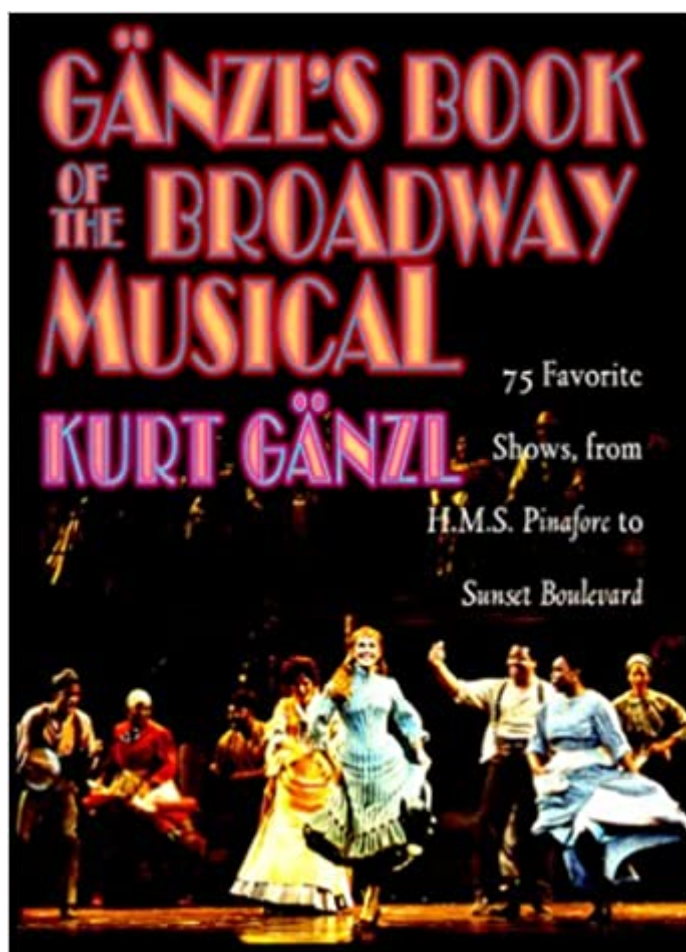


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Ganzl's Book Of The Broadway Musical: 75 Favorite Shows, From H.M.S. Pinafore To Sunset Boulevard



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Customer Reviews

Although most librarians will appreciate this "best of" collection, Ganzl's latest is a briefer, cheaper, and unfortunately less satisfying version of Ganzl's *Book of the Musical Theater* (LJ 4/15/88). Each entry reads like well-written liner notes in a compact disc. Song titles are interspersed in three- to four-page plot summaries, but production information is minimal. For plots, this work is more useful than Arthur Jackson's *The Best Musicals* (LJ 12/1/77), but patrons will almost always need to use another source (e.g., Stanley Green's *Broadway Musicals Show by Show*, Hal Leonard Bks., 1985) to gather details or critical analyses. Recommended for larger theater collections and wherever Ganzl's previous works are popular. —Anthony J. Adam, *Prairie View A&M Univ. Lib., Tex.* Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Ganzl's *Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre* [RBB S 1 94], the 1995 Dartmouth Medal Honor Book, and Ganzl's *Book of the Musical Theatre* [RBB Je 15 89] both cover musical theater around the world. This new title is a spinoff highlighting 75 Broadway musicals, a few of which are too recent to have been included in his encyclopedia. Each entry gives full production information, casts, plot synopses, song titles, and notes about film versions. Each is liberally illustrated with photographs from the original production. An appendix listing cast recordings on compact disc is followed by an index of names and song titles. Public libraries that couldn't afford Ganzl's more comprehensive encyclopedia for their reference collections will want his latest title covering the shows of most interest to today's reader. Large public and academic libraries that have Ganzl's other works in

reference will want to add this one to the circulating collection. Sandy Whiteley

This book is a total rip-off. First, each show gets just one photo. Two or three photos follow that are merely close-ups taken from the main photo. This design is so rigid that one of the close-up photos for one show depicts only a string of lights in the background. The captions are haphazard.

Sometimes they tell you the names of the characters or actors in the photo, sometimes they don't. The entries on each show are merely plot summaries with no additional information, backstage tales, historical perspective, critique or anything. I have no idea why someone would want to know the summary of a musical without any information about the songs. If you've seen the musical, then you know plot (which often is not the strong point of a musical). If you haven't seen the musical, why would want to know the plot? Also, each entry contains a list of characters' names. Not the original cast, not anything about the characters or how they relate to each other. Just names. Again, if you've seen it, you know the names. If you haven't, it might as well be a random list of names. This is a truly bizarre, overpriced book.

This is one of those books that can sit on your shelf for months or a year without any use. Then, all of the sudden, it becomes an invaluable resource. As a veteran of two Broadway shows, one of which is in the book, I have used the book to quickly get up to speed on a show. If you are looking for an in-depth analysis and documentary of the productions, this is not the book for you. If you want to get a quick glimpse at the plot and where the characters and songs fit into it--then this book is one that your should own.

I found the book very helpful. I am a voice teacher and need this types of information quickly at my fingertips. Musical name, plot, characters, story line, songs, are all there in a very complete, concise manner, no extras. Very short factual information on each musical.

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