

characters, and the older, experienced heroines of her later musicals (184). The sections on Fields's songs introduced at the Cotton Club will be of value to scholars of the Harlem venue, and those on *Annie Get Your Gun*, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, and *Sweet Charity* in particular will be valuable to scholars studying these musicals. Unfortunately, the Fields estate did not grant permission to publish a selection of Fields's lyrics, and the licensing costs to do so were prohibitive. The inclusion of lyrics in Gary Konas's discussion of Fields in Bud Coleman and Judith A. Sebesta's *Women in American Musical Theatre* (McFarland, 2008) demonstrates how lively an examination of Fields's work can be when illustrated by her lyrics. Konas and Greenspan's studies join Philip Furia's consideration of Fields in *The Poets of Tin Pan Alley: A History of America's Great Lyricists* (Oxford University Press, 1992) and Deborah Grace Winer's *On the Sunny Side of the Street: The Life and Lyrics of Dorothy Fields* (Schirmer, 1997). Less anonymous now for this growing bibliography, Dorothy Fields's "fine romance" with the American musical has been ably charted by Charlotte Greenspan.

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Shakespeare and the American Musical. By Irene Dash. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010; pp. xvi + 229, 21 illustrations. \$24.95 paper.

doi:10.1017/S0040557412000348

Reviewed by Jennifer-Scott Mobley, Rollins College

In *Shakespeare and the American Musical*, Irene Dash, well known for her feminist readings of Shakespeare's work on the page and in production, addresses a gap in Shakespeare and American musical theatre scholarship by offering a study that explicitly concerns itself with musical interpretations of Shakespeare's plays in the twentieth century. In five chapters chronologically ordered by play, Dash offers extensive case studies of American musicals for which Shakespeare's plays are the source material: Rodgers and Hart's adaptation of *Comedy of Errors*, *The Boys from Syracuse*; Cole Porter's *Kiss Me, Kate*, drawn from *The Taming of the Shrew*; *West Side Story*, inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*; *Your Own Thing*, a multimedia adaptation of *Twelfth Night*; and finally, the musical production of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* that marked the inaugural season of free Shakespeare in the Park. Dash establishes a trajectory, tracing the development of American musical theatre from the first integrated musical with a large orchestra, to deconstructions featuring pared-down instrumental accompaniment performed by the actors, and culminating with the rock musical of the seventies. In doing so, she argues that the genius of Shakespeare's plays as source material inspired innovations for the birth and growth of American musical theatre.

Dash begins by establishing that *The Boys from Syracuse* (1938) initiated a new form of musical theatre in which all the elements of plot, character, song, and dance were incorporated to move the story cohesively forward. Dash calls this the

first “organic musical” (19), and points out that *The Boys from Syracuse*, which adhered to the spirit of Shakespeare’s text but integrated songs and choreography to tell the story, precedes *Oklahoma* (1943), the landmark production commonly referenced as one of the first integrated musicals. Musical theatre scholars may be disappointed in Dash’s omission of preceding key musical productions such as *Showboat* (1927).

Dash’s study is particularly engaging when she contextualizes the plays within American culture and politics, and specifically when she returns to her feminist roots to trace evolving attitudes toward women and women’s changing roles as reflected in the productions. For example, she observes that Shakespeare’s female characters in *Comedy of Errors* were comparatively more liberated and independent than the resigned and compliant women depicted in *The Boys from Syracuse*. On the other hand, she notes that the book for *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948) was written by a woman, Bella Spewack, and was in the vanguard in terms of its treatment of women onstage. She asserts that this musical version of *The Taming of the Shrew* responds to the cultural moment in which it was written and expands the parts of the female characters, exploring the dilemma of women torn between their roles as housewives and their growing opportunities for economic independence. Dash also reminds us that the original Broadway production of *Kiss Me, Kate* featured African American dancers (who were excised from the 1953 movie version), and concludes that this was a watershed moment in musical theatre history in which elements of realism and the organic musical alchemically combined with a democratization of staging to create a new musical comedy form, one in which women’s voices could be heard.

