specific opportunities offered to young people connected to youth adaptations of full-length Broadway musicals.

In chapter four, I identify the unique role the arts play in learning and consider the impact of educational theatre programs on youth. I then analyze the form of musical theatre and introduce a framework to connect the Broadway Jr. musical to a specific pedagogy of teaching/learning used in musical theatre performance. Finally, I identify a continuum of process and product and share different examples of how the Broadway Jr. musical is positioned on the continuum based on the context and needs of a specific school or community.

In chapter five, I analyze the Broadway Jr. musical from a student's and educator's/director's perspective. I explore the major themes of story, censorship, opportunity, access, skill development, and materials. I compare and contrast collected data and share specific examples in order to illustrate how the Broadway Jr. program is used in different contexts and is perceived by various individuals. I conclude this chapter with an analysis of the major findings.

In summation, in chapter six, I reflect on the major findings. I return to the research question and draw conclusions based on the data presented. I then examine the challenges of the junior musical by identifying tensions that exist in this work. Finally, I make recommendations for further research on the junior musical and the Broadway Jr. program and invite the field to consider the junior musical's place in educational theatre.

Chapter Two

“There are Giants in the sky!

Big tall terrible awesome scary wonderful Giants in the sky!”

- *Into the Woods*, Stephen Sondheim

Titles such as *Wicked*, *Hairspray*, and *Newsies* arise in discussions of musical theatre with youth. Specific musicals function as a reference point and standard in musical theatre for young people. Although many musicals exist in the larger field, young people are aware of only specific titles. Often corporate sponsors or commercially-driven producers push musicals into young peoples’ consciousness through specific forms of exposure. These musicals indicate corporate America’s influence on musical theatre. Though some may consider these corporate giants as terrible, I believe that musicals with corporate backing, widespread exposure, and commercial appeal can also be wonderful as they provide opportunities to engage youth in the art form.

In this chapter I define and explore the terms Broadway, musical theatre, and commercial American musical theatre. Then, I argue that commercial American musical theatre and media expose young people to the art form of musical theatre through popular culture. I highlight specific productions and movements within the history of American musical theatre to illustrate the connection between the musicals and their youth culture influence. The musicals referenced in this chapter are selected due to their intentional connection to youth—as musicals that have been adapted into versions for young performers, musicals that feature young people on stage as performers in lead roles,

musicals that feature young characters represented on stage by adults, or musicals that offer themes that may be engaging to youth. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the relationship between young people and commercial American musical theatre in the twenty-first century. I consider musical theatre to be a way for young people to form their own identity, though I also acknowledge the lack of access to live musical theatre for U.S. youth. Throughout this chapter I consider both youth and young adults as consumers of musical theatre and position Broadway as an American art form.

BROADWAY

Broadway is characterized by iconic images of Times Square in New York City. Glowing lights illuminate the night—hence Broadway’s nickname “The Great White Way.” In one century New York City has become the capital for theatre and remains an “influential cultural center in the United States” (Shefter 10). Broadway’s influence on the city is hard to ignore. Sections of midtown-Manhattan have been built to cater to the Broadway theatres and their patrons. Understandably so, given that Broadway contributes about 11.9 billion dollars to New York City’s economy (Spotlight on Broadway). Further, Broadway productions and their corresponding theatres are a place of employment for numerous people, supporting about 87,000 jobs (Spotlight on Broadway). Broadway is the pinnacle and measure of success for commercial theatre.

Collectively the theaters define what types of shows constitute the current Broadway season. Distinguishing a Broadway theater from an off-Broadway theater refers to the house’s seating capacity, not the location of the theatre. Forty Broadway houses currently exist, featuring both plays and musicals (Spotlight on Broadway). Of the

new pieces on Broadway each season only about 30-40% are new musicals. However, due to the fact that a musical generally has a longer life on Broadway compared to a play, many long-running musicals continue to occupy specific theaters each season (The Broadway League). Thus, musicals make up roughly 80% of current Broadway shows. For this reason the term “Broadway” is often associated with a style of performance, specifically musical theatre.

MUSICAL THEATRE

Musical theatre in the twenty-first century is a commercial business. In *Musical Theatre: A History*, historian John Kenrick explores this commercial art form. He stresses the role of the paying audience, who make art profitable for the multiple artists involved (Kenrick 15). Kenrick warns that the success of a piece is often dependent on consumers with a supply and demand model; musical theatre audiences assume the role of consumers, “taste and attitude of the audience play a clear role in determining the development of the product” (15). Though some artists are not aiming for commercial success, Broadway itself is a commercial business.

Musical theatre, by definition, is a collaborative art form. In its most simple form musical theatre uses a combination of acting, singing, and/or dancing to tell a story onstage. The form of musical theatre is collaborative in that design elements woven into the piece advance the story and help shape the piece’s unique vision. Musical theatre educator Joe Deer explains that although musical theatre has many similarities to straight plays, the form also presents differences distinguishing it from other forms of theatre, namely: heightened text, heightened behavior, heightened visual expression, and

heightened reality (Deer 3-4). These characteristics often attract audience members, designers, directors, and performers to the work. On the flip side, Deer points out that these characteristics are also the reasons why certain people are less interested in musical theatre (4). Within the form of musical theatre different conventions dictate the style of the piece; however, the separate elements can be studied together as one cohesive text. Thus, each text comes with its own history building upon prior shows' advancements in order to push new artistic possibilities. The art form of musical theatre is continually changing within the American theatre.

COMMERCIAL AMERICAN MUSICAL THEATRE

The form and style of theatre now associated with musical theatre is distinctly an American art form. Though the style of the musical can be traced back to European opera and operetta, as well as Roman and Greek theatre, the current form of musical theatre is American (Bryer and Davison viii). In the introduction to *The Art of the American Musical: Conversation with the Creators*, editors Jackson R. Bryer and Richard A. Davison examine the term "American musical theatre". They note: "The musical has been rightly designated as the only indigenous American theatrical form.... All musicals, no matter their country of origin, owe a debt to the American version of the form, and any history of that form inevitably becomes a history of the American musical. " (Bryer and Davison viii). The term "American musical" does not dictate the source material or assume that the story has to be "American" in any way. While the style is now shared with our European counterparts, the musical is uniquely Western.

Within this thesis I use the term “commercial American musical theatre” to reference the art form of the American musical coupled with a piece’s corporate backing, wide-spread exposure, and/or commercial appeal. Though I often reference stage musicals in discussion of commercial American musical theatre, this term encompasses other media forms of musical theatre that prove to be a financial and commercial success, gain an audience following, and use the form of the American musical to tell a story.

MUSICAL THEATRE ON BROADWAY

Musical theatre transformed between the eighteenth and twenty-first century. In her analysis of American musical theatre before the twentieth century, music historian Katherine Preston explains that some genres or styles of musical theatre have been removed from contemporary definitions of musical theatre (3). Our current definition of musical theatre has been shaped by 1940s “Golden Age” musicals. One of the most widely recognized pieces from that period is Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein’s *Oklahoma!* Musicals preceding *Oklahoma!*—with the exception of *Anything Goes*—are rarely revived today (Miller 44). Musicals from the Golden Age of Broadway are common titles produced in high schools across the U.S., such as *Guys & Dolls*, *The Music Man*, *Hello, Dolly!*, and *Once Upon a Mattress*. Likewise, many of the musicals from this period live on in current society through cast albums, film adaptations, and Broadway revivals. The theatre educators interviewed for this research call these musicals “classic” and many deem them appropriate for young people to be exposed to in the context of theatre education.

Oklahoma! shaped artistic norms of the art form still adhered to in the twenty-first century. The understanding of a musical as a dramatic form, with equal parts given to the story as told through scenes, song, and dance, laid the template for other shows' creation and critique. The term "integrated" remains a key characteristic that defines the relationship between music and scenes in the form of musical theatre. Integration of the musical refers to the "interrelationship of the various elements" of acting, singing, and dance used to tell a cohesive story (Bryer and Davison ix). Understanding musical theatre as an integrated art form informs pedagogical approaches to musical theatre.

After Broadway's Golden Age different theatrical inventions deviated from the form while retaining an emphasis on a strong story driving the plot of the entire show. One deviated form was the "mega-musical," a large-scale spectacle with an epic story marketed for mass appeal (Prece and Everett 251). One particular producer is a common thread among the many early shows that fit this genre: Cameron Mackintosh. Mackintosh produced *Cats*, *Les Miserables*, and *Phantom of the Opera*, three of the longest-running musicals of all time (The Broadway League). He is also recognized for both his marketing achievements and a new vision of what a production on-stage can look, feel, and sound like (Prece and Everett 251). Mackintosh developed musicals in Europe before bringing them to America. The theatre community, specifically Broadway, can still see this exchange between British and American theatre happening today. For example, productions like *War Horse* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* were first developed and produced at the National Theatre in London; they have since found commercial success in America. Also, large-scale popular musicals, such as *Billy Elliot*

and *Matilda* have moved from Europe to America and brought with them new models of working with young actors on Broadway. The cultural and artistic exchange between Europe and America is a characteristic of Broadway in the twenty-first century. Currently, the mega-musical is characterized by international popularity, spawning productions in multiple languages all over the world (Prece and Everett 254). *Wicked* is one of the most popular current incarnations of a mega-musical, surely benefiting from the groundwork laid by Mackintosh.

Mega-musicals are some of the longest running productions on Broadway. Due to the popularity of the productions and merchandise created to accompany the show, the musicals seep into mainstream culture. Youth interested in musical theatre identify mega-musicals as standards within the musical theatre canon due to their long-lasting popularity. Youth less familiar with the production may still recognize its title due to the musical's presence in popular culture and media.

Another production company that develops musicals focused on spectacle as a tool for engagement is Disney Theatrical Group. Disney Theatrical Group's entrance on Broadway shifted the landscape of American musical theatre. Though there were musicals that used comic strips as source material (e.g., *Annie*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*) and adapted movie musicals into stage productions (e.g., *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*, *Singing in the Rain*), Disney was the first group to create a Broadway musical out of a featured animated film (Stempel 631). Disney's first stage musical, *Beauty and the Beast*, was created to look as similar to the animated film as possible. Proving a commercial success, Disney took a larger risk with its second

adaptation, *The Lion King*. Setting both a professional precedent and creative standard, *The Lion King* reimagined what Disney was capable of bringing to the field of musical theatre. Disney's productions are some of the most recognizable shows for youth due to the popularity of their animated feature films.

Disney's success within the larger theatre market continues through the development of large spectacle musicals and educational programming for schools. *The Lion King* helps the larger theatre field understand how commercial success is defined in contemporary musical theatre. In *Strike Up the Band: a New History of Musical Theatre* historian Scott Miller explains, “[*The Lion King's*] commercial success was so overwhelming, Disney actually considered opening a second production on Broadway to handle the demand for tickets” (209-210). Though this second production never happened, *The Lion King* did produce twenty-seven global productions (Disney Theatrical Group). It remains the highest grossing musical, more than the combined global revenues of the six most-popular Harry Potter films (Associated Press, “The Lion King”) and was recently named the third longest-running Broadway show of all-time (Broadway League). Disney went on to create multiple productions from their catalogue of movie musicals, including two non-animated films—*Mary Poppins* and the cult-classic *Newsies*. Opening their first production more than twenty years ago, Disney Theatricals holds a share of the commercial market on Broadway and remains a creative corporate producer (Adler 71). Young people in the twenty-first century do not remember a time when Disney did not produce stage productions. Disney currently has several musicals available for licensing that engage young people in familiar stories from feature

films. This includes the Disney KIDS shows for elementary students, Disney Broadway Jr. musicals for middle school students, and full-length titles for professional or amateur theatre performers.

American musical theatre on Broadway continues to spark new styles of musical theatre in the twenty-first century. One popular genre of commercial American musical theatre is the adaptation of a non-musical featured film into a stage musical. The movie musical takes the book of the new musical from the motion picture as its original source material. The plot is then expanded upon and musical moments are created in order to develop a full-length stage production. Film adaptations outside of Disney motion pictures do not usually have a complete vocal score attached. Popular film adaptations have included *Legally Blonde*, *Shrek*, *Hairspray*, and *School of Rock*. Given film audiences' sense of familiarity with the story, these adaptations bring possible new audiences to the theatre, mixing die-hard theatre fans and movie fans. Due to our accessibility to film in the U.S., young people exposed to non-musical feature films may then become interested in the Broadway musical version of the same story.

FANDOM AS COMMUNITY

In the twenty-first century, Broadway serves as a community for youth, including young people who are self-defined artists and fans. One of the largest issues with Broadway is the rise in ticket prices over the past seventy years, which has affected the demographics of Broadway audiences (Jones 3). However, the larger Broadway community consists of fans and artists brought together through media, merchandise, meet-up events, and an online presence. Musicals, compared to plays, are unique in that

they have “lasting power beyond a single Broadway experience” (Streeter). In a digital age, Broadway productions have become accessible to many more people beyond a single performance. Digital technology and merchandise develop communities of fans around a specific production. Youth are engaged with the most current and popular digital platforms, including YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Snapchat. Broadway theatre fans pride themselves on knowing facts about the production, information about the cast, and the developmental history of the show. In the twenty first century, a young person has the opportunity to belong to a specific Broadway community from a distance

Association and fandom around specific productions define the various Broadway communities to which young people belong. Theatre scholar Stephanie Woodson attempts to define the term “community” in her book *Theatre for Youth Third Space*. Though community is often defined by a sense of belonging, she points out that an individual can belong to multiple communities and each community has the power to “define and distinguish” themselves in relation to others (Woodson 41). The distinctive elements vary between communities, but some youth Broadway communities value certain types of capital. Some musical theatre fans solely subscribe to an exclusive type of capital—specifically Broadway shows—as a source of power. In her article “Wicked Divas, Musical Theatre, and Internet Girl Fans”, theatre scholar Stacy Wolf examines the fans of *Wicked*. Wolf finds that *Wicked* youth fans “value their own categories of cultural capital, which exclude pop music and pop divas” (*Changed for Good* 232). This community uses Broadway as a feature to define and distinguish itself, valuing specific

capital and excluding those without the same knowledge or interest in the Broadway production as its self-designated members. Such practices are characteristics of fandom. A fan culture is a participatory act and is defined by a community of individuals who “share a deep interest in some object of popular culture and translate their love into cultural activity with other fans” (Haenfler 22). While musical theatre remains unpopular to some young people, for others fandom around a specific Broadway show creates a sense of belonging.

Fandom simultaneously pushes a show’s commercial appeal and creates a specific community through participatory culture. In considering a young person’s role in the arts, scholars of comparative media Henry Jenkins and Vanessa Bertozzi discuss how a young person moves from a consumer to a participant through artistic expression. In their chapter “Artistic Expression in the Age of Participatory Culture: How and Why Young People Create” they explain that participatory acts like dressing up as your favorite character, quoting lines from a musical, or researching a musical represents “membership in a subcultural community—one that expands beyond the local community or even national boundaries” (181). Jenkins and Bertozzi go on to explain how young people take away a deeper appreciation for the art once they have created their own work in response to the original (179). Understanding how a young person moves from observer to participant helps position musicals as a place of belonging; youth create a sense of identity coupled with a certain musical.

Youth that are interested in a specific Broadway musical identify their found community through said musical. The first known instance of created fandom and self-

proclamation by fans was associated with the musical *Rent*, which opened on Broadway in 1996. Self-proclaimed *Rent* fans identified themselves as “Rentheads”. Since then, particular musicals that feature a young adult casts have gained a youth following. Many young people identify with the characters and situations represented onstage. In specific cases, even the sound of the musical differs from traditional pieces in the musical theatre canon, which speaks to young people who are finding their own aesthetic. For example, many young people identify with the musical *Spring Awakening*, a story about youth dealing with the social and religious pressures placed on them by adults. In the musical, the young adult characters deal with issues of abuse, sex, and suicide. Youth fans of the musical are able to identify and connect with the story being told onstage. Furthermore, the storytelling devices of the 2006 Broadway production and 2015 Broadway revival pushed the boundaries of traditional American musical theatre.

