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MASCULINITY IN MUSICALS:

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE 1950S AND PRESENT DAY

A Capstone Experience/Thesis Project

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Bachelor of Arts with

Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

By

Emily M. Eisenbrey

* * * * *

Western Kentucky University

2011

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Approved by

Advisor
Department of Anthropology

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ABSTRACT

This project compares and contrasts ideas of masculinity in musicals from the 1950s to those of present day. Current musicals have allowed for more expressions of masculinity while musicals from the 1950s provided a narrower definition of masculinity. This paper explores the current perception that straight men don't enjoy musicals and breaks down why this perception exists. Multiple lines of evidence are used to examine the connection between masculinity and male audience attendance of musicals. These lines of evidence are: masculinity research, script analysis, performance analysis, reviews of musicals, and original surveys.

Keywords: masculinity, musical theatre, homosexuality, gender

Dedicated to my family, friends, and advisors.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Composer Leonard Bernstein once called musical theatre 'an art that arises out of American roots, out of our speech, our tempo, our moral attitudes, [and] our way of moving'" (Miller 2007:5). If musical theatre is a reflection of society, why is theatre attendance disproportionately female? According to a study on the demographics of Broadway audiences, conducted by the Broadway League in 2009, 66% of audience members are women (Davenport 2010). In a similar study on touring Broadway shows, 70% of audience members are women (Davenport 2009).

As an avid musical theatre fan, I wanted to discover why most men aren't interested in musicals. Have women always outnumbered men in Broadway audiences or is this a recent phenomenon? Through personal experience I have noticed that many of my male friends who attend and/or perform in musicals are gay. The question seemed almost as impossible to answer as "which came first the chicken or the egg?" Are heterosexual males avoiding musicals because the majority of musical theatre participants are women and gay men, causing a "feminization" of musicals, or have musicals always been feminine causing heterosexual men to avoid them and women and gay men to flock to them? A google and yahoo search quickly revealed that others are asking similar questions. The headings for links to websites included things like "do straight guys like

musicals," or "why straight men hate musicals," or "how 'gay' are musicals?" Straight men might enjoy musicals but the perception is that they don't.

I set out to research if ideas about masculinity in the United States might be causing the perception that musical theatre is a "feminine" activity, thus affecting audience attendance. The 1950s are known as the "golden age" of musicals because the large number of musicals being released at the time and the large number of audience members (Kantor 2004). Gender norms have changed significantly since the 1950s, so it seemed useful to consider how changing ideas about masculinity were reflected in musicals then and now. I researched reviews over musicals in the 1950s and their revivals in the 1990s and 2000s to see what critics focused on, to see if acting, singing, and dance had changed. I watched performances from the 1950s and present day in order to see if men appeared more masculine in one time period than in another. I then also read and watched several musicals from the 1950s and present day, to see if plots, themes or characters had changed to be geared more toward women. I administered a survey to 147 people, mostly in the college age range and people over the age of 56, to see how opinions of musicals differed.

The 1950s presented more rigid boundaries for masculinity while today more variation is allowed. While homosexuality was around in the 1950s, it was not considered a valid lifestyle. Talk about sexuality was more monolithic in the 1950s and men were not labeled as being gay when participating in feminine activities because homosexuality was silenced. Present musicals represent a wider array of male characters who may not fit into the stereotypical heterosexual masculine male image.

CHAPTER 2

MASCULINITY

In order to understand how musicals have allowed for more variation in expression of masculinity, masculinity must first be defined. There is no standard definition for what it means to be a man, but there are many behaviors that are considered masculine versus feminine. In the 1990s "sociologist Talcott Parsons defined male sex roles as 'instrumental' – that is, aggressive, competitive, rational – and female ones as 'expressive' – that is, nurturing, gentle, emotional, and non-ambitious, even fearful of success" (Buchbinder 1998:30).

Young men have their own opinions of what it means to be a man. In the documentary, *Tough Guise*[1], men are asked what it is to be a real man and they listed the following: strong, independent, intimidating, respected, athletic, and tough. Jackson Katz said men are placed within a narrow definition of masculinity which they must fit inside to be accepted. If you don't measure up to this definition you are called: pussy, bitch, fag, queer, soft, mama's boy, emotional, weak, wuss, and sissy (Bailey 2002). Men will strive

[1] *Tough Guise* – a documentary released in 2002 that examines how images of masculinity in the media have changed to represent men as muscular and violent, and how this effects how men interact with other people. It features Jackson Katz who has also written a book, *The Macho Paradox.*

for excessive masculinity – huge muscles, huge car, and lots of sex – in order to avoid any threat of not being masculine (Buchbinder 1994:36).

At a young age, boys are told by their parents, coaches, teachers, and the media that they must be tough. If a boy skins his knee and he cries, he's told, by older men, not to show any weakness, that it is womanly to cry (Bailey 2002). Crying is something children and women do. Since women and children are viewed as being weaker than men, men are not supposed to express emotions that would place them at the same level of weakness (Beneke 1997:57). The motto "take it like a man" is often taught to boys at an early age. A little boy will scrape his knee, start crying, and then be told that he needs to "suck it up" because boys don't cry (Beneke 1997:37). Boys learn quickly that it is an insult to be told "you throw like a girl" and they learn that they can't cry otherwise they are labeled as being a sissy. Being labeled as such will exclude a boy from the group. Boys want to fit in, so they are careful to mimic the appropriate "masculine" behavior (Buchbinder 1994:35). Men often put on a mask in front of other men, in order to look tough, but in other situations they will show their true emotions. In *Tough Guise* a girl said that her male friends act tough in public, but then they will cry in front of her (Bailey 2002). Men often have a best friend to confide in, or they confide in the women they date, but even in these instances men are careful not to sound too needy (Buchbinder 1994:37-38).

Katz says that the media has constructed an image of violence that says it is natural for men to be aggressive (Bailey 2002). Boys can be aggressive and hurt each other; this is okay because "boys will be boys." This is perpetuated by the media portrayal of men as innately aggressive. Parents should be happy that their son fights,

because he's being a normal boy (Bordo 1999:235). Part of the reason for this aggressive behavior is the belief that boys must endure hardships to become men because they aren't born masculine (Buchbinder 1994:2). The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence says that "proving masculinity may require frequent rehearsals of toughness, the exploitation of women, and quick aggressive responses" (Beneke 1997:38).

While fighting is considered a natural part of being men, touching other boys as an act of affection is taboo. Boys and girls can touch each other. Girls can touch other girls, but boys cannot touch other boys. Even hugs between men have a certain protocol. Viewing two men embracing is just as uncomfortable for men as the actual act of embracing another man. Other than giving "manly hugs," there are a few occasions, like sporting events, when men can touch. "At the moment of greatest male glory… men are able to be openly affectionate with each other, to hug and to pat each other more freely" (Beneke 1997:58). This moment generally occurs after events like the Super Bowl. When a group of men watch the Super Bowl together and their team wins, they'll often hug or bump chests. Sports players will often smack each other's butts after winning a game.

Sports prove manhood through endurance and danger. Baseball uses death metaphors to "suggest that baseball is about a continual struggle with symbolic danger" (Beneke 1997:139). Many believe that boys naturally enjoy sports and games because these things require activity and this activity is more masculine (Sexton 1969:118). The surveys I conducted support this. Most of the men, ages 18-35, who responded in surveys that they disliked musicals, said it was because they were bored by musicals and sat for too long. Of the 16 men who responded that they dislike musicals, 12 listed being bored

or sitting for too long. Women were less likely to say that. Only 5 women listed that musicals were boring. Eight men also listed sports as live events that they enjoy attending, but only one woman listed sports. Sporting events allow for more activity than something like a musical because it is not uncommon at sporting events for men to stand up and yell at the players. Also, men can relate to players in sporting events because they are considered masculine, while men might have more difficulty relating to the female and gay characters in musicals.

Unfortunately men are in a double bind; they are supposed to be aggressive and powerful, but they are also supposed to know when to be loving and kind. It can be difficult for men to know when it is okay for them to show vulnerability (Bordo 1999:242). The media has begun to show more instances of male vulnerability. In the 1997 movie *The Full Monty* (which recently was turned into a musical) the men show insecurities. One man openly reveals that he thinks he is unattractive. The men in the film also participate in non-traditional masculine activities such as dancing (Bailey 2002).

Other than films, music is another way for men to show more feelings. Katz said that popular music is one form of media that has shown many variations of masculinity. They write songs about relationships and are proponents for women's rights, but many of them are also considered masculine. Katz uses Garth Brooks as an example, because Brooks sings songs about love and openly talks about his childhood, but is also considered masculine (Bailey 2002). All forms of music allow singers to open up, to reveal things about themselves in a way that they can't by just speaking. Like popular singers and bands, musicals use songs to express several emotions that can't be expressed in dialogue. Many artists have used musicals as an avenue to express themselves. Even

popular bands have started to turn their music into musicals. The new musical *American Idiot* is made of songs by the popular band Green Day. The increased range of socially accepted expressions of masculinity could bode well for musical theatre by bringing larger audiences to musicals, especially men.

