

THE ECONOMIC CRUNCH AND THE
BROADWAY THEATRE, 1969 - 1975:
AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
PERSPECTIVE

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THE ECONOMIC CRUNCH AND THE BROADWAY THEATRE, 1969-1975:

AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

An Abstract

Presented to

the Graduate Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Thomas Wayne Goolsby

July, 1980

Abstract

The Broadway theatre of the United States is truly a unique and complex part of American life. It is not only a major industry and employing thousands, supporting other industries, and grossing millions of dollars each year, but is also an art form, reflecting changes and innovations in the life style of American society. Like any industry, the theatre is affected by the rise and fall of the economy, and, like any art form, there is a constant metamorphosis and continual change.

The theatre in the United States may well be compared to a mirror for the nation in that it reflects with considerable accuracy certain aspects of the country's recent economic and social history. A study of the Broadway financial problem in the recent past may offer certain guidelines for the nation as a whole, as well as for the theatre generally. A careful examination of the theatre in New York, from both economic and social perspectives, beginning with the 1969 theatre season and

ending in the so-called "bountiful" season of 1975, will present several interesting problems facing other industries and social institutions. The attempted solutions and experiments may easily serve as guidelines for Americans involved in other business and social institutions as well as art forms. Truly all three merge together nowhere else quite so well as in the theatre today. As theatre critic Brooks Atkinson said:

...the contemporary theatre is an abstract of the life of the times. Indeed, it is part of the same thing. What is wrong with America is wrong with the American theatre.¹

¹Brooks Atkinson and Albert Hirschfeld, The Lively Years: 1920-1973 (New York: Association Press, 1973), p. 308

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I am often asked where I think the... theatre is heading. Its one question I always try to dodge because I don't think it's heading anywhere until it's already been there. One night a show opens and suddenly there's a whole new concept. But it isn't the result of a trend; it's because one, two, three or more people sat down and sweated over an idea that somehow clicked and broke loose. It can be about anything and take off in any direction, and when it works, there's your present and your future.

-Richard Rodgers, 1975

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Thomas Wayne Goolsby entitled "The Economic Crunch and the Broadway Theatre, 1969-1975: An Economic and Social Perspective." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in history.


Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:


Second Committee Member


Third Committee Member

Accepted for the Council:

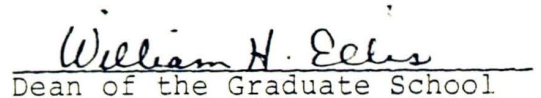

Dean of the Graduate School

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"All the world's a stage."

-William Shakespeare, As You Like It, 1623

"The theatre can't last much longer anyway, and in the meantime, it's a living. Yes, I think if we give the theatre another year or two, perhaps...."

-Joseph Kesselring, Arsenic and Old Lace, 1941

"The theatre! The theatre! What's happening to the theatre?:

-Irvin Berlin, White Christmas, 1954

"Welcome to the theatre! To the magic, to the fun!...Welcome to the dirty concrete hallways,/ Welcome to the friendly roaches, too,/ Welcome to the pinches from the stage-hands,/ It's the only quiet thing they do.../ Welcome to the flop/ You thought would run for years/ Welcome to the world/ Of tears and cheers and fears...."

-Betty Comden & Adolf Green, Applause, 1970

Chapter I

THE PROBLEMS

The Broadway theatre has long been a glittering source of entertainment, culture, and excitement in America. The theatre has served to help make New York City a major cultural center and to draw countless tourists and would-be stars to that city every year. However, in the last ten years, a tremendous economic crunch has hit the Broadway theatre, and, coupled with other factors, nearly served to cripple the big theatre industry.

This crunch in the Broadway economy first surfaced most obviously in the 1969-1970 theatre season.² In October of 1968, Actor's Equity reported that 838 of its members were working in Broadway shows. By October,

²One theatre season starts the day after the other ends on June 30, when Actor's Equity contracts expire. The serious business of play producing begins late in September. Therefore, one speaks of a theatre season in terms of two years, i.e., 1969-1970, the year the season begins and ends. New York Times, October 31, 1972.

1969, that figure had fallen to 583. In 1968, twenty-five plays and musicals were playing, four new plays were in preview, and only seven theatres were dark. In 1969, only sixteen plays (eight of which were musicals) were playing with only one play in preview, and with fifteen theatres dark.³ Brooks Atkinson reported that, during the first six months of the 1969-1970 season, there were only eleven productions with only two of them truly hits. In 1969, the month of November, November being normally one of the high points of any theatre season, saw ten of the thirty-six theatres on Broadway were dark. Variety reported that Broadway was then operating at 46.5 percent capacity.⁴

Only two plays in the 1969 season were playing to a full house--the holdover musical Hair and the romantic comedy Butterflies are Free. The only new musical still playing in December of 1969 was Jimmy, which had been totally panned by the critics. The decline amounted to a take for the fifty-two weeks of the 1969-1970 season

³"There's Slow Business in Show Business," Business Week, October 18, 1969, p.44.

⁴Brooks Atkinson, Broadway (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1974, p. 456.

of \$53.3 million as compared with \$57.7 million in 1968-1969, and the 1967-1968 record high of \$59 million.⁵

Considerable losses were suffered by many during the 1969-1970 theatre season.

Backers poured \$12.5 million into 32 new plays and musicals on Broadway, and into 58 smaller ones Off-Broadway. And, according to the New York attorney general's office, the investors came out on the short end by \$1.4 million.⁶

Various reasons have been suggested as contributing factors to the decline in the New York theatre district. Among these suggestions are: the change in the physical appearance of the theatre neighborhood, that is, removal of land marks and the invasion of pornography, bringing with it a rise in crime; a lack of appeal in the theatre today for young people; competition in the form of the numerous regional theatres and road companies in the nation; the emergence of two separate kinds and forms of theatre; and the high cost of producing a show on Broadway.

⁵Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., (ed.). The Best Plays of 1969-1970. (New York: Dodd, Meade, and Co., 1970), p. 5.

⁶Don Dunn, The Making of No, No, Nanette New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1972, p. 11.

In November, 1969, a New York Times poll of a number of prominent theatre people asked these questions:

1. Has Broadway had it?
2. What is responsible for its decline?
For the particularly poor outlook for this season?
3. Is there any hope of a comeback? What would it involve?⁷

On the question "Has Broadway had it?" director Alan Schneider⁸ stated:

Wouldn't the real question be: Has our society 'had' it? And aren't Broadway's growing problems only crazy-house mirror images of our society's growing malaise?

His answer, "Not yet. But...its just a matter of time."

Schneider blamed the problem on...the Broadway system itself. The general state of the damnation plus a thousand specific trouble, including higher costs and higher prices and low standards and bad tastes and boredom and rudeness and affluence and TV being worse and movies getting better and inertia and greed and critics who hate the theatre and people who hate critics (by listening to them regularly). But, ultimately, the system; a system concerned with prices but not

⁷New York Times November 23, 1969.

⁸Alan Schneider has directed such shows as Waiting for Godot, Endgame, Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolfe?, Tiny Alice, A Delicate Balance, and You Know I Can't Hear You When the Water's Running.

with values; with profit, not benefit; that recognizes only success or failure, not achievement; that plays a vicious game of Russian roulette with talents and lives and work; that always ends by corrupting its own eaters and eating its own corruption.

On the question of Broadway making a comeback, Schneider said:

Only if the Broaway theatre...stops trying to operate as a business when it is not a business, should not and cannot be strictly a business.... I have no easy answer except to say that we need a basic look at both the entire economics and the entire psychology of Broadway; we have to make it less 'commercial' and more social, and if that means subsidy and limited runs and other similar not so new ideas, the times they are, as we say, a-changing; and even Broadway has to change with them or die.

Responding to the Times' survey, actress Ruth Gordon stated that she felt Broadway was

...not entertaining enough. Never mind things cost too much, never mind people getting paid too high.... Well, if it is entertaining, it'll make more, that's for sure.

Producer Harold Prince⁹ denied any great decline.

⁹Prince had been the producer of such Broadway shows as The Pajama Game, Damn Yankees, West Side Story, Cabaret, and the 1980 Tony Winner Evita.

He stated:

...the theatre is in a period of change, and that's all there is to it.... Let's start out with the premise that change is a good thing in any art form, that a period of affluence is bad, that more good work is wrought from discomfort than comfort....¹⁰

Certainly a change in the physical appearance of the theatre neighborhood has played a major role in contributing to the theatre's decline. These physical changes began in the late sixties and the early seventies. Numerous pornographic stores and theatres began to appear. In 1965, the Allied Chemicals Corporation bought the Times building, a landmark in the Broadway neighborhood. They stripped off its Renaissance Florentine tower facade and replaced it with blank marble. In 1968, the Astor Hotel was torn down and replaced with an office building. For over fifty years, the Astor had served as a home for theatre people who "regarded the Astor's Hunt Room as their private luncheon club" and "who loitered in the barber shop in the basement, exchanging show business

¹⁰ New York Times, November 23, 1969.

gossip."¹¹

The tremendous amount of pornography and undesirable characters mixing into the theatre district, too, proved troublesome not only for the theatres themselves, but also for the other businesses associated with the theatres and dependent upon them, such as the restaurants and tour businesses. Paris Asta, president of the Crossroads Sight-Seeing Line, said:

The influx of immorality in Time Square has dried up business. It has down-graded the square to where family groups just don't want to come here any longer. We've noticed a tremendous drop in business--I don't mean a slight drop or a moderate--I mean a tremendous drop. We used to have to be open until ten or eleven o'clock at night,¹² Now after 5:30 P.M., forget it.

Truly, the once glittering, holiday mood of Broadway was gone. The theatres with first-run movies and live concerts were gone. In its place remained a dirty, unsafe, sleazy neighborhood with very few traces of its former affluence remaining.

