



STAGERAGE

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BOARD UPDATE

It is with regret that Leanora Potten's resignation from the ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS has been accepted, with Leanora's last meeting to be in July 2025. Therefore, your current Board is;

- Allan Nagy (President), Samantha Peters, Jessie Feyen, Jon Samia, Adie Johansen, Lorna Stanley (seconded), Milana Mariu-Reade (seconded as Youth Representative), Jen Lambert (Administrator), Kay Nagy (Board Secretary)

This means there are currently two vacancies on the Board. If you might be interested in serving on the Board, please don't hesitate to contact Allan Nagy (President) to have a chat about this.

Should you have any questions, queries, suggestions or compliments you may contact/chat with any Board member, the Administrator or the Board Secretary. If you have any specific queries please contact;

- Lighting – Samantha Peters
- Venue – Allan Nagy
- Sound – Allan Nagy
- Hireages – any Board member
- Future Shows/Forward Planning – Jessie Feyen, Jon Samia
- Social Events – Jon Samia
- Health & Safety/Wellbeing – Jon Samia, Adie Johansen
- Membership – Samantha Peters, Jessie Feyen

Welcome to the 2025/26 year of ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS – a new exciting year is ahead.



INTRODUCING THE CAST OF COME FROM AWAY

Glenn Maskill	CLAUDE	Ben Pryor
Suzy O'Donnell	BEULAH	Verity McKay
Lindsay Yeo	KEVIN T	Finn Davidson
Jessie Feyen	BEVERLEY	Kaydee Zabelin
Frazer Lynn	KEVIN J	Clio Exconde
Hannah Newman	BONNIE	Helena Pawson
Reihana Haronga	BOB	Clio Exconde
Erica Ward	HANNAH	Vanessa Stephens
Cal Eagle	OZ	Caleb Thomas
Milana Mariu-Reade	JANICE	Anna Hamilton
Michael Doody	NICK	Stephen Gregory
Tamzin Price	DIANE	Bridgette Lynch
Rob Waayenburg	STEVE	BV

ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS

ALTERNATE CAST PERFORMANCE DATES

THURSDAY 21ST AUGUST

Clio Exconde	BOB
Vanessa Stephens	HANNAH
Caleb Thomas	OZ

FRIDAY 22ND AUGUST

Kaydee Zabelin	BEVERLEY
Stephen Gregory	NICK
Bridgette Lynch	DIANE

THURSDAY 28TH AUGUST

Ben Pryor	CLAUDE
Helena Pawson	BONNIE
Finn Davidson	KEVIN T

FRIDAY 29TH AUGUST

Anna Hamilton	JANICE
Verity McKay	BEULAH
Clio Exconde	BOB

ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS

Calling All Potential Sponsors for our Cast Members

ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to bringing Broadway-quality musicals to the Manawatū. All of our incredible cast members volunteer their time and talent and we're currently seeking sponsors for each of our 24 performers. For just \$450, your sponsorship will directly support bringing this powerful production to life on the Regent on Broadway stage. If you are passionate about the arts and interested in sponsoring one of our cast members, we'd love to hear from you! Contact us directly at admin@actthree.co.nz.

COME FROM AWAY

SPONSOR A COME FROM AWAY CAST MEMBER

SPONSORSHIP OF \$450

- 2x PREMIUM TICKETS TO OPENING NIGHT
- 1x COMPLIMENTARY PROGRAMME
- 2x DRINKS ON ARRIVAL
- AFTER SHOW CAST MEET AND GREET WITH CASH BAR
- YOUR LOGO IN OUR SHOW PROGRAMME
- PROMOTION ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS
- THE SATISFACTION OF SUPPORTING YOUR LOCAL ARTS COMMUNITY

We also have larger sponsorship deals available. Please get in touch to see what we can offer your business!

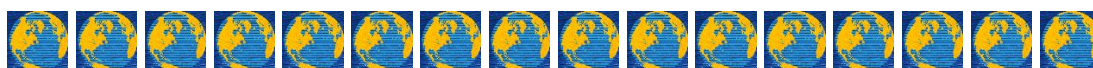
Contact Jen Lambert at admin@actthree.co.nz for further details.

To secure your sponsorship, please email admin@actthree.co.nz

ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS

Looking for a cosy way to move through winter? Come along to Adult Ballet with the beautiful Chantelle – a warm, welcoming class open to all experience levels. Whether you're brand new or returning to the barre, this is your space to stretch, move, and enjoy the grace of ballet in a relaxed and supportive environment. No need to book – just come as you are to ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS, 75 The Square, Palmerston North.

\$10 for members | \$15 for non-members (pay per class). A perfect way to warm your body and lift your spirits – we'd love to dance with you!



Tony Awards 2025: List of Winners

Best Musical winner *Maybe Happy Ending* emerged as the most Tony-winning show of the season, with *Purpose* winning Best Play.

By Logan Culwell-Block, Andrew Gans



Helen J Shen and Darren Criss in *Maybe Happy Ending*

There was an especially happy ending at the 78th Annual Tony Awards – presented 8 June 2025 at Radio City Music Hall – for the new musical *Maybe Happy Ending*, which was named Best Musical at the ceremony hosted by a dazzling Cynthia Erivo. *Maybe Happy Ending* went into the evening as one of three shows tied for most-nominated productions of the season – along with *Buena Vista Social Club* and *Death Becomes Her*, each with 10 total nominations. The surprisingly moving musical about South Korean HelperBots that have been deemed obsolete ended up winning six 2025 Tony Awards, including Best Musical, the most of any show of the season.

Jamie Lloyd's stripped-down production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Sunset Boulevard*, which was a hit in London before arriving at Broadway's St James with four of its principal players (including now Tony-winning star Nicole Scherzinger), earned the Best Revival of a Musical Tony.

In the leading actor categories: Scherzinger repeated her Olivier-winning London success, earning the Tony for Leading Actress in a Musical for her work as ill-fated Norma Desmond in the revival of *Sunset Boulevard*, and Darren Cris won his first Tony for Leading Actor in a Musical playing a robot with a heart named Oliver in *Maybe Happy Ending*.

See some of the winners below ...