New rock musicals like *American Idiot* might bring new audience members to Broadway, but that might push other musicals out of the way. What about the musicals that focus heavily on dance? Rock musicals don't have as much dance in them, so while new rock musicals may have more male audience members, that doesn't mean there will be an increase in popularity of dance heavy musicals. How has the perception of dance changed to decrease its popularity among men? Most masculinity research on dance focuses on classical dance as opposed to dance in musicals. Ramsay Burt pinpoints a downhill slide for male classical dancers since the Victorian age. "It was the prudishness of Victorian gender ideologies that initially condemned male dancers" (Burt 2007:13). Dance was not the only form of art that became more restricted during the Victorian age. Art in general was considered "female" because it expressed emotion, while science was considered "male" because it was based on facts (Burt 2007:17). Anything that emphasized the male body was unacceptable. Male nude paintings and sculpture disappeared and clothing fashions changed so bodies wouldn't be as exposed. The outfits associated with ballet made male audience members uncomfortable (Burt 2007:11-12). "Victorian men, therefore, wished to be spectators who were not, themselves, objects of investigation for another's gaze" (Burt 2007:14). This idea that men do not want to be the object of others gaze can be seen presently in posters and advertisements where men are generally portrayed as active while women are passive (Burt 2007:45).

The body shape of men and women has also changed. In the 1950s women were full figured and men didn't have big bulky muscles. Now women are extremely thin and men look like they are on steroids. Men are taking up more space than women (Bailey 2002). This is connected to the idea that women are meant to be viewed and men are the viewers. Burt Ramsay posits that this is why men have a problem with male dancers. Dancers' attire allows the contours of the body to be viewed. If the body is then viewed by men, the men in the audience are viewing a male body (Burt 2007:47). This also relates to data collected in my survey that suggests men want to see musicals with women but not with other men. If a man is already disturbed by the male figure when viewing dancing, then it is even more disturbing to be sitting next to another male while thinking about the men on stage. If the revealing costume is the problem then why are male dancers costumes viewed as more sexual than costumes of wrestlers? Male ballet dancers lift female ballet dancers, while male wrestlers are touching other men. Wrestling, as an act of aggression, is a symbol of being tough, while dancing requires different skills that do not need aggression. Male wrestlers are allowed to wear anything they want to wear because the very act of wrestling is masculine enough to overcompensate for costumes.

Unlike wrestling, dancing has become wrapped up with sexuality. According to Ramsay Burt, homosexuality tends to be connected to dancing because a high percentage of male dancers are homosexual (Burt 2007:11). This could mean that homosexuals are drawn to dance more often than heterosexuals or it could mean that the perception of dance is that it is homosexual and therefore heterosexual men avoid it. This connection with homosexuality is a more recent phenomenon. Sexuality has not always been a topic of debate, so dancers have not always been criticized for it. This could explain the

decrease in male dancers recently because their sexuality is threatened. They don't want to be perceived as being gay (Burt 2007: 11-12).

While there are fewer male classical dancers than female dancers, male choreographers outnumber female choreographers (Gard 2006:4). As a choreographer you have control of the dance, whereas if you are just a dancer, someone else controls your movements. Since a part of masculinity is the ability to dominate others, choreography can be a way for men to take on a more masculine role while still being involved with dancing (Gard 2006:4). The role of the male dancer is different from that of the female dancer. For example, in ballet, beginning in the 1830s, male dancers became the "invisible role as support for the female dancer" (Gard 2006:48). Ballet focused more on appearing weightless and effortless, which didn't coincide with male dancers' desires to appear strong and agile (Gard 2006:47).

Some dancers are trying to change the image of male dancers. Choreographer, Bausch Sacre, in 1975, wanted to prove that men could be masculine and also dance. Sacre's dances emphasized the hard work put into dance. His moves exhausted the dancers, and they showed the audience their exhaustion instead of trying to hide it. His dances also showed men dominating women, harassing them, while the women were completely powerless (Burt 2007:142-143). It is unfortunate that Sacre, in an attempt to masculinize dancers, felt the need to perpetuate the image of violent masculinity. There should be other ways for male dancers to prove their masculinity without degrading women. Male dancers want to prove that dancers can also be tough. They have to lift women but make it look effortless. This requires strength and endurance (Burt 2007:42). Choreographer Ted Shawn tried to use "athletic, masculine movement to attract men to

dance" (Burt:2007:87). Efforts of choreographers to make dance more masculine have not yet been successful.

Present ideas of masculinity are focused on being tough and aggressive. This idea that men must be "tough" was also around in the 1950s, although that wasn't the main focus in the media. The 1950s were a changing time for men's and women's roles in America. Women had joined manufacturing factories during World War II and many didn't want to return to the domestic sphere. Men returning from the war had to push women back into the home so they could get their jobs back. Television shows, films, and advertisements in the 1950s tried to enforce gender norms by portraying women as housewives and men as workers providing for their families (Buchbinder 1994:8-9). This emphasis on women marrying and staying home can also be seen in many musicals. The woman starts out working, but by the end of the musical she has plans to quit her job and get married. In the musical, *Fiorello!,* Marie is a successful woman working for Fiorello and she is very good at her job, but then she wants to get married to the first man who asks her, no matter what he is like. In the song "The Very Next Man" she sings:

> And if he likes me
> Who cares how frequently he strikes me?
> I'll fetch his slippers with my arm in a sling
> Just for the privilege of wearing his ring.
> (Weidman 1960:134)

She's willing to marry a man who beats her, just so she will be married. Luckily the man she wants to marry, Fiorello, is a good man who won't beat her. Fiorello fires Marie so he can marry her, and she's happy with that. She would rather be his wife than work for him. Fiorello's first wife, Thea, was also a working woman who then quit her job after

marrying him. In *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, Rosemary sings the song "Happy to keep his dinner warm." She is a secretary, but would be "happy" to quit her job and support him in his. In *The Sound of Music* Maria ends up marrying Captain Von Trapp instead of becoming a nun, although, at least in this musical, she is still an active character because she helps the family escape from the Nazis. In the 1950s, women cooked, cleaned, and took care of the kids while men worked. This was supposed to make everyone happy.

Since marriage was so important for both men and women, it was strange when someone deviated from the norm. Men were supposed to want to have a wife to take care of them; women were supposed to want to be housewives. In the 1950s and 1960s men who didn't get married were assumed to be gay (Bordo 1999:113). Marriage was the determining factor in who was gay. This is a large contrast to present day where men can still be single and straight. People tried to pinpoint where homosexuality came from, mainly focusing on male homosexuality. Many believed that if a man was raised like a girl, had a bad relationship with his father, had an overbearing mother, and/or had no chance to interact with boys, then he was more likely to become gay (Sexton 1969:98). If a boy did too many "girly" things, people were afraid he would turn out gay. This relates back to why men avoid dancing and musical theatre since they are perceived as being feminine. Men don't want to attend too many musicals because then they might be labeled as being gay. The media often portrays men together at sporting events or at someone's house or a bar, drinking beer and watching a game. They don't show men going to the theatre together. Men must participate in more masculine activities than feminine activities. Men can do some feminine activities if they are already considered

masculine. Sexton uses her father as an example. He "was a professional boxer and athlete, and rather confidently masculine; yet he passed his leisure doing delicate embroidery work and writing poetry" (Sexton 1969:15). In the film version of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying,* the boss of the company has a passion for sewing which he hides. This successful man is embarrassed to admit that he knits because it is viewed as a female activity. Society places high expectations on men, expectations that they can't meet. In the 1950s men were told to be "dependable, brave, sweet, gentle, strong, and independent," constantly contradicting themselves (Bordo 1999:155).

The song "Soliloquy" from *Carousel* is another example of a musical reinforcing gender norms. Billy talks about what his son will be like, and how he will raise him. He says that he'll teach his son to wrestle. His son will never get pushed around because he'll teach his son how to stand up for himself. "And you won't see nobody dare to try to boss or toss him around" (Rodgers 1945). His son will grow up to be whatever he wants to be, whether that means doing hard labor or becoming President of the United States. He also says that his son's "mother can teach him the way to behave but she won't make a sissy out of him" (Rodgers 1945). When talking about his son, he emphasizes the fact that no one will ever boss him around. Then Billy realizes that he could have a daughter and he gets scared. The song becomes more tender. He says "you can have fun with a son but you gotta be a father to a girl" (Rodgers 1945). His description of his daughter is completely different from his son. She is sweet and pretty; she's a good girl. He says he has to shelter her. His sense of responsibility toward a daughter versus a son, is based on the idea that boys should be able to take care of themselves. Females need protection; males shouldn't need protection because they are strong.

As the song "Soliloquy" mentions, boys must be tough. This shows that aggression has been considered an important masculine quality for quite some time. Author Patricia Sexton's prevalent view of masculinity in her book is that, what is "necessary to masculinity is the willingness to fight on occasion" (Sexton 1969:198). We should encourage boys to be aggressive because that is how they become "strong and autonomous males" (Sexton 1969:198). In the musical, *Me and Juliet,* two men fight over a woman. Larry, the man that Jeanie wants to marry, doesn't want to fight, but Larry is forced to defend himself against an attack from Bob, Jeanie's overaggressive ex-boyfriend. Larry ends up winning the fight and the story ends happily. In *Oklahoma!* Jud, the antagonist, is extremely masculine. He is very strong and does hard labor. He also objectifies women and views them as sex objects. Curly, the protagonist has more layers, often engaging in verbal banter with Laurey. He shows that he can be tough but also that he cares deeply for Laurey and respects her opinion and intelligence. Jud attacks Curley and forces Curley to fight back to save himself and Laurey. Curly beats Jud in the fight and then marries Laurey. In both of these instances the man who wins the fight and then gets married is the one who didn't want to fight. The overly aggressive instigators of the fights are not the ones who win. The men that women choose to marry are the ones who are strong enough to defend themselves, but who aren't going around searching for a fight.