Dash positions *West Side Story* (1957) as part of the progression of American musical theatre in which adaptors sought to create an American tragedy with the tools of dance and music formerly reserved for comedy. This chapter offers a detailed case study of how the play came into being. Famously based on Leonard Bernstein’s take on *Romeo and Juliet*, which Bernstein described as “an out and out plea for racial tolerance” conceived in the aftermath of World War II (quoted in Dash, 80), the play was originally titled *East Side Story* and focused on tensions between Jews and Italian Catholics on the Lower East Side. Dash compares the many parallels between theme and character function in Shakespeare’s play to those in the musical version; she argues that choreographer Jerome Robbins’s expansion of dance vocabulary replaced the expressiveness of Shakespeare’s language, so that moving bodies onstage captured the essence of the Bard’s words, taking yet another step forward in musical theatre innovation.

The last two musicals in Dash’s study, *Your Own Thing* (1968) and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1971), are contextualized in the shadow of the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, and the changing sexual mores of the sixties and early seventies. She asserts that *Your Own Thing* was the forerunner of the American rock musical, bringing rock music and interactive slide projections to this loose adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, as well as openly exploring onstage homosexuality and freedom of sexual choice. Dash contends that *Your Own Thing* had a significant impact on contemporary musical theatre, being the first in her study in which the “American musical was incorporated into

Shakespeare's play rather than the two forms mutually influencing each other" (150). Furthermore, *Your Own Thing* inspired Joseph Papp with new possibilities for musicalizing Shakespeare, leading to the racially mixed, musical adaptation of *Two Gentleman of Verona*, another landmark production in American musical theatre history.

Although Dash does not engage much with secondary material and does not anchor her exploration in musical theatre scholarship, her expertise in Shakespeare and her passion for the material generate a thorough literary analysis. Furthermore, she is painstaking in her comparative study of Shakespeare's texts and the books, lyrics, and choreography of the respective musicals, demonstrating where they align and where adaptors take liberties to reshape the stories. Dramaturges and directors will appreciate Dash's detailed textual analyses, her extensive research, and her reliance on primary source material, including detailed descriptions of the original productions, all of which would be useful for anyone staging a revival of any of these gems of the American musical theatre.

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Albee in Performance. By Rakesh H. Solomon. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010; pp. 303, 22 illustrations. \$26 paper.
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Reviewed by Jeanmarie Higgins, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Rakesh H. Solomon's *Albee in Performance* is an extensive archive of observations of Edward Albee as a director, based on the fifteen years Solomon spent conducting interviews, collecting and synthesizing critical responses, and attending rehearsals of Albee-directed productions of his own plays. From the multiplay tour of *Albee Directs Albee* in 1978 to the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Three Tall Women* in 1994, the book covers fifteen productions. Solomon records Albee's in-the-moment rehearsal decisions, including articulations of his characters' motivations and on-the-fly changes to scripts and production designs. The author shows Albee to be adept at directing actors, adaptable to changes in venue and budget, and highly capable of interpreting his own work.

Solomon notes that the considerable body of scholarship interpreting Albee's written texts provides a contrast to the general lack of scholarship about Albee in production; his book attempts to fill that gap. Solomon's major critical contribution is his articulation of Albee's "dramaturgy of contrasts" and of how this idea translates into actual rehearsal practices. He describes Albee encouraging actors to explore a full range of possibilities for rapidly shifting qualities of voice, and to embrace a naturalistic style of acting despite the often abstract, almost musically scored dialogue of his scripts. These contrasts are not paradoxes, argues Solomon; rather—in addition to Albee's preference for stillness and minimalism—they are the hallmarks of Albee's aesthetic. Solomon's premise is that critics have heretofore neglected to identify key points of Albee's dramaturgy, and that