Fandom has grown around other musicals like *Newsies*, *American Idiot*, and *Wicked*, all generated by a youth audience. Fandom helps young people self-identify and connects youth with other individuals who assert themselves as fans of the same Broadway show. Self-proclamation can be a powerful force as young people are wrestling to define their own identify. In the introduction to *Theatre Geek*, a book chronicling a day in the life at theatrical training camp Stagedoor Manor, author Mickey Rapkin discusses the term “theatre geek.” Although sometimes an insult, the term “theatre geek” used by those in the theatre community it is a term of empowerment (Rapkin 2). Youth self-identification helps others understand and recognize what an individual values, in comparison to having others define or impose their own values on

an individual. Ethnographic researcher and drama practitioner Kathleen Gallagher believes that young people “appreciate the possibility of playing with identity, experimenting with what they know, what is socially acceptable, and what may be desirable” (123). Outlets created for fans of Broadway shows allow young people the opportunity to engage in experimentation to define themselves and select their community of belonging.

Media and merchandise certainly play a large role in the commercial power of a musical, and in fandom at large. A musical can seep into contemporary popular culture and individuals can become a fan of a musical without ever seeing the Broadway show itself. In discussing the power of Disney and the phenomenon of *High School Musical* in 2006, theatre scholar Sean Bliznik argues young people can form their own identity via material culture and re-create a moment of live performance through related materials attached to the Broadway show (74). The desire to collect merchandise around a specific Broadway show allows fans the opportunity to become part of a specific community. This parallels Wolf’s findings about teen girl fans of *Wicked*. In her book *A Problem Like Maria: Gender Sexuality in the American Musical* Wolf expands upon the role of Broadway merchandise. She argues, “The American musical may be just as powerful for those spectators who come to know and love it solely through its manifestations far from Broadway and perhaps never even witness it live” (Wolf, *A Problem Like Maria* ix). Wolf points out the closeness some people feel to musicals through related media and merchandise, even if they did not see a staged production. This is not common among other theatrical art forms and hints at the commercial and social power of a Broadway

musical.

MUSICAL THEATRE AND TELEVISION

Television broadcasting allows young people to access live versions of musicals, thus changing the way youth view and access musical theatre. Television showcases musicals from live broadcasts of the Tony Awards to spots on talk shows and features in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. In the past few years, musical theatre has had a resurgence in popular media, specifically airing during prime time hours on TV. For example, Broadway fans enjoyed the short-lived television show *Smash* from 2012-2013, a musical drama chronicling the behind-the-scenes making of a Broadway musical. The popular television series *Glee*, a show about a group of underrepresented high school students in a show choir, adopted the form of musical theatre. The commercial success of *Glee* was evident when it first aired in 2009 and the television program ran for six seasons. Currently, networks are tackling Broadway remakes with live action TV musical specials, most recently *The Wiz Live!* and *Grease Live!* and the forthcoming *Hairspray Live!*

Glee serves as an example of a modern-day musical told on television, rather than on the stage. Fascinatingly, *Glee* engaged both new and already devoted musical theatre fans (youth and adults alike). The show was set in a high school and featured characters the same age of the target demographic. In addition, the show also used the art form of the American musical to tell the story of misfit students engaged in an underfunded and unpopular glee club. For this reason, *Glee's* content highlighted both issues faced by teenagers in the twenty-first century and the lack of arts education in American schools.

Creator Ryan Murphy explained the television series' connection to education by stating, "*Glee* has always been about the important of arts education" (21st Century Fox). According to a 2010 National Association for Music Education poll, 43% of music educators credited *Glee* with creating a surge of interest in high school choral programs (Chen). *Glee* also helped pop artists' songs surge to the top of the charts alongside musical theatre numbers recorded by the television cast. In discussing the role of music in *Glee*, co-creator Brad Falchuk stated that commercial music success was not the reason he and Murphy created the show, rather "the decision was made because the music greatly enriches the show by giving the viewers an emotional understanding of what the character is going through" ("*Glee*", Associated Press). In this way, *Glee* highlights both the form and function of the music in a musical theatre piece. In addition, *Glee*'s cast and creative team used the show as a platform to engage in activism around arts education and identity representation to "take meaningful steps toward social change" (21st Century Fox). For these many reasons, *Glee* became a cultural phenomenon and impacted youth directly.

Young people are also exposed to musicals—specifically new works and Broadway revivals—through the Tony Awards, an awards show that recognizes achievements in live Broadway theatre. The Tony Awards highlights nominated musicals through a short musical performance. The annual three-hour telecast remains an important source of exposure to the theatre even in the digital age. The nationally broadcasted program is influential for young people. Ken Davenport, a Broadway producer, recounts his experience as a young person with the Tony Awards in a pre-

YouTube era: “I used to record the Tonys on our VCR so I could watch them over and over again” (Davenport 191). Now, a Tony-Award-winning Broadway producer himself, Davenport contends that the Tonys matter, writing, “I was once told by an insider that while the numbers of viewers aren’t exceptionally high, the TYPE of viewer that watches the Tonys is why CBS does the show year after year” (Davenport 191). Based on what he has shared of his own experience, I believe the type of viewers Davenport is referencing is young people. For certain youth the Tony Awards are the only way to be exposed to musicals that do not have a strong life in the commercial market after closing on Broadway.

The idea of exposing young people to musical theatre through the Tony Award seems to resonate with the Broadway theatre community itself. In his 2013 acceptance speech for Best Leading Actor in a Musical, *Kinky Boots* actor Billy Porter admits that, in 1982 at eleven years old, he was drawn to musical theatre when he saw Jennifer Holliday sing a solo from *Dreamgirls* during the broadcast. The Tony Awards have introduced countless other theatre professionals to musical theatre. In the 2013 Tony Awards opening number, host Neil Patrick Harris sang about the impact of the Tony Awards on youth in “Bigger,” a song penned by two Broadway veterans, Tom Kitt and Lin-Manuel Miranda. A section of the song explained the potential role of the Tony Awards for youth:

There's a kid in the middle of nowhere sitting there, living for Tony performances singin' and flippin' along with the *Pippins* and *Wicked*s and *Kinkys*, *Matildas* and *Mormons*. So we might reassure that kid and do something to spur that kid. Cause I promise you all of us up here tonight, we *were* that kid. (Hetrick)

Although multiple Nielsen reports have shown that the annual Tony Awards telecast does not have large national viewership compared to other television special events such as sports, the theatre community believes the Tony Awards telecast is an important form of exposure for young people. As explained in professional theatre artists' testimonials, the Tony Awards have a direct impact on young people, and remain a source an access point to musical theatre.

ACCESS TO BROADWAY

Television is not the only medium exposing young people to commercial American musical theatre, however access to live Broadway theatre is limited to only select individuals. Despite the fact that some young people have the opportunity to see Broadway theatre in New York City or on a tour across the country, many others do not. I refer to the most current reports compiled by The Broadway League to help the field understand who is attending live Broadway shows on a national level.⁶ This information directly impacts K-12 drama/theatre education as young people may have a variety of knowledge gained about musical theatre as an art form from attending shows.

The Broadway League points out positive trends in attendance overall through their annual reports, but these reports also display certain problems with commercial American musical theatre in regards to access and diversity of audiences. During the 2014-2015 Broadway season 8.7% of the audience was under the age of eighteen and 12.2% of the audience was in the age range of eighteen to twenty-four years old (The

⁶ In this thesis, I borrow statistics from two reports produced by The Broadway League—"The Audience for Touring Broadway 2013-2014" and "The Demographics of the Broadway Audience 2014-2015". In this section, I delineate between New York City Broadway theatre and Broadway tours that take specific shows on the road across the U.S.

Broadway League). In the 2014-2015 Broadway season almost 80% of the audiences were Caucasian and in the 2013-2014 Broadway tour season 92% of the audiences were Caucasian (The Broadway League). The New York City (NYC) and Broadway tour audiences have an average annual household income of over \$100,000 and more than 75% of the audiences had completed college (The Broadway League). Additionally, The Broadway League also reported that the majority of attendees were female in both the NYC and national tour audiences (The Broadway League).

Outside of New York City, many Broadway musicals tour to cities around the U.S. While some of these shows take place on college campuses, they are not widely attended by individuals under the age of twenty-four; this age group only made up 2.3% of the demographics in the 2013-2014 touring season (The Broadway League). In their analysis of data gathered from the tour season The Broadway League explains, “Children and teens were underrepresented in comparison with general population statistics; however, many shows are not appropriate for young people” (16). The Broadway League contributes the lack of young audiences to the content of the material, making a direct link between appropriateness and accessibility. Though, I argue that many of these musicals are appropriate for young adults and the musicals contain themes similar to those in other forms of media young people are exposed to.

The Broadway League data illustrates that lack of access to live Broadway performances, but does not consider the factors that may limit access to youth specifically. One of the contributing causes of why young people are not able to attend live Broadway performances is the cost of multiple tickets. A minor needs to be

accompanied by an adult, which increases the overall ticket prices for a group of individuals to attend the theatre. In addition, Broadway theatre often only tours to major cities across America, limiting the number of young people that can see the performances due to their access to major cities. The Broadway League data also illustrates that individuals from specific racial groups as a whole attend Broadway musical theatre more than others. Thus, live Broadway performances are only experienced by certain groups of people.

Though that data does not draw connections among cost, location, and audience demographics, I infer that more than one barrier can limit a young person from being able to attend live Broadway performances. Multiple barriers continue to distance specifically marginalized groups from having access to musical theatre performances. Even if one limitation, such as cost, is removed, location of the theatre may remain an obstacle for specific populations of youth. Lastly, The Broadway League reports help illuminate why only specific titles are known by youth. Often times the titles and shows familiar to youth are musicals that have appeared on Broadway and have toured across the country.

REPRESENTATION IN MUSICAL THEATRE

Representation in musical theatre is an issue theatre educators often deal with when casting shows in their school. Broadway serves as a standard for schools that want to replicate a Broadway show in an educational setting. This translation between Broadway and K-12 schools is challenging, as Broadway itself has struggled with diversity and representation onstage. In her article “Let's Talk about Representation” writer Mary-Margaret Annab struggles with the notion that theatre is a universal language

when, for years, Broadway has been an “all-white club.” Annab moves beyond racial identity and discusses various identity markers such as ability and sexual orientation that have been non-existent onstage, either in story or casting. She connects this to young people, noting, “Without that representation, we turn theatre from an art form for everyone to an art form for a certain niche. Is that the kind of message we want to be sending to the young people who visit theatres all around the world?” (Annab). If we want musical theatre to be viewed as an inclusive form of theatre, Broadway must engage in inclusive casting practices and be committed to telling diverse stories onstage.

Numerous connections exist between youth and Broadway theatre, specifically authentic representations of age onstage in Broadway shows. Over the course of American musical theatre history young people have more frequently appeared onstage in Broadway shows. Currently, numerous musicals on Broadway feature young performers as protagonists or ensemble members. In 2013, nine Broadway productions featured young performers (Pogrebin). In a *New York Times* article, well-known casting director Bernard Telsey explains, “many more musicals not only have kids in smaller parts but those young actors are actually carrying shows” (Pogrebin). New models of working with young performers are beginning to be the norm on Broadway. These models consider how young performers need to be treated differently from adult company members. Soon many of the Broadway titles that feature young people will be available for licensing for schools. Compared to titles necessitating that youth embody characters much older than they are, like a teenager playing Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, for the first time the

majority of the roles in certain shows like *Matilda* and *Newsies* are age-appropriate for youth performers.

If Broadway is to remain a standard for the American musical, though the history of Broadway includes predominately white bodies onstage and is labeled a “white” art form, change in how musical theatre is constructed and viewed must come from Broadway itself. Critical scholars ask the field to consider if there is enough representation on Broadway stages that reflect the make-up of America itself. Megan Alrutz, theatre scholar and director within the field of Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA), tackles this issue in response to Keke Palmer’s premiere as the first African American actress to play the title role in *Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Cinderella*. While Alrutz celebrates Palmer’s embodiment of Cinderella on the Broadway stage, she also highlights the lack of diversity on stage and in the audience. Alrutz identifies two issues that plague commercial American musical theatre—whose stories are onstage and what content is deemed appropriate for young people. She notes:

The problem is that many of the stories considered appropriate or family-friendly are primarily written by and about white people or about characters stripped of culturally specific (read non-white) content. Moreover, topics labeled as risky, taboo, or too serious for kids, such as death, racial politics, or lesbian and gay experiences, are the very themes present in the real-life experiences of many young people in this county. (Alrutz)

These choices have been under a microscope in the past few years with recent commercial American musical theatre productions on Broadway such as *Aladdin*, *Hamilton*, and the Lincoln Center revival of *The King and I*. Each of these productions took a stance on how to cast specific bodies onstage in conversation with the material being presented. If Broadway is to represent “America” as discussed earlier in the

chapter, Alrtuz and others believe musical theatre has a long way to go until Broadway reflects the true diversity that exists in this evolving country. If Broadway is to serve as a standard for educational and professional practices in musical theatre, change must begin at the top with commercial American musical theatre.

Chapter Three

“It takes two.

I thought one was enough, it’s not true.

It takes two of us.”

- *Into the Woods*, Stephen Sondheim

The Broadway Jr. musical can be defined as commercial American musical theatre in an educational setting. As discussed in chapter one, commercial American musical theatre engages young people in the art form, therefore it is important to understand how the junior musical is used in an educational context. The junior musical is positioned at a crossroads between professional theatre practices and drama/theatre education, the adaptors rely on knowledge in both fields of practice order to develop musical theatre curriculum for middle school students. I argue that the intersection of these two fields strengthens the junior musical’s position in the educational theatre market compared to full-length musicals produced in schools.

In this chapter I look at the value of the junior musical by understanding the educational theatre market and analyzing the use of Broadway musicals in schools. I continue my exploration of commercial American musical theatre in the space between professional and educational theatre and between NYC and schools across America. In order to look at commercial American musical theatre in schools, I analyze trends reported by the Educational Theatre Association, a national theatre organization focused on secondary theatre education. I examine data about theatre teacher preparation, play

production and selection, theatre programming within schools, and the value administrators place on these specific programs. I draw connections between the data and the junior musical, claiming that junior musicals both fill a void and pique the interest of students, teachers, and families. Within this chapter I identify major licensing companies in the field that are taking full-length Broadway musicals and adapting them for youth performers. I offer the term “junior musical” as an umbrella term for these shows. I then focus on Music Theatre International (MTI) and their Broadway Jr. program in order to identify the essential elements of a junior musical. I conclude the chapter by considering unique opportunities offered to youth through the junior musical.

THEATRE EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Theatre education continues to grow throughout the U.S. During the 2011-2012 school year, Educational Theatre Association conducted a study to assess the state of theatre education in the U.S., building upon previous surveys investigating secondary theatre education in 1970 and 1991. The 2012 survey showed a growth in the number of schools offering theatre courses and extracurricular theatre programs over the years. The growth of schools offering extracurricular theatre grew from 63% in 1970 and 79% in 1991 to 95% in 2012 (EdTA). This data displays the increased involvement of young people in the theatre as an after-school program across the U.S. In comparison, 79% of schools offered theatre courses in 2012 (EdTA). Though the percentage of school offering extra-curricular programs remains higher than the percentage of schools offering theatre courses, the 2012 survey data points out a considerable leap in both types of programming over the past decades.

Educational Theatre Association surveyed school administrators and asked them to compare theatre to other student activities offered at their school. Administrators identified theatre as “more time-intensive” and “less expensive.” While many theatre educators may disagree that theatre is inexpensive to produce, what is most interesting about this survey data is that school administrators identified theatre to be generally not very profitable compared to other student activities, but an important activity for young people to participate in. When asked to compare theatre to other student activities 10% of administrators reported theatre as “extremely important,” 32% as “very important,” and 40% as “somewhat important” (EdTA). In analyzing this data, educational researcher and theatre educator Matt Omasta reports, “82% [of administrators indicate] that theatre was in the upper fifty percent of activities in terms of overall importance and only a small minority (just under five percent) not considering it important ‘at all’” (Omasta 14). The findings provide an inference between the value placed on a theatre experiences for young people and the growth of extra-curricular educational theatre programs over nearly fifty years.