¹¹Atkinson, Broadway, pp. 469-470.

¹²New York Times, July 17, 1972.

the show "saucy, stylish, (and) frolicsomenely funny."¹¹⁰

Even with these tried and proven revival successes, however, there is some room for innovation and change. For example, in the recent reincarnation of The Pajama Game, the show was cast bi-racially, so that in addition to union dues, miscegenation, also, became an issue. The 1975 revival of Gypsy allowed its producers certain internal changes and different values from the original Ethel Merman production. The show's creators, Arthur Laurents and Stephen Sondheim, made several changes. Laurents admitted that he would not have been interested in doing the show exactly as it had been done in the earlier production. He said, "You could get a stage manager and do it the way it was done before."¹¹¹ There seem, however, to be few changes and modifications in the current revival productions of West Side Story, Oklahoma!, Peter Pan, and The Music Man as well as in the soon to arrive My Fair Lady with Rex Harrison and Camelot with Richard Burton.

¹¹⁰"Pixyland," Time, May 12, 1980, p. 83.

¹¹¹pacheco, Ibid.

The district is a shabby, untidy neighborhood of souvenir shops, third-class hotels, and garish neon signs which blind by night and gather grime by day. It is an area of pokerino halls, penny arcades, record stores, hot dog stands, and pornographic bookshops which show dubious physical-culture magazines in the windows and advertise 'peep shows' for a quarter inside. It is an area of freak exhibits and taxi-dance halls, some of which have turned to topless entertainment and some of whose girls still affect the Rita Hayworth long hair look of a 1940 movie.

It is a district, too, of morose, heavily bewigged prostitutes who gather day or night in uncertain clusters along West 47th Street looking for a fast trick; and of street drifters who shuffle vaguely within the crowds, past movie theatres and office buildings, begging for handouts or staring dumbly out of alleyways.¹³

The Great White Way, the street to whom George M. Cohen had wished his regards to be given, had digressed to such a sorrid state that Cohen, like the many starry-eyed aspirants who flock to the famous street, would scarcely recognize it. The disgraceful condition of the street even affected the plots of the shows within the theatres. The opening dance sequence of the musical *Grease*

_____ continued in the same vein in the interview stating.

¹³Stuart W. Little and Authur Cantor, The Playmakers (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1970), pp. 13-14. *New York Times*, June 3, 1973

Seesaw depicts a man trying to make a telephone call from a street phone booth in New York City. Soon he is surrounded by prostitutes, and, eventually, he is mugged.¹⁴ So much has changed since November of 1950, when Sky Masterson and Sarah Brown stood on a New York street and sang of the street lamp's light filling the gutter with gold in Frank Loesser's Guys and Dolls.

Cast members of the various Broadway plays became quite verbal in regards to the poor moral conditions and obvious dangers and vices in the theatre neighborhood. Actress Joan Hackett reported:

I was propositioned by a girl who looked about seventeen and another actress was urinated on by a wino who sits at the stage entrance. Sometimes actresses are literally pulled into doorways. There are panhandlers who hit you if you turn them down.

In the same interview, actress Barbara Berrie said:

I don't carry money any more, but I carry a big umbrella...and I know karate.... But what about my children? I would like them to be able to come see me act.

Dancer-actress Ruby Keeler, returning to the New York stage in 1971, after an absence of over thirty years, continued in the same vein in the interview stating,

¹⁴New York Times, June 3, 1973.

"I hope the Mayor will do something about it. I don't just mean smile and have his picture taken with the actors, but really act."¹⁵

In a panel discussion on the program "Public Hearing" on WCBS-TV on July 16, 1972, devoted to the question of cleaning up the Times Square neighborhood, Jacquelin Robertson, New York City's director of Midtown Planning and Development, reported:

Over the next ten years the whole area's going to be redeveloped and, as it's redeveloping, the sleazier activities--the massage parlors, the porno shops, the prostitution hotels--are going to be driven out by economic forces.¹⁶

The legitimate businessmen in the theatre district wished to stress that their intentions were not so much to dictate the moral code for others, but simply to protect their own businesses and to encourage their customers. According to Vincent Sardi, Jr., owner of famed Sardi's Restaurant in the heart of the theatre district:

¹⁵New York Times, July 17, 1972.

¹⁶Ibid.

Its not so much a question of morals as it is a matter of sleazy characters hanging around all the time.... There's a certain class, a certain atmosphere, a certain quality to our street. We want to maintain our distinctive atmosphere.¹⁷

A certain lack of appeal to young people, too, has been presented as a possible cause of decline in theatre attendance and thereby a factor in the economic crunch. Playwright Arthur Kopit stated that the young people simply did not attend the live theatre as they did the movies. He explained:

When a guy takes a girl to the theatre, he's embarassed going Establishment. And for three dollars he can sit anywhere in a movie house. In the theatre he sits in the balcony and feels like a second-class citizen.¹⁸

Producer Harold Prince commented on the lack of appeal to the young people by stating:

We're not going to have a prosperous theatre until we have a more substantial younger audience and, by the way, I'm not ruling out such shows as No, No, Nanette or Sleuth. What I am saying is that Broadway has to make itself available to all ages. It must be like a supermarket providing a

¹⁷ New York Times, September 18, 1973.

¹⁸ "Bad Box Office on Broawdway," Newsweek, December 22, 1969, p. 92.

variety of merchandise and not just
a candy store.¹⁹

The subject of youth involvement and participation in the theatre was the subject of a January 4, 1971, meeting of Drama Desk, a group sponsored by the Association of New York Drama Critics, Drama Editors, and Drama Reporters. The group met with four young college-student panelists who had recently completed a three-month course with the National Theatre Institute, a project of the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theatre in Watertown, Connecticut. In the course of the meeting, the group agreed that the commercial theatre was failing to attract large number of young people as audience, but differed somewhat on the reasons. As the meeting progressed, several older panelists conceded that the average age of most Broadway theatre patrons was in the late forties and early fifties. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., a popular novelist and author of the play Happy Birthday, Wanda June, said that he disagreed with one speaker who stated that he felt that there was a shortage of good playwrights. Said Vonnegut:

¹⁹New York Times, May 7, 1972.

²⁰New York Times, January 5, 1971.

The problem is not a lack of playwrights, but a lack of ideas. What we need today is ideas. I'm totally out of them, and, as a teacher, I find this wonderful younger generation is totally out of them.

Christian Horn, a nineteen-year-old student at Trinity College and a member of the panel, expressed the feelings of his colleagues when he made the statement:

I think the lack of interest is because people are trying too hard to find what youth wants, trying to be relevant. God, that just makes me sick. I don't like being thought of as a market. We only want what other theatregoers want--plays of genuine human worth.²⁰

The Broadway theatre also is faced with considerable competition in the form of regional theatres around the nation and the emerging status of summer stock productions. Because of the tremendous amount of competition for the roles in the few plays being offered on Broadway, actors have turned their attention away from New York City and toward lesser cities across the nation. In May, 1970, there were forty-two resident theatres in the United States operating with professional artists of the Actor's Equity Association, not to mention the many dinner theatres and summer playhouses across the

²⁰ New York Times, January 5, 1971.

nation. According to Davey Marlin Jones, director of the Washington Theatre Company in Washington, D.C., "most of the excitement in the American theatre is now found outside New York. There is more original drama and more experimentation. It's the wave of the future."²¹

These theatres are found throughout the nation. Since 1961, five new, year-round, professional theatres have opened in Chicago. Drama is also thriving in Los Angeles, long the movie capital of the world. Dozens of theatres have sprung up on the west coast in the past few years, and are consequently encouraging migration of talent and participation to that area. Regional theatres have also invaded the South. The Academy Theatre of Atlanta, Georgia, for example, has developed into a full-time company of eight players and produces plays written by local authors.²² According to author Martin Gotfried, the best known, leading regional theatres in the nation today are the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C.; the Alley Theatre in Houston, Texas; Postwar American Stage (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1967), p. 164.

²¹"New Life in New Places for the American Theatre," U.S. News and World Report, May 4, 1970, p. 80.

²²Ibid., p. 81. November 4, 1973.

the Front Street Theatre in Memphis, Tennessee; and the Dallas Theatre Center in Dallas, Texas.²³

Producer Roger L. Stevens²⁴ of Washington, D.C., contrasted the Broadway neighborhood with Washington, lamenting the fact that:

...theatregoing is such an awful effort in New York. Train service is no good, parking is difficult, people are afraid of crime in the streets. In Washington, which I regard as having the best theatre audience in the country right now, we try to make it easy for theatregoers. The Kennedy Center has safe, on-site parking. We take credit card reservations by phone. Our theatres are new, and our prices are somewhat lower than in New York.²⁵

The status of summer stock, too, has greatly improved in the past decade. With touring companies, many of which are now headed by popular stars often appearing in a vehicle which may well have provided their popularity, local audiences are able to enjoy excellent theatre without having to make the expensive

²³Martin Gotfried, A Theatre Divided: The Postwar American Stage (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1967), p. 164.

²⁴Stevens successfully produced Lost in the Stars, Country Girl, and The Jockey Club Stakes in Washington, D.C.

²⁵New York Times, November 4, 1973.

pilgrimage to New York and experience the inherent difficulties there. According to actor-director-producer-playwright Harold J. Kennedy:²⁶

Summer stock today is better for the audiences, and the audiences demand more from it. There is no experimentation. It is a miniature replica of Broadway itself. The actors get lots of money and they play parts that they are shrewdly and properly cast for.²⁷

Concerning the status of summer stock and established performers, actress Myrna Loy stated:

At first, people told me I shouldn't do summer stock because it's a terrible status thing, when you have reached the pinnacle. You're supposed to sit around and wait for offers. But I wanted to play comedy on stage and summer stock allowed me to.²⁸

There are also, of course, considerable economic factors involved in the staging of summer stock productions. For example, the mounting of a regular proscenium play for

²⁶Kennedy has produced and directed summer stock productions of Bus Stop, Pygmalion, and Bell, Book, and Candle. He directed the 1969 Broadway revival of The Front Page. He wrote A Goose for the Gander and Three Curtains.

