

Fact sheet on Musicals

- First, make sure that you are aware that a musical is not an opera. However, musicals are a direct development from opera.
- A musical is a theatrical work in which music plays a central role.
- The music is usually in a popular style (blues, Jazz, rock)
- Borrows conventions (such as structure) from opera:

Musical Conventions	Opera conventions
Solo songs	Arias
Spoken parts	Some parts spoken (Comic Opera)
Choruses	Choruses
Orchestral/band accompaniment	Orchestral accompaniment
Duets	Duet
Dance numbers	- (rarely)

- Sources of inspiration:

Musical and composer	Textual inspiration
Westside Story: Bernstein	Romeo and Juliet: Shakespeare
Joseph: Lloyd-Webber	Exodus: Bible
Oliver Twist: Bart	Oliver Twist: Charles Dickens
Cats: Lloyd-Webber	Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats: T. S. Eliot
Les Misérables: Schonberg	Les Misérables: Victor Hugo

History

- Musicals started life as musical comedies in America. These developed into the full-scale dramatic works that we know as musicals.
- One of the most famous early musical was **Show Boat (1927) by Jerome Kern**.
- Other famous names include **Rodgers (music) & Hammerstein (words)** who collaborated on **Oklahoma (1943)**, **Carousel (1945)**, **The King and I (1951)**, and **The Sound of Music (1959)**.
- **Andrew Lloyd-Webber** came to fame in 1968 with **Joseph** in which he collaborated with **Tim Rice**.
- Other Lloyd-Webber musical include: Jesus Christ Superstar (1971), Evita (1978), Cats, Starlight Express, and Phantom of the Opera

Word Setting

As with Opera, word setting can be either syllabic (one note per syllable) or be melismatic (stretch one syllable over many notes).

Jesus Christ is Ris'n Today (Methodist Hymn Book, 1933, no. 204)

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Jesus Christ is Ris'n Today". The score is written in G major and 4/4 time. It features a treble and bass clef. The lyrics are: "Je - sus Christ is ris'n to - day Al - le - lu - ia!". Above the staff, two arrows indicate different word settings: "Syllabic" covers the first part of the phrase "Je - sus Christ is ris'n to - day", and "Melismatic" covers the second part "Al - le - lu - ia!". A sub-arrow labeled "melisma" points to the "Al" syllable, which is stretched over several notes. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