Best Musical

Buena Vista Social Club

Dead Outlaw

Death Becomes Her

WINNER: *Maybe Happy Ending*

Operation Mincemeat: A New Musical

Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a Musical

Megan Hilty, *Death Becomes Her*

Audra McDonald, *Gypsy*

Jasmine Amy Rogers, *BOOP! The Musical*

WINNER: Nicole Scherzinger, *Sunset Boulevard*

Jennifer Simard, *Death Becomes Her*

Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Musical

WINNER: Darren Criss, *Maybe Happy Ending*

Andrew Durand, *Dead Outlaw*

Tom Francis, *Sunset Boulevard*

Jonathan Groff, *Just in Time*

James Monroe Iglehart, *A Wonderful World: The Louis Armstrong Musical*

Jeremy Jordan, *Floyd Collins*

Best Revival of a Musical

Floyd Collins, Tina Landau (book, additional lyrics) and Adam Guettel (music and lyrics)

Gypsy

Pirates! The Penzance Musical

WINNER: *Sunset Boulevard*

Best Direction of a Musical

Saheem Ali, *Buena Vista Social Club*

WINNER: Michael Arden, *Maybe Happy Ending*

David Cromer, *Dead Outlaw*

Christopher Gattelli, *Death Becomes Her*

Jamie Lloyd, *Sunset Boulevard*

Best Performance by an Actress in a Featured Role in a Musical

WINNER: Natalie Venetia Belcon, *Buena Vista Social Club*

Julia Knitel, *Dead Outlaw*

Gracie Lawrence, *Just in Time*

Justina Machado, *Real Women Have Curves: The Musical*

Joy Woods, *Gypsy*

Best Performance by an Actor in a Featured Role in a Musical

Brooks Ashmanskas, *SMASH*

Jeb Brown, *Dead Outlaw*

Danny Burstein, *Gypsy*

WINNER: Jak Malone, *Operation Mincemeat: A New Musical*

Taylor Trench, *Floyd Collins*

Best Original Score (Music and/or Lyrics) Written for the Theatre

Dead Outlaw, David Yazbek and Erik Della Penna

Death Becomes Her, Julia Mattison and Noel Carey

WINNER: *Maybe Happy Ending*, Will Aronson (music and lyrics) and Hue Park (lyrics)

Operation Mincemeat: A New Musical, David Cumming, Felix Hagan, Natasha Hodgson, and Zoë Roberts

Real Women Have Curves: The Musical, Joy Huerta and Benjamin Velez

Best Costume Design of a Musical

Dede Ayite, *Buena Vista Social Club*

Gregg Barnes, *BOOP! The Musical*

Clint Ramos, *Maybe Happy Ending*

WINNER: Paul Tazewell, *Death Becomes Her*

Catherine Zuber, *Just in Time*

Best Scenic Design of a Musical

Rachel Hauck, *Swept Away*

WINNER: Dane Laffrey and George Reeve, *Maybe Happy Ending*

Arnulfo Maldonado, *Buena Vista Social Club*

Derek McLane, *Death Becomes Her*

Derek McLane, *Just in Time*

Best Lighting Design of a Musical

WINNER: Jack Knowles, *Sunset Boulevard*

Tyler Micoeau, *Buena Vista Social Club*

Scott Zielinski and Ruey Horng Sun, *Floyd Collins*

Ben Stanton, *Maybe Happy Ending*

Justin Townsend, *Death Becomes Her*

Best Choreography

Joshua Bergasse, *SMASH*

Camille A. Brown, *Gypsy*

Christopher Gattelli, *Death Becomes Her*

Jerry Mitchell, *BOOP! The Musical*

WINNER: Patricia Delgado and Justin Peck, *Buena Vista Social Club*

Best Orchestrations

Andrew Resnick and Michael Thurber, *Just in Time*

Will Aronson, *Maybe Happy Ending*

Bruce Coughlin, *Floyd Collins*

WINNER: Marco Paguia, *Buena Vista Social Club*

David Cullen and Andrew Lloyd Webber, *Sunset Boulevard*

Best Sound Design of a Musical

WINNER: Jonathan Deans, *Buena Vista Social Club*

Adam Fisher, *Sunset Boulevard*

Peter Hylenski, *Just in Time*

Peter Hylenski, *Maybe Happy Ending*

Dan Moses Schreier, *Floyd Collins*

Best Book of a Musical

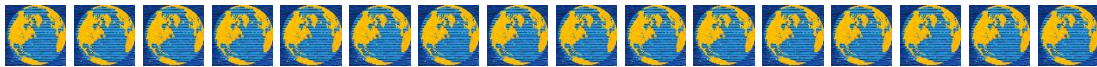
Buena Vista Social Club, Marco Ramirez

Dead Outlaw, Itamar Moses

Death Becomes Her, Marco Pennette

WINNER: *Maybe Happy Ending*, Will Aronson and Hue Park

Operation Mincemeat: A New Musical, David Cumming, Felix Hagan, Natasha Hodgson, and Zoë Roberts



July on the London Stage: Rachel Zegler in *EVITA*, Orfeh in *BURLESQUE* and more

by Matt Wolf



Rachel Zegler and Orfeh (Photos: Marc Brenner and c/o Story House)

Temperatures are rising, and so is the energy across London theatre this month. The line-up includes a stage adaptation of a Cher film vehicle, a radical retake on a beloved British musical, a play about a wedding that doesn't go quite as planned and a series of cabarets that tackle climate change and other urgent themes. It's a varied and vibrant mix of what's ahead.



Janie Dee in *Janie Dee's Beautiful World Cabarets* (Photo: c/o davidburnspr)

COME TO THE CABARET

Janie Dee has won two Olivier Awards, but the protean actress is just as committed to the world around her. Her latest project, *Janie Dee's Beautiful World Cabarets*, runs from July 5 to 13 at the Charing Cross Theatre. The show brings together performers united by a passion for storytelling, song and social engagement, from climate change to broader humanitarian concerns. "Spiritually, I don't think I've ever felt stronger about anything," Dee said of curating a lineup

that includes Maureen Lipman, Olivia Williams, jazz singer Ian Shaw and many others. (She'll headline a few shows herself and be in attendance throughout the run.) "Each show is gorgeous and fun. Cabaret has always been a way historically for the political situation to be expressed in entertainment." Expect to laugh, be moved and leave inspired to make a difference.