²⁷Harold J. Kennedy, No Pickle, No Performance (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1977), p. 209.

²⁸"The Paperback of Broadway," Newsweek, August 4, 1969, p. 78.

an opening on Broadway normally costs at least \$250,000, whereas a new play can be tested in summer stock for as little as \$10,000, representing a considerable savings to the backers and producers as well as allowing time for revisions.²⁹

The economic successes of touring a show have even caused some producers to question the wisdom of even bringing a show to New York. Economically and artistically, it is equally profitable to tour the country with a play. The 1973 production of Lorelei starring Carol Channing opened in Oklahoma City on February 26, 1973, and did not come to New York City and Broadway at the Palace Theatre until January 20, 1974. The show was capitalized at about \$500,000, and, although touring is expensive (it can often cost as much as \$30,000 to get a big show in and out of town), Lorelei grossed over \$90,000 a week during a three-week run in Washington, D.C., and nearly \$100,000 a week in a six-week run in San Francisco.

The producers of a revival of the musical Gypsy, with Angela Lansbury in the lead, had a twenty-four week

²⁹Ibid.

pre-Broadway tour in the United States in 1973, even though both the star and the show had been highly praised by critics in London.

Harry Rigby, the co-producer of the successful revival of No, No, Nanette, announced in 1973 that his revival of the 1927 musical Good News, to star Alice Faye and John Payne, would open in Boston on December 17, 1973, and tour until October of 1974 before arriving in New York. Said Rigby about his production of Irene, starring Debbie Reynolds, which also went through a long road tour, too, "the long road tour is a way to be Barnes-proof. I mean, if you're paid off when you come in, you don't have to worry so much about Clive Barnes' review."³⁰

Still another problem making survival difficult for many shows, and, therefore, endangering Broadway's survival involves the diverse styles and kinds of shows and the emergence of what seems to be virtually two or more smaller audiences instead of one great, supportive theatre following. In his work A Theatre Divided: The Postwar American Stage (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1967), author Martin Gotfried uses political terms to

³⁰New York Times, November 4, 1973.

describe this division of tastes and styles referring to the right as those type plays with which we have long been familiar and accepted and to the left as the new, experimental, more radical plays. Indeed,

...theatre style was fragmenting in the 1969-1970 season, partly because of this growing dissatisfaction with the old forms, and partly to satisfy the fragmenting taste of New York audiences. Time was when we all knew what we meant when we spoke of a 'good comedy' (Harvey or Private Lives), a 'good musical' (Oklahoma! or The Boy Friend) or even a 'good drama' (Arthur Miller/Tennessee Williams). We still enjoy such shows--many of them, in fact, appeared as popular revivals this season (1969-1970). But now there's a growing audience that wants something else/something more/something different, an audience that grew up in this age when television has been repeating, and exhausting, all the possible linear comic and dramatic situations. Thus, Neil Simon's Last of the Red-Hot Lovers with its situation comedy premise and Jules Feiffer's The White House Murder Case with its sick-joke fantasy are two fine theatre comedies, funny and meaningful, but in such completely different ways that there's no reason to insist that a devotee of one must necessarily enjoy the other (it is possible, but not inevitable).³¹

The same theatre commentator reported on the season in 1970-1971 with a similar comment. He said:

³¹Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1969-1970, pp. 8-9.

more and more obviously, it seemed, the New York theatre was dividing into two theatres like some unicellular creature overcome with an impulse to grow; not the Broadway/Off-Broadway separation, not the straight/musical, not even square/far out, but a comfortable/uncomfortable theatre division which crossed all other dividing lines; the comfortable theatre as we have always know it existing side-by-side with the uncomfortable theatre as it is bound to become, stretching our minds until it strains our imagination, stimulating our senses to the threshold of pain. ...audience tastes continued fragmenting (in 1970-1971) into a group of audiences instead of a great monolith. There was one audience for No, No, Nanette, another for Home, another for the manic-depressive Alice, and so forth.³²

In commenting on these emerging theatres, often in direct competition with each other, producer Harold Prince saw a major cause for such fragmenting as being the young people. Prince questioned how the theatre as a whole could survive this splintering effect. He stated:

What we're facing today is the fact that there are two audiences for the theatre and neither is substantial enough to make it prosper. There is the older audience and the younger one, and the older one simply has to give up the

³² Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., (ed.), The Best Plays of 1970-1971 (New York: Dodd, Meade, and Co., 1971), p. 8.

notion that it can be the arbiter of taste. The kids of today are not interested in dipping into nostalgia with their parents. And get rid of the idea that all kids want the absurd, the avant-garde, etc..... What they want is for someone to talk to them about their problems, about their times, about their lives. How can they be nostalgic³³ at eighteen and why should they be?

Bad publicity about New York City, too, had quite a detrimental effect upon the Broadway theatre. Rumors and stories of crimes in that city's streets appeared in every newspaper and magazine throughout the country, consequently discouraging tourists and local theatregoers alike.

The legitimate stage has done much to enhance the quality of New York life over eight or nine decades,...but it is now getting a bad name by association so much. Sensational bad news travels fast, and New York's crime-in-the-streets publicity is offered up daily not only to theatre audiences in the city and its suburbs, but also to those many ardent fans of New York theatre across the country who customarily³⁴ make an annual pilgrimage to Broadway.

All the above causes have greatly encumbered

³³New York Times, May 7, 1972.

³⁴Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1971-1972, p. 11.

the Broadway theatre both economically and socially just as several of them have equally affected other industries and activities in America. Without a doubt, however, the most important factor in the economic slump on Broadway remains the same: the high cost of production of a show. Just as production costs skyrocket in other industries, so do they in the theatre. According to a Variety estimate, the average production cost of a Broadway musical in 1972 had risen to \$534,000. For a straight play, the average was \$141,000, with no end in sight for the escalating production costs.³⁵

Tight money was and is the primary reason for any slump on Broadway, according to producer Robert Shelley, who, in 1970, was forced to postpone his proposed musical version of William Inge's successful 1955 straight play Bus Stop because he (Shelley) was unable to raise even \$80,000 toward the half-million dollar proposed costs. According to producer Robert Weiner, the musical version of Elmer Gantry was to be done in 1970 for \$400,000, a cut of \$250,000 less than what a producer would normally have asked for such an undertaking. Even

³⁵Ibid., p. 6.

then, the plans were dropped because of economic reasons.³⁶

Although money was difficult to come by, it was not as unattainable for established producers as for newcomers to the profession. Producers without a string of hits to their credit found themselves having serious problems obtaining backers. Money for serious drama, in 1969, was virtually nonexistent because of the recent unsuccessful nature of current dramas, but it was also difficult to get money even for a major musical. Backers had no desire to put up the three quarters of a million dollars for a Broadway musical that would take a long time to pay off when they could "put money into a low budget picture like The Groupies which cost \$150,000 and go for quick profits."³⁷

Not all producers, of course, had such troubles. For example, Hillary Elkins had no trouble raising \$850,000 for a musical based on the novel, The Rothschilds, but his success stemmed from the fact that, in 1968, he had produced the big hit Oh! Calcutta! which cost about \$100,000 to open off-Broadway and then moved to Broadway

³⁶Atkinson, Broadway, p. 44.

³⁷Ibid., p. 45.

where it grossed about \$41,000 a week.³⁸ However, Elkins was not so fortunate with the stage version of the The Rothschilds. It was still in the red for \$650,000 of its \$850,000 cost when it closed after a run of 507 performances in 1972.³⁹

Producer David Merrick was one of the fortunate producers able to secure funds.⁴⁰ In 1970, he said:

It's easy for me to get money. But the costs are appallingly high now. A musical costs \$750,000 to \$800,000, and a straight play runs \$150,000 to \$200,000. That's a lot of money.

Three years later, Merrick's thoughts continued in the same vein. At that time, he commented:

The tightening economics of Broadway are gradually leading to a reduction in the scale of musicals, which in recent years have been coming to town with the all but impossible task of recovering an investment of \$750,000 and more. Plays are more difficult to put on as costs go up.... I'm not having very much trouble at the moment because I haven't had a major flop

³⁸Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1971-1972, p. 7.

³⁹"What's Needed to Revive Broadway?" U.S. News and World Report, May 4, 1970, p. 83

⁴⁰Merrick has successfully produced such Broadway hits as Gypsy, Carnival, 110 in the Shade, Oliver! Becket, and Hello, Dolly.

recently, but give me a couple of musical flops and I'll have to scratch around, too....⁴¹

A few musicals, however, were fortunate enough to have the earmarks of success and not have to go to drastic extremes to secure financial backing. For example,

...some musicals appear to be such sure-fire hits that they readily attract important investors. CBS put up all the money for My Fair Lady. RCA backed How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying. Ampex was behind Purlie. More often than not, however, the producers must wearily conduct a series of 'backers' auditions'--miniature performances of the show--before invited groups of potential investors. At these events, the show's plot is outlined, some of the music is played and sung, and the producers diligently try to sound as enthusiastic and positive as they can.

Even these backers' auditions, however, require quite a bit of expense and capital. In fact,

...the backers' auditions may seem like the financial starting point of the production. But much that takes money has gone on before. In order to acquire a property, sign a star and director, print scripts, pay attorneys, and the like, the producers of a big Broadway musical may require some \$25,000 to \$50,000 in 'front money.'⁴²

⁴¹New York Times, June 1, 1973.

⁴²Dunn, pp. 79-80.