While marriage can still be a good way for men to prove that they are heterosexual, marriage is no longer the only way. There are men who remain bachelors their whole lives, who prove their heterosexuality through their multiple sexual conquests. C.J. Pascoe's book *Dude You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High*

School, Pascoe found that high school students were careful to follow gender norms so they wouldn't be labeled as a "fag" or a "loser." The men in this study defined being a "real man" as being a "stud at sports" and a "stud with the ladies." Boys had to show interest in sports and in women otherwise they were not manly (Pascoe 2007:87). Boys frequently spoke disrespectfully about women when they were around other boys, saying they wanted to have sex with lots of women. When these boys spoke to Pascoe one-on-one, they were more open about their feelings and they admitted that they didn't really want to have one night stands; they really wanted a relationship with a woman, but in front of other boys they couldn't admit that. Around their friends, they had to act tough and talk about sex. They were considered more manly if they had sex frequently with multiple women (Pascoe 2007:107). The one exception to sexual talk was if a boy abstained from sex for religious reasons. For instance, a boy could avoid talking about sex if he was a Christian (Pascoe 2007:110). Boys in high school sat around in class telling stories about their sexual conquests in order to sound manly in front of the other boys. It was impressive to talk about multiple partners and it was impressive if they were able to make the girl orgasm. Multiple sexual partners proved that they wanted to have sex a lot, and having the girl orgasm proved that they knew what they were doing (Pascoe 2007:84-85).

Many of the boys expressed their belief that controlling a woman's body was what it meant to be a man (Pascoe 2007:114). Sex is used as a metaphor to show the control that men have over women. Men, like their sexual organ, are viewed as powerful, hard, and able to penetrate barriers. Men penetrate women's barriers since women are soft and open. This idea of the man being able to penetrate is also why homosexuality

threatens many men. The idea that men can be penetrated, makes men more similar to women than they would like to be (Buchbinder 1994:42-43). The idea that real men want to have sex can also be seen in some musicals. *Grease* is a good example of a musical where the boys talk about having sex with multiple partners, but they don't actually do it. They are like the high school boys Pascoe observed. Danny loves Sandy and he only wants to be with her, but when around his friends he puts on this tough guy act and acts like he just wants to have sex with women.

Tomboys give insight into ideas of masculinity because their behavior is considered abnormal for girls, but is actually the way society believes boys should behave. Pascoe wrote about girls on the basketball team and girls in the Gay Straight Alliance in high school. The basketball girls were considered more like boys because they were athletic, wore baggy clothes, spit, and walked "gangsta style" (Pascoe 2007: 120). The girls said they wore baggy clothes because they were comfortable, not because they wanted to look like boys (Pascoe 2007:120-121). These girls also were more aggressive and louder than other girls, frequently cutting class and getting in fights. The aggression they displayed is similar to aggression displayed by boys (Pascoe 2007:122-123). Many of the girls who dressed and acted more like boys were assumed to be lesbians (Pascoe 2007:119). Masculinity is directly linked to liking girls, so women who are masculine are assumed to be lesbians. Having sex with women is synonymous to being a "real man."

Since sexuality is a large factor in who is masculine in the United States, it is difficult to label men who are not heterosexual. A man can play sports, have large muscles, and be tough, but be homosexual. Does that mean he is not masculine? In recent

politics, gay marriage has been debated, bringing the issue of homosexuality to the forefront of American's minds, which has made it more vital for young men to prove their masculinity, thus proving their heterosexuality. Men in the 1950s didn't have this high pressure to prove their sexuality and thus were more freely able to pursue all their interests, including ones that were considered more feminine, such as musicals. Older men today may not feel the pressure from homophobia that young men experience, because they have already proven their masculinity either through work or through marriage and having children.

According to Katz, recently, men have begun to feel threatened, both by women and gay men. Feminists movements have forced men to look at society differently and not all men want to do that (Bailey 2002). Until the 20th Century, Americans lived in a patriarchal society and men were content to keep it that way. As women gain more rights, power is being taken away from men which threatens men's ideas that they should be at the top. Some men would still like to keep women in the home "where they belong" (Buchbinder 1994:15-16). This is why men's bodies have become larger while women's bodies have become smaller in advertisements; men are trying to over compensate (Bailey 2002). Homosexuality is also threatening to men because more men are "coming out" and not all of them fit within the stereotype of the extremely feminine man (Buchbinder 1994:1-2). This scares men because it is easier to categorize heterosexual men as masculine and homosexual men as feminine. If masculine men can also be gay, then these categories don't fit anymore and it becomes impossible for men to define who is gay or straight, which leads to anxiety (Beneke 1997:145).

In the high school study conducted by Pascoe, "homophobia was synonymous with being a guy," but only homophobia toward men. Two women together is a sexual fantasy for men (Pascoe 2007:55). Homophobia restricts men from behaving certain ways. Since men are afraid of being labeled as gay, they avoid doing anything that others could call gay. Feminine "gaits or gestures, flamboyant or colorful dress, expressing affection toward other men… engaging in traditionally feminine activities like cooking or sewing" and expressing emotions are things that straight men are supposed to avoid (Beneke 1997:154). "Homophobia is the social mechanism which prohibits, or makes fearful, the idea of intimate contact or communication with members of the same sex" (Burt 2007:22). In the musical *Victor/Victoria* the King falls in love with Victor. He becomes convinced that Victor must be a woman simply because the King doesn't want to think that he is gay. A friend of Victoria says that since the Kings manhood is at stake, there is no telling what lengths he'll take to prove that Victor is a fraud. The King doesn't think he's gay but he starts to have doubts because he has trouble proving Victor is a woman. He comes to terms with his feelings and decides that he loves Victor regardless of Victor's sex, but he says he can't go back to Chicago with Victor because his reputation would be ruined. Even though the King knows that Victor is actually a woman, he doesn't want to go out in public with her dressed as a man because it makes him look less masculine.

The term "fag" is an insult and often the term "gay" is also a derogatory term. These two words are used to describe someone, or even something, that is inadequate. "Gay" can be used to say that something is stupid. In the high school where Pascoe did his study, some boys said they only used the terms "gay" and "fag" when they were

around other straight guys, and they often used those terms to joke around with each other. If a guy did something stupid or something that was too feminine, then he was told he was gay (Pascoe 2007:56-57). Calling someone a fag "literally reduced a boy to nothing" (Pascoe 2007:55). If a boy became uncomfortable by a situation where masculinity could be questioned, boys would often joke about being gay in order to show they definitely were not gay. For example, in a drama class some boys were forced to dance close to each other, so they jokingly made feminine gestures to reassure each other that they were all straight (Pascoe 2007:64). Men being uncomfortable dancing together could also transfer into watching other men dancing together, or touching each other in a musical. In order to feel comfortable watching such acts, they might need to avoid attending musicals with other men, or at least make fun of musicals when around other men.

At the high school where Pascoe conducted his study, there was a boy who was labeled as "the fag" because he was involved in "drama, the choir, and the Gay/Straight Alliance," and he was a dancer and choreographer. He also dressed differently with colorful hair extensions, mascara, and sometimes skirts (Pascoe 2007:65). He was part of the dance team. Other boys were on the dance team, but they did separate dance steps from the girls. Med did all the "physical' moves such as flips, holding up the girls, and spinning them around" (Pascoe 2007:69). This boy, on the other hand, did the same moves as all the girls. This included "sexually suggestive hip swivels, leg lifts, arm flares, and spins" (Pascoe 2007:69). This boy experienced a lot of bullying throughout school, especially at sporting events. Other boys commented that they thought "the fag" was

disgusting and that they would refuse to go to prom if they knew he was going to be there (Pascoe 2007:69-70).

Ramsay Burt writes that since many male dancers are assumed to be gay, less boys are learning how to dance. "Homophobic prejudice can… 'limit the range of male dancing severely'" (Burt 2007:29). In Pascoe's studies of high schools he observed that drama and dance were safe spots for gay students. Boys in drama classes didn't have to worry about their behavior, but instead could "enact a variety of gender practices" (Pascoe 2007:78). In one instance, Pascoe observed boys preparing stage makeup for their production of *Carousel*. Even though the boys were applying makeup, something that would be considered feminine, and even though they were singing and dancing, the boys never made jokes about being gay (Pascoe 2007:78-79). These boys were able to just be themselves around each other, but when they left the safe space of the theatre, they were once again at the bottom of the social hierarchy (Pascoe 2007:80-81).

In America, in the 1950s up to present day, masculinity has been defined by being tough, aggressive, and independent. Due to recent gay and women's rights movements, it has become more vital for contemporary men to prove their masculinity. In the 1950s, a man did not have to worry about being labeled as gay simply because he participated in a few feminine activities, as long as he got married. Marriage was reinforced in the media as something everyone must do. After the sexual revolution in the 1960s and 1970s marriage became just one of several options for people. Men today do not have to be married to prove they are masculine, but they must prove it other ways. Since men use the term "fag" and "gay" more often to degrade other men, men must more consciously

pursue proper masculine activities. This means that participating and/or viewing feminine activities such as dancing, and musical theatre, are often avoided by men.

