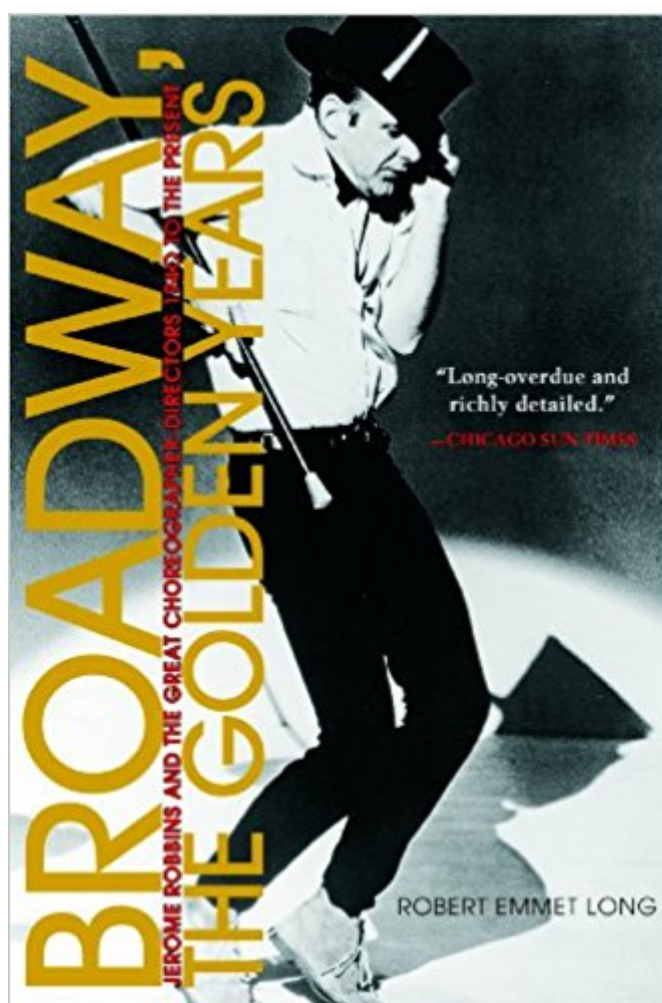


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# Broadway, The Golden Years: Jerome Robbins And The Great Choreographer-Directors, 1940 To The Present



## Synopsis

Broadway, the Golden Years, is a wonderfully readable group portrait of the great Broadway choreographer-directors: Jerome Robbins, Agnes de Mille, Gower Champion, Bob Fosse, Michael Bennett, Tonny Tune, Graciela Daniele, and Susan Stroman.>

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A literature critic, commentator on the performing arts, author of hundreds of magazine articles (in the Nation, Saturday Review, etc.) and author or editor of 30 books on subjects like Hawthorne, Fitzgerald, Thurber and the films of Merchant and Ivory, Long certainly has the credentials for this latest project. But his tenure as a New York drama critic (North American Review) cinches the deal. In this colorful history of the Great White Way, he deftly traces the Broadway musical's evolution from WWII to the present, covering such hits as A Chorus Line, Gypsy, The Pirates of Penzance and The Producers. Long documents the fancy footwork of Broadway's great choreographer-directors Agnes de Mille (Oklahoma!), Bob Fosse (Cabaret), Gower Champion (42nd Street), Michael Bennett (Dreamgirls) and Tommy Tune (The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas). While these major talents receive full chapter profiles, Jerome Robbins takes center stage in a 100-page portrait packed with fascinating anecdotes: he turned A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum from flop to hit; his 1943 collaboration with Leonard Bernstein on the innovative Fancy Free ballet evolved into Broadway's On the Town. It might even be said that Robbins choreographed this book, arranging for his associates to be interviewed by Long, and making available the coveted rehearsal tapes. A chapter on Broadway today brings down the curtain on this