High operating expenses and small audiences plagued all producers, eventually even the big names. Harold Prince, despite his impressive string of successes, was not so successful in 1972. His production of Follies which starred veteran stars Alexis Smith and Yvonne de Carlo, though it ran for more than a year, lost \$650,000. The show Lenny, a drama with music based on the life and career of nightclub performer Lenny Bruce, ran for more than a year and lost \$136,000.⁴³ The 1969 drama Indians, by Arthur Kopit and starring Stacey Keach as Buffalo Bill, received rave reviews and enjoyed successful runs in both London and Washington, D.C., before it opened in New York. The play was grossing around \$40,000 per week, but needed at least \$43,000 to break even. It was forced to close. "Our operating expenses were too high," explained co-producer Lyn Austin, "We didn't get the theatre-party-type audience."⁴⁴

Plagued by the above-mentioned problems, a nearly crippled Broadway theatre, like many other industries, continued to limp along for several rather unsuccessful and inglorious years.

⁴³Atkinson, Broadway, p. 475.

⁴⁴"Bad Box Office.....", p. 42.

Chapter II

THE SEASONS, 1969-1974

An examination of the theatre seasons from 1969-1974 reveals little to cheer about, economically or artistically. For the most part, those years were a dry spell for Broadway with but a few interspersed oases in the form of economic and/or artistic successes and achievements. An examination of the seasons reveals hard times for both the business of Broadway play producing as well as for the theatre as an art. According to theatre-watchers:

...it was like this in 1969-1970: there was no cluster of excited shows until deep in April;...our most reliable playwrights seemed baffled, even paralyzed by the demands of the developing theatre form and kept their new works, if any, to themselves; instead of one great homogeneous appetite for theatre, there was a decided schism between the lacquered audiences at Applause and the soft, rapt, furry faces at Stomp; production costs continued toward the roof, at the same time that the audience buck was coming tough; and, last straw, the sound of the air compressor and jackhammer intruded

into the venerable theatre district, as office-builders continued to threaten the very physical existence of the Broadway⁴⁵ theatre as we've known it for decades.

The 1969-1970 season boasted twenty-one straight plays, fourteen musicals, eighteen revivals, three foreign plays in English, and eight foreign language productions. Production costs were quite high. According to a Variety estimate, production costs varied considerably from play to play: Coco, starring Katherine Hepburn, cost between \$850,000 and \$900,000; Cry for us All, which lasted only nine performances, cost \$750,000; and La Strada, which lasted only one performance, cost \$650,000. Among the net profit estimates published during the season were these: Hello, Dolly!, a profit of \$7,775,526 on an investment of \$350,000; Fiddler on the Roof, a profit of \$5,907,552 on an investment of \$400,000; The Boys in the Band, a profit of \$600,000 on an investment of \$20,000; and Man of La Mancha, a profit of \$4,600,000 on an investment of \$200,000. All of these shows were held over from previous seasons.

The hottest weekend musical tickets were highest

⁴⁵Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1969-1970, p. 3.

priced at fifteen dollars with the straight plays charging eight and a half dollars. Coco charged fifteen dollars for week nights as well. Coco, Applause, and Company, all musicals, pushed the matinee top price up one dollar from the year before, from eight dollars to nine dollars. However, one could still see Hair for four dollars, Fiddler on the Roof for two dollars and eighty cents, and Company for two dollars in the least expensive matinee seats.⁴⁶

The Broadway theatrical season of 1970-1971 brought to the stage fifteen revivals, fourteen straight plays, eleven musicals, four foreign language productions, and eight foreign plays in English as well as four specialities such as concerts. There was, however, in the 1970-1971 season, little to boast about economically. Like any season, it began, naturally, with optimism, but this proved to be but a false sense of security.

In April (1970), the New York Times was able to announce 'All Broadway Stages Occupied or Booked'...all thirty-odd Broadway theatres were full of shows in the waning weeks of the season. Unfortunately,...they weren't also full of

⁴⁶Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1969-1970, p. 6.

audiences. Only one show was selling out, Neil Simon's The Prisoner of Second Avenue.⁴⁷

The year 1970 was the date of one of the best hit revivals in recent years, that of the 1920's musical No, No, Nanette. However, this show was certainly more the exception economically than the rule for the 1970-1971 season.

In 1970-1971, when No, No, Nanette opened, it was in competition with eleven other musicals. Eight closed after running only a few days or weeks. Two lasted several months.... Only one other musical had a chance to go into the black ink column along with No, No, Nanette.⁴⁸

The 1971-1972 season brought nineteen plays, thirteen musicals, twelve revivals, two revues, one specialty, and nine foreign plays in English. Producer Alexander H. Cohen saw the 1971-1972 season as

...very encouraging.... Because the major writers who will be represented on Broadway...are Jerome Lawrence, Robert E. Lee, Arthur Miller, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Harold Pinter, Philip

⁴⁷Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1970-1971, p. 3.

⁴⁸Dunn, p. 11.

⁴⁹New York Times, October 1, 1971.

Roth, Peter Schaffer, Neil Simon, and Melvin Van Peebles. That's a fascinating array of talent. More impressive than has been the case in recent seasons.⁴⁹

Through no one would deny the talents and abilities of Cohen's impressive list of seasoned playwrights, the economic results were not nearly so impressive. Profits from Broadway productions fell during the 1971-1972 season, according to a report made by New York State Attorney General Louis J. Lefkowitz.

According to the report, ninety-seven Broadway productions brought in profits of only \$1,092,915 against profits of \$1,888,198 from the sixty-nine productions during the 1970-1971 season. Major profit-makers for the 1971-1972 season were: Hair which realized a profit of \$2,232,417 as of June; Applause, \$215,947; Butterflies Are Free, \$117,044; No, No, Nanette, \$381,881; 1776, \$861,748; and Sleuth, \$675,452.

The report continued,

...of the ninety-seven Broadway offerings registered with the Attorney General's Office, twenty-one productions, capitalized at \$6,105,000, were abandoned or withdrawn during the...season as compared with eleven, capitalized at \$2,515,000, during the 1970-1971 season.⁵⁰

⁴⁹New York Times, October 1, 1971.

⁵⁰New York Times, August 3, 1972.

The 1972-1973 season witnessed on Broadway sixteen plays, thirteen musicals, two revues, four foreign plays in English, and sixteen revivals. The season proved financially disastrous for many backers. The musicals Dude and Via Galactica and the straight plays Ambassador, Lysistrata, Tricks, and Shelter lost their backers a total of over three million dollars. Arthur Miller's The Creation of the World and Other Business lost \$250,000 on Broadway.⁵¹

The lasting power of many shows in the 1972-1973 season was quite short. As a matter of fact,

Status Quo Vadis...closed after only one performance \$235,000 in the red. In all, five shows closed in the 1973 season after only one performance; Status Quo Vadis; The Enemy is Dead, Let Me Hear You Smile by Leonora Thuna and Harry Cauley and starring Sandy Dennis; Jerome Kilty's Look Away (one of the season's three plays about Mary Todd Lincoln); Louis Del Grande's Forty-Two Seconds from Broadway; and the Sam Bobrick-Ron Clark comedy No Hard Feelings, starring Eddie Albert and Nanette Fabray.

The season also brought about

⁵¹Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., (ed.), The Best Plays of 1972-1973 (New York: Dodd, Meade, and Co., 1973), p. 7.

...Dude, which spent more than \$100,000 to remodel the Broadway Theatre to suit its unique form and personality...(it) folded to the tune of \$900,000; and Via Galactica, nicknamed 'daughter of Dude' because it had the same composer, Galt MacDermot, and suffered a similar fate, a \$900,000 loss after a miniscule run.⁵²

The New York State Attorney General, in a report made public on August 6, 1973, reported that major losses were, indeed, suffered in the theatre industry during the season. Attorney General Louis Lefkowitz reported that fourteen Broadway productions with "a capital of \$4,970,000" were abandoned or otherwise withdrawn before staging."⁵³ The New York Times reported in October, 1973, that there were, at that time, only eight Broadway productions held over from the previous season on Broadway. Each theatre would hold on the average about one thousand people. This meant that only eight thousand people could find accommodation each night in the commercial theatre in New York City, a figure representing one-tenth of one percent of New York City's population

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³New York Times, August 7, 1973.

of eight million people.⁵⁴

This season proved fatal for a number of shows that had been quite successful elsewhere. David Storey's successful drama The Changing Room had made a very successful American debut in New Haven, Connecticut, in March, 1973. It moved to Broadway soon after that, received excellent notices from the New York critics, but, by mid-August, 1973, after 191 performances, closed because of a lack of business, losing money for its backers.⁵⁵

Theatre critic Walter Kerr, writing for the New York Times Magazine, in 1973, noted that theatre-going had declined to the point where even reviews of a very positive nature were unable to guarantee capacity audiences for a play. Kerr cited for an example Neil Simon's comedy hit The Sunshine Boys, which seldom had a week that was completely sold out. Even the hit musicals of the season, A Little Night Music and Pippin, both of which had been able to pay off their backers,

⁵⁴New York Times, October 7, 1973.

⁵⁵New York Times, November 4, 1973.

failed to sell out completely week after week.⁵⁶

It was, however, in 1973, that some shows did begin to show a profit. In the 1973's Grease, a rock musical, showed a profit of \$404,000; The Prisoner of Second Avenue showed a profit of \$231,000; and Sleuth, a profit of \$784,000.⁵⁷

By mid-May, 1973, there seemed to be arising in the theatre a feeling of optimism, an instinct that some nadir had been passed, some corner turned, as Irene and A Streetcar Named Desire set new weekly gross records and brave new productions were being announced for 1974.⁵⁸

The 1973-1974 season on Broadway showed ten plays, nine musicals, one revue, seven specialties, eight foreign plays in English, and nineteen revivals. Profits for the season on Broadway were \$46.2 million, up from \$44.8 million the previous season.⁵⁹

The economic strain was felt not only by the

⁵⁶New York Times, November 4, 1973.