Extra-curricular theatre is an interesting phenomenon in American schools. While only some states offer theatre certification for public school teachers and only select schools across the country offer theatre courses, numerous schools have after-school theatre programs. These afterschool programs usually produce an annual show (play or musical) or have an entire season of various productions throughout the school year. Educational Theatre Association’s 2012 Landscape Study looked at different schools’ theatre production seasons in order to analyze how shows (plays or musicals) were

selected and identify what types of shows were being produced. The study reported that 78% of schools were producing faculty-directed full-length musicals, a significant growth from 40% in 1970 and 53% in 1991. Of the many factors that go into selecting a piece, “Quality of Script” was “very important” to 80% of educators and “somewhat important” to 19% of educators. The Landscape Study did not identify how quality is being defined or what criteria educators use in order to identify a quality script. Certainly educators can choose from a pool of numerous titles, however commercialism leads some titles to overshadow others. Specific titles are then selected from that pool based on the “quality of script” to include in an extra-curricular theatre program. Often, the titles selected are musical that have appeared on Broadway.

BROADWAY TITLES IN THE EDUCATIONAL THEATRE MARKET

Musical theatre remains a critical aspect of America’s cultural landscape as a whole, but specific Broadway musicals are highlighted as pieces that define the canon. Such pieces are highly visible and accessible to the American audience. In a discussion about the current state of musical theatre in the U.S., New York City theatre producer and creative development consultant Ryan Bogner explains, “When musicals succeed on Broadway, an entire channel of distribution opportunities open up, from tours to licensed productions at regional theaters that have been trained to expect a Broadway brand.” As Bogner describes, stamping “Broadway” on a show can do wonders for its life after it closes in NYC. He alludes to the fact that numerous shows either do not have the commercial staying power for Broadway, or never develop into a piece that is right for the commercial market (Bogner). Bogner further points out the fact that licensing is a

way to help a production live on through numerous iterations of the show. Many of the pieces which premier on Broadway end up produced in high schools across the country.

In order to analyze the musical titles being selected by schools I draw upon another report produced by Educational Theatre Association. Each year Educational Theatre Association surveys its members to find out the top musicals and plays produced in schools across the country. Compared to Educational Theatre Association's Landmark Survey that has only taken place three times in the history of the organization, the Play Survey has taken place annually since 1938. The Play Survey has an interesting beginning, which correlates to the history of the musicals discussed in the previous chapter; musicals did not appear on the list until the 1960s. *Oklahoma!* topped the chart for two decades until *Bye, Bye Birdie* assumed the top spot until the 1990s (Nadworny). All of the titles that made the list over the past seventy-five years have had healthy Broadway runs. Even decades after a show's premier on Broadway, "classics" continue to appear on the list. The mix of contemporary and classic titles on the list illustrate that extra-curricular theatre programs stage both well-known and newer titles.

This information displays the powerful impact the "Broadway" title can have on the life of a show in the educational theatre market. In order to look at which Broadway shows are currently performed in schools I analyzed the most recent list from the 2014-2015 school year. The top ten most popular shows in the 2014-2015 school year were: *The Addams Family*, *Shrek*, *Legally Blonde*, *Cinderella*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Anything Goes*, *Guys & Dolls*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Hairspray*. In the 2014-2015 survey *The Addams Family* was ranked as the highest, most-

produced musical of the year. The 2014-2015 school year also marked the first year that *The Addams Family* appeared on the amateur market (EdTA). Often when popular commercial musicals are released, they shoot up to the top of the survey like *Shrek* in 2013-2014, whereas other musicals such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *Guys & Dolls*, and *Hairspray* remain popular each year.

In tracking Educational Theatre Association's annual Play Survey over decades, Elissa Nadworny from National Public Radio found the same "Broadway" trend over a longer period of time. Before the digital age, popularity of musicals in the high school arena grew as a Broadway show closed and moved to a regional run, which provided more exposure for a specific show (Nadworny). This granted the show time to gain popularity before hitting the high school market and once the amateur rights became available the show would be sought after by high schools around the country. Nadworny reminds us that when the amateur rights for *Godspell* were released in 1975 the "licensing agency's switchboards were jammed for days." As reported by Educational Theatre Association's Annual Play Survey, the most popular musical that school year was *Godspell*. This trend continues in the twenty-first century as musicals move from Broadway to the educational theatre market.

Commercial American musical theatre has a direct influence on educational theatre programs. Educational Theatre Association's annual Play Survey does not distinguish between full-length titles and youth adaptations when surveying schools (Prignano). The title of show, the story, and the music are important recognizable features between the full-length and junior version of the same show for both the licensing

company and the schools. Thus, creating a strong connection between a full-length musical and its junior adaptation. Of the twenty titles listed on the 2014-2015 survey, eighteen have an adapted version for youth performers. For example, the release of the *Les Miserables* school edition in 2002 is attributed to the title's surge to the top of the chart in 2003 (Nadworny). Though the Educational Theatre Association survey does not delineate between full-length Broadway versions or adaptations for youth, the options to license both versions are available to schools and community organizations.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE JUNIOR MUSICAL

The junior musical was created as a response to the need for young people to have exposure to popular and classic musicals and provides this access point via musicals similar to their full-length counterparts. Although the junior musical was first developed for a middle school audience by the CEO of MTI Freddie Gershon, the name “junior musical” has come to be synonymous within the field for any full-length Broadway musical that has been adapted from its original form for youth performers, from elementary to high school. The development of the junior musical was informed by Gershon's conversation with Steven Sondheim and Arthur Laurents in the early 1990s about finding a way for young people to become engaged in musical theatre in a technological age. He explains:

I conceived and developed the Broadway JR. collection because I was aware that one of the unique elements of growing up for little boys in America was something called “Little League”. Little boys and girls now participate in junior leagues and play soccer, baseball, basketball and swim and do gymnastics. The operative word is “participate”. In the field of education, there is something called *experiential learning*. It is not sitting in an audience and watching a show being performed. It is actually going up on the stage or in the cafeteria or in the little

auditorium of the school, and with the support and aide of teachers and sometimes parents, “put on a show”. (Gershon)

In exposing students to musicals, Gershon also developed a way for them to learn about the craft of musical theatre through producing a show. As illustrated in his above explanation, Gershon developed a school musical comparable to sports. Like athletics, the Broadway Jr. program is built upon educational and social goals and provides young people a structured opportunity to explore a specific craft. Gershon and his company began to study what a successful musical looks like at the middle school level based on the popular Broadway titles in their catalogue. MTI launched the “Broadway Jr.” program with their first title *Annie Jr.* in 1996. Twenty years later, the Broadway Jr. program is thriving and the educational theatre market in general has taken Gershon’s lead.

With this fairly new phenomenon in American musical theatre, schools are choosing between versions of the same show—the full-length originals or their junior counterparts. Decades ago, high schools only had the capital to produce a full-length Broadway musical. Now with the school-adapted versions, middle and elementary schools have the opportunity to put on a well-known musical as well. MTI’s Broadway Junior Collection and other licensing companies offering youth adaptations have widened the market for what is available for schools to produce. Due to the fact there are multiple versions of the Broadway show aimed at different target audiences, the distinction between the junior musical and its full-length counterpart has been blurred.

Taking their lead from Gershon and MTI, each theatre licensing company has developed their own brand of the junior musical, offering options to middle and

elementary schools in addition to the already-strong high school market. Many of the titles, no matter the licensing organization, are adapted and piloted by iTheatrics. iTheatrics remains one of the only theatre companies in the U.S. with a mission to adapt Broadway shows for young performers and develop high-quality materials and trainings to accompany the musicals. iTheatrics works with licensing companies to develop junior musicals for their catalogues. Their list of clients includes MTI, Disney Theatrical Group, Tams-Witmark Library, Inc., and the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization (iTheatrics).

Major Broadway musical licensing companies have developed their own brand of junior musical modeled after the Broadway Jr. program. There are four major musical theatre-licensing companies in the U.S.: Music Theatre International (MTI), Rodgers and Hammerstein Theatricals, Tams-Witmark Music Library, and Theatrical Rights Worldwide. Each licensing organization's catalogue is unique, offering musicals that have been on Broadway and some that have not, as well as Broadway musicals adapted for young performers. The following table presents an alphabetical list of each musical theatre-licensing company, along with their available educational packages.

Licensing Company	Educational Program Title	Target Age Range	Educational Titles in Each Company's Current Catalogue
Music Theatre International (MTI)	Broadway Junior	Middle School	39
	Kids	Elementary School	13
	School Editions	High School	7
Rodgers & Hammerstein Theatre Library	Getting to Know	Middle School	6
Tams-Witmark	Young Performers Edition	Elementary School/ Middle School	4
Theatrical Rights Worldwide	School Edition	High School	4
	Young@Parts Editions	High School	2

Table 2: Licensing Company Educational Programs

This table notes the various titles of programs for young performers, the age-ranges the musicals are geared for, and the number of titles available in each program. Specific trends begin to emerge. For example, “School editions” refers to Broadway shows adapted for high school students. This table also points to the larger number of junior titles offered in the MTI catalogue. See Appendix D for a full list of titles in each company’s catalogue.

ARGUMENT FOR AND AGAINST THE JUNIOR MUSICAL

Given this new type of theatre in the educational market, many arguments arise for and against the junior musical. Some proponents believe that the junior musical provides young people with previously non-existent opportunities, where others opponents argue that the junior musical diminishes the musical theatre form. One common argument in support of these adaptations is that junior musicals provide access to the arts for otherwise marginalized groups of young people. This connects back to Gershon's belief in the Broadway Jr. program and the reason for the popularity of junior musicals in schools as a whole: the junior musical provides opportunities for young people to engage in musical theatre regardless of specific identify markers. This opens access to musical theatre and provides an opportunity for specific young people to play roles that they may not have the ability to otherwise. In a 2015 *Huffington Post* article, Stacy Wolf argues:

These issues take on a different weight when economically disadvantaged children of color get the chance to perform. Students play any role, often across gender, and race-specific casting has no traction. They can pretend, take up space on stage, sing and dance. When kids are familiar with the stories and the songs, they're eager to commit to this ambitious project.

Wolf acknowledges that these junior adaptations of the shows provide opportunities for young people to perform and also explains that commercial appeal can benefit arts programs as a whole due to the fact that students are familiar with the story. The adapted versions give schools and community groups the ability to access the same musical, even if the full-length version is not the right fit for population or context. Educational theatre provides the opportunity for young people to experience theatre no matter their race or

gender. As Wolf points out, musical theatre is a powerful tool for students that do not normally have access to the arts.

Not all individuals feel adapting existing works for young performers benefits the performing arts. While most educators understand the issues of censorship, some theatre artists argue that by “junior-izing” a musical you are detracting from the art form. Blogger Philippa Boyes explains that by cutting down and removing as much as two-thirds of a musical you get the “bare bones” of a plot and “lose character idiosyncrasies and social commentary.” She goes on to argue that the form of musical theatre itself uses song and dance to illuminate a seemingly very small choice or critical moment and that these moments are often cut out in the creation of the junior version (Boyes). Boyes believes the richness of the story told through this specific art form ends up on the cutting room floor. In her argument, she links the story to an understanding of musical theatre’s form and function. Boyes wonders if a junior musical is worth doing if both the art form *and* the story are reduced.

Although I see Boyes’s point, for many artists and audience members, stories are at the heart of Broadway shows, no matter how they are told on stage. The form itself can exist with many different stories. The power of story is that it allows people, regardless of age, to connect to and empathize with characters by seeing a piece of themselves reflected back at them on stage. Though MTI’s Broadway Junior musical catalogue offers many newer titles, Dee Ann Brill, head of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, chose a more classic musical for her youth to perform. In an article about the Jr. Musical Theatre Festival she explains, “I chose *Finian’s [Rainbow]* partly because it deals with

immigration, which is an issue on which everyone currently has an opinion” (Filichia). This points to the fact that story matters in show selection. Educators and directors consider what will be relatable to young people in their specific community. Testimonials like Brill’s emphasize the power of a story’s relevance for a specific community.

A Broadway show’s appropriateness must be analyzed when deciding whether to develop it into a junior musical. Though certain shows are written for youth ensemble casts, like *13* and *Spring Awakening*, the language or content within the piece does not always translate to a school context without the piece undergoing massive cuts or changes, each of which needs author approval. Likewise, certain shows are too technically or vocally difficult to produce them without significantly altering the licensed material. Broadway shows are originally created for professional performers and Broadway has the resources to keep a difficult show running even with a cast of young performers. I acknowledge that schools have been altering musicals to fit their needs and abilities for years, though only in the last twenty years have licensing companies begun to offer such adapted versions. In addition, some licensing companies offer support systems to make the junior musical a successful process and product for all involved. Junior musicals bank on the full-length titles’ popularity in order to attract educational theatre groups to license the adaptation.

DEFINING SUCCESS OF A JUNIOR MUSICAL

Success is defined rather differently within educational theatre as compared to professional theatre standards. Although junior musicals use the same source material as their Broadway counterparts, a successful piece cannot be measured by a Broadway

standard. In developing the Broadway Junior Collection, MTI wanted to create a package that allows for young people and their directors to put on a successful show, while making the process as smooth as possible. In discussing what this looks like Gershon explains:

By “success”, I do not mean it’s going to win a Tony award. But they almost always get a standing ovation. The kids feel they have done right by the show and good about themselves. The essence of these musical theatre performances is not based on how glamorously the composer/author/lyricist envisaged the lighting grid, the sound system, the wigs, the costumes, the sets. Sometimes it can be terrific and sometimes it detracts. Producers and directors must trust the underlying material and the rest is frequently just a lot of fluff, which is a distraction from the story.

Gershon’s goals were to cut down the material and increase flexibility regarding how the piece is produced. In educational theatre accomplishment is based on meeting the individual goals of the school’s theatre program. In some schools theatre is used as a teaching tool, where in other settings theatre’s goal is to produce students of the art form. Success looks different within each context, whereas in professional theatre success is defined quite rigidly. On Broadway success is often defined by artistic innovation, quality of actor performances and production design, and commercial appeal. The same Broadway standards are not used to measure shows in an educational context.

JUNIOR MUSICAL AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL

The majority of the junior theatre market belongs to Music Theatre International. MTI describes their Broadway Jr. musicals as “condensed, author-approved versions of classic musicals, Disney favorites, and modern works, custom-tailored to the needs of young people and schools” (MTI). MTI’s Broadway Junior Collection shows are adapted

and developed by Disney Theatrical Group and iTheatrics. Marty Johnson, Director of Education at iTheatrics, explains that adapting the show from the Broadway original means not only cutting the running time down to one hour, but also creating adjustments to vocal ranges, simplification of music, and creating accommodations for larger casts (Johnson). Johnson notes that iTheatrics has developed numerous resources accompanying a show that a school can choose to use. The materials are designed to “guide novice directors in approaching the material correctly and help them use the show as an educational experience for their students” (Belizar 17). Each Broadway Jr. musical includes resource packaged called a ShowKit. In “Three Broadway Junior Case Studies”, a report by Carol Shookhoff, educators credit the ShowKits with making the production possible (4). The following information/description of the ShowKit is taken from the MTI online catalogue. A ShowKit includes:

Broadway Jr. ShowKit	
Director's Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tips and suggestions on casting, rehearsals, directing, choreography, costumes, sets, props, lighting and more • Curriculum Connections featuring educational activities and lesson plans tied to the show
30 Actor Scripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all the actors to customize and keep
Two Rehearsal/ Accompaniment CDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionally produced with a full orchestra of live musicians • Great keys for young singers • Guide-vocal tracks allow students to "sing along"—learning the music is easy and fun • Fully orchestrated accompaniment-only tracks are excellent for live performances with good tempos and easy-to-follow cues
One Piano/Vocal Score	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete scores for the director and rehearsal/performance pianist • Complete piano/vocal score with script cues • Transposed into age-appropriate keys • Easy-to-read format
One Choreographic DVD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional choreographic videos with renowned choreographer, Steven Kennedy • Steven shows you everything you need to know to handle the dance portions of your Broadway Junior musical
30 Family Matters Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides parents through the theatrical process • Provides positive ways parents can contribute to the success of the show without stepping on teacher's/director's toes • Great to send home with every student
Media Disc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes helpful files, audition sides and editable forms

Table 3: Broadway Jr. ShowKit (MTI)

The Broadway Jr. musical provides a package for schools that serves as a one-stop shop to creating a musical. All materials are provided as part of the flat-rate licensing fee. In comparison to the full-length Broadway musical, a ShowKit only exists for a Broadway Jr. musical. Geared for both new and experienced directors, the ShowKit

offers a plethora of materials for use if needed. The ShowKit supports directors and educators in areas where they might be lacking—direction, design, choreography, or management.