Diego Andres Rodriguez, Rachel Zegler & James Olivas in *EVITA* (Photo: Marc Brenner)

OH WHAT A SHOW

Director Jamie Lloyd has proven his affinity for Andrew Lloyd Webber with the Olivier and Tony-winning revival of *Sunset Boulevard*, starring Nicole Scherzinger, which finishes its Broadway run this month. But as one door closes, another opens with this week's bow at the Palladium of the same maverick showman's scorching revival of Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's *EVITA*. The stars this time out are a high-octane Rachel Zegler as Eva Peron and the superb Diego Andres Rodriguez as Che, the show's narrator (and conscience), who in this production comes to a devastating end. Rodriguez played Artie and understudied Tony nominee Tom Francis in *Sunset* in New York and has now come to London for a staging that's sure to be the talking point of the summer. "It's been pretty cool to make my debut on Broadway and in the West End the same year," the warmly engaging Rodriguez told Broadway.com during rehearsals for a bold reappraisal of *EVITA* that finds Che, by the finish, like Joe in *Sunset*, stripped to his underwear and battered by events. A recent graduate of the University of Michigan, Rodriguez said he was "super-grateful as a younger actor that the (creatives) trust what I can bring to the table." As for his leading lady, Rodriguez said Zegler, "... carries that image and that icon status of Eva and sings like I haven't heard from anyone. I can't wait for her to take over the West End."



Sinead Matthews & Dorothy Atkinson in rehearsals for *Till the Stars Come Down* (Photo: Manuel Harlan)

STARRY STARRY NIGHT

Beth Steel's fifth play, *Till the Stars Come Down*, is also her first to reach the West End, following an acclaimed run at the National Theatre early in 2024. Set in the English Midlands, the story centres on a family whose lives shift when one of three sisters marries a Polish immigrant. The production is transferring across the Thames to the elegant Theatre Royal, Haymarket, where it opens July 9. "I feel like the luckiest person of the world," Steel told Broadway.com, speaking from her play's new auditorium. "I just ran to the mirror to sort out my mascara because I'm in tears" – of joy. The play has clearly tapped into the zeitgeist, with productions planned for Tokyo, Athens and Prague, among other destinations. "I'm overwhelmed, excited and nervous," she said, pausing to credit her director, Bijan Sheibani. "What Bijan has done is great in its complete simplicity; this is one of the most incredible experiences of my life."

SING OUT, DUBLIN

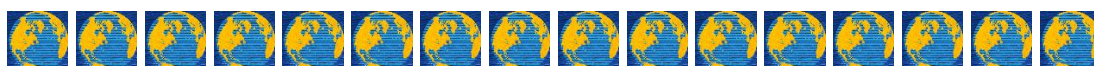
The stage version of the 2016 Irish movie *SING STREET* was set to transfer to Broadway in spring 2020 when, like the theatre world as a whole, it was shut down by the pandemic. Now it returns, recast and ready to take flight at west London's Lyric Hammersmith, opening July 18 and directed, as it was Stateside, by 2017 Tony winner Rebecca Taichman (*Indecent*). "There's a lyric in one of our songs about 'a second chance [at] life,' which is truly what this feels like," said an open-hearted Taichman, admitting to having felt "great sadness that the piece might not be able to survive all the storms that have come at it." Instead, John Carney's story of young love in 1980s Dublin returns with a new company packed with fresh talent, delivering a score by Carney and Gary Clark and a book by Enda Walsh (*ONCE*). Might this staging finally get the show to Broadway? "The hope would be that this production has a long life," said Taichman. "Time will reveal that, as it always does."



The company of *BURLESQUE* (Photo: Johan Persson)

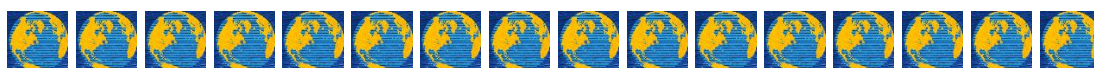
THE STRIP

The 2010 Steve Antin-directed film *BURLESQUE* has gained a cult following, and now it arrives on stage for a summer run at the Savoy, opening July 22. Orfeh and Jess Folley step into the roles made famous on screen by Cher and Christina Aguilera. Todrick Hall directs, choreographs, co-stars and has contributed to the score. "This is my summer in London, and I couldn't have asked for anything else," the delightful Orfeh told Broadway.com, marking her debut in a fully staged London show after previous concert appearances. "This is built to be a musical, even though it happened to be a film first." The icing on the cake; Orfeh is playing the part originated by her real-life godmother, Cher. "I've known Cher since I was a child; she basically raised me in the entertainment business." Synergy has rarely sounded so sweet.



Grace Hodgett Young to Depart *SUNSET BLVD* Early

Grace Hodgett Young is set to hang up her headset (and those socks), playing her final performance as the wide-eyed screenwriter Betty Schaefer in the Tony-winning Broadway revival of *SUNSET BLVD* a week early. Hodgett Young is departing the show due to a previously scheduled commitment; she will play her final date on July 13. Sydney Jones, who plays Dorothy and understudies the roles of Betty and Young Norma, will take over on July 15 and continue until the July 20 final performance. The departure renders Tony winner Nicole Scherzinger the last person standing among the original cast of principals who transferred to Broadway from the West End production. "No one leaves a star ..."



Lea Salonga Gets Hollywood Star Treatment

by Darryn King (broadway.com)

Tony and Olivier Award-winning singer, actress and Disney voice legend Lea Salonga will be honoured with a star on the iconic Hollywood Walk of Fame. Best known for her performances in *Miss Saigon*, *Les Misérables* and as the singing voice of Disney princesses Jasmine and Fa Mulan, Salonga most recently performed alongside Bernadette Peters in *Stephen Sondheim's Old Friends*. She will receive her star on a date to announced soon.

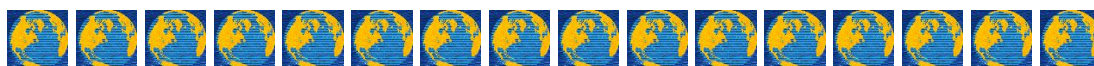
Lea Michele, Aaron Tveit & Nicholas Christopher to Star in Epic *CHESS* Revival

by Paul Wontorek



Aaron Tveit, Lea Michele and Nicholas Christopher (Photo by Richard Phibbs)