⁵⁷New York Times, August 7, 1973.

⁵⁸Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1972-1973, p. 6.

⁵⁹Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., (ed.), The Best Plays of 1973-1974 (New York: Dodd, Meade, and Co., 1974), p.11.

producers, but also by the theatre patrons in the form of rising prices of tickets to the plays. In the 1969-1970 season, Broadway's hottest weekend musical tickets were the highest priced at fifteen dollars. During the 1970-1971 season, tickets to the two playing Ibsen plays, Hedda Gabler and A Doll's House, were quoted at forty dollars a pair on the black market.⁶⁰ The highest ticket prices yet were reached in June of 1975, when a single ticket for the musical Chicago was priced at seventeen and a half dollars.⁶¹

The price of a ticket, high as it is, is only a small part of the enormous cost of theatre-going, which is now scaled at the level of the special occasion rather than of casual drop-in entertainment. It piles up all the extras that a special occasion demands: cocktails, dinner, taxis, dress, etc..⁶²

The problems theatre managers faced were perhaps best summarized by critic Rex Reed writing about the Tony Awards in the New York Sunday News in 1971. He said:

⁶⁰Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1969-1970, p. 6.

⁶¹Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., (ed.), The Best Plays of 1974-1975 (New York: Dodd, Meade, and Co., 1975), p. 5.

⁶²Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1971-1972, p. 11.

People stay home in front of their TV sets because its cheaper and safer, or they go to movies because even the worst movie in town is usually more interesting than nine out of ten Broadway plays.... You'll pay twelve dollars a seat to wear torturous clothes and suffer through something that will bore you to death for the same length of time you could have been home watching the Movie of the Week in your pajamas for nothing.⁶³

The situation was still further explained by critic Henry Hewes in commenting on why the 1972 production of Moonchildren, which had enjoyed a successful off-Broadway run, closed after only sixteen performances on Broadway. Hewes explained that the play lacked

...stars, music, plot intrigue, sensationalism, romantic theatricality, or sustained painless laughter. Thus it did not attract many of the wealthier theatre-goers. And the number of less affluent theatre-goers willing to support this kind of show on any given night is about the same as the number who attend a successful off-Broadway play or about half of what a Broadway show would need in order to break even.⁶⁴

Truly the theatre abounded not in successful,

⁶³Ibid., p. 12.

⁶⁴Henry Hewes, "Braving Broadway," Saturday Review, March 25, 1972, p. 27.

creative plays, but in problems that threatened its very survival. Theatre people, business leaders, critics, and political leaders alike became aware of the problems in this industry. Some type of solution was necessary and it seemed obvious to all that it would have to involve everyone, artists and industrialists alike, to seek out those solutions.

Chapter III

THE SOLUTIONS

Numerous plans were proposed to aid Broadway in its slump, and it is here that the Broadway theatre becomes an inspiration to other industries and arts. Many plans were suggested and tried; some were successful, other were not. Some plans were abandoned, some still are in practice today. The important thing, however, lies in the fact that many people were willing to work together for a common goal.

Quite a few attempts at helping the theatre survive were proposed. Among them were the encouraging of construction of new theatres; cleaning up the pornography in the area; the Theatre Development Fund's attempts to help new shows become established; the Ticketron System; experimentation within the shows; revivals of former hits; a limited gross arrangement; a change of curtain time; more matinee performances; and free parking.

The city of New York regards the theatre as a very valuable tourist attraction and, therefore, seeks to encourage its growth and strength. The city offers Broadway real estate promoters certain advantages if they include theatres in any newly constructed office buildings: they are permitted a bonus of twenty percent additional renting space. This practice gave rise to three new theatres between 1972 and 1973: the Uris on Fiftieth Street between Broadway and Eighth Avenue seating 1,885 patrons; the Minskoff, at One Astor Plaza, the site of the old Astor Hotel, with seating for 1,521 people; and the Circle in the Square - Joseph E. Levine Theatre in the basement of the Uris Office Building, seating 650 people.

None of these theatres, however, was successful immediately. The Circle faced bankruptcy in 1974, and a benefit was held for the theatre. Since the theatre management lacked funds to stage a production, they persuaded an English Company to return with a production of Scapino, based on a Moliere comedy. The show had previously played at Brooklyn's Academy of Music. Its return was a success for the Circle and temporarily solved the theatre's financial problems.

The Uris got off to a very bad start by opening with the previously mentioned flop Via Galactica which closed after seven performances and lost \$846,000 during its brief run. Several weeks later, the musical Seesaw opened at the Uris and enjoyed a fairly successful run, but had to move out soon because of a previous commitment. Next came Lerner and Lowe's Gigi, based on the successful movie with venerable veteran stars Alfred Drake and Agnes Moorehead.

The Minskoff was the luckiest of the three new theatres. It opened with a revival of the 1919 Musical Irene starring Debbie Reynolds. When she left the cast in 1974, she was replaced in the long-running show by Jane Powell.

According to Broadway critic Brooks Atkinson, however, something is missing from these theatres. He said:

...the Uris and the Minskoff are not theatres; they are theatre facilities.... Both theatres are located upstairs in immense office buildings.... Both theatres lack personality, the theatre-goer knows that he is not a guest but customer, not a participant but a visitor.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Atkinson, Broadway, pp. 470-475.

Critic Walter Kerr, in commenting on the new theatres, supported his colleague Atkinson. Kerr lamented the fact that

...not one has a marquee on Broadway...
they have entrances hidden in wind tunnels,
they have lobbies reached by escalators,
they are indoor houses. If you're going
to the Uris or the Minskoff, you'd better
know where they are. They raise no
beckoning finger to the Broadway sky.⁶⁶

The anger and frustration of theatre people as well as theatre patrons in regards to the bad moral conditions in the theatre district gave rise to considerable protest. Broadway producer Alexander H. Cohn, in December, 1972, charged that the City Council had abandoned the Times Square area to prostitution and threatened a theatre shut down on the last day of March, 1972, unless a bill was passed which would require the licensing of all the massage parlors in the area. Cohn did not reveal the extent of the threatened shut down, but, when pressed by reporters, stated that he spoke for "one hundred and fifty to two hundred 'creative people'-- actors and producers as well as janitors and porters--

⁶⁶New York Times, June 3, 1973.

who 'authorized me to speak for them.'"67

According to testimony by New York City Commissioner Bess Myerson of the Department of Consumer Affairs, the yellow pages telephone directory for New York City listed one hundred ninety-nine "massage parlors in the five borough, of which only twelve had state-licensed masseurs and masseuses."68

The protest continued, according to the New York Times, which reported in 1973,

Actor's Equity Association had joined the drive to improve the Times Square area by voicing opposition to massage parlors and other undesirable elements in the theatrical district.

The performer's union has formed a Times Square Committee, with Harriet Slaughter, the actress, as chairman, which will plan various publicity events designed to gain improved street lighting greater police surveillance and frequent trash collections in the area.69

The fight against the pornography industry and prostitution on the edge of the theatre district that was slowly creeping on to the Broadway district was thwarted

67 New York Times, December 5, 1972.

68 Ibid.

69 New York Times, October 31, 1972

somewhat in 1970 when efforts by a pornography circuit to acquire the Bijou, Ritz, and Little Theatres was temporarily put down. City officials then pledged to work with the theatre industry to maintain "a glamorous environment for enjoying the theatre."⁷⁰

By September of 1973, however, at least one of the above-mentioned theatres had become an adults only theatre. The Little Theatre on West Forty-Fourth Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues boasted on its marquee on Saturday, September 15, 1973, "Adult Movies. Male Movies. Admission: Five Dollars." The theatre drew much protest from theatre owners and restauranteurs in the area, one block of which contains four famous theatres: the Shubert, the Broadhurst, the Majestic, and the Saint James. The Minskoff is nearby. Producer Alexander H. Cohen vowed, "We will drive the vermin away."⁷¹ He proved as good as his word, for, on September 18, 1973, the theatre was closed at ten minutes after four o'clock in the afternoon as four male patrons watched the sixteen milimeter short subjects. The president of the Little Theatre, Inc., said he was not

⁷⁰Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1972-1973, pp. 34-35.

⁷¹New York Times, September 18, 1973.

aware that the new lessees of the theatre were showing pornography.⁷²

Yet another attempt at helping Broadway was the Theatre Development Fund, which was established in 1967 by the National Endowment for the Arts. In attempts to stimulate the growth of new audiences and to upgrade the quality of live theatre, the Theatre Development Fund purchased blocks of tickets to shows and offered them at reduced rates to students, property-area residents, and other people who were not normally theatre-goers.⁷³ This purchase of tickets helped the show by putting money into the box office at an often crucial early period in the show's run, before it has been able to acquire the following of which it may later be capable.⁷⁴ In 1972, the Theatre Development Fund gave out \$150,795 in direct production subsidy and \$191,825 in ticket purchases.⁷⁵ During the 1973-1974 theatre season, the Fund aided the following shows in the form of direct subsidy and ticket

⁷²New York Times, September 19, 1973.

⁷³"Bad Box Office on Broadway," p. 92.

⁷⁴Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1969-1970, p. 39.

⁷⁵Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1972-1973, p. 38.

purchases for around \$150,000: Nourish the Beast, Chemin de Fer, The Visit, A Moon for the Misbegotten, and When You Comin' Back, Red Ryder?.⁷⁶

The advent of the popular Ticketron system in 1972 was, indeed, a big boost to the theatre industry in its effect upon ticket sales. Ticketron sets up its

... remote box office terminals in high-volume locations, such as certain Macy's and Abraham and Straus branches and Chase Manhattan Bank offices. Its allotment of tickets... is entered into a computer for immediate printing and sale to the consumer. Customers pay a fee of fifty cents above the ticket price for this service and the theatre and/or the show's producer pays another twenty-five cents.