CHAPTER 3

SCRIPT ANALYSIS

Since ideas of masculinity have changed since the 1950s, I wanted to see how these changes were reflected in the content of musical librettos[2]. The material of movies has changed since the 1950s to reflect new ideas of masculinity, portraying men as more muscular (Bailey 2002). Were these changes similar to changes that occurred in musicals? I focused on four scripts from the 1950s and four from between 1990 and present: *West Side Story* (1956), *My Fair Lady* (1956), *Fiorello!* (1960), *Me and Juliet* (1953), *Hairspray* (2002), *Next to Normal* (2010), *Avenue Q* (2006), and *Urinetown* (2003). These plays are all very different from each other, giving a good variety. I also used some of my previous analysis from watching musicals and also from plays I have read previously.

Script analysis revealed some changes in characters and plots that may account for a changed perception of musicals. One change that has occurred is the continual integration of dance, song, and dialogue. The plot has become more important. Musicals such as the *Zeigeld Follies*, in the early 1900s, were all about chorus girls. These shows provided entertainment both for women and men because of the beautiful chorus girls

[2] Libretto – the text of a work (as an opera) for the musical theatre (Merriam-Webster 2011).

who sang, danced, and dressed in extravagant costumes. These shows also had elaborate sets and lighting. These shows didn't have solid plots, but with the new technology being used for spectacle and the beautiful women, they didn't need plots to be successful (Kantor 2004). Chorus girls continued to be a large part of musicals, even after plots became an important part of the show. When *Oklahoma!* hit the stage in 1943, people expected to see a line of dancing chorus girls starting the show. Instead, the show opened with an old woman churning butter (Flinn 1997:219). More musicals started finding new ways to integrate dance to help further the plot.

Dance routines became more complicated and less focused on pretty chorus girls. In the 1950s, shows like *West Side Story* and *Guys and Dolls* have full dances that don't even have any women in them. The dances are used to tell a story. In *West Side Story* dance is used to portray fighting between gangs. In *Guys and Dolls* dance is used to represent a craps game. Most recent musicals don't have large choruses and they don't have chorus lines. Some musicals still have large casts like *Hairspray,* but other musicals only have small casts. *Next to Normal* has a cast of six. With the loss of the chorus line, which was typically made up of long legged young women, have musicals lost male viewers? There aren't any statistics on the number of men who attended early Vaudeville shows and musicals that had chorus lines. Referencing back to "male gaze," it is possible that the lack of women could draw men away from shows. Women as objects aren't the focus of new musicals. In the interview with Arthur Laurents, the interviewer says "they don't seem to use choreography as much anymore. True?" and Laurents responds that it is because musicals have changed so you can't just have random dance scenes for no reason anymore (Bryer and Davison 2005:131-2). Several of the older musicals have

parts for dance breaks that may not be very relevant to the plot. The older musicals also tend to have more characters needed for chorus parts. This directly affects the number of female versus male characters in the play. 1950s musicals needed more females for the chorus. This, however, didn't mean that there were many female characters relevant to the plot. Men tended to fill a more important role as characters.

Of the musicals that I read and viewed, from both time periods, women did not marry the overly aggressive man. The men that the women end up with are all nicer than the other men in the play. This shows that women don't want the really aggressive men. Since the plot of many older musicals revolved around marriage, some of the female characters were a bit passive. They fall in love and get married, while the men prove themselves or do something. Moving away from marriage in newer musicals, women have more freedom to pursue other goals, without relying on men. Although marriage might not be the main focus of the plot, romance still is important. Very few musicals lack at least some type of romance. *My Fair Lady* doesn't have a romantic plot, but Freddy loves Eliza and sings a love song, "On the Street Where You Live." There is also a slight romance between Eliza and Henry Higgins, which causes Eliza to return to Henry and for Henry to be upset when she leaves him. Some musicals like the *King and I* only touched upon a slight romance between the King and Anna, and a romance between two minor characters. *Man of La Mancha* was the only play from the 1950s that didn't have romance. From the new plays, only one play did not have romance, *Passing Strange*. Even though this one did not have romance, sex was discussed, and there were some relationship issues.

The type of music in musicals has also shifted. People go to musicals because they enjoy the music. If the music is outdated then people will avoid seeing musicals. With the popularity of rock music among old and young generations, more musicals are starting to incorporate rock into musicals. According to the New York Times in May 2010, many musicals are rock musicals, some with plots, and others set simply as jukebox musicals. *Jersey Boys, Rock of Ages, Passing Strange, Spider-Man, American Idiot, Rent,* and *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* are a few musicals mentioned in the article (Pareles 2010).

The most significant difference between scripts from the 1950s and present, are the number of gay and crossdressing characters. Crossdressing and gay characters are not described in the 1950s scripts that I read, but I've noticed many recent musicals have subject matter related to these topics, or at least have one gay or crossdressing character. This is not to say that there were no crossdressing and gay characters in the 1950s, but the musicals that became blockbuster hits on Broadway did not contain any. Right away I identified several characters, in the 1990s and 2000s, that would force an actor to cross-dress or play a gay role. In *Hairspray* the mom is played by a man. In *Avenue Q* Gary Coleman is played by a woman and there is also a gay character, Rod, who doesn't want to admit he is gay. The audience knows he is gay the whole show and the writers use this as a joke throughout the musical. There is a song "If you were gay" where Rod's roommate tries to get him to admit he is gay. Later, Rod sings a song about his girlfriend in Canada to try to convince people he is not gay, although it is obvious he is lying. The show also makes jokes about stereotypical gay men. Rod sits down to read his favorite book: "Broadway musicals of the 1940s." Later in the musical, Christmas Eve, tells Rod

that "gay people make major contribution[s] to art and philosophy and literature," when Rod replies that he is a republican investment banker, she tells him to stay in the closet (Whitty 2006:115). In the musical *Tick, Tick… Boom!* there is a gay character. In the musical *Rent* there are gay and lesbian characters and a transvestite. The musical *Victor/Victoria* is all about a woman pretending to be a man so she can become famous on stage as a male crossdressing as a woman. A man then falls in love with her and is convinced she is a woman because otherwise that would be mean he is gay. Then it turns out that one of his bodyguards, a very tough, masculine man, is gay.

When a heterosexual actor plays a gay or crossdressing character, it is possible that audience members will assume the actor himself is gay. Arthur Laurents says, "when you see a play where there's an actor playing a gay man, if you look at the program you will find out how many children he has and how he was on the football and hockey teams. You don't see that unless an actor's playing a gay man" (Bryer and Davison 2005:139). Arthur Laurents also comments on the audience reaction to the musical *La Cage aux Folles* saying that it is difficult for straight actor's to play a gay man unless he is extremely confident in his sexuality. He said it was difficult for audiences to watch for the first time, because it was the first show to have two men touching, kissing, and singing love songs to each other (Bryer and Davison 2005:140). He also comments that the real problem is seeing sexuality portrayed between two men. Audiences don't tend to have a problem with subject matter related to homosexuality as long as there is no physical touching (Bryer and Davison 2005:140). Crossdressers were not mentioned in any of the scripts I read and they did not crossdress in any of the performances I viewed. The musicals I read and watched were blockbusters on Broadway. Anybodys in *West*

Side Story is a tomboy and she is the closest thing to being a crossdresser. She was tormented the whole play and told to act and dress like a girl. She received so much criticism just for being a tomboy. Now, tomboys aren't unusual.

Musicals from the 1950s did not diverge from the heterosexual male norm the way musicals do now. In the 1950s, musicals reinforced traditional gender norms, portraying women seeking a man to marry. The musicals ended with the woman choosing a man over her own independence. Recent musicals not only show independent women who don't need men, but they also have effeminate men. Men are less likely to go see something if it threatens their way of life, therefore men could have gone to musicals in the 1950s without threat, but now it would depend on what musical they go to see.

CHAPTER 4

PERFORMANCES

When I started viewing musical theatre performances for this project, I started watching whatever recordings of live performances I could find. This made it difficult to compare the performances because I was able to watch full productions of musicals from the 1990s up to present day, but I was only able to watch clips and select songs from musicals from the 1950s and 1960s. Comparing a single song from the 1950s to a whole production from present, didn't work. Watching a clip on youtube of John Raitt singing "Soliloquy" in 1952 on a television program, led me to a video of Hugh Jackman singing the same song. I watched both videos, recorded how deep their voices sounded, if I thought they were baritone or tenor, what their costumes were, their posture, and their gestures. I watched these videos two more times to record anything else I missed the first time. I then searched other pairs of performances of songs, watching all the performances three times and taking notes. I watched "Some Enchanted Evening" sung originally by Ezio Pinza and Mary Martin, then sung by Paulo Szot and Kelli O'Hara; "Tonight" sung by Larry Kert and Carol Lawrence, then by Matt Cavenaugh and Josefina Scaglione; "Shall We Dance" by Yul Brynner and Patricia Morrison, then by Lou Diamond Phillips and Donna Murphy; "Impossible Dream" by Richard Kiley, then by Brian Stokes

Mitchell. After watching these clips, I had opinions about which performances were better, and in some instances, who I thought was more manly. In order to try to be more broaden my analysis I read through some of the comments under the videos to see what other people's opinions were.