This fall, Broadway audiences will get to see theatre history made when *CHESS* returns to the Imperial Theatre, 37 years after its original debut there in 1988. Set during the Cold War, the sweeping musical follows a politically charged love triangle between two rival chess champions, an American and a Soviet, and the woman who manages one and falls for the other. Previews begin October 15, with an official opening set for November 16. First emerging as a London concept album in 1984, *CHESS* – with music by ABBA’s Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus and lyrics by Tim Rice – captured audiences with its pop-operatic score. The hit single “One Night in Bangkok” climbed all the way to No. 3 on the U.S. charts, ultimately leading to a West End production in 1986 and a Broadway premiere in 1988. Despite a short initial run, the show has achieved cult-favourite status through concert stagings and international revivals. Back on a Broadway stage is Emmy nominee Lea Michele as Florence Vassey, marking her return after her acclaimed turn in the 2022 revival of *Funny Girl*. She reunites with director Michael Mayer, the Tony winner who first discovered her in *Spring Awakening* and guided her career-defining comeback as Fanny Brice. Joining Michele are two powerhouse talents; Aaron Tveit as brash American grandmaster Freddie Trumper and Nicholas Christopher as Soviet rival Anatoly Sergievsky. Tveit recently stunned audiences in his Tony Award-winning turn in *Moulin Rouge!*, while Christopher has impressed in *Sweeney Todd*, *HAMILTON* and the Encores! staging of *Jelly’s Last Jam*. This revival features a new book by Emmy-winning screenwriter Danny Strong (*Dopesick*) and promises a fresh perspective on a show that blends Cold War politics, passionate romance and world-class vocals. With Mayer at the helm and this top-tier cast in place, *CHESS* is poised for a bold Broadway checkmate.



Billy Porter and Marisha Wallace to Lead *CABARET* for Its Final Weeks on Broadway

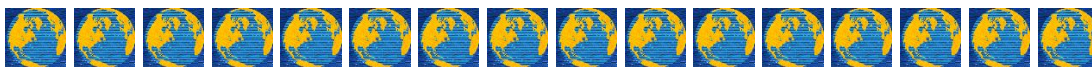
by Hayley Levitt



Billy Porter and Marisha Wallace (Photo: Jay Brooks)

Tony Award winner Billy Porter and two-time Olivier Award nominee Marisha Wallace will star as Emcee and Sally Bowles in *CABARET* at the August Wilson Theatre. Fresh off their run in the London production, the pair begin performances July 22 for the production’s final 13 weeks through October 19. “I can think of no better way to celebrate

this production’s incredible run on Broadway than by welcoming Billy and Marisha into the company for our final thirteen weeks,” said director Rebecca Frecknall in a statement. “They brought down the house every night on the West End, and I cannot wait for Broadway audiences to experience the electricity they generate together.” *CABARET* is currently led by country music star Orville Peck as Emcee and two-time Tony Award nominee Eva Noblezada as Sally Bowles, who will play their final performances in the production on July 20. With a score by John Kander and Fred Ebb and a book by Joe Masteroff, *CABARET* is based on the play by John Van Druten and stories by Christopher Isherwood. It features the songs "Willkommen", "Don't Tell Mama", "Mein Herr", "Maybe This Time", "Money" and the iconic title number. For this production, guests are invited to explore the Kit Kat Club and meet its seductive denizens before curtain time. *CABARET* is directed by Rebecca Frecknall, while scenic and costume designer Tom Scutt oversaw the August Wilson’s transformation into the Kit Kat Club, earning a Tony for his efforts. The production, which collected a total of nine 2024 Tony nominations including Best Revival of a Musical, also features choreography by Julia Cheng, lighting design by Isabella Byrd, sound design by Nick Lidster and music supervision by Jennifer Whyte. Angus MacRae composed the original music for the Prologue.



The British Are Still Coming: U.K. Contributions to Broadway’s Last 25 Years

by Beth Stevens

As Broadway.com celebrates 25 years, we’re continuing our look back at what has defined the Broadway landscape since 2000. We’ve revisited standout Tony moments, major milestones and memorable opening numbers. Now we’re turning our focus across the Atlantic. Over the past 25 years, U.K. talent has become a vital part of Broadway. As King George III sang in *HAMILTON*, “Oceans rise, empires fall”, and through it all, these two theatre worlds stay connected. Independence brings fireworks, but the real sparks on Broadway happen when talent crosses the pond and brightens the stage.



Members of the original Broadway cast of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*: Jamie Parker, Noma Dumezweni and Paul Thornley
(Photo: Caitlin McNaney)

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child

There have been plenty of British cultural contributions that changed the world, from Shakespeare to The Beatles, but in the 21st century, few rival the global reach of J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series. So when playwright Jack Thorne, director John Tiffany and Rowling teamed up to tell the story of the grown-up Hogwarts wizards and their children in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, millennials who grew up with the books showed up, often with their own kids in tow. The production won six Tony Awards, including Best Play, and proved the Boy Who Lived still had a few more tricks up his sleeve.

Mark Rylance

Mark Rylance was already a force in London when he arrived on Broadway in 2008, but his impact here was immediate and lasting. He won three Tony Awards in six years and an Oscar in 2016, earning the kind of respect that crosses industries. Praised by peers and adored by audiences, he turns every role into a lesson in nuance and presence. From the mischievous charm of *Boeing-Boeing* to the raw conviction of *Jerusalem* to the gender-bending wit of *Twelfth Night*, Rylance shifted the focus to the power of detail and restraint. Even at awards shows, he recited poetry instead of giving standard speeches. He didn't raise his voice, but Broadway listened, and so did Hollywood.

Matilda the Musical

Matilda premiered on Broadway in 2013, bringing to life Roald Dahl's tale of a remarkable girl who dared to change her story. Tim Minchin's score and Dennis Kelly's book captured the show's clever spirit. Both backstage and onstage, *Matilda* highlighted intelligence over idiocy in a way that often felt a little bit naughty. Family theatre fare rarely had so much fun breaking the rules.



Lorenzo Pisoni and Daniel Radcliffe in *Equus* (Photo: Carol Rosegg)

Daniel Radcliffe

Known to millions as the boy wizard, Daniel Radcliffe made his Broadway debut in 2008 with *Equus*, trading spells for stark, psychological drama. He kept theatregoers on their toes with a tap-dancing turn in *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, a nuanced performance in the tragicomedy *The Cripple of Inishmaan* and continued variety with *The Lifespan of a Fact* on Broadway and *Privacy* off-Broadway. Then came *Merrily We Roll Along*, where he in one of Sondheim's toughest scores and took home a Tony Award. At every turn, Radcliffe reminded Broadway that fame might get you in the door, but real talent keeps you there.