According to an early New York Times report on the Ticketron system:

The legitimate theatre in New York has recently put into operations some of the sales techniques that are widely used in other industries, such as retailing, that deal with the public. Electronic data processing is making its first substantial inroads in a field where individual hard tickets have been exchanged only for hard cash at separate box offices for generations. Ticketron electronic ticket-selling is now underway at 155 places in the metropolitan area, including branches of

⁷⁶Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1973-1974, p. 31.

department stores and banks in New York. Most offices are accepting American Express credit cards, many are taking personal checks with proper identification, and different telephone ordering systems are in effect.

Theodore W. Helweg, president of Ticketron, commented on the benefits of the service when he said:

I think the theatre is a product that's never been merchandised properly. Theatre people think they're in the theatre business, but they're really in the leisure-time business. And I don't think they're selling as aggressively as other in leisure-time industry.⁷⁷

The success of the Ticketron venture can be easily verified by a survey taken by the Theatre Development in October, 1973. A total of eight hundred and twenty-five Ticketron customers completed the Fund's survey. According to their responses, thirty-four percent had not been to a Broadway play in the past six months.

Among other findings of the survey:

...the median age of patrons was thirty, whereas, in a similar 1966 survey, it was thirty-nine. Thirty-eight percent of the people surveyed were from New York City, fifteen percent from the

⁷⁷New York Times, June 9, 1972.

rest of the state, twelve percent from New Jersey, and thirty-five percent from other states and countries. Sixty-three percent said they would ask for another show if their choice was not available. However, seventy percent received not only their first choice of plays, but also of seats.⁷⁸

Obviously, Ticketron was encouraging more young people to attend the theatre. Its convenience could not be denied in that suburban residents did not make one trip into the city to buy tickets, and then another to attend the show. According to William J. Baumol, a Princeton University and New York University economics professor who analyzed the survey, the low theatre attendance reported by the people who patronized the center implied that "these are people who the new box office has induced to return to the theatre."⁷⁹

Certain changes in the structure of shows and development of new type shows, too, served to benefit the theatre during the economic slump. An example of such a modification is the 1970 production of the Richard

⁷⁸ New York Times, October 11, 1973.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Rodgers musical Two by Two. Though most Broadway musicals have enormous casts including several leads and supporting players as well as a large chorus, Two by Two had a complete cast of only eight people and starred Danny Kaye, a well-known and popular entertainer, in his first Broadway appearance since 1941. Two by Two cost around \$800,000 to produce and broke even during its barely successful run. According to the legendary Rodgers, "It ran almost a year and showed a small profit."⁸⁰ He blamed some of the failure on the star himself. The lyricist reported:

Two by Two has left a sour taste in my mouth not because of the mixed reception, but because of Danny's behavior after the show had opened in New York. Early in February, 1971, he tore a ligament in his left leg during a performance and had to be hospitalized. Apparently unable to submit to the discipline of the theatre, when he returned to the show he decided to adapt the entire production to his infirmity. He appeared with his leg in a cast and wither rode around the stage in a wheelchair--in which he sometimes would try to run down the other actors--or hobbled around the stage on

⁸⁰Richard Rodgers, Musical Stages: An Autobiography (New York: Random House, 1975), pp. 367-368.

a crutch--which he used to goose the girls. In addition, he began improvising his own lines and singing in the wrong tempos. He even made a curtain speech after the performances in which he said, 'I'm glad you're here, but I'm glad the authors aren't!' 81

A 1972 Broadway arrival, after a long tour and off-Broadway run, brought a new dimension to musicals and proved to be extremely successful. The rock musical Grease, set in the 1950's with book and lyrics by two young men, Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey, and directed by one of Broadway's youngest directors, Tom Moore, came to the Eden Theatre in June, 1972, and took off like one of its song titles: "Greased Lightning." Unlike other rock musicals, there was a tight book, and, therefore, a definite plot. A New York Times critic said:

...the kind of musical that Broadway has needed for some time will finally get here this week... (Grease) had managed to combine the two commodities everyone agrees our theatre most requires: younger audiences and what I can best describe...as 'older virtues.' Grease deserves the adjectives we once awarded show like Pal Joey, Kiss Me, Kate, Guys and Dolls, and The Pajama Game but

81 Ibid.

haven't had much call for recently.⁸²

The New York Daily News said:

The charm of Grease is its ability to capture the innocence and joy of a new pop-culture manifestation. (It) is very modest in its aims and very sure about them. It succeeds because of the simplicity of its theme and because of the calculates skill with which it is presented.... Grease is a tonic.⁸³

The success of this venture can best be measured in the fact that, despite numerous road companies and a tremendously successful 1978 movie version, Grease is still on Broadway today, making it the longest running show in Broadway history.

Revivals of former hits, too, have helped the Broadway financial panic, though, no doubt, discouraging creativity in many new writers. The 1970-1971 season was, indeed, a vintage year for revivals. The revival of the 1925 hit, Vincent Youngman's No, No, Nanette, produced by Cyma Rubin, an experienced fund-raiser working on her first Broadway show, introduced a sense of frugality

⁸²New York Times, June 4, 1972.

⁸³Grease: A New 50's Rock 'n Roll Musical program, (New York: Gloria Enterprises, Inc., 1972), n.p.

to producers. Ms. Rubin proposed a tight budget of \$500,000. Her plan was two-fold. First, she said, "You have to put a red pencil to the excess items. You don't pick up the tabs for limousines and lunches." Secondly, she was going to rely on well-known, nostalgic names with the staging of musical numbers by veteran choreographer Busby Berkeley and stars like Ruby Keeler and Patsy Kelly.⁸⁴ The plan proved successful and gave birth to many imitations, including the 1973-1974 production of Over Here!, a new musical with some old stars: Patty and Maxine Andrews, two of the remaining three Andrews sisters, as well as Carol Channing in Lorelei, a re-make of her earlier hit Gentlemen Prefer Blondes. Nostalgia was big. Debbie Reynolds set an all-time record week's legitimate stage gross, \$355,000 for six performances, at the new twelve thousand seat open-air Municipal Opera in Forest Park, Illinois, in Irene while the show was still on Broadway.⁸⁵

Another proposed plan, still employed occasionally, was the limited gross plan for shows. It was

⁸⁴"Another Reprise of Broadway Blues," Business Week, September 19, 1970, p. 34.

⁸⁵Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1973-1974, p. 31.

announced in December, 1970, that Broadway authorities had reached an agreement with the various unions on what was called a "middle contract." The agreement called for assorted concessions from the unions which would permit reduced production costs under specified conditions. Thus, for example, the weekly gross in certain Broadway theatres was to be limited to only \$25,000. Under the contract, it was figured that musicals and dramas both could be produced for considerably less than they were currently costing. Producers, therefore, would be encouraged to be more venturesome. Producers were able to lower ticket prices somewhat with a lower overhead then, and the show's personnel felt the show would sustain a longer run.⁸⁶

Still another organized activity in the 1969-1970 season in an attempt to boost the activity on Broadway, included an effort on the part of the League of New York Theatres to advance the curtain time from the long traditional 8:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., a full hour earlier. Among the more than two thousand replies to a questionnaire on the subject, fifty-nine percent of those

⁸⁶New York Times, December 27, 1970.

polled favored a 7:30 curtain. The commuters wanted to get home an hour earlier; the city residents wanted to break early enough to enjoy a leisurely after-theatre dinner. Despite the fact that such a time change might cause a problem in the title of Noel Coward's 1936 theater-set play Tonight at Eight-Thirty, it was clear that some experimentation was warranted. The number of Playbill programs (a good indicator of theatre attendance) handed out had fallen from a monthly average of 967,432 in 1967 to an average of 872,234 in the fall of 1970. Yet another possible reason for the desire to try such a change resulted from the lateness of the hour the theatres let out. The Eighteenth Precinct of the New York City Police Department, which includes the theatre district, reported that serious crime is highest in the area between 11:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m.⁸⁷ In general, it was the hope of the League of New York Theatres that, by raising the curtain earlier, the theatre would be able to woo back those suburbanites who had come to prefer their hearthside to getting late trains home, as well as the city dwellers who were reluctant to be on the street

⁸⁷"Tonight at 7:30," Newsweek, January 18, 1971, pp. 78-79.

after midnight.⁸⁸

One further Broadway innovation to boost theatre attendance and to make theatre patrons feel more secure on the streets of New York City involved the addition of more matinee performances of the shows. Walter Kerr commented in the New York Times in June of 1973, that mail orders for tickets for the play Finishing Touches, written by Kerr's wife, Jean Kerr, were heavily weighted toward matinees. Kerr further reported that, in 1969, William Goldman, in his book The Season (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, 1969), the results told of a survey taken then clearly indicated a definite preference for matinee performances. The surveyed people expressed preference for performances in this descending order:

(1) Saturday matinee; (2) Friday matinee; (3) Sunday matinee; (4) Wednesday matinee; and (5) Saturday night.⁸⁹

It was a long-standing tradition that shows played only two matinees: Saturday afternoon and a Wednesday afternoon performance. In January of 1972, however, several shows were switching to a three matinee

⁸⁸New York Times, December 27, 1970.

⁸⁹New York Times, June 3, 1973.

week. Five of the twenty-one shows on the boards were giving the three matinee performances and one, the Peter Stone - Sherman Edwards musical 1776, was offering four matinees a week with performances on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday afternoons. The regular nightly performances were held on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. The five shows with three matinee performances, Butterflies Are Free, Fiddler on the Roof, Follies, To Live Another Summer, and Ain't Supposed to Die a Natural Death, all canceled their Monday night performances and played instead a Sunday Matinee. The producer of Butterflies Are Free, Arthur Whitelaw, saw the increase in matinees as "a desirable move for the Broadway theatre," and went on to explain that his production had found the policy to be

...a very successful experience with its three weekly matinees - they are the busiest performances of the week, and we hope that the theatre community might get together and consider adding more weekday matinees, perhaps on Thursday.