While watching John Raitt and Hugh Jackman sing "Soliloquy" I thought that both men seemed manly, but in comparison I would have to say that John Raitt seemed more manly simply because John Raitt had a deeper and stronger voice, holding more resonance than Hugh Jackman. The notes are the same in the song, so it is not as if Hugh Jackman sings it higher. His voice just doesn't seem to carry as much authority as John Raitt's. (The audio quality is better on the John Raitt performance, which could account for why Hugh Jackman doesn't sound as powerful.) The last note of the song is particularly strong when John Raitt sings it, although it is powerful in both cases. Their appearance doesn't make either one look any more manly than the other. John Raitt has a tighter shirt on and he is clean shaven while Hugh Jackman has a beard and he is wearing a loose fitting striped shirt. John Raitt looks a bit more muscular simply because his shirt is tight enough to show his muscles (General Foods 1952; Carnegie Hall 2002).

The comments on these videos were interesting and expressed people's ideas about masculinity and changing singing styles since the 1950s. First, many people debated whether or not John Raitt was a tenor[3] or a baritone[4]. From listening to him, I was convinced he was a baritone because he seemed too deep for a tenor, but according

[3] Tenor – the highest natural adult male singing voice; *also*: a person having this voice (Merriam-Webster 2011).

[4] Baritone – a male singing voice of medium compass between bass and tenor (Merriam-Webster 2011).

to several people, he was a tenor. Atasteofbroadway said "John himself would tell you that he was a lyric tenor, but that money back then was as a baritone." Most of the comments on the John Raitt video said that it was disappointing that men don't sing like that anymore. Chriswren9 commented that "I'm almost sure [John Raitt] would not be pleased with these weak amplified voices of what are 'now' called leading men. As in his day the leading men could break our leading men in half over their knees!" Others reference Hugh Jackman's performance and say that Jackman can't compare. Macraeman said "John Raitt had Big lungs and Bigger balls – and wasn't afraid to use 'em – and knew EXACTLY what he was doing… absolutely Masterful" (General Foods 1952). Reference to John Raitt as having "big balls" is a strong indicator that the viewer finds John Raitt manly, since masculinity is often defined in terms of their genitalia.

Many of the comments under Hugh Jackman's video were similar. Some people commented that Hugh Jackman is a better actor than some previous musical theatre actors such as Gordon MacRae, but that Jackman can't match MacRae's voice. Some people said they enjoyed Jackman. FitandBushy said "I really like Jackman's interpretation. If feels more modern and less melodramatic than some earlier versions." Other people disagreed; Kjwactor said "I'm a fan of Hugh Jackman's, but this was NOT some of his best work. It's great to have a big voice and lots of technique, but he was all over the place. And he was rushing the orchestra… never a great choice." Other people didn't think anyone should be comparing singers from today to those from the past. The general theme was that, while Hugh Jackman's voice may not be as great as someone like John Raitt, his acting is far better (Carnegie Hall 2002). I personally would disagree with

the comments on acting. I thought both men acted the songs well. I'd have to see more of their performance of *Carousel* in order to make any acting critiques.

My first reaction to the two performances of "Some Enchanted Evening" is that Ezio Pinza and Mary Martin were a lot older than Paulo Szot and Kelli O'Hara. Age could explain the differences in the two performances, because Martin and Pinza could have been singing for longer and had stronger voices. I analyzed both the men and women's performances. My opinion for the females was that Mary Martin's voice sounded a bit lower than O'Hara's, but it also had more power than O'Hara's. I enjoyed listening to O'Hara's voice more, but I felt Martin was more powerful and I preferred watching her. Ezio Pinza and Paulo Szot both had deep powerful voices, but I thought Pinza had more power behind his voice. He had a booming voice. It seemed that the revival focused a lot on acting and movement, which actually seemed to take away from the characters. Martin and Pinza barely moved during the performance, but their singing was so powerful and contained such emotions, that it was more believable that they were in love than the performance of Szot and O'Hara, with the superfluous movement. As far as appearance is concerned, I would say that O'Hara looked more dressed up and feminine than Martin, but Szot also looked more dressed up. Szot's jacket looked a bit too big for him which made him look a little weak, while Pinza wore a shirt that fit well, making him look stronger. Mary Martin and Ezio Pinza both are stronger singers (Youtube N.d. and The View N.d.). Since musical training has changed since the 1950s, this difference could point to an overall lack of strength among males and females, not just males. The effect of this change is different between males and females. Men and women are held to different standards. Since males are meant to take up more space, their

voices should also take up more space, while females should sound more timid. Softer singing would make a singer sound more feminine.

There was only one comment on the Martin and Pinza video that related to their singing. Waynebrasler said, "the originals and no one ever topped them. I've seen countless productions and Pinza and Martin simply could not be equaled" (Youtube N.d). Comments under the revival were mostly positive. Many thought the two sang very well, but there were also many comments saying that Pinza and Martin were better. MusDMA said, "he's no Ezio Pinza – not even close. She, on the other, is amazing as Nellie" (The View N.d.). Yet again, the male in the revival is compared to the original and deemed unworthy.

The performances of "Tonight" are not even close in quality. I would not pay to see the revival of *West Side Story* because this performance by Matt Cavenaugh and Josefina Scaglione is appalling. Carol Lawrence and Larry Kert are better actors and singers than Cavenaugh and Scaglione. Cavenaugh's voice was so weak, so quiet, and he didn't enunciate at all. I didn't understand half of what he said, even though he had a mike up to his mouth, and he used too much vibrato[5]. Scaglione also was quiet and she was breathy and nasal. Neither of them had any power behind their voices. Cavenaugh could barely be heard when Scaglione was singing because he was that quiet (Tony Awards Nominations Concert 2009). Carol Lawrence and Larry Kert, on the other hand, were amazing. The power from both of their voices was incredible. It was beautiful the way Lawrence hit those extremely high notes. Lawrence and Kert's acting also made me

[5] Vibrato – a slightly tremulous effect imparted to vocal or instrumental tone for added warmth and expressiveness by slight and rapid variations in pitch (Merriam-Webster 2011).

believe they were really in love, while Cavenaugh and Scaglione made me feel nothing. Lawrence and Kert were also older than Cavenaugh and Scaglione, with more experience, which might be part of the reason they were far better than the younger actors. I definitely think Kert was more manly than Cavenaugh, partly because Kert was muscular and looked like a man while Cavenaugh was scrawny and looked like a scared little boy (The Ed Sullivan Show 1958; Tony Awards Nomination Concert 2009).

The comments under Kert and Lawrence praised the two singers. MusicloveBH said "the original is always the best. I feel like even broadway these days isn't the greatest. People were much more talented back then." Sonnet30 said "no other production of WSS including the film can match the passion, danger and romance of this original cast." More people commented that only the originals were great. Marctull2 said "these two will always be Tony and Maria. All others are imitations" (The Ed Sullivan Show 1958). Comments under the revival were much more varied ranging from people loving Cavenaugh and Scaglione to others hating the singers. Lolomch said "disappointing! She was too nasal and [there was] no warmth in either of their voices." Spc1689 said "this guy did a horrible job as Tony. He was not believable. His voice is not strong at all." TinyShadow2 said "his voice is annoying and her voice is weak." Adijam08 said "who would believe this is actually Broadway quality performing. This is like a limp high school production and the man as Tony, in particular, is totally hopeless." Other comments praised them. Rogerbartbiggestfan1 said "they are by far the best Tony and Maria ever" and xxacxx2013 said "Josefina Scaglione is SO Amazing. Her voice is super high but she's incredible." Bobbyjj331 said "they compliment [sic] each other incredibly and both of their voices absolutely soar together" (Tony Awards Nominations Concert

2009). People praised the originals more than the revivals, and Scaglione was praised more often than Cavenaugh. Many of the comments said that Cavenaugh's voice was too weak.

The performance of "The Impossible Dream" is the one time that I actually thought the revival was more powerful than the original. I thought both performers interpreted the song their own way, Brian Stokes Mitchell didn't attempt to copy Richard Kiley's performance. Richard Kiley sings softer and looks more like he's dreaming, just wondering about the future. Kiley is on stage alone, while Mitchell is singing to Aldonza, which changes the dynamic and could be the reason why Mitchell sings with more power. Mitchell moves around the stage with small, frail steps, but his voice is deep and loud. Kiley stands, leaning on his staff, looking weak and sad (Tony Awards N.d; The Ed Sullivan Show 1966).

There are no comments for Richard Kiley's performance and very few comments for Brian Stokes Mitchell. They are all positive comments. Ninarosie said "truly one of the most inspirational songs ever! Brian Stokes Mitchell does the best version that I've ever heard." Tappingtoes01 said "Brian Stokes Mitchell is brilliant! Just an amazing singer" (Tony Awards N.d).

Yul Brunner and Patricia Morrison were filmed years after they first performed on Broadway so they both look older than Lou Diamond Phillips and Donna Murphy. Yul Brunner's age makes him seem like a more powerful and wise ruler than Lou Diamond Phillips, who also looks younger because he has hair while Brunner is bald. The video of Brunner and Morrison is much longer, containing dialogue along with the song, giving more characterization and showing the power the King possesses. From the short clip of

Phillips, he seems to be more curious, and less powerful than Brunner's interpretation of the King, but Phillips still has a deep voice that commands Donna Murphy to dance with him. I think Brunner looks more powerful than Phillips because Phillips slouches a bit, while Brunner always stands very tall. Brunner's age also gives him more authority (Tony Awards 1971; Tony Awards 1996).