Jez Butterworth

Jerusalem put Jez Butterworth on the Broadway map in 2011, followed by *The River*, *The Ferryman* and *The Hills of California*. The last three featured his partner, Laura Donnelly, whose performances brought extra depth to his already intimate work. *The Ferryman*, helmed by powerhouse director Sam Mendes, won the Tony Award for Best Play and confirmed Butterworth as a major voice on Broadway. His plays take their time in the best way, making a case for lingering and letting silence, history and pain settle before the storm breaks. With rich characters and emotional precision, he's become one of the most consistently compelling voices on Broadway in the past 25 years.

Billy Elliot the Musical

Billy Elliot danced into Broadway in 2008 with Elton John's score and Lee Hall's story about punching above your weight. The winner of 10 Tony Awards, including one for its trio of young stars who shared the title role, *Billy Elliot* is still remembered for making ballet a working-class hero's sport. Hall's writing gave the show its grit and heart, while John's music pushed it forward, but it was the young performers, tackling complex choreography and emotional arcs, who really brought the house down. Broadway loves an underdog, especially one who can land a perfect leap.



Cynthia Erivo in *WICKED: For Good* (Still: Universal Pictures/Marc Platt Productions)

Cynthia Erivo

Erivo's breakout in John Doyle's revival of *The Color Purple* in 2015 brought soul, precision and a voice that floored Broadway audiences. Since then, she has won Grammy, Emmy and Tony Awards and earned Oscar, Golden Globe and SAG nominations. She stars as Elphaba in the two film *WICKED* adaptation, with the first instalment becoming the highest-grossing movie ever based on a Broadway musical. Her "Defying Gravity" battle cry became an instant cultural moment. In 2025, she reconnected with the Broadway community by hosting the Tony Awards. Up next; a one-woman *Dracula* in London and the role of Jesus in *JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR* at the Hollywood Bowl. It's clear her future is unlimited.

Spamalot

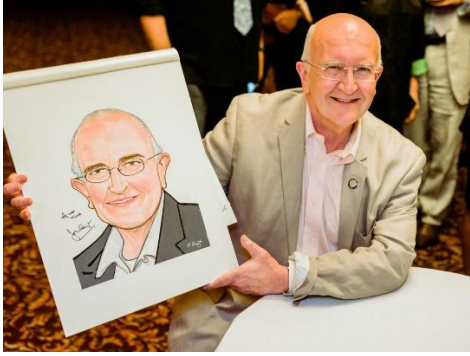
From the Finnish fisch-schlapping dance to the Knights who say Ni, *Spamalot* might be the silliest British musical comedy ever to storm Broadway. Monty Python's brand of ridiculous humour landed in 2005 and found that American audiences were happy to always look on the bright side of life. With three Tony wins, including Best Musical, it turned gleeful chaos into the holy grail of musical comedy – armour, coconuts and all.

James Corden

James Corden made his Broadway debut in *The History Boys* in 2006 and returned in 2012 with *One Man, Two Guvnors*, winning a Tony Award for his riotous turn as a hapless minder caught between two bosses. He's since kept one foot in the theatre world, starring in movie musicals like *Into the Woods*, *The Prom* and *CATS*. As the host of *The Late Late Show*, he turned *Carpool Karaoke* into a phenomenon and regularly celebrated Broadway with elaborate musical numbers. He hosted the Tony Awards in 2016 and 2019, leaning into his lifelong love of the stage. Corden may be a Hollywood regular, but he'll always be a theatre kid at heart – and he's coming back to Broadway in *Art*, beginning 28 August.

Marianne Elliott

Marianne Elliott made her Broadway debut directing *War Horse* in 2011, followed by *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* in 2014. Both shows used inventive stagecraft to pull audiences deeper into the story, setting a new bar for what live theatre can do. She returned in 2018 with a revival of *Angels in America* that earned her a second Tony Award and also brought wins for Andrew Garfield and Nathan Lane. Then came *Company* in 2021, where Elliott reimaged the central role as a woman and guided Patti LuPone to her third Tony. Each time, Elliott found a new way to make big ideas feel human.



John Doyle receiving his character portrait at Sardi's (Photo: Emilio Madrid)

John Doyle

Director John Doyle made his Broadway debut in 2005 with a scalpel-sharp *Sweeney Todd* and a clear point of view; less is more. Actors played their own instruments, the set was bare and nothing got between the audience and the story. His revival of *Company* took a similar path, followed by *The Color Purple*, which won a Tony and introduced Cynthia Erivo to Broadway audiences. Doyle's style asked audiences to listen closely and let the storytelling do the heavy lifting. His influence can still be felt in the clean, focused revivals that keep showing up on Broadway and in the way they trust actors to work.



Helen Mirren as Queen Elizabeth II in *The Audience* (Photo: Johan Persson/AP)

The Audience

Peter Morgan's fascination with the monarchy has fuelled a run of royal-watcher essentials, from the 2006 film *The Queen*, which earned Helen Mirren an Oscar, to Netflix's *The Crown* and the 2015 Broadway play *The Audience*. In *The Audience*, Morgan brought Mirren back as Queen Elizabeth II, this time focusing on her private weekly meetings with prime ministers at Buckingham Palace. Both Mirren and Richard McCabe, who played Harold Wilson, won Tony Awards. No list of Brits on Broadway would be complete without Mirren's turn as Her Majesty. It was so good, it made you want to curtsy.

Eddie Redmayne

Before his Oscar win for *The Theory of Everything* and roles in *Les Misérables* and the *Fantastic Beasts* series, Eddie Redmayne made his Broadway debut in John Logan's *Red*, playing opposite Alfred Molina as the assistant to abstract painter Mark Rothko. He won a Tony Award in 2010 and returned to Broadway in 2024 as a Tony nominee for his turn as the Emcee in *CABARET*, a role he first played in London. Redmayne's stage work has bookended a film career shaped by eclectic roles and committed performances.

Andrew Garfield

Yes, he was born in Los Angeles, but Garfield grew up in Surrey and holds dual citizenship, so we're flying the Union Jack for him here. His Broadway debut in *Death of a Salesman* was solid, but it was his vulnerable turn in the 2018 revival of *Angels in America* that truly stunned – and won him a Tony Award. And while it's a film, his meticulous performance as *RENT* composer Jonathan Larson in the Lin-Manual Miranda helmed *Tick, Tick ... BOOM!* hit squarely in the heart for theatre lovers. With all caveats noted, we're happy to proclaim Garfield's talent is louder than words.