Eugene V. Wolsk, co-producer of Ain't Supposed to Die a Natural Death, reported that he had scheduled the extra Sunday matinee for his show "because the black community has a long tradition of going out on Sunday

Yet another boost came near the end of 1971-1972 season when producer David Merrick came up with a pleasing gimmick: free parking for visitors to his play Sugar. Monday through Friday, by arrangement with a nearby garage, theatre patrons from the musical Sugar would be able to park their cars for free, representing about a three dollar savings to those people who came in their own cars.⁹¹ Merrick declared that it was "the beginning of what would be a continuing effort on my part to make Broadway theatre-going more pleasant and convenient."⁹²

In their own way, each of the above plans helped the Broadway theatre, from the enormous sums made available by the Theatre Development Fund to the savings on parking costs by David Merrick. The 7:30 p.m. curtain ceased to be after the 1971-1972 season as a result of protest from restaurant owners. Ticketron remains today

⁹⁰New York Times, January 12, 1972.

⁹¹Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1971-1972, p. 44.

⁹²New York Times, June 6, 1972.

a great success. Matinees continue to be successful money-making and crowd-raising successes. It is probably a combination of all the above factors that gave the theatre its successful 1974-1975, or bountiful, season.

Chapter IV

THE BOUNTIFUL SEASON, 1974-1975

The 1974-1975 season on Broadway has been called the Bountiful Season. Box office revenues were up twenty-five percent over the previous year and came within \$1.5 million dollars of surpassing the 1967-1968 all-time high.⁹³ After several years of famine, receipts for ticket sales on Broadway rose to \$57 million in the 1974-1975 season.⁹⁷ Leading New York theatre spokesmen were asked to comment on the results of this season. Anna E. Crouse, president of the Theatre Development Fund, noted "the sense of excitement in all areas of the theatre world. Dore Schary, former New York City cultural commissioner, commented positively on "the resurgence of interest on the part of the audience; the general aware-

⁹³Henry Hewes, "Broadway's Bountiful Season," Saturday Review, July 26, 1975, p. 14.

⁹⁴"Theatre is back in Business With New Ways, New Writers," U.S. News and World Report, August 11, 1975, pp. 45-46.

ness that the theatre is still an active and powerful force.⁹⁵ Those people actually involved in on-stage ends of the productions were highly aware of the upward surge, too. Said actress Sandy Dennis, starring at the time in Absurd Person Singular, "There's a hum on this street, a feeling of encouragement that hasn't been around for a long, long time." Advanced ticket sales for Bette Middler's Clams on the Halfshell Revue set a new one-day record: more than \$200,000.

The successful season seemed to truly have something for all theatre patrons. There was a return of young people to the theatre. According to producer Harold Prince:

...young people have begun to be exposed to serious regional theatre. The idea of the theatre as a serious entertainment, not just sitcoms, has rubbed off.⁹⁶

Young people were attracted to such shows a Equus, a psycho-detective story about a boy's love for horses and a brutal, passionate crime, a play about which Time magazine said:

⁹⁵Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1974-1975, p. 3.

⁹⁶"Boom on Broadway," Time, April 28, 1975, p. 70.

Peter Shaffer (the playwright) has fashioned a galvinizing psychological thriller. It is...the sort of drama that shoots adrenaline into people's tongues and makes ticket scalpers' fingers itch in anticipation. 97 Broadway desperately needed an Equus.

They were also enticed by the British mystery Sherlock Holmes as well as the moving musical A Chorus Line with its emphasis on young, hopeful performers looking for their place in the world and seeking their own identities as well. 98

The black population, too, began to turn out in great numbers for the musical The Wiz, an all-black cast version, of L. Frank Baum's fantasy classic The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. The Wiz made \$10,000 a week during the first month of its run. Thanks in part to substantial television and other media advertising, it became Broadway's first black blockbuster. Also of interest to blacks was The Island, a black drama set in a South African maximum security prison for African political offenders. 99

97 "Freudian Exorcism" Time, November 4, 1974, pp. 119-120.

98 Hewes, "Broadway's Bountiful Season," p. 14.

99 Boom on Broadway," p. 70.

Successful comedies abounded in the 1974-1975 season with Bernard Slade's sophisticated Same Time, Next Year, a play about two married people who meet annually to resume a love affair over a period of several years. Also on hand were Terrence McNally's comedies The Ritz and Bad Habits, set in a gay bath house and a mental institute respectively. These sophisticated comedies dealt with such taboo subjects as infidelity in marriage and homosexuality as comic devices.¹⁰⁰

Revivals, too, were present in this bountiful season. Indeed, according to one article:

...most of the shows in New York this season are ...revivals of old hits, new nostalgic musicals,...or successful shows from London. In addition to their track records, a number of these old-new or new-old shows well have toured for over six months before reaching the Street of Dreams.¹⁰¹

Among those shows revived for the 1974-1975 season were Angela Lansbury in the musical Gypsy, Henrik Ibsen's drama A Doll's House, Noel Coward's Private Lives with Maggie Smith, and critically acclaimed production of Tennessee Williams' Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, starring

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹"Where Angels Dare to Tread," Forbes, November 1, 1974, p. 56.

Elizabeth Ashley, about whom Time magazine raved and praised for the success of the show by saying:

Elizabeth Ashley left the New York stage over a decade ago as a lovely ingenue. She returns, still ravishingly beautiful, as an actress absolute.... It is Elizabeth Ashley who gives the play a mesmeric, electrifying intensity. ¹⁰²

Commenting on the difference in the theatre, Miss Ashley said, "You could feel that audience breathe--they were moved." ¹⁰³

Musicals, certainly, were above the average and of a very lasting nature. There was also a considerable contrast in styles of the musicals on Broadway. The vibrant The Wiz was able to live comfortably on the same street with the deeply emotional, folksy, nearly country simplicity of Shenandoah, the story of a family desperately trying to avoid the horror of the Civil War, yet tragically thrust into it, starring John Collum. There was also the revival of Good News as well as hold-over hits from previous seasons in the form of Grease, master showman Bob Fosse's brash Chicago, and the percision dancing of

102 "Delta Wildcat," Time, October, 1974, p. 107.

103 "Boom on Broadway."

A Chorus Line.

The bountiful season did, indeed, breathe a breath of air into a theatre that was sorely in need of such freshness. Of course, there were failures: Goodtime Charley lost one million dollars plus on an investment of \$800,000; Mack and Mabel lost \$750,000; and Morning Pictures lost \$150,000.¹⁰⁴ The hits, however, did outweigh the failures and shows such as Shenandoah and Equus showed us that the theatre was still as magically alive as ever.

¹⁰⁴Guernsey, The Best Plays of 1974-1975, p.

Chapter V

AFTER THE BOUNTY

The five seasons after Broadway's bountiful season of 1974-1975 revealed no great revolution in the theatre either as an industry or as an art form. The theatre today, however, does seem, at best, healthier. One no longer hears of an economic crunch in the theatre, though inflation in the industry continues to reach skyward. For example, top ticket prices in 1979 were seventeen dollars for a non-musical and twenty dollars for a musical. This year, 1980, prices have moved to twenty dollars and twenty-six dollars respectively.¹⁰⁵ Interestingly, when Oklahoma! was first staged in 1943, top orchestra seats were priced at four dollars and eighty cents each. For the current 1980 revival, they

¹⁰⁵"Broadway Tickets," Parade Magazine, April 27, 1980, p. 22.

It is as an art form that the theatre continues to seem to be in a period of stagnation. There certainly have been numerous fresh shows and productions in the intervening years since that bountiful season. Certain plays come quickly to mind such as the 1976 production of Belle of Amherst, a one-woman show starring Julie Harris as poet Emily Dickinson; 1977's musical The Robber Bridegroom which incorporated a country music flavor and won a Tony award for its star, Barry Bostwick, as best male performer in a musical; the musical Annie, based on the "Little Orphan Annie" comic strip and introducing young Andrea McArdle; the suspenseful Dracula with Frank Langella; and Neil Simon's comic autobiography Chapter Two. 1978 gave us The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas and Sweeney Todd: The Deamon Barber of Fleet Street, two rollicking musicals, the latter of which won the 1979 Tony for best musical and is still running on Broadway, the earlier, soon to be made into a movie with country music star Dolly Parton. 1979 presented the moving

¹⁰⁶Patrick Pacheco, "Broadway Revivals," After Dark, April, 1980, p. 60.

straight plays The Elephant Man and Whose Life Is It Anyway? as well as the musical They're Playing Our Song, by and about the Broadway team Betty Comden and Adolph Green. The current season has blessed us with such new shows as the musicals Evita, Sugar Babies, and Barnum; the emotional Bent; and Neil Simon's latest comic success I Ought to Be in Pictures. Revisions and revivals, too, continue to play a very important role in this season, possibly a lesson learned from the season of 1974-1975. In the area of revisions, television star Mary Tyler Moore won a special 1980 Tony as a result of her switching medias from television to assuming the lead in the play Whose Life Is It Anyway?.

This season seems also to be employing more talent that is familiar to people such as Miss Moore, television star Dick Van Dyke in a revival of The Music Man, and the star of the movies Looking for Mr. Goodbar and American Gigolo, Richard Gere, in Bent.

If the theatre learned anything from the success of the 1974-1975 season, it would appear to be the drawing power of revivals of former hits and the emergence of dancing as a theatrical art. In regards to revivals,

the merits of such a venture are many.

In a depressed economy, producers are skittish about pouring out the million-plus dollars it now takes to get a musical on the boards. And, in a period dominated by global strife and anti-American protests, old-fashioned sentiments and well-scrubbed Americana are entertaining antidotes for political apprehensions of a world flying off its axis.