The 2012 Educational Theatre Association Landscape Study found disparities between producing shows in secondary school and the preparation the educators felt they had. The study reported that 96% of teachers believed that directing theatre productions was a “very important” job duty for their school’s theatre program, however only 50% of those educators felt that they were “very well trained.” The lack preparation educators felt also applied to dance/choreography and music direction/conducting. Though 37% of educators believe choreography/dance is “very important” only 6% reported that they are “very well trained.” 48% of educators believe that music direction/conducting is “very important,” but only 15% report that they were “very well trained.” The following table displays data pulled from the Landscape Study report, focusing on the question, “How well trained do you feel you are in each of the following areas based on education and experience?”

How well trained do you feel you are in each of the following areas based on education and experience?				
	Very Well Trained	Adequate Training	Having Some Training; Need More	No Training at All
Acting	50%	29%	16%	5%
Directing	53%	27%	15%	6%
Choreography	6%	17%	35%	42%
Musical Direction/Conducting	15%	17%	25%	43%
Stage Management	33%	38%	19%	10%
Set Design	20%	37%	31%	13%
Prop Design	16%	38%	31%	15%
Makeup Design	14%	35%	35%	17%
Lighting Design	10%	27%	42%	21%
Costume Design	12%	24%	41%	23%
Sound Design	8%	26%	42%	23%

Table 4: Theatre Educators Responses to Training (EdTA)

This table from the Landscape Study identifies the preparedness that teachers feel for overseeing many aspects of a production. The Broadway Jr. program uses the ShowKit to combat this problem and empower educators/directors to produce successful shows at their schools. This focus on generating materials to support theatre directors and educators of youth is a model replicated by other licensing companies.

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO ENGAGE IN MUSICAL THEATRE

One premise of the junior musical is that young people are considered theatre-makers. In some special cases young people are invited to participate as artists in unique experiences developed for them around a current Broadway show. Usually, the rights to a musical are held until the Broadway run and national tours are complete, then amateur licensing for schools is available. Two shows currently running on Broadway, *School of Rock* and *Disney's The Lion King*, stray from this model and have created exclusive

opportunities for young people to participate in performance while the original production is still running on Broadway.

One specific event highlights the connection between youth on Broadway and youth in schools performing musical theatre. *School of Rock*, a new musical by Andrew Lloyd-Webber, Julian Fellows, and Glenn Slater, opened on Broadway in December 2015. The musical, based on the feature film *School of Rock*, features a group of young people who become inspired by music with the help of their teacher and aspiring rock star Dewey Finn. The film was a box-office success and the stage musical adaptation draws on the current movie adaptation trend discussed in chapter two. When discussing the choice to make this show available exclusively to high schools at the same time as the Broadway show is running, Webber explained, “This musical is entirely about empowering kids to rock out, so what better way to herald its arrival and celebrate its themes than to allow youth performances from coast to coast. This will allow young fans to engage with the material in a much deeper way” (Viagas). Rodgers and Hammerstein Library, the licensor of *School of Rock*, is the first licensing company to make this choice on a national stage. In the future, I believe that there will be more intentional connections like this example between Broadway musicals and youth adaptations in schools.

Disney Theatrical Group developed two youth versions of a longtime-running musical—*Disney’s The Lion King Experience Jr.* and *Disney’s The Lion King Experience Kids*—each respectively created for middle schools and elementary schools. *The Lion King Experience* is unique compared to the other Broadway Jr. shows because is an “immersive, project-based exploration of theatre-making” (Disney Theatrical Group).

The program includes multiple sessions to introduce the theatre and the story of *The Lion King* to young people (Disney Theatricals). Throughout the production process, young people collaborate in the show's creation and also learn about the skills and tools of the art forms employed by musical theatre. *Disney's The Lion King Experience* can be used within a music or theatre classroom as a unit of study or in an extra-curricular context. Disney Theatrical Group also has a commitment to grant a certain number of qualified low-income public schools the rights and materials to *Disney's The Lion King Experience Jr.* and *Disney's The Lion King Experience Kids* free of charge (Disney Theatrical Group). This "experience" is a one-of-a-kind curriculum that only exists with *Disney's The Lion King*. Disney Dramaturg and Literary Manager Ken Cerniglia explains that these materials and experiences have been created especially for *The Lion King* and will not be created to accompany other Broadway productions (Cerniglia and Mitchell). Thus, *The Lion King Experience* exists as a point of access to musical theatre and theatre education available only to youth performers.

The Broadway Jr. program is highlighted each year at a unique festival built for students and educators/directors involved in producing a Broadway Jr. show at their school. Junior Theatre Festival (JTF) occurs each January in Atlanta, Georgia, celebrating the Broadway Jr. shows and the young people involved. In 2016, students and teachers from all over the country representing 115 educational musical theatre groups gathered for the festival. In this annual festival, completely geared toward the middle school musical theatre lover, student groups' focus on "celebration not competition" (Viagas). Festival participants perform selections from Broadway Jr. shows, participate in

educational workshops, attend concerts put on by Broadway stars, see staged numbers from new Broadway Jr. shows, and have the opportunity to connect with other student groups. JTF also focuses on the role of growth at the festival; programming and feedback is given in a way to encourage young people. JTF supports both the teachers directing the musicals and the students interested in working off-stage in technical theatre, providing fun and exciting opportunities for a wide-reaching Broadway Jr. audience. Due to the interest and popularity of the festival, in 2017 a second JTF will open on the west coast in Sacramento, California. JTF illustrates the connection between Broadway theatre and educational theatre as young people learn about the musical theatre while engaging in a festival that is created for them to learn and grow personally, socially, artistically, and academically. I acknowledge that access is a key factor for JTF attendance, however I believe the idea of creating a space where young people can come together to participate in and celebrate the art form of musical theatre can be created in local communities. In this setting, the power of commercial American musical theatre transcends individual productions and fosters community.

Chapter Four

“Careful the things you say, children will listen.

Careful the things you do, children will see. And learn.

Children may not obey, but children will listen.

Children will look to you for which way to turn, to learn what to be.

Careful before you say, ‘Listen to me.’”

- *Into the Woods*, Stephen Sondheim

Compared to professional theatre, educational theatre focuses on the learner and centers decisions about the process or product around the needs of the students. Students are recipients of specific pedagogical approaches when their educators/directors consider adopting the Broadway Jr. program as musical theatre curriculum. The field of drama/theatre education is able to recognize the learning opportunities that Broadway Jr. musicals present by understanding the intentional curriculum provided and the different ways that it is used in schools. Opportunities for young people to engage in a theatre-making process can be valuable and have long lasting effects even years after the show closes. Within educational theatre the process is as critical, if not more so, than the product.

In this chapter I will continue my exploration of commercial American musical theatre in educational settings by analyzing the relationship between process and product and considering how junior musicals develop both artistic and socio-emotional skills. I focus on the form of musical theatre as an opportunity for cognitive, artistic, and social

development. I identify the unique learning opportunities the arts provide along with the knowledge they produce. I link these findings to the development of artistic literacy as defined by the National Core Arts Standards. In order to specifically look at development of musical theatre skills taught within the Broadway Jr. program, I apply a pedagogical framework developed by the MusicTheatre Academy of the Rotterdam University of Arts Education. This analysis compares the junior musical in schools to the full-length counterparts produced in professional settings. I conclude the chapter by identifying the Broadway Jr. program as an educational theatre model that has the flexibility to live in different areas on a continuum between process and product, depending on the needs and make-up of the school community. Throughout this chapter I look at the Broadway Jr. musical as an educational tool in order to develop artistic practice.

FINE ARTS EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The current landscape of arts education in the U.S. can be understood through analysis of the junior musical within the education field. The Department of Education's 2009-2010 Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools survey determined a huge differential in the amount of drama/theatre education offered in elementary school to high school, from 4% at elementary school to 45% at high school (Department of Education 46, 49). The 4% of schools that offer drama/theatre classes at the elementary level dropped from a reported 20% ten years earlier (Department of Education 5). However, many secondary arts programs are considered co-curricular, defined as having academic and extra-curricular components. The survey reported that, of the middle and high school theatre educators surveyed, 82% reported having co-

curricular programs whereas 13% reported having solely extra-curricular programs (Department of Education 9). Though, the opportunity for young people to participate in extra-curricular activities diminishes when theatre opportunities move outside of the school day. Extra-curricular arts programming is limited to select students due to socio-economic status (which creates numerous barriers), conflict with other extra-curricular activities/after school programs, and/or selection of students who audition and are cast in specific productions.

Although numerous high schools produce musicals in an extra-curricular setting, this data points to a lack of drama/theatre classroom experiences for elementary students, defined as grades K-6. Though arts are often cut first in public education, the survey reported that at the elementary level 94% of schools offer music education and 83% visual arts education (Department of Education 5). A comparison of theatre education and music education at the elementary level shows that 4% of public schools have theatre education while 94% of public schools have music education (Department of Education 5). Two conclusions can be drawn from this statistical disparity: students lack exposure to theatre arts classes in elementary school and thus lack theatrical knowledge and skills when progressing into secondary education; more students have exposure to music education and possess knowledge and skills within music when progressing into secondary education. This data is critical for analysis of musical theatre's unique art form, which requires theatrical and musical skills. In addition, this data displays a need for elementary and middle school theatre programs that scaffold learning in order to

support student engagement in full-length musicals at the high school level. The junior musical helps schools fulfill these educational needs.

WHAT DO THE FINE ARTS DO?

The fine arts as a whole offer different learning opportunities to young people as compared to other subject areas like math, science, and language arts. I want to first analyze conceptions about what fine arts as a whole provide young people. I borrow the term “enduring understandings” from curriculum specialists Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe’s work in *Backwards Design*. Wiggins and McTighe define an enduring understanding as “a constructivist result of attempts by students to make sense of the work” (58). Understandings are larger ideas about the discipline formed through engagement in a process, compared to the smaller pieces of knowledge (such as facts) and discrete performance skills within the art form. In considering enduring understandings in the broader arts context, an understanding encompasses core ideas about the arts and has lasting impact beyond one experience. In order to identify the understandings that engagement in the arts provide I look at the work of Jessica Hoffmann Davis, a cognitive developmental psychologist and founder of Harvard University’s Arts in Education graduate program. In *Why Our Schools Need the Arts*, she identifies five unique offerings of the arts: a tangible product, focus on emotion, ambiguity, process orientation, and connection (50). Each of these five features produce two understandings as a result of engagement in the arts. The following table identifies the five features, their corresponding understandings, and a description of each

understanding. The information included in this table is from Davis's book *Why Our Schools Need the Arts*.

Feature	Understanding	Description
Tangible Product	Imagination	The arts in education invite students to think beyond the given, to imagine, “What if?” (55)
	Agency	The arts in education enable student to experience their significance as agents of effectiveness and change, to realize, “I matter.” (55)
Focus on Emotion	Expression	The art in education give students the opportunity to recognize and express their feelings, to acknowledge, “This is how I feel.” (58)
	Empathy	The arts in education help students to be aware of and attentive to the emotions of others, to appreciate, “This is how you feel.” (58)
Ambiguity	Interpretation	The arts in education enable students to see that there are many equally viable ways in and out of the same subject, to know that even if their views differ from others’, “What I think matters.” (65)
	Respect	The arts in education help students to be aware of, interested in, and respectful of different ways of making sense of the world. They come to know that even if they disagree with peers, “What others think matter.” (65)
Process Orientation	Inquiry	The arts in education teach students about questions that make use of information but go beyond right and wrong answers to considerations of, “What do I want to know?” (71)
	Reflection	The arts in education help students to develop skills of ongoing self-reflection and assessment, moving beyond judgments of good or bad to informed considerations of, “How am I doing and what will I do next?” (71)
Connection	Engagement	The arts in education excite and engage students, awakening attitudes to learning that include passion and joy, and the discovery that “I care.” (76)
	Responsibility	The arts in education connect children to others within and beyond school walls, helping to awaken a sense of social responsibility and action because “I care for others.” (76)

Table 5: Engagements in the Arts Features and Understandings (Davis)

This table displays the larger understandings that can come from a rich experience in the arts. Fine arts allow young people to position themselves as capable learners and consider the actions, thoughts, and opinions of others in relationship to their identities while learning through and about a specific art form. Davis argues that these features and their understandings are unique to the fine arts. These larger understandings about self, others, and the art form help create artistically literate students.

In 2014, the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) released revised national standards in music, theatre, visual art, dance, and media arts. One of the guiding principles behind the revision of the 1994 National Arts Standards was a consideration of arts education in the twenty-first century. Within this framework, NCCAS looks at the role of developing artistically literate students. Artistic literacy is defined as “the knowledge and understanding required to participate authentically in the arts” (10) and requires engagement in artistic processes through the use of appropriate materials and spaces in authentic situations (17). The value of artistic literacy extends beyond the knowledge and skills art form, as individuals use the arts as a tool for making meaning in order to develop personal and academic connections. Any art form as a tool for meaning-making requires exposure, opportunities for practice, and scaffolded instruction to develop competences within the art form.

IMPACT OF THEATRE EDUCATION

Early exposure to a rich and meaningful experience in the arts does not simply correlate to choosing fine arts as a field of study or practice later in life. Rather, development of artistic literacy helps young people in different areas of their life beyond

performance and art-making. One study looked at the impact of school theatre participation on adults who went on to have various careers after high school. Participants in the Lifelong Impact study represented graduation years between 1953 and 2009 from various states across the U.S. (McCammon, Saldaña, Hines, and Omasta 30-31). Analysis of the survey data suggests that, regardless of future occupation, quality theatre programming for adolescence in an educational setting develop:

increased self-confidence; collaborative teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership skills; public speaking, communication skills, and presentation of self; pragmatic work ethics such as goal setting, time management, and meeting deadlines; heightened historic, cultural, and social awareness; empathy and emotional intelligence; identify, values systems, and a sense of personal significance; lifelong friendships; and artistic living and patronage. (McCammon, Saldaña, Hines, and Omasta 35)

I draw connections between the impact of arts education as reported by participants within this study and enduring understandings that involvement in the arts creates. The impact study's findings align with the majority of theatre educators in the 2012 Educational Theatre Association Landscape Survey who identified interpersonal and intrapersonal development as factors for maintaining a theatre program at their school. Supported by Davis's claims about what the arts provide young people, I argue that involvement in a rich and meaningful junior musical theatre experience can provide such development.

Two studies currently exist about Broadway Jr. shows: "Evaluation of the Broadway Junior – Arts Connection Program in Three New York City Public Schools" (2001) and "Three Broadway Junior Case Studies" (2009). Both studies look the Broadway Jr. program in schools within the New York City Public School system. They

each report social-emotional growth of students and identify characteristics such as self-confidence, risk-taking, problem solving, and positive peer interactions (Horowitz, Shookhoff). In addition, each study documented skills and knowledge within the art form and reported an increased interest in musical theatre among the students (Horowitz, Shookhoff). Although academic gains were not a focus of the study, “Evaluation of the Broadway Junior – Arts Connection Program in Three New York City Public Schools” observed multiple areas of academic growth in the young people involved in the program, specifically language development (Horowitz). Both studies recognized that the Broadway Junior program had an impact on school culture and climate, noting the reactions of peers, teachers, principals, and parents (Horowitz, Shookhoff). This research, focused on specific schools and populations, illustrates how the Broadway Jr. program assists in developing skills that can be applied to life-long learning.