SIX

In *SIX*, the wives of Henry VIII step out of the history books and into the spotlight, reclaiming their stories with the now-iconic summary; divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived. Created by Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss, the show delivers a concert-style history lesson packed with pop bangers, sharp humour and plenty of sisterhood. It won two Tony Awards, including Best Original Score, and brought a fresh, feminist jolt to the Broadway stage.



Kelsie Watts, Kay Sibal, Najah Hetsberger, Gianna Yanelli and Krystal Hernandez in *SIX* (Photo: Joan Marcus)

Jamie Lloyd

Director Jamie Lloyd has changed the look and feel of Broadway revivals. Known for stripped-down sets, live cameras and emotional honesty, he's brought star-driven productions of *Betrayal*, *A Doll's House* and *Sunset Boulevard* to New York. The latter earned 2025 Tony Awards for Best Revival and for star Nicole Scherzinger. His minimalist approach cuts through tradition, drawing focus to the actors and their inner lives. With *EVITA* running in London and *Waiting for Godot* on the way, Lloyd's influence on Broadway's visual storytelling is unmistakable.



Daniel Craig as Macbeth in *Macbeth* (Photo: Joan Marcus)

Daniel Craig

Long before the tux and the martinis, Daniel Craig was a stage actor. Fame came later, but he's never stopped returning to the theatre to challenge himself. He made his Broadway debut in 2009's *A Steady Rain* with Hugh Jackman, then took on *Betrayal* in 2019 opposite his real-life wife, Rachel Weisz. In between Bond films, he played Iago in the 2016 *Othello* off-Broadway and tackled *Macbeth* with Ruth Negga in 2022. Known for action on screen, Craig brings quiet control to the stage. He keeps coming back to the theatre, a place where even the most recognisable stars can stretch themselves.

Wolf Hall

Tudor drama landed on Broadway with *Wolf Hall*, the 2015 two-part epic based on Hilary Mantel's bestselling novels. Adapted by Mike Poulton and imported from the Royal Shakespeare Company, it followed Thomas Cromwell's rise through Henry VIII's court without dumbing anything down. Ben Miles played Cromwell with quiet command, guiding the audience through shifting alliances and political survival. The staging was spare, the storytelling crisp and the tension slow-burning. *Wolf Hall* earned eight Tony nominations and reminded Broadway that serious storytelling – when done right – can be just as gripping as spectacle.

Catherine Zeta-Jones

Catherine Zeta-Jones won a Tony in 2009 for playing Desiree Armfeldt in *A Little Night Music*, a role that comes with one of the most familiar songs in musical theatre. "Send in the Clowns" is the "to be or not to be" of Broadway ballads – so well known it's difficult to make your own. Zeta-Jones began her career onstage in London, but audiences knew her best as Velma Kelly in the 2002 film version of *CHICAGO*. That performance helped launch a new era of movie musicals and reminded Hollywood that glamour and talent still go together. Onstage, she held back just enough to let the role speak for itself.



Jamie Parker, Andrew Knott, Dominic Cooper and James Corden in *The History Boys* (Photo: Joan Marcus)

The History Boys

Alan Bennett's *The History Boys* arrived on Broadway in 2006 with its full original cast from the National Theatre – and barely needed a moment to settle in. A schoolroom play about exams, ambition and the purpose of education, it resonated deeply. Nicholas Hytner's direction kept the rhythm tight and the sentiment in check, letting the performances shine. Richard Griffiths led the ensemble, which also introduced American audiences to James Corden and Dominic Cooper. It won six Tonys, including Best Play, and proved that a talky, British coming-of-age drama could hold a Broadway house. It wasn't loud, but it stuck with you. Just like a good teacher.

Maria Friedman

Maria Friedman came to Broadway as a performer in *The Woman in White*, but her return as a director changed the conversation. Her revival of *Merrily We Roll Along* reintroduced the famously short-lived Sondheim show and reframed it. With Jonathan Groff, Daniel Radcliffe and Lindsay Mendez leading the cast, Friedman stripped the story to its core and let the relationships carry the weight. She didn't over-design or over-direct. She trusted the material and the actors, and it paid off. A show that once closed in two weeks is now a Broadway hit. Sometimes it just takes the right person to hear it clearly.

Jodie Comer

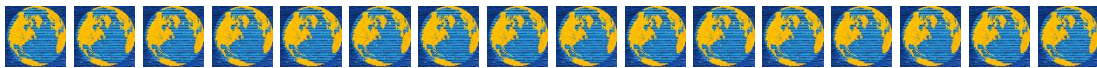
Jodie Comer made her Broadway debut in *Prima Facie* and won a Tony Award for Best Actress in a Play. The *Killing Eve* star delivered a solo performance as a criminal defense barrister forced to confront the legal system from the other side. Adapted by Suzie Miller and directed by Justin Martin, the production transferred from the West End and made a strong impression in New York. One actor, one chair, a sharp shift in perspective. Comer didn't rely on spectacle or staging. She held the audience on her own, for 100 minutes straight, and never let go.

The Play That Goes Wrong

Some British imports arrive with pedigree. *The Play That Goes Wrong* arrived with a collapsing set and a lot of shouting. Created by the Mischief Theatre team, this farce about a disastrous amateur production turned chaos into an art form. It opened on Broadway in 2017 and ran for nearly two years before moving off-Broadway, where it's still going strong. *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* followed in 2023, showing the formula has legs – and bruises. For a play built on disaster, it turns out a lot went right.



Dave Hearn, Greg Tannahill, Henry Lewis and Charlie Russell in *The Play That Goes Wrong* (Photo: Jeremy Daniel)



25 Broadway Opening Numbers That Define Musical Theatre Post-Millennium

by Hayley Levitt

Broadway.com's 25th anniversary celebration continues with another round-up that defines the past 25 years of Broadway. Now we're taking a musical detour through some of the greatest opening numbers that have graced Broadway stages in the past quarter century. Travel chronologically through our list of 25 favourites – numbers that grabbed us by the throat from the first chords and never let go.

1. “Queenie Was a Blonde” – *The Wild Party* (2000) / Michael John LaChiusa

Quick history lesson. The 1999–2000 theatrical season saw two musicals based on the same narrative poem by Joseph Moncure March. A version scored by Andrew Lipppa opened off-Broadway in February of 2000, another version scored by Michael John LaChiusa opened on Broadway that April and both have opening numbers called “Queenie Was a Blonde”. This is our moment of appreciation for LaChiusa’s brassy, vaudevillian introduction to Queenie, a showgirl attracted to “violent and vicious men,” played on Broadway by Toni Collette. The cast also boasted Mandy Patinkin, Eartha Kitt, Tonya Pinkins, Norm Lewis, Marc Kudisch, Nathan Lee Graham ... the list goes on. The show, which ran for only three months, did not. But the opening number explains how it still managed to nab seven Tony nominations.

