

Broadway's Epic Fails: A Journey Through Four Decades of Musical Flops



Not Since Carrie: Forty Years of Broadway Musical Flops by Ken Mandelbaum

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 13383 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 386 pages



Broadway, the vibrant heart of theater, has witnessed countless triumphs and standing ovations. Over the decades, some shows have ascended to the heights of theatrical excellence, earning critical acclaim and leaving an enduring legacy. Yet, beneath the glittering facade, there have been a series of spectacular musical debacles that have become the stuff of Broadway legend.

In this article, we will venture into the annals of Broadway history and uncover forty years of musical misfires, exploring the ambitious projects that crashed and burned, the bizarre concepts that baffled audiences, and the colossal flops that left critics scratching their heads in disbelief.

The 1980s: A Decade of Grandiose Misfires

The 1980s ushered in an era of Broadway musicals that were as lavish as they were ill-conceived. These shows boasted extravagant sets, elaborate costumes, and star-studded casts, but their substance often failed to match their grandeur.

One of the most infamous flops of this era was **Carrie**, a musical based on Stephen King's horror novel. The show premiered in 1988 and was met with a critical and commercial disaster. Its elaborate set, which included a giant pig's head, failed to impress critics and audiences, and the show closed after just 16 performances.

Another notable flop was **Legs Diamond**, a musical based on the life of a 1920s gangster. The show opened in 1988 and closed after just 78 performances. Critics found the plot and music uninspired, and the show's star, Peter Gallagher, later admitted that he knew it was a disaster during rehearsals.

The 1980s also saw the rise of mega-musicals, such as **Les Misérables** and **The Phantom of the Opera**. These shows were massive productions that required large casts and elaborate sets. While they were commercial successes, their critical reception was mixed, with some critics arguing that they were more spectacles than genuine musicals.

The 1990s: A String of Bizarre Concepts

The 1990s was a decade of experimentation on Broadway, with producers trying to push the boundaries of musical theater. This led to a number of bizarre and unusual shows, many of which failed to find an audience.

One of the most notorious flops of this era was **Nick & Nora**, a musical based on the Thin Man detective novels. The show opened in 1991 and closed after just 21 performances. The critics were particularly harsh, with The New York Times calling it "a disaster of epic proportions."

Another oddball flop was **The Red Shoes**, a musical based on the 1948 film. The show opened in 1993 and closed after just 47 performances. The lavish production, which included a giant pair of red shoes, failed to impress critics, who found the plot and music unoriginal.

The 1990s also saw the Broadway debut of Andrew Lloyd Webber's **Sunset Boulevard**. The show was a commercial success, running for over 900 performances. However, it received mixed reviews from critics, who found the plot and music derivative.

The 2000s: A Decade of Colossal Flops

The 2000s was a decade of colossal Broadway flops, with some shows closing after just a night or two. These failures were often the result of inflated budgets, poor marketing, and weak material.

One of the most infamous flops of this era was **Lestat**, a musical based on Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles. The show opened in 2005 and closed after just 33 performances. The lavish production, which included a flying vampire, failed to impress critics and audiences, and the show lost over \$10 million.

Another notable flop was **Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark**. The show opened in 2011 and was plagued by technical problems and injuries. The production was eventually shut down for several months and underwent a

major overhaul. Despite the changes, the show closed after just two and a half years, losing over \$50 million.

The 2000s also saw the rise of jukebox musicals, such as **Mamma Mia!** and **Rock of Ages**. These shows featured the music of popular bands, and while they were commercial successes, they were often criticized for their lack of original content.

The 2010s: A New Era of Broadway Disasters

The 2010s have seen a continuation of the trend of Broadway flops, with some shows closing after just a few performances. These failures have been the result of a variety of factors, including changing audience tastes, the rise of streaming services, and the high cost of producing a Broadway show.

One of the most notable flops of this era was **The Cher Show**, a musical based on the life of Cher. The show opened in 2018 and closed after just 41 performances. The critics were mixed in their reviews, but the show failed to find an audience, losing over \$10 million.

Another notable flop was **The Prom**, a musical about a group of Broadway actors who travel to a small town to help a lesbian student. The show opened in 2018 and closed after just 309 performances. The critics were generally positive in their reviews, but the show failed to connect with audiences, losing over \$6 million.

The 2010s also saw the rise of immersive theater, with shows such as **Sleep No More** and **The Great Comet**. These shows placed the audience in the midst of the action, creating a unique and immersive experience.

While some of these shows were critical successes, they were often not commercially successful, as they were more expensive to produce and required a smaller audience size.

Broadway's history is littered with musical flops, from the grandiose misfires of the 1980s to the bizarre concepts of the 1990s, the colossal flops of the 2000s, and the new era of disasters in the 2010s. These failures are a testament to the risks and challenges of producing a Broadway show, and they serve as a reminder that even the most ambitious projects can end in disaster.

However, these flops are also an important part of Broadway's legacy. They show that even in the face of failure, theater artists continue to push the boundaries and create new and innovative work. And who knows, one of tomorrow's biggest hits may have started out as a spectacular flop.



Not Since Carrie: Forty Years of Broadway Musical

Flops by Ken Mandelbaum

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

- Language : English
- File size : 13383 KB
- Text-to-Speech : Enabled
- Screen Reader : Supported
- Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
- Word Wise : Enabled
- Print length : 386 pages





Killing A King: The Assassination Of Yitzhak Rabin And The Remaking Of Israel

The Assassination Of Yitzhak Rabin And The Remaking Of Israel ## **
An Event That Reshaped a Nation's Destiny ** On an autumn evening in 1995, a single shot shattered...



Death in Benin: Where Science Meets Voodoo

In the West African nation of Benin, death is not simply the end of life. It is a complex and mysterious process that is believed to involve both the physical and spiritual...