ANALYZING THE FORM OF MUSICAL THEATRE

Understanding what the arts do as a whole helps illuminate the need for quality processes that provide meaningful experiences for young people, but specifically the junior musical focuses on performance of one specific discipline—musical theatre. As discussed in chapter two, musical theatre is the integration of acting, singing, and dancing to tell a cohesive story. I argued that musical theatre is a complex artistic medium due to its specific features and use of particular conventions. In chapter two, I identified the distinguishing characteristics of a musical as: heightened text, heightened behavior, heightened visual expression, and heightened reality (Deer 3-4). In *Directing Musical Theatre: An Essential Guide*, author Joe Deer dives deeper into analyzing the musical and

identifies specific conventions used in musical theatre: music tells the story, condensed dialogue, expanded time, romance, comedy, and complexity (4-5). Deer explains that these conventions are not rules, yet they emerged out of a study of the art form and are common practice in musical theatre writing. Furthermore, different styles can exist within the genre of musical theatre. Deer states, “We often associate specific sets of style rules with particular genres of musicals” (29). He argues that style is an intersection of the past and the present and that style is not defined by the original production date of a musical (Deer 33). Thus, each musical presents its own challenges and requires distinct skills, knowledge, and understandings in order to make meaning of the integrated art form. The process of integration requires an understanding of discrete skills specific to an individual discipline (theatre, music, and dance) while also understanding the art form’s features (heightened text, behavior, visual expression, and reality), use of conventions (music tells the story, expanded time, condensed dialogue, etc.), and the style of the individual musical. For these reasons, musical theatre pedagogies are continually growing as the field evolves and expands.

In order to connect musical theatre performance to educational theory I turn to the work of educational philosopher Elliot Eisner. In his rationale for arts education, Eisner argues that each art form (discipline) differs in representation and modality; therefore each form requires different skills in order for an individual to engage in and be able to comprehend the art form (Eisner 4). For example, singing requires different abilities, skills, and knowledge from dancing. For this reason, training in musical theatre often

splits into three branches of study—theatre, music, and dance. Performers use skills from different art forms when rehearsing or performing a musical theatre piece.

However, as previously discussed, the modern musical is an integrated form and is considered a cohesive text. Eisner also contributes a theory to understand the multiple artistic forms represented in the integrated musical. This theory is applied to analysis of when, how, and why different art forms are used as modes of expression within a musical. He explains that art forms are tools that can be used to influence meaning-making (Eisner 5). In musical theatre different points of the story are told through different forms of artistic expression (acting, singing, and dancing). A performer not only applies the needed skills required by the art form used for expression, but also analyzes why the writer(s) chose a form of artistic expression in an exact moment of a character's journey. By understanding why the form of representation is used within the heightened reality of musical theatre, a performer can apply the skills required and make meaning of the text for themselves and an audience.

Lastly, musical theatre utilizes an integration of art forms that function differently in each piece. The function is dictated by the style of the musical. Style is associated with a set of rules related to a particular musical genre (Deer 29). Deer denotes three key elements of style within a musical: style is articulated and understood, style is applied consistently throughout a production, and style is recognizable to the audience (30-31). Accordingly, the function of the artistic discipline employed in the musical (acting, singing, and dancing) is dictated by the style of the individual piece. The understanding

of style within an integrated art form makes musical theatre a highly complex performance art as each musical provides its own template for storytelling.

MUSICAL THEATRE PEDAGOGY

Eisner's educational theory and Deer's examination of musical theatre helps theatre educators and scholars define musical as a unique art form with a discrete set of knowledge and skills to be gained, practiced, and performed. In order to analyze how the Broadway Jr. program helps students achieve mastery in a complex artistic form, I examine pedagogies of musical theatre. Though students can learn the basics of acting, singing, and dancing in separate courses, I focus on pedagogies that look at the integration of these musical theatre performance art forms. One such pedagogy comes from the MusicTheater Academy developed by Mony Wouters and Maarten Mourik. Wouters and Mourik's pedagogical approach aims to teach integration and combination of skills. Integration skills are defined as: "a thorough understanding of music, singing, acting, and movement, coupled with insight into character, theatre, and storytelling" (Mourik 214); combination of skills is defined as: combining any two skills such as dancing and singing or singing and acting (Mourik 213). The approach resulted in four methods used to teach and practice integration and combination skills: reducing complexity; modular repertoire; deconstruction versus whole; and exploration, independence, and individuality (Mourik 216-7). MusicTheatre Academy's break down of material for undergraduate students is similar to the choices made by theatre companies adapting full-length musicals for young performers—both help students learn the craft through equivalent pedagogies. In the following table I take MusicTheatre

Academy’s pedagogies and compare them to the Broadway Jr. program in order to illustrate how the Broadway Jr. program is supporting young people and their directors to develop the skills required by the art form. I also compare the pedagogies and Broadway Jr. program to the practices used in professional musical theatre; this displays the choices made when a piece moves to the educational theatre market after being developed in a professional setting.

MusicTheater Academy’s Pedagogies in Musical Theatre Training	Broadway Junior Adaptations for Youth Performers	Full-Length Broadway Musicals
Method One: Reducing Complexity: breaking down pieces section by section; mastering discrete skills before integration (216).	Resources in the ShowKit include sing-along tracks in addition to printed music in the libretto; fully orchestrated accompaniment tracks with correct tempos and easy-to-follow cues; choreography DVD and director’s guide. The director’s guide breaks the show down into manageable pieces for a director in order to see how to create or rehearse small pieces while retaining the full picture of the story.	The piece is created for trained professional actors/musicians/dancers with support from a design team, direction team, and administration staff. Elements of the piece are performed live. The piece is being conceived or adapted for the stage from original source material; no other production exists so the rehearsal process can look different with each piece.
Method Two: Modular Repertoire: careful and deliberate selection of material; considerations for different song types within the canon of musical theatre that is coordinated to ability (216).	Adjustment of material (book and score) with consideration of young performer’s vocal ranges, stamina, and relationship to the content and context, while still adhering to the original sound and style of the piece.	Each piece, specific in style, utilizes a narrative structure to tell the story. The songs and scenes move the story forward and the focus is on the storytelling mechanism first and foremost. Within the Broadway community there are numerous individuals capable of playing a specific role. Generally, censorship is not a concern of a writer while creating the material.

Table 6: Pedagogies of Musical Theatre Comparison

<p>Method Three: Deconstruction versus Whole: a focus on the piece as a whole (217).</p>	<p>A 60-minute piece that allows for time to run the whole piece within one rehearsal block while also allowing time to dig deep and work specific moments.</p>	<p>A two-act piece generally running between two and three hours. The rehearsal period for a Broadway musical at minimum is 6-8 weeks; 8-10 hours a day. Most Broadway musicals are in development for about six to ten years.</p>
<p>Method Four: Exploration, Independence, and Individuality: affording students the opportunity to have a truly unique performance (217).</p>	<p>Young people are encouraged to find a way to bring themselves to the role, have fun, and become independent. A director serves as a guide or coach to support students to be successful.</p>	<p>Broadway professionals are encouraged to find a way to bring themselves to the role. A director serves as a guide to shape the piece overall. Several members of the creative and administrative team support the actors in producing a successful show.</p>

Table 6: Pedagogies of Musical Theatre Comparison, continued

The table above aims to compare and contrast a Jr. musical to a professional Broadway production through analysis of a pedagogical approach to musical theatre. Through this analysis I argue that the Broadway Jr. musical breaks down material in an achievable way and illustrate how a professional theatre setting has different standards, expectations, and resources compared to educational theatre. This data identifies the strengths of the Broadway Jr. program in developing ways for young people to engage in the process of successfully creating and producing a musical through an understanding of the integrated art form.

PROCESS VERSUS PRODUCT

The tension between process and product still exists even within an educational theatre model in extra-curricular settings. Joan Lazarus's aforementioned discussion of educational theatre in schools in chapter one notes that some secondary education schools focus on solely producing shows without considering the intentional process involved in art-making (31). The focus on process and product in educational theatre can be applied now to various models of youth theatre. In order to look more closely at educational theatre, I examine models developed by theatre scholars Jenny Hughes and Karen Wilson. In a Centre for Applied Theatre Research report they identify four models of youth theatre: theatre/arts, community, youth arts, and applied theatre. Each model shares three key features: voluntary participation by young people, theatre as non-formal education, and developmental outcomes for participants (Richardson 11). Each model also presents a "different balance of process and product" (Richardson 11). Broadway Jr. falls into two of the four categorizes defined by Hughes and Wilson: theatre/arts and youth theatre. Theatre/arts and youth theatre are defined by Hughes and Wilson as:

Theatre/arts — the 'reason for being' within this model is to provide access to professional quality drama and theatre processes. Personal and social development outcomes may be a by-product of this work but the driving force is to create theatre and performance. (Richardson 11).

Youth arts — the 'reason for being' and overriding aim is to support the personal, social and political development of young people through theatre. (Richardson 11)

Hughes and Wilson explain that these types of programs (theatre/arts and youth arts) differ from each other due to their focus and objective. However, I argue that educational theatre in the U.S. operates between these two binaries. In developing a continuum

between process and product in educational theatre, the model of “youth arts” can be placed on one end and “theatre/arts” on the other. Building upon the research of Hughes and Wilson, I have developed a continuum of practice that illustrates my point and pulls upon arguments I have made throughout this thesis. Within the figure below I define process and product separately by stating the goals, pedagogical processes involved, and skills developed. The arrows in the middle of the figure illustrate the movement between process-centered and product-centered practices in educational theatre.

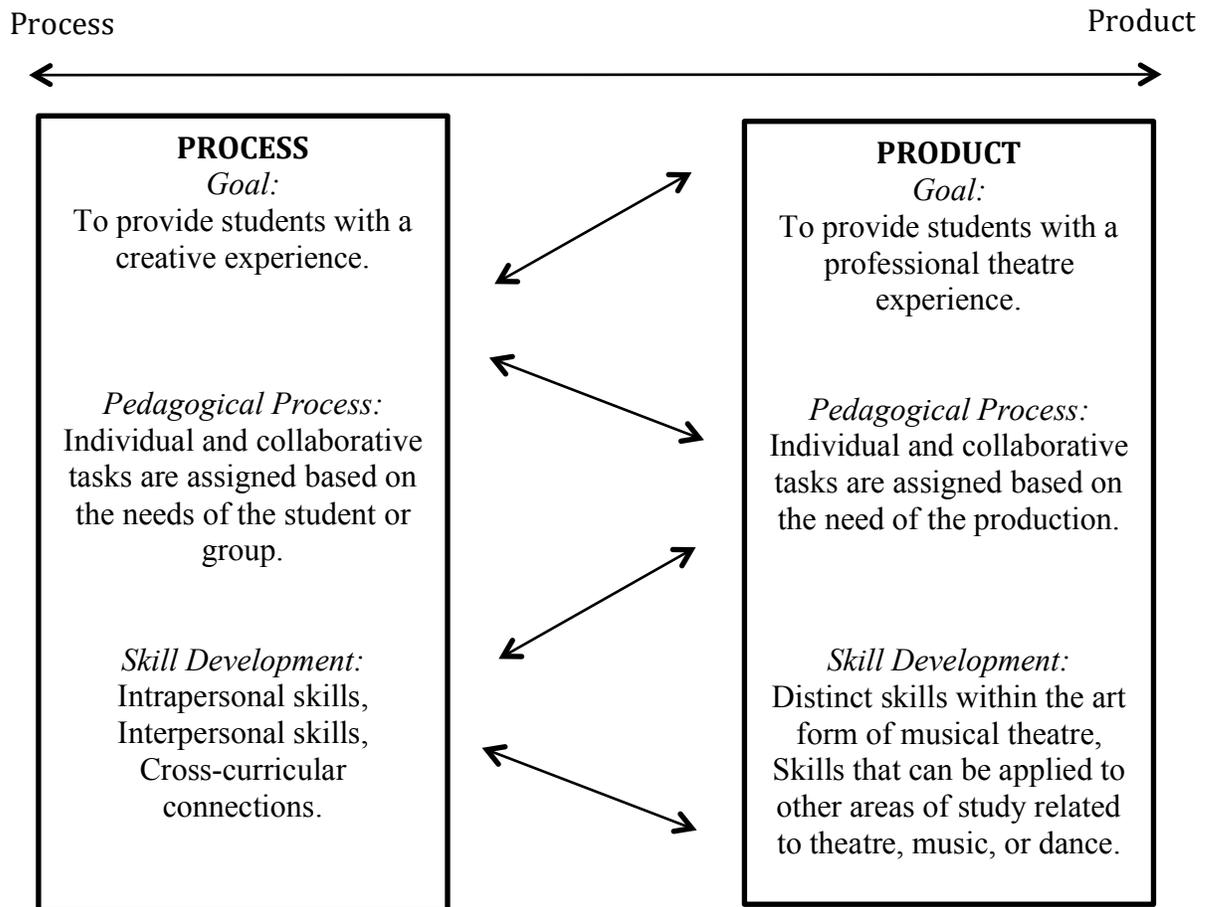


Figure 1: Continuum of Process and Product in Educational Theatre

The Broadway Jr. program can be an educational tool placed at different points on this continuum between process and product depending on the context and needs of the school or community. Multiple points along the continuum may encompass an entire rehearsal process in an educational setting. For example, some rehearsals may focus on development of skills within the art form in relationship to the material being performed and other rehearsals emphasize inter- and intrapersonal growth of students through building ensemble and community. Lastly, I argue that process and product are not siloed in educational theatre, but rather they influence each other. For example, particular skills in the art form can be developed through a process-based approach. As illustrated in the documentary *Children Will Listen*, students working on *Into the Woods Jr.* analyzed the text as a group and designed costumes for their characters using readily-available materials or clothes. As indicated by the arrows in the figure, process and product influence each other in educational theatre.

Though individual directors of extra-curricular programs determine their own placement on this continuum, I argue that the Broadway Jr. program invites a balanced approach of focusing on process as a way to achieve a meaningful product. These ideas connect back to Freddie Gershon's description of success in a Broadway Jr. musical and analysis of the Broadway Jr. ShowKit in chapter three. Educational theatre remains important as it has the potential to produce unexpected results when youth have the opportunity to personally connect to the material and share their work with others.

The junior musical provides opportunities for youth to see their peers performing onstage, which provides opportunities for empathy development compared to seeing

unfamiliar actors inhabit the same role onstage. In examining the power of youth audiences seeing other familiar young performers on stage, theatre scholar Jennifer Chapman looks at empathy development. Chapman identifies the dual role of theatre participants in play production—those involved in the creation and those watching the performance. She points out empathy’s role as a critical skill exercised in the process of making and viewing theatre when a participant empathizes with a character or connects personally to a situation. Chapman goes one step further to address an interesting dynamic when the performers and the audience are individuals from the same school community. She explains that seeing a familiar young person on stage can “distance the audience from the play text but may make them feel closer to their fellow community members” (404). This opportunity can promote empathy development within the school or larger community (Chapman 404). Educational theatre provides the opportunity for youth to see other youth performing on-stage, sometimes in unanticipated ways.

Opportunities for critical dialogue arise as students try to find connections within the material itself, particularly the more “classic” pieces of the Broadway canon. In her book *Temporary Stages*, secondary theatre educator and scholar Jo Beth Gonzalez discusses critical dialogue around musical theatre. Gonzalez asks educators to reframe their thinking about how to involve young people in the process of producing a “critically conscious” musical. She challenges directors and educators to consider both the process and the material. Gonzalez asks, “How do we dwell in the pockets of critical engagement during rehearsals of complex Broadway musicals without compromising artistic quality?” (60). She argues the answer to this question lies in collective dramaturgy, which she

explains is research on and about the details of the play, either literally or metaphorically (57-8). Through dialogue around the themes, characters, and situations presented in the show, students are able to “rehearse musicals from the past with full engagement and critical awareness today” (59). Gonzalez’s challenge asks educators/directors to consider the musical an active text, examining how might they dialogue with it and understand, defend, or push against choices made within the material itself. She does not promote changing the licensed material, but rather asks theatre educators/directors to consider how bringing a critically conscious eye to a piece can help shift the culture within a room, break down barriers, and be inclusive of diverse bodies and ideas within the community. Through a critically conscious lens, young people in the room find relevancy in the story while developing justification of why sharing that specific story onstage matters to their own community. In many ways, the notion of finding ways to make art relevant to the participants connects to developing artistically literate individuals and supports Lazarus’s previous concerns of secondary theatre education.