2. “Oh, The Things You Can Think!” – *Seussical* (2000) / Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty

Just before the millennium, Ahrens and Flaherty won a Tony for their breathtaking and politically incisive *Ragtime* score, featuring one of the greatest opening numbers of all time. A Dr. Seuss musical wouldn’t have been anyone’s first guess for their next Broadway project, but the pair’s skill for melodically cracking open a world is on full display in this sweet ode to imagination. There’s a reason the striped hat lands on every regional and youth theatre marquee in America.

3. “Opening Night”/“The King of Broadway” – *The Producers* (2001) / Mel Brooks

Mel Brooks’ borscht belt-style comedy made *The Producers* the mega-hit that it was, and all that sharp-elbowed wit is introduced in this two-for-one pair of opening numbers. Before our title producer can introduce his own fall from grace, we meet the Broadway hack via the angry opening-night audiences at *Funny Boy*, his musical adaptation of *Hamlet*. By the time “The King of Broadway” commences with sounds of the shtetl on klezmer fiddle, we know exactly who we’re dealing with; “That slimy, sleazy Max Bialystock”.

4. "Not for the Life of Me"/"Thoroughly Modern Millie" – *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (2002) / Jeanine Tesori and Dick Scanlan

Thoroughly Modern Millie offered a throwback to classic Broadway with a jazzy, dance-filled opening number fit for the Roaring Twenties. Our small-town leading lady, made iconic by breakout star Sutton Foster, hits the stage with a ribbon in her sweet, long hair, and ends the sequence as a fully flappered New Yorker, branded with her signature bob. Who doesn't love a Kansas-girl-takes-the-big-city-by-storm story? Especially with Jeanine Tesori behind the melodies.

5. "Good Morning Baltimore" – *Hairspray* (2002) / Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman

Tracy Turnblad "lying" in her vertical bed, greeting the day with a nasal "oh-oh-oh" is a core memory for every theatregoer who saw Marissa Jaret Winokur in her Tony-winning role. And the number only got more iconic from there. The Ronettes' "Be My Baby" drumbeat drops you right in the middle of the '60s; colourful flashers and drunks fill out the Baltimore streets; and Tracy's love for it all, even the rats, lays the groundwork for the relentless optimism that makes her a hero. It's a Shaiman and Wittman homerun.

6. "What Do You Do with a B.A. in English"/"It Sucks to Be Me" – *AVENUE Q* (2003) / Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx

Puppets. They're just like you and me. Especially in a Broadway audience with a demo that's guaranteed to vibe with a song called "What Do You Do with a B.A. in English". Young adult angst set in a foul-mouthed thread of the Sesame Street multiverse just hit the spot like nothing else back in 2003 (the *AVENUE Q*-*WICKED* Tony showdown has become the stuff of legend). It's a show that tells you what it is up front, so by the time Kate Monster drops her first F-bomb in "It Sucks to Be Me," you're know if you're in or out.

7. "No One Mourns the Wicked" – *WICKED* (2003) / Stephen Schwartz

Jon M. Chu's big-screen version renewed appreciation for this dynamic opening number, which functions more like a one-act play than a single song. It's Elphaba's full origin story as told after her death, so we know how it started *and* how it's going. By the Ozians' final cry of "*Wicked!*" we're so ready to find out what happened in between. At this point, we've also absorbed at least four different melodies and a glass-shattering high E. We'll follow this yellow brick road anywhere.

8. "Statues and Stories" – *The Light in the Piazza* (2005) / Adam Guettel

Adam Guettel challenged Broadway audiences to accept a new sound with his complex, lyrical score for *The Light in the Piazza*. The opening number acclimates your ear and introduces you to Maragaret and Clara Johnson, the mother and daughter unassumingly strolling through a Florence piazza on their Italian vacation. Take a seat, belters. This one's for the sopranos.

9. "The Last Real Record Store on Earth" – *High Fidelity* (2006) / Tom Kitt and Amanda Green

This Broadway composing debut for Tom Kitt (and debut for lyricist Amanda Green) lasted only 32 performances at the Imperial Theatre, but its opening number sticks like Velcro. Grungy underachiever vibes are put to a pop-rock melody as Brooklyn record store owner Rob gives you a peek inside his uneventful life. As the tune goes; "*Meet the real go-getter / With the thrift store sweater / And the last real record store on earth*".

10. "Mama Who Bore Me" – *SPRING AWAKENING* (2006) / Duncan Sheik and Steven Sater

The prayer of one girl inspecting her form in the mirror turns into a battle cry for an army of young women. Duncan Sheik's harmonies, Steven Sater's elegiac lyrics, Lea Michele's adolescent rage. "Mama Who Bore Me" is a one-of-a-kind opening number that skips traditional exposition but tells you everything you need to know about this world and the people who inhabit it. It's no mystery why *SPRING AWAKENING* became an addiction for angsty teens all across the Broadway diaspora.

11. "Omigod You Guys" – *LEGALLY BLONDE* (2007) / Laurence O'Keefe and Nell Benjamin

Justice for *LEGALLY BLONDE*, one of the best female-driven musicals of the 21st century that has never gotten its due. Broadway.com vlogger Erika Henningsen proved there's a showdown to be had between its Act One closer, "So Much Better", and *WICKED*'s "Defying Gravity". But shift your attention now to the musical's opening number, which, kicked off by a killer drum fill, makes a meal of sorority sisterhood and emergency shopping. It also birthed the "Courtney, Take Your Break" internet phenomenon – plus Delta Nus speak Bruiser? No edits.

12. "In the Heights" – *In the Heights* (2008) / Lin-Manuel Miranda

This nearly eight-minute number was Lin-Manuel Miranda's introduction to Broadway and he brazenly opened it with the sound of claves and two straight minutes of rapping. It was a musical paradigm shift for Broadway, but it brought the universe of Usnavi's Washington Heights bodega to life.

13. "Just Another Day" – *Next to Normal* (2009) / Tom Kitt and Brian Yorkey

An unstable mother, a morose father, a high-strung daughter and a golden son. Tom Kitt and Brian Yorkey knew they just needed an infectious rock beat to get people on board for this dark-hued story about the dysfunctional Goodman family. It's an opener that realises all the juicy rock potential in the quiet desperation of suburban America.

