

Summary Article: **musical**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

20th-century form of dramatic musical performance, combining elements of song, dance, and the spoken word, often characterized by lavish staging and large casts. It developed from the operettas and musical comedies of the 19th century.

**Operetta** The operetta is a light-hearted entertainment with extensive musical content: Jacques Offenbach, Johann Strauss, Franz Lehár, and Gilbert and Sullivan all composed operettas.

**Musical comedy** The musical comedy is an anglicization of the French *opéra bouffe*, of which the first was *A Gaiety Girl* (1893), mounted by George Edwardes (1852–1915) at the Gaiety Theatre, London. Typical musical comedies of the 1920s were *Rose Marie* (1924) by Rudolf Friml (1879–1972); *The Student Prince* (1924) and *The Desert Song* (1926), both by Sigmund Romberg (1887–1951); and *No, No, Nanette* (1925) by Vincent Youmans (1898–1946). The 1930s and 1940s were an era of sophisticated musical comedies with many filmed examples and a strong US presence (Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, and George Gershwin). In England Noël Coward and Ivor Novello also wrote musicals.

**Musical** In 1943 Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* introduced an integration of plot and music, which was developed in Lerner and Loewe's *My Fair Lady* (1956) and Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* (1957). Sandy Wilson's *The Boy Friend* (1953) revived the British musical and was followed by hits such as Lionel Bart's *Oliver!* (1960). Musicals began to branch into religious and political themes with *Oh, What a Lovely War* (1963), produced by Joan Littlewood and Charles Chiltern, and the Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971) and *Evita* (1978). Another category of musical, substituting a theme for conventional plotting, includes Stephen Sondheim's *Company* (1970), Hamlisch and Kleban's *A Chorus Line* (1975), and Lloyd Webber's *Cats* (1981), using verses by T S Eliot. In the 1980s, 19th-century melodrama was popular; for example, *Les Misérables* (first London performance 1985) and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986).

**APA**

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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## MLA

"musical." *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*, edited by Helicon, 2018. *Credo Reference*, <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/musical>. Accessed 18 Oct. 2019.