

ABSTRACT

Author: Vittoria Cristante

Title: A STUDY OF MUSICAL NUMBER STORYLINE INTEGRATION OF
“GOLDEN AGE” MUSICALS VERSUS “JUKE-BOX” MUSICALS

Thesis Advisor: Larry Nye

Department: Department of Theatre and Honors College

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To this day, one of the most influential and memorable periods in the history of musical theatre is The Golden Age, which spanned approximately 1943 to 1959. The Golden Age was a period of change for musical theatre and, as a result, is one of the most successful and impactful periods in theatrical history. The most significant change to come out of this period was how musical numbers and, more specifically, dance was embedded into the entire production. Since the end of the Golden Age, the role of musical numbers has continued to shift. One of the new genres of musicals that has emerged abandons the idea that numbers in a musical are written for the story, regardless of whether or not they serve to progress it. The “Juke-Box” is a musical composed of already existing popular music of an artist or group which is placed into a storyline. Because the story was written for the music, Juke-Box musicals pose the question of whether or not the songs are fully integrated or if they are just for entertainment. With the continuous success of Golden Age revivals on modern stages one begins to question if a return to the level of structure and musical number integration exhibited in Golden Age productions could influence the success of newly created shows.

This study takes a look at *Mamma Mia!*, a contemporary Juke-Box musical by Catherine Johnson, Benny Andersson, and Björn Ulvaeus, to see if its musical numbers are fully integrated into its story. Each musical number is analyzed in terms of how its content and lyrics play a role in the development and understanding of the characters performing it and the plot as a whole. The analysis of this musical sets a baseline understanding of whether Juke-Box musicals can be as structurally successful as distinguished Golden Age classics.