



THE HISTORY OF MUSICALS

JAMIE HAYES

The Arts Society Fylde
Lowther Pavilion Theatre
5 November 2025 at
2.00pm

It's sometimes quite tricky to work out where to set the boundaries (if they even exist) between opera, operetta and musical theatre. The ever-reliable (?) AI offers this "thought": *opera is a classical, fully sung art form with powerful voices and orchestral music. Operetta is a lighter, comedic version of opera with spoken dialogue and tuneful melodies. Musical theatre blends contemporary music styles, spoken dialogue, and dance, focusing on entertainment and storytelling for modern audiences.* Well, today our focus is firmly on musical theatre, when we welcome Jamie Hayes on his first visit to The Arts Society Fylde. By way of introduction, he explains that he will trace the history of the musical from its almost accidental beginnings of *The Black Crook* of 150 years ago through to the modern phenomenon which is *Hamilton*. Jamie will highlight the great musical productions from London's West End and Broadway and will focus on the game changing moments of both composers and productions. From Jerome Kern to Lin-Manuel Miranda, every great musical has its own story: from page to stage. We are promised a chance to enjoy great music and the great stories - supported by what Jamie calls "the dynamic theatricality of musical theatre's finest moments".

JAMIE HAYES

After training at RADA Jamie graduated as a Stage Manager and subsequently worked for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Bristol Old Vic and the BBC. He became an Assistant Director with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Kent Opera and English National Opera and soon began directing productions of his own. He has directed many new opera productions in the UK whilst other new opera productions overseas include Reykjavik, Malta and Melbourne. Jamie was Associate Director on the original production of the hit musical *Miss Saigon* in the West End and on Broadway. He has directed productions in all the major UK conservatoires and was Director of Productions for British Youth Opera for over a decade, a company devoted to promoting the talents of our finest young opera singers in the UK. Jamie is a regular enrichment programme lecturer for various leading cruise ship companies. He is married to the mezzo-soprano Jean Rigby and they have three sons.



SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Musical Theatre: A History, John Kenrick, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama , 2017

Broadway Babies Say Goodnight, Mark Steyn, Routledge, 1999