Revivals have great appeal to young people who have heard of these great theatrical adventures, but never had the opportunity of experiencing them first hand.

Revivals of classic Broadway musicals are not so much a question of hankering for nostalgia as they present the opportunity for new generations to witness the magic and excitement that sparked the theatre in previous decades.¹⁰⁷

Indeed, hearts will fly to the throats now as they did thirty-seven years ago when Jud pulls the knife on Curley in Oklahoma! and the same hearts will melt as they did in 1956 when Henry Higgins first realized that he has grown accustomed to Eliza's face in the forth coming revival of My Fair Lady.

Nevertheless, this recycling does seem to

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

indicate a certain death to new and original productions. Critics seem to "constantly bemoan the fact that there is little original material."¹⁰⁸ Even some of the original material of this season seems old and familiar. Sugar Babies, starring Mickey Rooney and Ann Miller, is a salute to the old burlesque shows and written by Dr. Ralph G. Allen of the University of Tennessee. Said Dr. Allen about the show, "They told us it was a silly idea, that it was good for the road but didn't belong in New York." The show received eight Tony nominations this year, is going on tour this summer in the United States with Robert Morse and Carol Channing, and separate companies are now being formed for London and Australia.¹⁰⁹

Also present in New York this season is A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine by Dick Vosburgh and Frank Lazarus. Act One is a takeoff on the movie musicals of the 1930's and Act Two is merging of many ploys from the classic Marx Brothers' movies. Time magazine called

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Bill Ryan, "Ralph Allen in Baggy Pants," Parade Magazine, June 15, 1980, pp. 10-11.

Yet another lesson gleaned from the bountiful season regards the resurgence of dancing as a major part of Broadway musicals.

Dance has become Broadway's dominant metaphor for vitality, renewal, and survival in the past few seasons. A Chorus Line pumped such tingling life into Shubert Alley that the entire theatre district began pulsating with an almost forgotten excitement.

The popularity of A Chorus Line gave rise to at least two more musicals with dancing as the central theme. Also, 1978's Dancin' by Bob Fosse as well as 1978's Ballroom, by A Chorus Line's Michael Bennett, a middle-aged Saturday Night Fever with older people meeting at the Stardust Ballroom to dance, proved quite successful for their producers.¹¹²

Besides just stage productions, other endeavors have helped kindle an interest in stage dancing. The 1980 movie All That Jazz, an alleged biography of Bob Fosse, and the ABC-TV special "Baryshnikov on Broadway", which aired April 24, 1980, and starred New York City Ballet star Mikhail Baryshnikov and Liza Minnelli, drew

¹¹²"Danse Nocturne," Time, December 25, 1978

the attention of thousands who had never seen a stage production devoted to stage dancing. Baryshnikov appeared in production numbers from Oklahoma!, Guys and Dolls, Ain't Misbehaving', and A Chorus Line. The Russian defector, ballet super-star Baryshnikov said:

The most fascinating people in a Broadway performance are the gypsies,¹¹³ who can tap, tumble, act, sing, and dance at the same time. It's like universal Greek actors or the universal commedia dell'arte actors. This tradition in Europe is completely destroyed, dead, and this is the one country in the world--America and Broadway--keeping this tradition alive.¹¹⁴

In the present theatre season in 1980, we find a Broadway theatre still plagued by inflation, yet all too often, caught in a kind of creative doldrums. As Brooks Atkinson said, "That's the eternal paradox of Broadway...artistically and technically proficient, but no longer creative."¹¹⁵ The 1980 season, however, does do one thing for us. We are entertained. We think at shows like Bent and Whose Life Is It Anyway?; we laugh

¹¹³Gypsies is a theatre term for dancers who travel from show to show.

¹¹⁴Brant Mewborn, "Fact to Face with Liza and Misha," After Dark, April, 1980, p. 44.

¹¹⁵Atkinson, Broadway, p. 458

at I Ought to be in Pictures and Sugar Babies; and we either revel in memories at Oklahoma! and Peter Pan or, if seeing them for the first time, experience a priceless magic. Regardless, we are entertained.

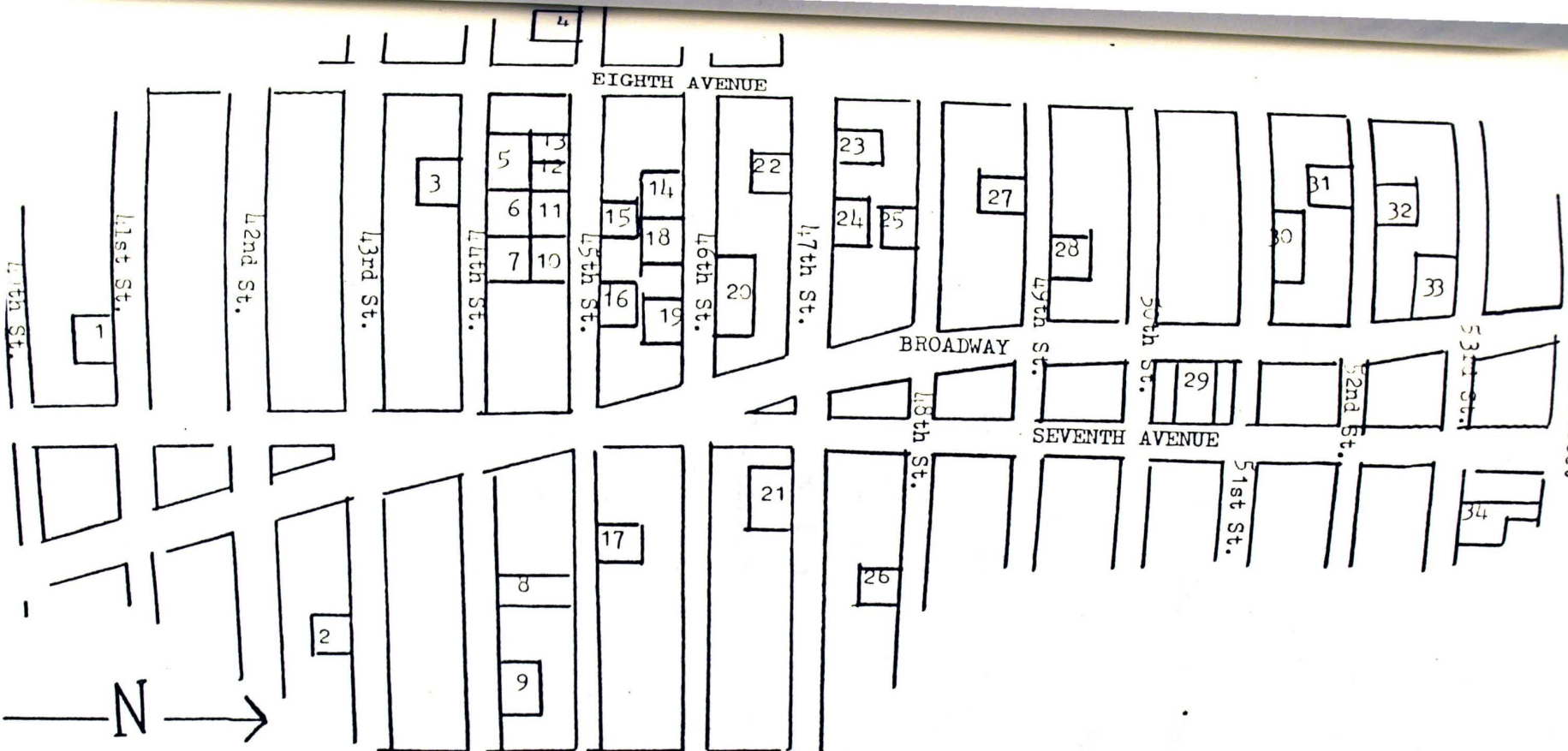
Chapter VI

THE LEGACY

What, then, is the legacy which the Broadway theatre has left to American art and industry as a result of its years of economic and social stress? It is simply a reinforcement of an old American concept: one must be willing to strive for unity and to be willing to try various plans when seeking any solution. Industry and art must learn that it is necessary for people to work together and to experiment with large and small plans, to be willing to admit when one plan does not work and to go on to another. They must learn, like the theatre, that new is not always a synonym for better and that the past is often a tremendous source for answers to the problems of today.

The history of the American theatre is as rich and full as the history of the nation. It is filled with stories of success and failure, of heroes and villains. It is the story of a continual climb and fight

for new and far-reaching vistas. The New York theatre remains the meter stick by which every theatre, playwright, and actor in America today measures himself.



THEATRES:

- 1 Billy Rose
- 2 Henry Miller's
- 3 St. James
- 4 Martin Beck
- 5 Majestic
- 6 Broadhurst
- 7 Shubert
- 8 Hudson

- 9 Belasco
- 10 Booth
- 11 Plymouth
- 12 Royale
- 13 Golden
- 14 Imperial
- 15 Music Box
- 16 Morosco
- 17 Lyceum

- 18 46th Street
- 19 Helen Hayes
- 20 Lunt-Fontanne
- 21 Palace
- 22 Brooks Atkinson
- 23 Biltmore
- 24 Ethel Barrymore
- 25 Longacre
- 26 Cort

- 27 Eugene O'Neill
- 28 Ambassador
- 29 Winter Garden
- 30 Mark Hellinger
- 31 Alvin
- 32 ANTA

- 33 Broadway
- 34 George Abbott
(54th Street)

The N.Y.C. Theatre District

From: The Playmakers

Appendix B

Theatre Gross, 1969-1975 Seasons

Season:	Broadway:	Road Productions:
1969-1970	53.3 million	48.0 million
1970-1971	54.9 million	50.0 million
1971-1972	52.3 million	49.7 million
1972-1973	44.8 million	55.5 million
1973-1974	46.2 million	45.3 million
1974-1975	57.4 million	50.9 million

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