There were only a few comments on the Brunner and Morrison clip, and they mostly questioned what year it was filmed. Crazygfish said "Yul was and is the only King" (Tony Awards 1971). There weren't many comments on the Phillips and Murphy clip either. Those comments mostly commented on how wonderful Donna Murphy was. SpyroTheifGirl said "Donna Murphy is the perfect Anna. Her voice was meant for the role" (Tony Awards 1996).

From comments on the clips, it seems that most people think that acting has greatly improved since the original production of the shows, but that singing is not what it used to be. All of the performers had fans that thought they were fantastic, and many also were criticized, including women, but more criticism was placed on the men in revivals. More comments stated that men like John Raitt, Gordon MacRae, Alfred Drake, and Ezio Pinza would always be the greatest singers. Women were not compared to previous performers, but were instead judged purely on their own ability. Women were able to find their own style, but men were constantly being compared. Age also was a contributing factor in singing ability. Some of the singers like Ezio Pinza and Mary Martin were much older than the actors in the revivals. Age adds a maturity to the voice which can add strength to the voice, to help make a males voice sound more authoritative. The singers that I found to be the weakest, Josefina Scaglione and Matt

Cavenaugh, were cast to better mirror the actual age of Maria and Tony in *West Side Story.* Larry Kert and Carole Lawrence were older than the characters they were playing. Using younger actors to fill the roles may be more effective visually, but this means that these singers don't have as much experience and as much strength as previous singers. The increased emphasis on acting and "realism" in musicals today, may be affecting the quality of singing. A revival of *West Side Story* with older actors may have been better quality. The weaker voices of men from revivals might be affecting how men are perceived in musicals. Weaker voices suggest that the men in revivals are weaker than the men in the original productions.

CHAPTER 5

NEW YORK TIMES REVIEWS

Several shows from the 1950s have recently been revived on Broadway. Comparing the reviews of four Broadway shows to their revivals gives insight into what aspects of shows critics focus on. I chose New York Times reviews because there is an archive of articles dating back to 1851, so I knew I could find reviews. I chose the reviews based off if there was a review of a revival and an original. Not all musicals from the 1950s were revived. I searched for plays that I knew the names of, so that is why they were all blockbuster hits. The review for the original production of *West Side Story* focuses on how movement is used to tell the story. The use of dance to reveal plot is the only part of the production that the critic, John Martin, enjoyed. He says that the show "has no 'names,' no tunes, few laughs, and almost no girls" (Martin 1957). Early musicals had dance numbers set aside just for lines of chorus girls. It was unusual to see a musical with more male dancers than female dancers. Dance is the only thing Martin focuses on in his review, referencing how the dancers' muscles tensed with each movement. "The cast acts and reacts in terms of movements, and that is the most direct medium that exists for the conveying of inner states of feeling" (Martin 1957). Martin does not refer to any individual actors in his review and the acting and singing are not mentioned (Martin 1957).

The revival received a positive review which focused more on the acting than on the dancing. Ben Brantley's review states that the production "lovingly replicates Mr. Robbin's balletic choreography" (Brantley 2009). The show gave a "tenderhearted awareness of the naked vulnerability of being young." It was described as being softer, and the gangs looked more like cute kids, not violent gangs. Brantley describes Tony's singing as "more tender, wondering and introspective than that of most Tony's, with less of the regulation leading-man virility" (Brantley 2009). He is less virile[6] than previous Tony's. By calling Cavenaugh less virile, Brantley implies that he is less masculine. Tony is also described as having a "goofy, woolgathering and slightly shy side," while Bernardo is described as "full of citrusy zest and acerbity" (Brantley 2009). When talking about Maria, Brantley says the audience gets a "sense that she's the one who's really in charge." Tony isn't described as being very masculine, just as being a scared little boy. Overall, Brantley says the show is softer than it was when it first opened in 1957 and makes the audience feel more "parental protectiveness" for the gangs (Brantley 2009).

The review for the revival has a wider scope than the review for the original production. It refers to Arthur Laurents attempts as director to incorporate Spanish into the play. It talks about costumes, dance, singing, and acting. In an interview Arthur Laurents says that when he does a revival of a show he tries to make it fresh. For *West Side Story* he said that he cast younger actors and made the scenes more sexual to be more relevant in today's society (Bryer 2005:139). It doesn't seem as if he accomplished his goal of making it sexier because Brantley didn't mention any sex appeal. Instead, his

[6] Virile - having the nature, properties, or qualities of an adult male: capable of functioning as a male in copulation" also defined as "characteristic of or associated with men: masculine (Merriam-webster).

description made the characters seem too young to even fully understand sex. The two reviews are very different. The 1957 review focuses mainly on dance and doesn't talk about individuals, while the 2009 review barely mentions dance and instead focuses on the characters. This could be because the choreography was groundbreaking when it first came out, but now it is just characteristic of *West Side Story*, nothing new that needs to be mentioned. The reference to the strength of Maria as a character in the revival reflects how women have gained more independence in society since the 1950s. Tony was the stronger character in the original production, because in the 1950s men were dominant, but with changing gender ideology, female characters can be represented differently in 2009. Tony's lack of "virility" in the revival also points to a decrease in masculinity in his character.

Guys and Dolls received an excellent review by Brooks Atkinson when the show opened in 1950. Atkinson emphasizes how well everything fits together. The dancing, songs, and dialogue all work well together. Atkinson praises the actors for being impossible to separate from their characters. "There was never a more grotesque crew of deadbeats on the stage than the harum-scarum characters of 'Guys and Dolls'" (Atkinson 1950). The colloquial language runs through the dialogue and the songs making it realistic, and even the dances have an energy that reflects the feelings of the gamblers. "Sam Levene's desperation and ingenuity are Nathan Detroit" and "Robert Alda's slick braggadocio is Sky Masterson" (Atkinson 1950). "Mr. Kidd's nervous, cheap-jack ballets express the theme" (Atkinson 1950). The revival of Guys and Dolls received a bad review from Ben Brantley. He described the acting as tentative creating the "impression of an entire cast of understudies" (Brantley 2009). The actors needed to speak with a

"tough-guy vernacular," but they didn't understand how to do it correctly so instead they just sounded confused. Brantley describes Oliver Platt, playing Nathan Detroit, "his singing voice is agreeable, small but smooth, but it does not define a character. His hands often glued to the sides of his jacket, he has the stricken, nauseated expression of someone terrified of being fingered as an imposter" (Brantley 2009). All of the actors are described as being stiff and awkward on stage. Love duets were sung in "rigid profile." The production had bad directing, distancing the audience from the show by adding in a man at a typewriter, observing the show (Brantley 2009). The reference in the 2009 review repeatedly states that the men looked unsure of themselves and that this took away from their characterization of being tough men. This directly reflects that masculinity depends not just on being tough but also on not backing down, and being strong.

Brooks Atkinson covers everything in his review of *Pajama Game*. Atkinson gave the show a good review. John Raitt sings with a "deep voice and the romantic manner" which is well suited for the lead role (Atkinson 1954). "Bob Fosse's ballets and improvised dance turns seem to come so spontaneously out of the story" (Atkinson 1954). He describes "Eddie Foy Jr., a true clown who can strut standing still, is immensely funny," and he also did an "amiable soft-shoe dance" with Reta Shaw (Atkinson 1954). The revival also received a good review from Ben Brantley. He writes that the show is full of "sexual chemistry," but the dance numbers lacked energy which made them appear more generic. The leading male, Mr. Connick "brings moodier, more intricately expressive vocal shadings to his songs" versus the "virile, firm-voiced tradition of John Raitt" (Brantley 2006). John Raitt is described as virile, just like in the review of *West Side Story* where past Tony's are described as virile. This indicates that

actors from the 1950s displayed more characteristics of masculinity. Mr. Connick is described as being more expressive, similar to how Cavenaugh is described as "introspective." Both reviews focus on all aspects of the show, but Brantley's review continues to reference how sexy the show was. Both reviews mention dances, focusing mostly on female dancers, but does not mention male dancing as Atkinson did in 1954.

South Pacific received an incredible review from Brooks Atkinson when he describes it as "tenderly beautiful idyll of genuine people inexplicably tossed together in a strange corner of the world; and the music, the lyrics, the singing, and the acting contribute to this mood" (Atkinson 1949). Atkinson describes "Mr. Pinza's bass voice is the most beautiful" and he sings 'One Enchanted Evening' with "infinite delicacy of feeling and loveliness of tone" (Atkinson 1949). Myron McCormick is described as a "braggart, scheming Seabee, and plays it with great comic gusto." Also mentions that the song "There is nothing like a dame" should be a theme song for men who served in the war (Atkinson 1949). In the revival Brantley describes Mr. Szot singing 'One Enchanted Evening' "not as a swoon-making blockbuster, but as a measured and honest consideration of love" (Brantley 2008). Brantley says that every song has layers to it and a depth that makes it, not just another revival, but a fresh new show as well. All the large song and dance numbers are "made to feel ordinary, as if part of a daily routine" instead of being played just as crowd pleasers (Brantley 2008). He says what is most impressive about the show is "how deeply, fallibly and poignantly human every character seems" (Brantley 2008). The 2008 review talks more about the show as a whole, instead of mentioning individuals. Both reviews mention how heartfelt 'One Enchanted Evening' was sung.