The richest learning experiences for young people arise when a link exists between critical dialogue and the artistic material. The learning process affects the product by moving textual analysis into playable action onstage. Angela Fleddermann Miller, Assistant Professor of Theatre and Dance at Millikin University, describes her experience with a group of middle school students:

When directing *Legally Blonde Jr.*, a cyber-bullying problem arose between some middle school girls in the cast. When it was brought to my attention, we sat down as a cast and looked at the script. Is Elle bullied? If so, by which character or characters? Do we want to be like those people? Which characters change? Which do not? We talked about how Vivienne changes the most, and how that is reflected in the music (she sings the highest note in the show at the point of

change). The offending girls were in tears by the end of our group conversation. Boys were speaking out about being respectful of others. It was a satisfying moment of growth for everyone in the room.

This example illustrates the link between real-life experiences and the art being presented on-stage. For young people a musical theatre experience is an opportunity to develop artistic practice while building a stronger community. Likewise, Miller understands the complex art form of musical theatre. Through consideration of the musical score as text, Miller assists students in understanding how character development and plot are constructed through song. In the above example, Miller connects the form of musical theatre with how it functions to tell the story in this moment of the musical. Deep analysis of the art form highlights the integrated structure of musical theatre discussed earlier in the chapter.

The Broadway Jr. program gives schools the tools to produce a musical regardless of students' individual needs. P94M from District 75 in New York City is a city-wide district for students with special needs. Broadway Jr. is a program that fits their context. Director/educator Tessa Derfner noted of the Broadway Jr. program, "The project was an exact fit with their philosophy of special needs" (Shookhoff 16). She explains that musical theatre is a way for her to provide learning opportunities that engage certain learners who would not otherwise be involved. At her school, the Broadway Jr. program also offers a long-term project that can be spread out over the course of the school year and will then culminate in a performance. This school uses their annual Broadway Jr. show as a teaching tool for academic connections. For example, the directors discuss using *Annie Jr.* to study the Great Depression and *Honk Jr.* as a way to open dialogue

with their students about waterfowl and literary versions of the same story (Shookhoff 27). The school measures the impact of the program by social-emotional growth over knowledge and skills within the art form or performance attendance. This example displays the flexibility Broadway Jr. provides to meet the needs of schools that may not fall under traditional performing arts programs.

Chapter Five

“And I know things now, many valuable things, that I hadn’t known before.”

- *Into the Woods*, Stephen Sondheim

Critical reflection helps us consider what is gained or lost in a creative process. Additionally, reflection allows individuals to share their understandings of an experience and have those experiences acknowledged and validated. In order to consider the value of the Broadway Jr. program my research included an opportunity for the target demographic of middle school students and educators/directors to reflect on their experiences, identifying valuable things that they hadn’t known before.

In this chapter I analyze interviews conducted with various stakeholders in the Broadway Jr. program, primarily focusing on interviews with students and educators. The questionnaires asked participants to discuss and evaluate their experience with the Broadway Jr. program. Collectively, these surveys point to interest in Broadway Jr. musicals because of their commercial appeal, the opportunities that the Broadway Jr. program provide to young people, and access to musical theatre for schools. Despite the fact that some of the responses address challenges with the material itself, overwhelmingly the Broadway Jr. shows were looked at as a positive educational theatre model.

To investigate the experience of performing in or working on a Broadway musical adapted for youth performers, I surveyed individuals who were involved in a Broadway Jr. production during middle school. In order to assess the value of the Broadway Jr.

program, I considered the role of reflection when selecting the age of the individuals to survey. Reflection serves as an opportunity for people to make sense of and share their experience. A theory of reflection put forth by educational theorists David Boud, Rosemary Keogh, and David Walker suggests, “The outcomes of reflection may include a new way of doing something, the clarification of an issue, the development of a skill, or the resolution of a problem” (34). Thus, reflection serves as a critical tool in my research. For this reason, I chose to survey individuals who range in age, from fourteen to twenty-nine. Casting a wide net allowed me the opportunity to hear from individuals involved in Broadway Jr. musicals over the twenty-year history of the program and to gather perspectives from individuals that have a variety of distance from the experience on which they are reflecting. The individuals surveyed were from different locations across the United States. The questionnaire did not ask the participants to share their name. Within this chapter I identify any individual who reflected on their experience as a middle school Broadway Jr. participant as a “student,” no matter their age at the time of the survey. See Appendix B for the list of questions asked to students about their experience in a Broadway Jr. show.

To investigate the role of the Broadway Jr. program in schools and within theatres, I surveyed educators and directors who have produced Broadway Jr. musicals with young people. The individuals surveyed range in experience with directing and/or musical theatre and had a variety of experience with the Broadway Jr. program itself. In addition, the educators and directors represented diverse educational settings from across the nation, each school and community unique in their needs, access to theatre, and use of

the Broadway Jr. program. Through surveys I asked open-ended questions that allowed the participants to participate in critical reflection. This reflective process allowed participants to consider their own experience in producing a Broadway Jr. show, while considering the larger impact that the Broadway Jr. program has had on their own teaching/directing practice and educational theatre program. Critical reflection serves to give participants an opportunity to share their experience and also evaluate and assess the Broadway Jr. program as an educational theatre model and teaching tool. In their book *The Reflexive Teaching Artist*, theatre scholars and practitioners Kathryn Dawson and Daniel A. Kelin discuss the role of critical reflection and engagement in a reflexive process as a practitioner in the field of drama/theatre, writing:

We need plenty of reflective and enriching encounters with art both as practitioners *and* as viewers in order to develop connections with, understanding and appreciation of, and opinions about theatre and drama. We need opportunities to see, play, and do, as well as time to discuss, argue, theorize, respond, consider, analyze, and reassess. (36)

Within this chapter I identify any individual who reflected on their experience as a director of a Broadway Jr. production as “educator/director.” As explained in chapter one, I use the term “educator/director” to identify the dual role that fine arts educators play within secondary theatre education and recognize that these two roles are fluid in pedagogy and practice within the field of drama/theatre education. See Appendix C for a list of questions asked to educator/directors about their experience with the Broadway Jr. program.

In this chapter, I separately analyze the student and educator questionnaires. Throughout the chapter I draw connections between the survey responses and the larger

themes and theories I bring up in previous chapters. I conclude with a short analysis of the survey results, returning to key ideas of engagement, storytelling, and artistry.

STORY

Many of the students surveyed discussed story on multiple levels. Some students dialogued about the familiarity of story, which made them excited to perform in a Broadway Jr. show adapted from a full-length musical. A sixteen-year-old student from New London, New Hampshire, writes, “You get to sing some of the same songs as the original Broadway show and some of the same dialogue as well.” Across multiple student surveys, the idea of Broadway as a standard came up. When asked, “What excites you about a Broadway Jr. musical?” a twenty-year-old student from Dallas, Texas, writes, “The idea of performing [and] producing a script and music worthy of Broadway.” Broadway, in this way, holds a distinction for young people and shapes their evaluation of theatre. These comments highlight the power of a musical taken from Broadway and adapted for youth performers. Young people are engaged when they are performing the material adapted from the original production.

Other students mentioned popular stories in American culture that are also musicals. Students cited musicals such as *Annie* and *The Little Mermaid*. Familiarity of story in this way does not hinge upon knowing the full-length musical counterpart, but rather familiarity of the story from other sources. Disney Theatrical Group understands that their titles are commonly known within mass media and popular culture, which helps attract and sustain the interest of young people in onstage stories familiar from other mediums (Cerniglia and Mitchell). Beyond Disney titles, specific musicals such as

Cinderella and *The Wizard of Oz* interest young people due to the familiarity of the tale and the re-use of the same story.

Some students discussed the idea of familiarity as a positive or negative aspect of the Broadway Jr. program. In their surveys, students write that familiarity creates opportunity or becomes limiting. On the one hand, a twenty-year-old student from Dallas, Texas, argued that familiarity of story leads to creativity, noting, “Working on a show with a story that everyone knows builds creativity in acting, marketing, and directing—you must show them something they aren’t expecting.” On the other hand, a fourteen-year-old student from Johns Creek, Georgia, claims “there is a lot of pressure for those who have seen it done.” This young person identifies the larger issues that the field of theatre grapples with—the invention and re-invention of how the same story is told onstage. As members of a professional community, theatre artists value a replication of the original, such as *A Chorus Line*. Yet artists also find value in a new interpretation of an original text, as illustrated by notable shows that become re-imagined revivals on Broadway every year. Recent Broadway revivals that reimagine the same material in a new context include the 2015 revival of *Spring Awakening* the 2013 revival of *Pippin*. Overall, young people seem to be attracted to the familiarity of stories.

Another student discussed the process of adapting a story to fit a time limitation. This twenty-year-old student from Lexington, Kentucky, noted one drawback of Broadway Jr. musicals was “heavy editing of songs or scenes containing important themes or moments of character development simply because of time constraints.” This student’s response points to a challenge that iTheatrics and Disney Theatrics address as

they work to adapt the full-length Broadway pieces into shows for young performers. Many representatives of these theatre companies discuss the achievability of the length of a junior musical for young performers (Johnson, Cerniglia and Mitchell). However, analyzing adaptations from an artistic standpoint, the original writers of the full-length musical sign off that the Broadway Jr. version of the show can be published. Likewise, the companies adapting the musical work to build a clear story-arc and attempt to retain the original musical's sound and style.

CENSORSHIP

Though many students surveyed spoke to the benefits of the Broadway Jr. program, other students negatively perceive the translation of a story from the Broadway show to a Jr. show. Multiple students mentioned that their favorite moments had been cut or that the adapted version of the show did not meet a specific standard. Students used the phrases “dumbed down,” “watered down,” “simplified,” or “not the real thing.” While the companies that adapt the musicals for young performers discuss their role as editors to create a story appropriate for family audiences with clear dramatic structure and strong character development (Johnson), young people wrestle with the result of the adaption process. A nineteen-year-old student from Decatur, Illinois, explains, “In most junior shows insensitive things that might upset a family audience are cut. You end up with a skeleton of the show and usually it is missing the core of the show and the inner meaning.” Many students’ perspectives illustrate young people’s understanding of the original full-length Broadway show in comparison to the junior version. Familiarity with the original can create a sense of “less than” when pieces are adapted.

In addition, some students addressed issue of censorship as developing a negative rapport of the Broadway Jr. shows. A twenty-one-year-old student from Chicago, Illinois, writes that the Broadway Jr. shows have a “negative stigma associated with them for censoring necessary plots and cutting songs deemed inappropriate.” Multiple students surveyed agree with this opinion. Though, when asked about specifically Broadway Jr. musicals, many students referred to school editions of popular shows geared for high schools alongside Broadway Jr. musicals that are aimed at middle schools. For example, students referenced *Into the Woods Jr.* (middle school) along side *Avenue Q School Edition* (high school), which illustrates that young people are conflating the different types of adapted shows and their associated target audiences. This points to the fact that the term “junior” has come to mean any theatre piece adapted from the original Broadway production for various school-aged students to perform.

However, a nineteen-year-old student from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, mentioned that experience in youth adaptations of Broadway musicals allowed her an opportunity to reflect on the role of censorship in defining what is appropriate for a youth audience. They write:

I did enjoy my time working with the Broadway Jr. material, but as I’ve gotten older I’ve started to question why there are Broadway Jr. productions of certain shows when the original material is so mature....However, Broadway Jr. musicals did start my analysis in what is appropriate material for what younger aged students, so I think Broadway Jr. really did help to shape my early analysis of theatre.

This reflection suggests an understanding of a youth adaptation of a Broadway musical and raises concerns about the original show’s content, which was then adapted for youth

performers. This analysis again highlights the connection between understanding of the adaption and the original source material, but also invites analysis of the Broadway Jr. musicals by positioning the program as a model for arts education. This above quotation illustrates Broadway Jr. program's role in promoting artistic literacy and individual artistic development of young people. Not only do Broadway Jr. shows operate as a tool for young people to be involved in theatre, they also allow young people to consider how theatre is defined and identify what function it serves and who it is serving.

OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity and access are salient points brought up by both students surveyed and mission statements from companies involved in producing Broadway Jr. programs. In conversations with iTheatrics, Music Theatre International, and Disney Theatrical Group, all of the organizations explained why and how the Broadway Jr. shows provide opportunities to communities that might not otherwise have access. Numerous students discussed the role of Broadway Jr. as a provider of opportunity and accessibility to younger audiences. In the surveys students used words like “chance,” “experience,” and “involve” to explain the opportunity that the Broadway Jr. musical provides for young people to engage in musical theatre. Many of the students discussed the importance of exposure to the art form. An eighteen-year-old from New York City reflected on their involvement in a Broadway Jr. show and touched upon the need for access:

You really get a sense of what you like and don't like in shows, and kids really learn to love theatre through whatever subdivision or branch they learn from. Without the Jr. versions, I probably wouldn't love theatre as much as I do. Sure doing the full version would have been fun, but a smaller version that kids can take on is more ideal for middle and high schools. By getting a taste, you gain

appreciation for the craft, and you want to branch yourself out to experience the full [length version].

This student's reflection and analysis aligns with the goals of the junior musicals—provide exposure and serve as a stepping-stone for young people and producing organizations. Again, this student compares the junior version to its full-length counterpart, but identifies the youth adaptation as an achievable option for students in middle or high school. This reflection also highlights the role of exposure that the Broadway Jr. musical provides for young people in picturing the theatrical field as a possible, legitimate vocation.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

In the previous chapter I identified Broadway Jr. as an educational theatre tool, which can balance the role of product with process. In the surveys, students identified skills gained from participation in a Broadway Jr. musical. Many of the students explicitly referred to the skills involved in musical theatre, where as a few others mentioned the by-products of involvement in a process, such as social-emotional learning.

Students identified acting and singing skills—"stage presence," "memorization," "characterization," "ensemble skills," and "reading and singing music"—gained by being involved in a Broadway Jr. musical. Other students referred to the challenges of working on a script and subsequently developed skills like "filling in the gaps" and "looking for gold in the dirt." These responses point to the craft of storytelling, specifically learning how to translate words on the page into playable action for the stage.

Some students explained that the length of the Broadway Jr. musical supported in skill development within the art form. A nineteen-year-old student from Zionville, Indiana, wrote, “cut versions that a Broadway Jr. show allows more time for the performers to rehearse.” Other students mentioned the effect that a 60-minute adaptation had on application of skills gained. A sixteen-year-old student from Atlanta, Georgia, explains, “It has helped me be ready to tackle full-length musicals.” Similarly, a seventeen-year-old from New London, New Hampshire reflected that one skill they developed was “learning to be in a bigger, more complicated show.” All of these students identify the Broadway Jr. musical as a building block that will help them approach other theatrical material. In addition, the students factored in length of a Broadway Jr. musical as fostering rigorous discussion/interpretation of the piece during rehearsals. Rehearsal is a key component of learning about theatre through participation in the art form.

A few students brought up non-performance aspects of theatre. A nineteen-year-old from Carbondale, Illinois, explained:

I had little to no experience with any technical or production sides of theatre until I got to my senior year of high school and from what I have heard it is not an uncommon occurrence. Theatre involves so many more sides than just performance and school and community theatre tend to elevate the ‘cast’ above anyone else involved.

Although this student’s reflection points to their own experience, Broadway Jr. shows allow students to become involved in aspects of theatre besides acting. The opportunity to engage in these skills helps young people understand what goes into creating a production. Broadway Jr. fosters interest in non-performance areas such as design or technical theatre.

