



Shakespeare and the American Musical

Irene G Dash

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Irene G. Dash explores the influence of Shakespeare on American musical theater through analyses of five important productions from 1938 through 1971 -- The Boys from Syracuse (The Comedy of Errors), Kiss Me, Kate (Taming of the Shrew), West Side Story (Romeo and Juliet), Your Own Thing (Twelfth Night), and Two Gentlemen of Verona. Dash argues that adaptations of Shakespeare were instrumental in the alteration of the musical theater formula from the stock plots and song forms of the 1930s musical comedy to the more organic "integrated musical," where songs and dance sequences were used to advance the plot rather than break the action. In bringing together these well-known works, Dash offers a fresh look at the development of American musical theater and a new understanding of Shakespeare in the modern American context.

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