marvelously entertaining and exuberant critical history. 15 b&w photos. (Dec.)Forecast: This fine book will be greeted with applause by the many Broadway buffs, show-tune collectors and musical mavens. Booksellers would do well to display it alongside Greg Lawrence's *Dance with Demons: The Life of Jerome Robbins* (Forecasts, Apr. 30).Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Several retrospective looks at the Great White Way have been published in the last year, including Steven Suskin's *Broadway Yearbook* (LJ 8/01) and the *New York Times Book of Broadway* (LJ 10/15/01). This title differs in several ways. Most important, rather than a Broadway overview, it is primarily a series of short biographical essays on choreographer-directors Agnes de Mille, Jerome Robbins, Bob Fosse, Gower Champion, Michael Bennett, and Tommy Tune, with Robbins getting the lion's share of the attention. Their creative lives are told in the context of their Broadway successes and failures. A critic of American and British literature and drama, Long is interested in how various dance and music styles made their way into the commercial theater of the time. Ultimately, although he writes in a lively, chatty, informal style, the price and narrow subject remove his book from the selection lists of smaller public libraries and into the realm of larger libraries and theater collections. J. Sara Paulk, Coastal Plain Regional Lib., Tifton, GA Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is an excellent introduction to the most vital and important Choreographer/Directors in the history of the Broadway stage. Unfortunately, it really should be taken as an introduction. Each of the Choreographers included could (and should) be a subject of volumes devoted entirely to their lives and their works. But this is a good way for someone not particularly knowledgeable about these gifted individuals in the Golden Time of Musical Theater History to gain a good basic knowledge of what true artists could accomplish.

Excellent Book

Great condition

Book came as expected. Haven't reviewed yet, as it is a gift. Have no complaints about the seller.

As with the word "Hollywood," the word "Broadway" refers less to a location than to a culture. In this

brilliantly written and thoroughly entertaining book, Robert Emmet Long examines several of Broadway's most productive, creative, and dynamic choreographers and choreographer-directors of that culture: Agnes de Mille, Jerome Robbins (to whom Long devotes three chapters), Bob Fosse, Gower Champion, Michael Bennett, and Tommy Tune. Long also includes an insightful Epilogue ("Broadway Today") followed by Notes and a first-rate Bibliography. Friends of mine who claim to "love" Broadway musicals have seen few of them performed on stage. What my friends really mean is that they appreciate the music written for those musicals which they probably first heard when seeing adaptations and/or listening to sound tracks from films such as *Carousel*, *The King and I*, *Oklahoma!*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Sound of Music*, and *South Pacific*. I consider myself fortunate having been able to see, live, the original cast performances of several of the musicals which Long discusses in his book. They include *The Bells Are Ringing*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Music Man*, *Pajama Game*, and *West Side Story*. Film adaptations of musicals can only suggest the energy and excitement of the choreography devised by those whom Long discusses in this book. What I especially appreciate is the fact that Long tells his reader so much about their personal lives as well as about their professional careers. Many of them collaborated on major musical productions. For example, as choreographer-director of *West Side Story*, Robbins worked closely with Hal Prince and Robert Griffith (co-producers), Leonard Bernstein (composer), Arthur Laurents (librettist), and Stephen Sondheim (lyricist). Throughout his career, Robbins was directly or indirectly involved with many of the musicals which were introduced during what Long characterizes as Broadway's "Golden Years." Today, given the development and production costs of new musicals as well as the negative impact of the economy on those who are prospective investors in them, there is legitimate concern about the fate of choreographer-directors. Does Long share that concern? "It is far too soon to write [their] obituary. With all these gleamings of fresh life in the theater recently, it is entirely possible that the choreographer-director will after all endure -- or more than endure, will go on to triumph again and again." Long carefully explains how exceptionally high creative standards were established on the Great White Way during the past 60 years by Agnes de Mille, Jerome Robbins, Bob Fosse, Gower Champion, Michael Bennett, and Tommy Tune, among others. My fervent hope is that, in years to come, others will accept the challenge and indeed triumph "again and again" as their Broadway ancestors once did.

I had such high hopes for this book, but reading it drove me crazy. I counted more than 50 factual errors, misspellings, grammar errors, homonym errors, misidentified songs, directors, characters, relationships, dates -- and those are just the ones I caught. This book needs an editor and a fact

checker, and the author needs to learn to spell Anne Bancroft's name, among others. It's an interesting subject, but how can you take the book seriously or trust any of its information when it's riddled with mistakes? I got the impression while reading this that the author has not seen or read about many of the shows he discusses -- he couldn't have and still made those mistakes. Don't waste your money on this awful book.

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