Though many students noted explicit skills in the art form, many others discussed the social-emotional skills developed through involvement in the process. Students named “responsibility,” “accountability,” “collaboration,” and “creativity” as key skills gained from Broadway Jr. experiences. One student wrote about the dual role that a musical allows students to take—stepping into an individual spotlight, while still remaining a part of the group. An eighteen-year-old from New York City noted, “feeling confident in my ability to play a role outside of the ensemble, but knowing how to blend and collaborate with a group.” This student’s understanding of the art form as a whole upholds the idea that theatre is a collaborative process. Theatre helps teach skills that connect to other academic areas or life skills.

The comparison between fine arts and athletics is brought up often when discussing the value of arts education in schools. Like athletics, the Broadway Jr. program gives students opportunities to learn skills through extra-curricular activities that are applicable to other areas of life. A twenty-year-old student from Kent, Ohio, reflected on her time spent doing Broadway Jr. shows as a young person. When asked what skills are critical for student participants in musical theatre to gain through a Broadway Jr. experience, she answers:

Regardless of whether a kid is thinking about musical theatre as a career choice, theatre is imperative to building important life skills, especially for kids who aren’t learning those same skills through team-building on athletic teams. Confidence, and the ability to perform in ANY capacity (public speaking, job interviewing, communicating with peers, etc.) are things that can change a kid’s life.

This student believes that a singular theatre experience can produce numerous life skills for young people, no matter their career later in life. This connects back to the role of the Broadway Jr. show as an educational theatre tool and correlates to the Lifelong Impact study by Laura McCammon, Johnny Saldaña, Angela Hines, and Matt Omasta.

COMMERCIAL AMERICAN MUSICAL THEATRE

In the same way students had interest in Broadway, educator/directors discussed commercial American musical theatre piquing the interest of their students. Numerous educator/directors noted that students and the school community are drawn to the popular canon of musical theatre. Chelsea Petty of Columbus Middle School explains, “It brings Broadway to their level allowing them to not only participate in classic, well-known plays at an early age, but to have an appreciation for them.” Many other educator/directors discuss the importance of known titles to interest students and build theatre programs within their community. Trudy Wheeler of Kentucky Country Day School writes, “The excitement around the ‘major’ musical concept has helped grow our program.” Lastly, some educator/directors surveyed pointed out that well-known shows bring in audience members. Matt Erickson of Rhodes Junior High School explains, “[Broadway Jr.] provides me the opportunity to do big name shows on a smaller scale. My attendance has gone up because people in the community know the shows and are more willing to come out to see those shows.” For educator/directors the recognition of a title not only interests students, but it also has been shown to help in building school theatre programs and audiences. The Broadway Jr. program as an educational theatre model engages students, schools, and communities through known titles and familiar

stories. This leverage assists educator/directors with building sustainable theatre programs. With the many challenges facing arts education in U.S. schools, the Broadway Jr. program provides theatre education programs for middle school students.

However, the surveys conducted with educator/directors brought up tensions regarding the name “Jr. musical.” Though the title holds the Broadway name, for some the “junior” attached to it seemed to make the piece “less than.” Michael Bobbitt of Adventure Theatre MTC explains, “Some of our older kids feel that the name ‘junior’ is beneath them or too-baby-ish.” Bobbitt’s experience compares to some of the students’ own experiences with the name “junior” in the title of the piece. A twenty-year-old student from Dallas, Texas, explains, “When people hear ‘junior’ they think it’s not the real thing or as good as the original.” Despite the stigma is associated with the title of the show, once young people are involved in the production process they may feel differently, regardless of the title. Educator/director Alexander Gonzalez of Doral Performing Arts & Entertainment Academy had a similar experience to Bobbitt’s, but explains how his students’ perspectives changed through involvement in the process of producing the junior musical. Gonzalez writes:

The real challenge that I have found is having is the ‘Jr.’ attached to the production. I am a high school teacher and at times the students feel as if doing a ‘Jr.’ shows is too easy. At first the kids were not thrilled when I announced we were doing *Seussical Jr.*, but as the rehearsals went on and we finally opened, the kids fell in love with the show. Some had done the full-length and admitted to liking the Jr. version better.

This story illustrates the ability of an artistic process to shift a preconceived notion about how the title of a piece correlates to the content. Broadway Jr. shows rely on the

educator/director maintaining a positive attitude around the junior title and shaping an engaging experience for the young people involved.

ADAPTATION OF MATERIAL

When analyzing the adaption, students focused on specific moments, songs, or scenes missing from a specific Broadway Jr. musical, whereas educator/directors analyzed the program as a whole for clarity of story and achievability of provided material. Some individuals explain that “the cuts are a little jumpy” or “integral moments of the story are missing.” However, many of the educator/directors discussed how the junior version of the show matches the age group for whom the material is intended. Michael Bobbitt of Adventure Theatre MTC explains that the Broadway Jr. program “allowed us to do great titles that are accessible to the skill set of students.” Some educator/directors addressed the challenge of musical theatre as an art form and believe that the junior musical materials provide a developmentally-appropriate challenge for a middle school students. Michael Klimzak of Westosha Central High School and STEPS Performing Arts Center explains, “In teaching performing arts, growth occurs when students are challenged. Broadway Jr. scripts provide this challenge, simplifying material only when absolutely necessary.” While some educators/directors struggle with the adapted material in comparison to the original source, many find the material suitable for the target demographic.

Educators/directors and some students positively perceived the 60-minute running time as they reflected on their experience on the Broadway Jr. musical. Many directors felt that the 60-minute running time allows a Broadway Jr. musical to feel manageable.

Bobbitt explains, “The length of the show allows us to produce work and have time to get it polished.” The ability to dive deep into a short amount of material proves more successful than covering the surface of longer material, which aligns with the goals of educational theatre as discussed in chapter four.

FINANCIAL ACCESSIBILITY

Financial accessibility remains one of the large barriers in arts programming and arts education in the U.S. The Broadway Jr. program attempts to remove this limitation on schools and overwhelmingly the educator/directors surveyed discussed financial accessibility of the Broadway Jr. program. Most of the individuals surveyed discussed the cost associated with licensing a Broadway Jr. musical as a positive attribute of the program. Educators/directors used the words “affordable,” “economical,” and “budget friendly” to describe the Broadway Jr. program. Schools with limited resources find that Broadway Jr. fits their financial needs while also allowing large numbers of students to be involved. Betsy Quinn from Haven Middle School states, “We have done various Broadway [Jr.] shows. They have provided hundreds of seventh and eighth grade students an opportunity to work on a musical. It allows access to Broadway musicals for schools with limited resources.” In comparing the cost of licensing a full-length musical to a Broadway Jr. musical, a school can save anywhere from hundreds to thousands of dollars. The Broadway Jr. program attempts to offer high quality products at affordable prices. Freddie Gershon states, “We try to make the materials as cost-effective as possible.... We’ve tried to keep the prices as modest as possible so that we leave no teacher, school or student behind, and sometimes just donate to very needy schools.” Currently,

numerous programs and initiatives run in partnership with iTheatrics, MTI, and/or Disney Theatrical Group assist low-income schools or school without arts programming to produce youth adaptations of Broadway musicals in their schools.

TEACHING TOOL

The large majority of educators/directors identified the Broadway Jr. program as a helpful teaching tool. Many of the individuals referenced the resources that come with the ShowKit. Some educator/directors noted their vast experience directing and working with middle school aged students, but explained that the provided resources still made their job easier. Numerous educator/directors mentioned the accompaniment tracks used for rehearsals and performance, scripts that students could write in during the rehearsal process and then keep afterwards, and the plethora of resources (e.g. director's guide, choreography DVD, media disc, Family Matters books, rehearsal accompaniment CD, Show Support online community, etc.) available with a licensing purchase to support schools.

The Broadway Jr. materials function as a teaching tool for both students and educator/directors. One of the most referenced materials by educator/directors was the Director's Guide. Chelsea Petty of Columbus Middle School writes, "I like the study guide that came with it to allow me to teach my students more about the play itself." Other educators referenced the high-quality materials provided directly to the students. Kaitlyn-Dawn Perham of Brentwood Middle School explains, "I appreciate the definitions given in the footnotes for the students. It helps them enhance their vocabulary." The materials produced to accompany a Broadway Jr. musical help

individuals understand the story and bring the show to life. The team adapting the full-length Broadway musical into the Jr. version oversees the pilot workshop with young people, creates the content to be included in the director's guide, and supervises the production of the accompanying material (Johnson). This allows the package of a Broadway Jr. musical to be cohesive while remaining specific to the needs of the individual show, thus yielding a quality product for schools.

In chapter three I briefly related the Broadway Jr. program to sports in order to explain the scaffold process that has been created between the junior musical and full-length musicals for young people. Educators/directors also explain how the junior musical serves as a tool to help create a transition for students into full-length musicals at the high school level. Gail Bartell of Orangewood Christian School adds, "It's a great tool for educators to use when working with the transition ... between middle school and high school." The notion that a Broadway Jr. show can help a school begin to build a program and transition young people into full-length musicals aligns with the mission of the Broadway Jr. musicals as explained by creator of the Broadway Jr. program Freddie Gershon in chapter three. Likewise, the junior musical contributes to the growth in involvement in high school theatre programs. William Myatt of Pleasant Valley High School notes, "students ... can't wait to get to the high school to join the theatre program." Though student involvement relies heavily on accessibility to the arts, the Broadway Jr. program aids by providing ways to build a larger district-wide theatre program. In MTI's catalogue youth adaptations can fit the span of K-12 education,

identifying the adapted youth musical as a new type of theatre within the licensing market.

ANALYSIS

These surveys not only highlight the viewpoints of students and educators/directors involved in the work, but also emphasize key tensions in educational theatre. The analyzed data raise questions around censorship, artistic authenticity in comparison to the original piece, and commercial American musical theatre.

I return to three essential components: engagement, storytelling, and artistry. During my research I found that access to musical theatre was one of the biggest factors limiting engagement with this specific art form. This arose in the surveys with students and educators, as well as with the creators of the Broadway Jr. program. The Broadway Jr. program supports schools in providing musical theatre experiences to young people. A familiar tale, a relatable story, or a Broadway title proved to entice and excite both educators/directors and students. The title of the musical and the Broadway name served as leverage to engage students in learning and build theatre programs within schools. While the quality of a Broadway Jr. adaption remains in conversation with the original full-length counterpart, the program as a whole offers multiple entry points for educators/directors to create a quality process for young people. The Broadway Jr. program serves to introduce young people to musical theatre and produce high-quality musical theatre with middle school students. Through the process of producing a musical, young people learn artistic skills specific to the art form and gain other skills that are applicable outside of the musical theatre experience.

Chapter Six

“I wish.”

- *Into the Woods*, Stephen Sondheim

This thesis positions the junior musical as a form of educational theatre that can be studied through multiple lenses. Although I build upon theories to understand the Broadway Jr. program and draw specific conclusions about the junior musical, this research also invites scholars and practitioners to further investigate the junior musical. I hope that this thesis validates this form of musical theatre as a pedagogical approach to teaching and learning in United States schools and as a field we begin the conversation of how the Broadway Jr. program can serve students and educators/directors in diverse communities. I invite scholars to question, analyze, and wrestle with the conclusions and tensions I express within this document in order to move the conversation forward.

This thesis investigates the question: *What is the value of Broadway adaptations created for youth performers?* In this document I argue that musical theatre is a significant aspect of popular culture in the twenty-first century and position the Broadway Jr. program and other adaptations of full-length Broadway shows for young performers as a new type of theatre in the educational market. In comparison to original musicals specifically written for young people, these adapted Broadway musicals excite and engage a youth audience. I argue that musical theatre is a complex art form that has the potential to provide unique learning opportunities to young people. This thesis examines the discrepancies between interest in the art form and access to theatre

education in U.S. schools. Survey respondents reveal the wide range of opinions on junior musicals, specifically analyzing the Broadway Jr. program. Lastly, this thesis aims to celebrate the history of the Broadway Jr. musical while critically analyzing the junior musical in order to identify its challenges and strengths.

In this chapter I focus on new understandings of the Broadway Jr. program as discovered through the research and consider the value of the Broadway Jr. program. Then, I acknowledge the limitations and challenges of this study and identify the need for future research in specific areas. I end the chapter by applying the outcomes and findings to the larger fields of educational theatre and musical theatre.

OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSIONS

Overall, this research identifies the changing landscape of drama/theatre education, justifies the need for high-quality shows that recognize young people as artistic creators, and considers the interest of young people in arts programming.

In a time where there is a lack of theatre education in schools and educators/directors do not always feel prepared to produce musical theatre productions, the Broadway Jr. program provides an opportunity to fill this void. As noted in the data analysis in chapter five, numerous educators discussed the high quality resources provided in the Broadway Jr. ShowKit. As a result, educators with varying degrees of experience are able to develop theatre programs in their schools.

In addition, the junior musical serves as an art-making process that young people engage in collaboratively. Through the arts young people are afforded the ability to develop specific dispositions or habits that can transfer to other areas of learning outside

the arts. As discussed in chapter four with the Lifelong Impact study, theatre education can affect multiple areas of learning beyond development of discipline specific skills. Researchers from Harvard's School of Education Project Zero identified, classified, and named artistic habits, or dispositions, that result from participation in an artistic process. The researchers developed a framework of eight Habits of Mind artists' use when involved in an art-making process: Develop Craft, Engage and Persist, Envision, Express, Observe, Reflect, Stretch and Explore, and Understand Art Worlds (7). Together, the theories presented by The Lifelong Impact study, Jessica Hoffmann Davis, and Harvard's School of Education Project Zero suggest the need for quality arts programs for all young people in U.S. schools. I believe that the Broadway Jr. program serves as a way for schools to invite young people to participate in an art-making process, no matter their career interests. Engagement in an artistic process emphasizes the twenty-first century learning skills of collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking.

This research also identifies how educational theatre practices are different from professional theatre practices. In educational theatre certain considerations are made regarding the individual students involved in the production and the school's community. A common thread through all of my interviews and conversations with Music Theatre International, Disney Theatrical Group, and iTheatrics is that they are unable to predict which shows will resonate with or be successful in various communities. Each community is different and each musical offers a different platform for engagement—either through story or staging. Likewise, the pedagogical tools used to teach musical theatre to young people and the definition of success in educational theatre remains

different than in professional theatre. The Broadway Jr. program offers flexibility to schools, allowing them to fit the show to their educational needs. Connecting back to the continuum of process and product discussed in chapter four, the Broadway Jr. program can serve a variety of communities with their catalogue of titles.

Lastly, this research points to young people's interest in engaging in the material and musicals that they consume in through mass media and popular culture. For these reasons, specific commercial American musical titles attract specific youth. As discussed in chapter one, Tepper identifies this as the "platinum age of theatre." The Broadway Jr. program hinges on familiar titles and stories that interest young people and adults (i.e., educators, directors, families, and audience members). This thesis considers young people's exposure to musical theatre as a factor in arts programming within K-12 educational settings.

LIMITATIONS

This thesis does not follow a specific community involved in a Broadway Jr. program in order to understand the value of the junior musical on a specific population or within a specific setting. Instead, the research surveyed a small number of individuals involved in the work throughout the nation. Of the interviews with students, educators, and directors conducted that appear on these pages, many more stories are not included. In an interview with Disney Theatrical Group's Dramaturg and Literary Manager, Ken Cerniglia, and Lisa Mitchell, Senior Manager of Education and Outreach, they shared a brief story about the pilot for *Aladdin Jr.* in a dual-language school in Texas. They explain the positive impact that they felt the program had on the community and families

by offering stories in a language that directly connected to the students' lives. A Broadway Junior show's impact on a specific community has begun to be documented through *Spectrum of Hope* and *Children Will Listen: When Kids and the Arts Come Together*, however more research needs to be done on how the art form of musical theatre and the role of performance functions to support various specific communities and populations with diverse needs. This research will assist in understanding how musical theatre supports a learning process to teaching non-artistic skills in an educational setting. Over time, such research will strengthen pedagogies of musical theatre in a K-12 context.