The play reviews reveal a trend of focusing more on acting than in the 1950s, while dancing is mentioned less than in the 1950s. While *West Side Story* has many dance scenes that are integral to the plot, the review of the revival only makes a small reference to dancing. The first scene in the musical is a fight enacted through dance, but the revival glances over the significance of dance. The review of *South Pacific*, is the one revival that actually mentions dance as being a reason why the musical was so well done. For the revivals, the reviewer focuses mainly on how acting portrays emotions, even though these musicals have dance scenes that can express these emotions better if the dancing is executed correctly. Since non-dance rock musicals are becoming more of a norm, shying away from dance, it might explain why reviews refer to dance less often. The norm of focusing on acting over dancing is also mentioned before in the section on performances. Also, the men in revivals are described as being less masculine, but not in a bad way. Brantley mentions virility in his review of *West Side Story* and *Pajama Game.* He says that men who played those roles in the past were more virile, and since virile is defined as characteristic of masculinity, it implies that they were more masculine. The men in the revivals have new acting styles that are described as "expressive" and "introspective," but these are good reviews. Not being virile is not considered a bad thing.

CHAPTER 6

SURVEYS

In order to gauge interest in musical theatre, I conducted a survey containing 19 questions asking people if they like musicals and who they would take with them to musicals. The survey can be viewed in the appendix. I surveyed a total of 147 people ranging in age from 18 to 90 years old, during August to October of 2010. I attempted to get an even number of male and female participants, but females outweighed males. I divided the results into three different age categories: 18-35, 36-55, and over 56 years of age. In the 18-35 age category I received 47 surveys from females and 40 from males. From the 36-55 age category there were 11 females and 9 males. From people over the age of 56 there were 31 females and 9 males. I had a small number of people in the 36-55 age category because I was trying to focus on college students and people over the age of 65. My goal in targeting this group was to get the young generation, people affected by modern ideas of masculinity, and compare it to people who would have grown up in the 1950s with those ideas of masculinity. Many of the surveys were conducted on WKU campus, and completed by people between the age of 18 and 22. I would have liked to have found more men over the age of 36, but these were all I was able to collect. The reasons for this are partly due to the locations I chose to do the surveys and also partly because several men refused to participate. I took surveys into two sociology classes at WKU, passed them out to residents in McLean Hall, went to Greenwood Mall, Bowling

Green Retirement Home, Blairs Ballroom in Louisville and St. Steven Lutheran Church in Louisville.

Two questions on the survey related to how often participants attend theatre events. The first question is "How often do you attend musicals?" The responses are recorded in Table 1 below, in black on the left side. The majority of people answered that they rarely attend musicals. Most people have attended at least a few musicals but the largest percentage of people who never attended a musical belong to the males aged 18-35 category. For the second question "How often do you attend plays," the responses are recorded in red in the right hand side of each column in Table 1. Yet again, most people responded rarely. Less people responded "never" for seeing plays than they did for seeing musicals. In a later question, people are asked to choose between seeing a musical or a play and the majority of people choose musical, so the statistics for attendance of musicals and plays does not directly reflect whether or not people have enjoyed what they've seen.

Table 1: How often do you attend musicals/plays?

	Female 18-35		Male 18-35		Female 36-55		Male 36-55		Female 55>		Male 55>	
	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P
Never	7	5	11	7	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	0
Rarely	22	27	18	24	4	7	6	5	9	12	4	4
Occasionally	17	13	11	8	6	4	2	3	20	17	3	5
Frequently	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0

One question asked "do you enjoy attending musicals?" I expected to see a huge gender difference between answers on this question, but differences weren't as large as I thought. The majority of people replied "yes." Table 2 below reveals that there is a

gendered difference between all the age groups, showing that more women enjoy musicals than men.

Table 2: Do you enjoy attending musicals?

	Female 18-35	Male 18-35	Female 36-55	Male 36-55	Female 55>	Male 55>
Yes	37	24	11	6	29	6
No	9	16	0	3	0	3

A series of questions related to the scenario "If you were given free tickets which would you choose?" Three questions related to this scenario asked participants to choose between "play or musical," "play or movie," and "musical or movie." The majority of people wanted to watch musicals over plays (Table 3). The males age 36-55 are the exception to this, with the majority choosing play. The majority of people from the age group 18-35 wanted to watch movies over musicals and plays, no matter who they were watching it with. The majority of people over the age of 35 preferred watching both plays and musicals over watching movies (Table 4).

Table 3: Choose Musical or Play

	Female 18-35	Male 18-35	Female 36-55	Male 36-55	Female 55>	Male 55>
Musical	30	21	8	3	19	5
Play	17	19	3	6	7	4

Table 4: Choose Play or Movie

	Female 18-35	Male 18-35	Female 36-55	Male 36-55	Female 55>	Male 55>
Play	6	11	6	5	16	5
Movie	41	29	5	4	11	3

The answers to the question "If you were given free tickets, would you choose a musical or a movie?" are recorded in Table 5. In the 18-35 age category 55% of females and 60% of males chose movie over musicals. All the other groups chose musical over movie. In the 36-55 age group 82% of females and 56% of males chose musical over movie. In the age group of 56 and older, 55% of females and 67% males chose musical over movie. This shows more of an age gap than a gender gap. Young men and women would rather attend movies, while older men and women would rather go to a musical.

Table 5: Choose Musical or Movie

	Female 18-35	Male 18-35	Female 36-55	Male 36-55	Female 55>	Male 55>
Musical	21	16	9	5	17	6
Movie	26	24	2	4	7	3

The following question asking "which would you choose if you were bringing your boyfriend/girlfriend or husband/wife" provided insight into perceptions of gender interest in musicals. The results are shown below in Table 6. 87% of females in the 18-35 age category chose movie over musical. This is a significant increase from the 55% on the previous question who chose movie. In comparison, on the question "which would you choose if you brought an older male relative" 53% replied movie, which more closely resembles their own opinion. These results are listed in Table 7. While the questions don't ask why they chose their answer, I did overhear a few college girls discussing the questions and they said that they would have more trouble convincing their boyfriend to go with them to a musical than they would convincing their dad to go with them. They did not however discuss taking a younger brother with them to see a musical. The results for the question "which would you choose if you took a younger male

relative" are in Table 9. Of females in the 18-35 age group 96% said they'd go to a movie with a younger male relative. Why wouldn't they take a younger male relative with them to a musical? It could be the same reason they wouldn't take a boyfriend with them to a musical. Maybe they think that younger men don't want to go to musicals while older men are more open to going.

Table 6: Taking a boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife

	Female 18-35	Male 18-35	Female 36-55	Male 36-55	Female 55>	Male 55>
Musical	8	16	7	7	17	3
Movie	39	24	4	2	9	5

Table 7: Taking an older male relative

	Female 18-35	Male 18-35	Female 36-55	Male 36-55	Female 55>	Male 55>
Musical	22	37	6	6	14	5
Movie	25	3	5	3	13	3

Table 8: Taking an older female relative

	Female 18-35	Male 18-35	Female 36-55	Male 36-55	Female 55>	Male 55>
Musical	29	21	8	9	19	5
Movie	18	19	3	0	13	3

Table 9: Taking a younger male relative

	Female 18-35	Male 18-35	Female 36-55	Male 36-55	Female 55>	Male 55>
Musical	2	7	4	2	15	4
Movie	45	33	7	7	13	4

Males in the 18-35 age range did not change their answer for the question "which would you choose if you were bringing your girlfriend?" 60% chose movie over musical

(Table 6). The percentage jumped radically up to 93% for movie on the question "which would you choose if you brought an older male relative?" (Table 7) In contrast, on the question asking which you'd choose when taking an older female relative, 53% of males chose musicals (Table 8). Half of men would take an older female relative to a musical, but only 7% would take an older male relative. Do they think an older male relative wouldn't want to go? Statistics from this survey show that older men prefer musicals over movies, so that is a misconception. Do they think it would be strange to be at a musical with an older male relative? Another question had similar results. When asked "which would you choose if you took a younger male relative," 83% said they'd go to a movie (Table 9). When the media portrays male bonding between fathers and sons they typically show males playing sports like baseball or working with tools building something. They don't show two men going to see a musical together. As mentioned earlier, ideas of masculinity are often taught to boys by older men. If older men have been telling boys their whole life to "take it like a man" and introducing them to "masculine" toys and activities, then this could explain why men are uncomfortable going with older men to a "feminine" activity.

The perception is that men don't want to see musicals. On the question asking people to choose between musical and play when taking a boyfriend/husband, more women chose play (Table 10). Females seemed to think that men would prefer to see plays over musicals because on the boyfriend/husband question 64% of females age 18-35 chose play, and 56% of females over 56 chose play, although 64% of women 36-55 chose musical.

Table 10: Musical or Play

	Female 18-35	Male 18-35	Female 36-55	Male 36-55	Female 55>	Male 55>
Musical	17	20	7	5	9	3
Play	30	20	4	4	13	5

The perception is that most young men do not want to see musicals. The other perception is that older women favor musicals. For the question "which would you choose if you were taking an older female relative," the majority of people responded "musical" (Table 8). If participants chose their answers based on what they thought an older female relative would want to see, then results correlate with the assumption that older females enjoy musicals more than other groups.

For the question, "would you attend more live performances if it was cheaper?" The majority of people said yes, except for men over the age of 56 (Table 11). 56% of men over the age of 56 responded "no." Since only 9 men over the age of 56 participated in the survey, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not this is an accurate portrayal of males over the age of 56, and if it is, it is difficult to know why they wouldn't go to musicals. Some of those respondents had already said they don't like musicals.

