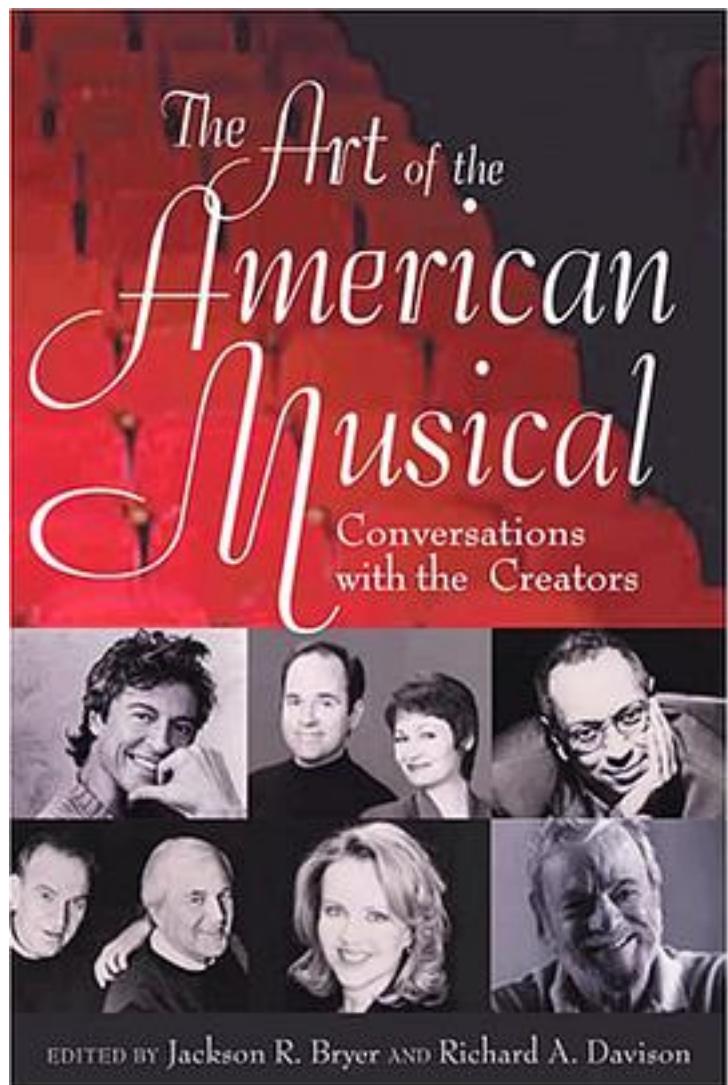


The Art of the American Musical



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出版者:Rutgers Univ Pr

出版时间:2005-9

装帧:Pap

isbn:9780813536132

Musical theater has captivated American audiences from its early roots in burlesque stage productions and minstrel shows to the million-dollar industry it has become on Broadway today. What is it about this truly indigenous American art form that has made it so enduringly popular? How has it survived, even thrived, alongside the technology of film and the glitz and glamour of Hollywood? Will it continue to evolve and leave its mark on the twenty-first century? Bringing together exclusive and previously unpublished interviews with nineteen leading composers, lyricists, librettists, directors, choreographers, and producers from the mid-1900s to the present, this book details the careers of the individuals who shaped this popular performance art during its most prolific period. The interviewees discuss their roles in productions ranging from "On the Town (1944) and "Finian's Rainbow(1947) to "The Producers (2001) and "Bounce (2003). Readers are taken onto the stage, into the rehearsals, and behind the scenes. The nuts and bolts, the alchemy, and the occasional agonies of the collaborative process are all explored. In their discussions, the artists detail their engagements with other creative forces, including such major talents as Leonard Bernstein, Jerome Robbins, Bob Fosse, Liza Minnelli, Judy Garland, Barbra Streisand, Jule Styne, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, Alan Jay Lerner, Zero Mostel, and Gwen Verdon. They speak candidly about their own work and that of their peers, their successes and failures, the creative process, and how a show progresses from its conception through rehearsals and tryouts to opening night. Taken together, these interviews give fresh insight into what Oscar Hammerstein called "a nightly miracle"--the creation of the American musical.

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