This study focused on titles within the Broadway Junior Collection that have full-length musical counterparts. A small number of titles within the Broadway Junior Collection are original musicals, such as *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley Jr.*, *Dear Edwina Jr.*, and the *Magic Tree House Jr.* musicals. Jon Prignano, Senior Operations Officer at MTI, explains that titles without a full-length counterpart also do well in comparison to the Broadway Jr. shows that are adapted from a full-length musical. However, he did state that national awareness of a show, like a movie or national tour, piques interest in Broadway titles that have a Jr. counterpart (Prignano). This fact is congruent with the research presented in chapter three. Overall, Prignano explains that licensing is about “what is available and what makes sense with a community” (Prignano). Likewise, this study looks at the development of the junior musical and specifically analyzes the value of the Broadway Jr. program licensed by MTI. These musicals have a specific target audience of middle school students. As

discussed in chapter three, adapted musicals for youth performers have various target audiences, ranging from elementary to high school students.

Although this thesis considers the role of access to musical theatre for youth, it neglects to look at the physical, social, emotional, artistic, and academic developmental needs of students in comparison to target age range of the junior musical. For example, further research should look at how the Broadway Jr. musical specifically addresses the needs of a middle school student, how school editions meet the needs of high school students, etc. Likewise, collaboration is a key element of the process in any theatre production, including the junior musical. This research also fails to look at peer-to-peer relationships and student-educator/student-mentor relationships as a tool for engagement or development of craft. Lastly, this research does not explicitly track individual students as they move from a Broadway Jr. musical into a full-length musical. Further research should assess the knowledge, skills, and understandings that a junior musical gives to a young person and identify how the learning transfers into a full-length musical production process or advanced studies in musical theatre.

TENSIONS

Within this thesis I consider the Broadway Jr. musical as musical theatre pedagogy. The Broadway Jr. musical is one giant kit that includes supporting materials to accompany the show. Thus, these resources are part of the curriculum offered to educator/directors. Though this model was pioneered by MTI, other licensing companies have replicated the model by providing similar resources with their junior musicals. Most of the educator/directors surveyed discussed the role of the Broadway Jr. ShowKit in

assisting them to direct and produce the Broadway Jr. musical. This raises the question about the reliance on the ShowKit for educator/directors. I wonder, does the ShowKit provide directors untrained in musical theatre the tools to direct a full-length musical without other support? I believe this tension points to the complexity of musical theatre and training of drama/theatre educations that go through undergraduate pre-service education programs. Though many pre-service theatre educators are trained in pedagogical approaches, they may not be trained in a specific art form that they end up teaching or directing in schools.

Another specific topic that came up in all of the interviews, conversations, and surveys with educator/directors was the notion of “classics.” A classic often refers to an American musical from the Golden Age of Broadway that has remained popular over the years. These musicals appear as titles on Educational Theatre Association’s annual Play Survey year after year, like *Guys & Dolls* and *Oklahoma!* The educators/directors surveyed discuss the role of the junior musical to provide a way to introduce young people to “classics.” In my experience and within this research, the term “classic” has become synonymous with identifying a musical with “appropriate content for youth.” Specific Broadway shows are adopted into contemporary culture and not viewed as problematic in mainstream America. I believe educators find these shows to be safe with audiences due to familiarity, but also allow the popularity of a piece and the distance of decades from the original Broadway production eliminate critical analysis of the work. Unintentionally, educators may value specific musicals due to their own experiences or uphold specific traditions instead of analyzing a show on the same criteria for selection,

no matter if the musical is a “classic” or a contemporary piece. Within this thesis I identified the tension between content and censorship that exists between youth that are interested in newer commercial titles and adults that approve of the classics because of audience familiarity.

Another tension this research brings up is that Broadway serves as a standard within American culture, which diminishes other forms of theatre used within a K-12 educational theatre setting. Despite the fact that this standard is well deserved, there are limitations to what can be recreated outside of a commercial market. Additionally, professional theatre experiences exist outside of the commercial New York City market, but are rarely recognized in mainstream popular culture. The name “Broadway” attracts educators, directors, and students, but also limits the scope of what is available in musical theatre. Understanding and knowing only what is popular remains a tension in both musical theatre and educational theatre as a whole. The larger field of musical theatre acknowledges quality titles that have not appeared on a Broadway stage, but likely young people across the U.S. have limited exposure to these pieces. Likewise, the field of drama/theatre education recognizes that there are other pedagogies that engage young people, such as devised theatre and process drama. I also recognize that not all individuals, students, or educators are interested in the performance style of musical theatre. However, as discussed in chapter one, some educators focus exclusively on the production of shows from Broadway (Lazarus 31) and do not explore the broad pedagogies offered by the field of drama/theatre education and styles of theatre that exist in American and international theatre.

This thesis examines the inherent challenges in adapting a full-length Broadway musical into a youth musical. An adaptation inherently implies an act of interpretation (Gordon and Jubin 6). In the case of the Broadway Jr. musical, a theatre company, such as Disney Theatrical Group or iTheatrics, takes a full-length musical and adapts the original into a piece for young performers. The company considers both the abilities of youth and how to retain the original story, style, and sound of the piece. In order to ensure that the product is accessible to young people, the process includes testing the material with the target age group in a workshop setting. In addition, the adaptation process includes obtaining approval of the cuts from the original authors.

However, some theatre educators and scholars view the junior musical as a deficit model, compared to an asset model. When the junior musical is licensed, a successful adaptation may always be compared to the original stage musical even if the adaptation fulfills the mission of the theatre company charged with adapting the full-length Broadway musical into a piece for youth performers. In their article “‘Telling the Tale’: Adaptation as Interpretation,” musical theatre scholars Robert Gordon and Olaf Jubin explain that adaptations will always be compared to the original source (6). Though a comparison between the junior musical and its full-length counterpart is expected, a focus on what an adaptation for youth performers lacks often overshadows what the junior musical is capable of doing for a specific community or population of students.

A tension also exists between imitation and expression. In chapter two I discussed the role of the musical as a form of expression for young people in identity formation. Likewise, in chapter five I discussed the role of creative expression as a means to focus

on process in a Broadway Jr. musical, which deviates from copying the original Broadway production. However, in surveys young people address the anxiety around replicating the original Broadway show when performing the junior version of the musical. This tension between imitation and expression exists in the Broadway Jr. program. I believe the Broadway Jr. musical fosters creative expression. Each show can be unique to the make-up of the young people participating in the art-making process. Though imitation is a specific skill that some directors and young people may value, I argue that the educational value within the Broadway Jr. program lies in creative expression.

Another tension this research uncovered is the embodiment and retelling of specific stories onstage. Within this thesis I consider educational theatre as a space and place where identity markers (e.g., age, race, and gender) provide a new lens to tell the same story. If Broadway defines traditional casting, educational theatre exercises non-traditional casting when decisions made around bodies onstage move beyond what was created on Broadway. This opportunity creates not only access for young people to explore specific stories, but also allows rich learning opportunities to take place as young people wrestle with the content within the material in order to portray a character. For example, the *Hairspray Jr.* Director's Guide explains that the use of blackface is not permitted under production contract, but suggests that the youth version of the musical is performable by any community (MTI, "Hairspray Jr. Director's Guide"). The *Hairspray Jr.* Director's Guide includes a letter explaining to an audience why blackface cannot be used and explains how the show can still be done with any group of young people:

If the production ... features folks whose skin color doesn't match the characters (not unlike how Edna has been traditionally played by a man), we ask that you use the timeless theatrical concept of 'suspension of disbelief' and allow yourself to witness the story and not the racial background (or gender) of the actors. (MTI, "Hairspray Jr. Director's Guide")

This letter points to how the junior musical endorses casting across identity markers and illustrates how educational theatre can transform a musical into a new incarnation of the same Broadway story. Likewise, this letter also considers what traditions a Broadway production has set with the musical and what pieces of the musical the authors agree are malleable within an educational context.

There are inherent tensions around representation on stage and certain understandings about what is deemed appropriate and inappropriate within a specific community. Gordon and Jubin discuss the role of cultural appropriation within adaptations. In the same article they explain that "each act of adaptation involves a new cultural appropriation of the original text, and old texts are kept alive in the contemporary cultural imaginary through these very acts of appropriation" (6). This thesis points out how stories created about one specific culture or a character played by one specific body onstage in the original Broadway production can change when moved into an educational setting with the adapted junior version of the same musical. While I believe this is a positive attribute of the junior musicals, educator/directors need to be aware of representation when choosing titles for youth to perform. I argue that the goal of educational theatre is to not encourage cultural appropriation, but understand the flexibility in casting when the story lends itself to looking at the piece through a different lens. In selecting an appropriate junior musical for their school, it is the

educator's/director's responsibility to serve as an informed member of their community and advocate for why a specific Broadway Jr. musical is the right fit for their context.

Likewise, as Gordon and Jubin's quote points out, adaptations keep specific texts alive. Some scholars argue that many of the titles schools are producing perpetuate specific stereotypes and are sexist, racists, misogynistic, or heteronormative. The junior musical serves to introduce young people to specific titles within the musical theatre canon. As the adapting theatre companies identify full-length musicals that best work for a youth theatre model, specific titles emerge to be adapted into junior versions. Due to the junior musical's limited catalogue of titles, a recycling of already known full-length Broadway titles begins to happen in the junior theatre market. This recycling provides the opportunity for specific musicals to reach a larger demographic, thus keeping certain texts alive. This also means that other texts are left out. While the junior musical canon can only become diversified if Broadway titles meet specific criteria, the titles presented within the junior musical catalogue beg communities to find entry points into other stories that may seem irrelevant or dated.

MOVING FORWARD

This thesis charts the beginning of youth adaptations of Broadway musicals for young performers. The list of popular Broadway shows that will be adapted for youth performers continues to grow. Although the intersections and tensions explored within this thesis remain, I believe that the junior musicals assist in furthering theatre education in the U.S. The junior musical helps grant schools opportunities for young people to access the arts and helps prepare students to engage in full-length musicals in the future.

Broadway Jr. musicals provide an educational theatre model that is flexible and responsive to the needs of the school and community it serves. Musical theatre as an art form and storytelling device will continue to grow as students are exposed to quality titles through junior musicals, thus creating musical theatre appreciators and theatre-makers. The Broadway Jr. musical provides a critical lens through which we can better understand how commercial American musical theatre and education coexist. The junior musical pushes the field to explore further pedagogies of musical theatre and consider the junior musical as an educational tool for both students and educators/directors.

Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Approval



OFFICE OF RESEARCH SUPPORT

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

P.O. Box 7426, Austin, Texas 78713 · Mail Code A3200
(512) 471-8871 · FAX (512) 471-8873

FWA # 00002030

Date: 02/11/16

PI: Joshua R Streeter

Dept: Theatre and Dance

Title: Broadway Junior: Musical Theatre for Young Performers

RE: Non-Human Subjects Research Determination

Dear Joshua R Streeter:

The Office of Research Support (ORS) reviewed the above protocol submission request and determined it did not meet the criteria for human subjects research as defined in the Common Rule (45 CFR 46) or FDA Regulations (21 CFR 56). IRB review and oversight is not required because the activities involve:

- No human interactions
- Classroom activities used to teach methodology and technique
- Program evaluation where results are not generalized to other services or programs
- Secondary use of de-identified data set (no direct or links to identifiers)
- Obtaining information that is not about living individuals
- Obtaining information from publicly available sets
- Biographical research that is not generalizable beyond the individual
- Archival research using existing literature
- Other (Explain):

At this time you are free to begin your research as IRB approval is not necessary. You should retain this letter with the respective research documents as evidence that IRB review and oversight is not required.

If you have any questions contact the ORS by phone at (512) 471-8871 or via e-mail at orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of James P. Wilson in cursive.

James Wilson, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair

Appendix B: Student Questionnaire

What is your age?

What is your location?

When someone says Broadway, what do you think of?

What excites you about a Broadway Jr. musical?

What do you dislike about a Broadway Jr. musical?

What skill have you gained by being involved in a Broadway Jr. musical?

Appendix C: Educator/Director Questionnaire

Name

School or Theatre

What has your involvement been in a Broadway Jr. musical?

How has the Broadway Jr. show impacted your theatre program?

What are some challenges you have found in producing a Broadway Jr. musical?

What does the Broadway Jr. program provide to you as an educator/director?

What benefits do you see to the Broadway Jr. program overall?

Appendix D: Junior Musical Titles

Licensing Company	Educational Program Title	Target Age Range	Educational Titles in Each Company's Current Catalogue
Music Theatre International (MTI)	Broadway Junior	Middle School	<i>Annie Jr.</i> <i>Bugsy Malone Jr.</i> <i>Captain Louie Jr.</i> <i>Dear Edwina Jr.</i> <i>Disney's Aladdin Jr.</i> <i>Disney's Alice in Wonderland Jr.</i> <i>Disney's Beauty & the Beast Jr.</i> <i>Disney's High School Musical Jr.</i> <i>Disney's High School Musical 2 Jr.</i> <i>Disney's Mulan Jr.</i> <i>Disney's My Son Pinocchio Jr.</i> <i>Disney's Peter Pan Jr.</i> <i>Disney's The Lion King Jr.</i> <i>Disney's The Little Mermaid Jr.</i> <i>Doctor Doolittle Jr.</i> <i>Elf the Musical Jr.</i> <i>Fame Jr.</i> <i>Fiddler on the Roof Jr.</i> <i>Finian's Rainbow Jr.</i> <i>Godspell Jr.</i> <i>Guys & Dolls Jr.</i> <i>Hairspray Jr.</i> <i>Honk! Jr.</i> <i>Into the Woods Jr.</i> <i>Legally Blonde Jr.</i> <i>Magic Tree House: A Ghost Tale for Mr. Dickens Jr.</i> <i>Once on This Island Jr.</i> <i>Roald Dahl's James and the Giant Peach Jr.</i> <i>Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka Jr.</i> <i>Schoolhouse Rock Live! Jr.</i> <i>Seussical Jr.</i> <i>Shrek the Musical Jr.</i> <i>Singin' in the Rain Jr.</i> <i>The Music Man Jr.</i> <i>The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley Jr.</i> <i>The Phantom Tollbooth Jr.</i> <i>The Pirates of Penzance Jr.</i> <i>Thoroughly Modern Millie Jr.</i> <i>Xanadu Jr.</i>
	Kids	Elementary School	<i>A Year with Frog and Toad KIDS</i> <i>Annie KIDS</i> <i>Disney's 101 Dalmatians KIDS</i> <i>Disney's Aladdin KIDS</i> <i>Disney's Cinderella KIDS</i> <i>Disney's Sleeping Beauty KIDS</i> <i>Disney's The Aristocrats KIDS</i> <i>Disney's The Jungle Book KIDS</i> <i>Disney's The Lion King KIDS</i> <i>Disney's Winnie the Pooh KIDS</i> <i>Magic Tree House: Dinosaurs Before Dark KIDS</i> <i>The Music Man KIDS</i>
	School Editions	High School	<i>Avenue Q School Edition</i> <i>Elton John and Tim Rice's Aida School Edition</i> <i>Les Misérables School Edition</i> <i>Miss Saigon School Edition</i> <i>Ragtime School Edition</i> <i>Rent School Edition</i> <i>Sweeny Todd School Edition</i>

Licensing Company	Educational Program Title	Target Age Range	Educational Titles in Each Company's Current Catalogue
Rodgers & Hammerstein Theatre Library	Getting to Know (G2K)	Middle School	<i>Getting to Know Oklahoma!</i> <i>Getting to Know Once Upon a Mattress</i> <i>Getting to Know Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella</i> <i>Getting to Know State Fair</i> <i>Getting to Know The King and I</i> <i>Getting to Know The Sound of Music</i>
Tams-Witmark	Young Performers Edition	Elementary School/ Middle School	<i>Anything Goes Young Performers Edition</i> <i>Bye Bye Birdie Young Performers Edition</i> <i>Crazy for You Young Performers Edition</i> <i>The Wizard of Oz Young Performers Edition</i>
Theatrical Rights Worldwide	School Edition	High School	<i>Grease School Edition</i> <i>Monty Python's Spamalot School Edition</i> <i>Saturday Night Fever School Edition</i> <i>We Will Rock You School Edition</i>
	Young@Parts Editions	High School	<i>All Shook Up Young@Parts Edition</i> <i>Monty Python's Spamalot Young@Parts Edition</i>

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