Table 11: Would you attend more live performances if it was cheaper?

	Female 18-35	Male 18-35	Female 36-55	Male 36-55	Female 55>	Male 55>
Yes	45	35	11	7	26	6
No	2	5	0	2	4	3

Two open-ended questions were on the survey in order to give a little insight on what live entertainment people attend and why they attend or don't' attend musicals. The question, "what types of live entertainment do you enjoy" listed a few examples of live

entertainment in order to help people think of some. When I said live entertainment I meant things like theatre and concerts, but a few people wrote down things like sporting events, comedians, car races, magicians, step shows, and dance battles. After conducting the survey, I realized that by only including examples of theatrical live entertainment, I may have biased the survey because some people only used the examples given as their answers, sometimes simply circling the examples. I recorded all the forms of live entertainment that people included and calculated how many people expressed the same interests. For females age 18-35, 85% wrote down concerts, 64% wrote musicals, 51% wrote plays, 28% wrote some type of dance performance, 13% wrote operas, and a few others were also listed. For males age 18-35, 83% said concerts, 45% plays, 38% musicals, 20% sports, 13% comedians, 13% operas, and another type of performance. Sports were listed on a significant percentage of male surveys but only on one female survey. Several females listed a dance performance, but not a single male listed dance. This corresponds to masculinity research that shows that dance has become more feminine, with more female participants. Musicals were also enjoyed by a higher percentage of females than males. A higher percentage of men wrote down plays as a type of live performance they enjoy, and on question 10 (Table 3) the results were about half and half between musical and play. Also, women chose to take men to plays instead of movies (Table 10). It seems that it is the perception that men prefer plays over musicals and this is at least partly true.

Results for the same question for the other age groups show that 72% of women age 36-55 said concert, followed by 64% for plays, 55% musicals, and 27% ballet. For men 36-55 years of age, 67% plays, 56% concerts, 33% musicals, and 22% dance. For

females over the age of 56, 77% musicals, 71% concerts, 65% plays. For males over the age of 56, 67% plays, 56% concerts, and 33% musicals. While not a large percentage, three men (out of a total of 18) over the age of 36 wrote dance or ballet, while not a single male, under the age of 36 (out of a total of 40), mentioned dance. As mentioned in the masculinity section of this paper, dance has become increasingly labeled as feminine and gay, which could explain why younger men did not mention liking dance, while older men did mention it. For this question, a majority of people in all age categories listed "concert" as a form of live entertainment they enjoy. "Concert" is a very broad term which could encompass many forms of musical performance ranging from orchestral or choral to rock or country.

The second open ended question asked participants to list three reasons why they like or dislike musicals. I asked this question thinking it was possible that some men would respond things like "musicals are for girls." I didn't receive any of those responses. One girl said "usually I find them whiney and faggoty." That was the only reference to musicals being in any way "gay." Most of the reasons for disliking musicals were that musicals are too long, boring, too expensive, a waste of time, the music is bad, the music takes away from the plot, or the stories are bad. Males gave more reasons for disliking musicals than females. This was true for all age groups, which directly correlates with the number of people who said they disliked musicals in the previous question.

Participants gave a myriad of reasons for liking musicals. All groups said they liked the music, they are entertaining, the performers are talented, and it is something different to do. People in the 18-35 category also said they feel like it is culturally

enriching and they like seeing their friends perform. Several females in the 18-35 age group said they liked the dancing, but not a single male said that. All other groups also said they liked musicals because they are live and you feel like you are a part of it. They also like them because it is a chance for them to socialize. The middle age group referenced having a night away from their kids. Many of the females over 56 said musicals were one of the few times they got to go out, have fun, and also relax. No one in the middle age group mentioned dance, but both males and females over 56 mentioned dance. Yet again, males in the 18-35 age category avoided mentioning dance as a reason they liked musicals. Surprisingly, though, not a single person listed dance as a reason they dislike musicals. A possible reason for these results could be what type of musical these men have gone to see. Older men may be seeing dance heavy musicals while younger men may not be seeing much dancing and therefore do not have a reason to mention it as part of why they like or dislike musicals.

Gender and age gaps are evident from the data collected in the surveys. People over the age of 36 are more likely to attend musicals than people under the age of 36. This is reflected both in participants own responses and their responses for taking other people with them. If an older person is unwilling to take a younger person with them to go see a musical, then the younger person will not have a chance to be exposed to musicals. Gender gaps are revealed through the fact that many people did not say they would take men with them to see musicals, even though they would take women with them. While data shows some age and gender trends, further study would need to be conducted for conclusive data. Since most of the men surveyed were under the age of 36, further collection of surveys would be required for concrete evidence that older men

enjoy musicals while younger men do not. Further studies would also need to be conducted in order to evaluate why people responded the way they did. The answers given by men in regards to bringing other males with them to musicals would be particularly useful in further studies.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In musicals from the 1950s, more narrowly bounded ideas about masculinity were reinforced through onstage portrayal of stereotypical gender activities like marriage. Some attributes of masculinity have not changed since the 1950s. Men are still supposed to be aggressive, independent, and tough, but the portrayal of men has now become more fluid to include more levels of expression. Men in musicals don't have to be the "virile" John Raitt's of the past. They can now show more emotions. Women have also changed in musicals so marriage is no longer their only option for a happy life. These less rigid boundaries of masculinity create more space for questioning a man's masculinity.

The consequence of not fitting within the tight definition of masculinity has changed since the 1950s. Heterosexuality is now a factor in determining masculinity. Avoiding the "gay" label has become more vital as more men "come out." In the 1950s many people did not admit to being gay. Now there is more freedom for people to admit their sexuality. Since heterosexuality is still the norm of masculinity, many males feel pressured to avoid being labeled as "gay" or to limit engaging in activities that are considered feminine. Since musical theater is considered feminine, many men feel like

they must avoid attending musicals. They must maintain their "tough guise" and only shed it around close friends or their girlfriend, who they feel safe around.

The change in plots, characters, and themes of musicals has recently started to shift in a way that might be interpreted as more male friendly. The increased popularity of rock musicals may increase male viewership, but until these rock musicals opened, many of the musicals were geared more toward women and gay men. Plots focusing on romance with strong female characters do not match the popular male movies released today with strong male characters who are overly aggressive and have sex with multiple partners. The increasing number of gay and crossdressing characters may also deter heterosexual men from attending musicals. Men who are already faced with the threat of being called gay do not want to attend musicals with gay characters because then they might be accused of actually enjoying seeing gay men.

The performers in musicals and their singing techniques have also changed since the 1950s. Comparing performances of men in musicals revealed an increased reliance on acting with less training in singing. The increased focus on acting and portraying characters more "realistically" has caused directors to cast younger actors. In *West Side Story* the characters are teenagers, but in the 1950s they were not played by teenagers. In the revival the actors were much closer to the characters age. The problem with using younger actors is that they don't have as much experience and their voices are not as strong. Male performers in the 1950s were described by some viewers as being more manly because their voices were stronger and carried more authority.

Reviews of musicals also reflect the idea that male performers are less masculine than the male performers from the 1950s. Reviews mentioned how "virile" John Raitt

was, and how virile previous Tony's were. The male leads in the revivals were described as more expressive and introspective. Female characters like Maria, on the other hand, were described as being stronger than previous Maria's.

Surveys revealed that older generations prefer live performances like plays and musicals over seeing movies, but young college students prefer to see movies over live performances. Overall musicals are more popular than plays, but there is the perception that men would prefer to see plays over musicals. While men enjoy seeing musicals, the perception is that they don't like to see musicals. Men also try to avoid attending musicals with other men. This could be due to the fact that they try to maintain a tough guise in front of other men and going with other men to something considered feminine would shatter that illusion.

This project has only grazed the surface of the complex web of masculinity and musical theatre. More surveys would need to be conducted with revised questions that would examine more closely why men don't go to musicals. If time allowed, it would have been more beneficial to interview audience members, as well as performers, to understand their opinion of why less men attend musicals. From present data, the main points that can be concluded are that current musicals allow more variation in expression of masculinity while the 1950s was narrower. Hopefully, as men begin to come to terms with vulnerability, the various representations of men in musicals will be more appreciated by men, and attendance of musicals will increase.

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APPENDIX

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Circle the Appropriate Answer
(Answering "no" to #1 ends the survey)

1. Are you at least 18 years of age? Yes No
2. What age range do you fit into?

   18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 65>

3. Gender: Male Female
4. How often do you attend musicals?

   Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently

5. How often do you attend plays?

   Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently

6. Do you enjoy attending musicals? Yes No
7. Name three reasons why you like or don't like musicals.

8. What types of live performances do you enjoy attending? (Ex: plays, ballets, concerts, musicals, operas, etc…)

9. Would you attend live performances more often if they were less expensive?

   Yes or No

   The following relates to the rest of the questions: If you were given **free** tickets which would you choose? (Circle your answer)

10. Play or Musical

11. Play or Movie

12. Musical or Movie

Which would you choose if you were bringing your boyfriend/girlfriend or husband/wife?

13. Musical or Movie

14. Musical or Play

15. Play or Movie

16. Which would you choose if you brought an older male relative? Musical or Movie

17. An older female relative? Musical or Movie

18. Younger male relative? Musical or Movie

19. Younger female relative? Musical or Movie