

A Word from the Manager

Miss Ginger Devine



Soundtrack to the Story of my Life

What happened if Life were a Musical?

“The world would be a much happier place if everyone would break into song”. This is a sentiment I have shared with anyone who will talk to me for pretty much my whole life. If people were freely able to abandon their inhibitions and expressed what was in their heart and in their soul, perhaps we could let go of our emotional baggage. Also, a group dance number and a few jazz squares thrown in to boot could not hurt everyone’s general morale.

I feel that there is a perception by some that all musicals are trivial, superficial, campy productions that bear no true resemblance to real life. In my experience, musicals are an artistic forum to satirically comment on society and life. Whether they are commenting on the social injustices of homophobia, racism, or sexism or educating viewers about HIV/AIDS musicals work to form community and allow audiences to share in a common experience. Musical has the uncanny ability to point out the ridiculousness of life and allow audiences to laugh at themselves while at the same time highlighting the trials and tribulations that life often throws in our direction as well. Musical, more so than other theatrical productions, tend to be more optimistic, hopeful, and in general resolve the issue they are facing and not leave audiences unfilled without closure. I can chart the musicals that I listened to growing up and relate how each one provided solace, comfort, and insight to what was going on in my own personal life.

As a musical theater enthusiast, I find it difficult now to listen to any sort of mainstream music and be moved and convinced about the emotions they are singing. Musical at their core are an expression of some of the most painful and joyous moments of life. How is Kelly Clarkson singing about being an independent woman of the 21st century even remotely comparable to Idina Menzel’s powerhouse notes about Defying *Gravity* or how do the dime-a-dozen love songs on the radio compare to heart-breaking laments in *AIDA*? The truth is that they do not. Although the music is awesome and these artists are talented, I find that their songs tend to fall flat. When a contemporary musician or band sings about relationship ending, more often than not it is merely lyrics outlining a story. However, when a musical theater performer is singing about a break up, you see the visceral response in their body, the tears, the emotions, and the crumpled body position. While the contemporary artist merely sings about the break-up, the musical theatre performer will embrace, manifest, and evoke the concept of a break-up and then deliver a performance that will strike the heart strings of their audience.

Since the Utility Players are writing their own musical, I have given a great deal of thought to the role that musicals have played in my life. The musical relates the story of the formation of the Utility Players and will discuss the emotions, insecurities, joy, and doubt that the group experienced – as well as some evil witches, a fairy godmother, open mics, a big group number finish. Utility Players – the musical – premieres December 17th at the Studio on 4th and hope that it conveys the emotions of our journey.