14. "Underground" – *Memphis* (2009) / David Bryan and Joe DiPietro

Memphis, set in the 1950s when segregation of musical tastes was still the norm, opens with a taste of what's going down "underground" at Delray's juke joint. It's a number whose sole purpose is to create a place you'd want to spend your own Saturday night, and between the rocking band and the dirty dancing, it succeeds.

15. "Hello!" – *The Book of Mormon* (2011) / Robert Lopez, Trey Parker and Matt Stone

The Book of Mormon bulldozed all sense of propriety when it came to satire fit for Broadway, and the show's opening number – performed by an army of fledgling missionaries for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – was the Trojan Horse. It's a bouncy march of clean-shaven boys that has absolutely no groove but is a permanent earworm. And it even manages to sneak in a harmonic homage to the Tabernacle Choir. It's been nearly 15 years and doorbells have never sounded the same.

16. "Live in Living Color" – *Catch Me If You Can* (2011) / Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman

In 2011, the tunesmiths behind *Hairspray* came back with another '60s-flavoured bop to open the story of con man Frank Abagnale Jr. "I got a story that's fast and slick / And it's got more twists than a peppermint stick". It's a buckle-your-seatbelts kind of number with lyrics that were made for doing *The Swim*.

17. "To Build a Home" – *The Bridges of Madison County* (2014) / Jason Robert Brown

Kelli O'Hara unleashing her vocal bravura on the word "Iowa" is enough to make this opening number one of the best of the past 25 years. But there are plenty of reasons this too-short-lived romantic musical still managed to secure Jason Robert Brown a Tony for Best Score. Adding backstory where the original book and film don't, Brown opens the show with war bride Francesca Johnson's journey from Naples to Winterset, Iowa. It's a lush musical monologue, starting with the feel of an Italian aria and dissolving into a sturdy oom-pah—the utilitarian cadence of life as an American farm wife.

18. "Welcome to the Renaissance" – *Something Rotten!* (2015) / Wayne Kirkpatrick and Karey Kirkpatrick

Something Rotten!'s jaunty opener is in the dictionary next to the word "hummable". It's also a genuinely helpful primer on the cutting-edge arts, culture and science of 16th-century England where the Shakespeare spoof takes place. The number mostly plays with setting and tone, but we also get a grand introduction to the Bard himself – a man so talented, successful and beloved, you have to hate him.

19. "Alexander Hamilton" – *HAMILTON* (2015) / Lin-Manuel Miranda

What can we say? Lin-Manuel Miranda is an expert at opening numbers. "Alexander Hamilton" sets the musical vocabulary for his ambitious hip-hop score, but in every other way, it fits the classic formula. We meet our hero and our villain, get all that clunky exposition out of the way and are sent off into the story with an anticipatory "just you wait". It's textbook, but executed to perfection.

20. "What's Inside"/"Opening Up" – *Waitress* (2016) / Sara Bareilles

Elsewhere in the 2015–16 season, Broadway fell in love with pie maker Jenna Hunterson – and not because of her unflappable ethics. Sara Bareilles' debut as a musical theatre composer caught everyone's ears, and the opening pair of songs encapsulate the show's whole delectable ethos; delicate introspection buttressing music with heart, humour and a sprig of southern twang.

21. "Welcome to the Rock" – *COME FROM AWAY* (2017) / Irene Sankoff and David Hein

This song had Broadway chanting the syncopated rhythm of "I'm an islander, I am an islander" for all of 2017. Blending modern Broadway with the Celtic and folk music traditions of Newfoundland, Irene Sankoff and David Hein's opening number got audiences hooked on a brand-new musical about the 38 planes that were grounded in Gander on 9/11. It's a montage of friendly faces, overlapping narratives and a driving drumbeat that gets your pulse going.

22. "Road to Hell" – *Hadestown* (2019) / Anaïs Mitchell

Hermes spends the first five minutes of *Hadestown* telling us repeatedly that a "sad song" is ahead. And still, it feels like Mardi Gras on Bourbon Street. As opening numbers go, "Road to Hell" is as efficient as it is fun. One by one, we meet all our main players – gods, Fates, mortals. Meanwhile, a jazz trombone carries us off on a train to the Underworld, and we are more than willing passengers.

23. "The Whole 'Being Dead' Thing" – *Beetlejuice* (2019) / Eddie Perfect

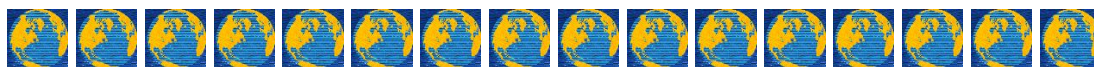
"Welcome to a(nother) show about death." We dallied in the afterlife a lot in 2019, but *Beetlejuice* went all out with its carnival of the macabre, starting with this in-your-face opening number where Beetlejuice claims his role as our hellish sherpa. It's unapologetically brash, it's wickedly clever and it's coming back to Broadway this fall.

24. "Ex-Wives" – *SIX* (2021) / Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss

Before *SIX* became a hit on Broadway it was a hit on Spotify, and this opening banger introducing Henry VIII's half dozen pop diva exes explains why. It has camp. It has screlting. It has a *Little Shop of Horrors* easter egg. The second the downbeat drops on the "Greensleeves" remix, you know what the show lacks in plot it'll make up for in personality – and riffs.

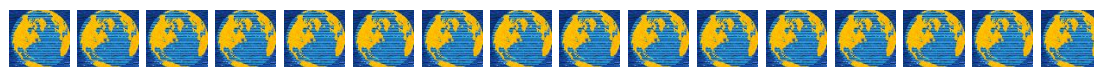
25. "Tulsa '67" – *The Outsiders* (2024) / Jonathan Clay and Zach Chance of Jamestown Revival

The opening pages of S.E. Hinton's coming-of-age novel, narrated by the introspective Ponyboy Curtis, get a country-rock treatment in this opener for the 2024 Tony-winning Best Musical. It gives you time, place, story, character, mood and adolescent male camaraderie – all in under six minutes. It's music that puts the heart in Heartland.



YOUR NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is compiled bi-monthly in January, March, May, July, September and November each year. If you would like to request that a notice be included in the next **STAGE RAGE**, please e-mail admin@actthree.co.nz and your request will be passed on to the newsletter team.



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