THE HISTORY



OF THE BROADWAY LEAGUE



BROADWAY IS RICH IN HISTORY and so is The Broadway League, which was founded in 1930!

As an industry that has become synonymous with New York City, we feel it is important to capture the milestones of this industry which has such a great impact, both economically and artistically to not only New York City, but to our country. With 27 million attendances at Broadway shows nationwide in the 2014–2015 season, the industry generated more than \$12 billion in economic impact to New York City in 2014–15, plus an additional \$3.2 billion to metro areas nationally where shows were presented. We want to make sure we keep this "History" updated for the sake of history.

In 2008 we created the first "History of The Broadway League" under the leadership of the Chair at that time, Nina Lannan. Since then Chairs Paul Libin, Nick Scandalios, and our current Chair, Bob Wankel, have insured that we have continued to add to the rich history begun in 1930.

As Broadway continues to impact New York City and the additional 240 venues that showcase Broadway shows in the 140 cities where our members present, we will continue to impact the arts in our country. And, with Broadway shows touring internationally now, the true American export, Broadway, will continue to impact the lives of theatregoers all over the world.

We hope you enjoy this "snapshot" of our history!

Arlotte St Martin

Charlotte St. Martin President

January 2017



THE HISTORY OF THE BROADWAY LEAGUE 2017 EDITION

Written and compiled by Ben Pesner

CONTENTS

Milestones 3 League History 5 Organizational Leadership 13 Board of Governors 14

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In memory of Seth Popper.

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Playhouse Square, Cleveland, OH

MILESTONES

1930 – **Organization founded** as the League of New York Theatres, primarily to protect consumers from unscrupulous ticket brokers.

1931 – An early **legislative victory**: The League convinces the NY State Legislature to drop proposed draconian censorship laws.

1948 – In conjunction with Actors' Equity Association, the League spearheads a **boycott of segregated playhouses** in Washington, D.C. and other cities.

1950s – The League **fights McCarthyism and the Hollywood blacklist**, refusing to shutter productions because of artists' political views.

1960 – The League works with the theatrical unions and the City of New York to create a **pension system** for Broadway employees.



The Hershey Theatre, Hershey, PA

1967 – For the first time, the League jointly presents the **Tony Awards**[®] with the American Theatre Wing, a partnership that continues to the present day.

1973 – Name change to the League of New York Theatres and Producers.

1982 – The **Commercial Theater Institute** established (with Theatre Development Fund) to develop and train emerging producers.

1985 – In recognition of the **national scope** of the membership, name change to the League of American Theatres and Producers.

1992 – The League and the Times Square Alliance create **Broadway on Broadway**[®] to entertain the delegates to the Democratic National Convention. For the next two decades, the event is an annual free outdoor



The Minskoff Theatre, NYC

concert in Times Square.

1996 – **Kids' Night on Broadway**[®], a national audience development initiative, debuts.

1997 – The National Touring Theatre Council coalesces into the League, which **fully embraces Touring Broadway**.

2001 – Launch of **Internet Broadway Database**[®] at IBDB.com.

2005 – **Family First Nights**[®] begins. This program invites economically at-risk families to attend Broadway shows.

2007 – Organization renamed as **The Broadway League**.

2008 – Establishment of the **Schoenfeld Vision for Arts in Education Award**.

2009 – The first annual **Broadway Salutes**, created in partnership with the Coalition of Broadway Unions and Guilds, recognizes veteran Broadway employees.

2010 – The organizational leadership structure grows to include the position of **Vice Chair of the Road**.

2011 – The semi-annual **Broadway Week** debuts. This initiative of the League and NYC & Company supports ticket sales during slow box-office periods.



The Walter Kerr Theatre, NYC



Brian Stokes Mitchell and NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn at Broadway Salutes in 2009.

2012 – **Spotlight on Broadway**, created with the NYC Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, highlights the history of Broadway and Times Square.

2012 – The League inaugurates **Viva Broadway**, an initiative to build bridges with Latino audiences, and establishes an advisory board to oversee the program.

2013 – Formation of a national **Legislative Council** of League members in every state where we have a member to support local and federal efforts.

2014 – The League and the John Gore Organization acquire the gTLD (generic top-level domain) **dot Broadway** (.broadway).

2015 – By creating international memberships, the League expands our presence globally.

2015 – The Broadway League Foundation takes over the management and production of the **National High** School Musical Theatre Awards[™]/Jimmy Awards[®].

2015 – The **federal tax code is amended** to provide live theatrical productions similar benefits to film and television, thanks to League advocacy.

2016 – **Broadway Bridges** is formed with the goal of sending every NYC public high school 10th grader to a Broadway show before they graduate.

2016 – The League is instrumental in passage of the federal **Better Online Ticket Sales Act (BOTS) Act** which protects consumers by banning "bots," software that circumvents security measures used by primary ticket sellers' websites.



The 2016 Jimmy Awards® participants

A HISTORY OF THE BROADWAY LEAGUE

THE EARLY YEARS

THE BROADWAY LEAGUE TRACES ITS HISTORY to 1930 when theatre owners, producers of plays and musicals, and theatrical managers in midtown Manhattan's Broadway Theatre District came together to create an institution that would protect their common interests, and those of the entire Broadway industry.

Several previous attempts to organize theatre operators and producers had fizzled. But when the New York State legislature began considering measures that would heavily regulate the sale of theatre tickets, a trio of producers, Arthur Hopkins, Brock Pemberton, and Gilbert Miller, took up the idea of creating a trade association for Broadway that would establish new guidelines for ticket-sellers to protect consumers from unscrupulous brokers. They invited reputable ticket-sellers to join the League of New York Theatres, as the association was then known.

The original configuration of the League did not last long, as a group of excluded ticket brokers went to court. When the dust settled, the League reconvened without any brokers among its membership. Instead, producers and theatre operators developed guidelines and standards for best business practices in the industry.

The new organization took its leadership from a Board of Governors that included both Broadway professionals and civic leaders. One of the latter was Alfred E. Smith, a former presidential candidate and four-term governor of New York State. The League's first executive director, Dr. Henry Moskowitz, was a social activist who had previously served as a member of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire Commission, as well as the NYC Commissioner of Public Markets. He also played a supporting role in the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

In addition to its work on the ticket-selling front, the League scored an early victory in a campaign to quash draconian censorship legislation that had been pending in the state legislature. Soon the League would come to represent the interests of the Broadway industry in Washington, D.C., as well as in the state capitol and at New York's City Hall. During the 1930s and '40s, principal areas of activity included a long and ultimately successful campaign to remove the Prohibition-era ban on selling liquor on the premises of a theatre, and the removal of federal admissions taxes imposed during World War II. Later the League would work with the New York City government on an overhaul of building codes to permit the construction of playhouses with office space above them. This paved the way for the construction of new Broadway theatres in the 1970s.

In the next several decades, the League continued to serve the Broadway community by providing a forum for producers, theatre operators, and other interested parties to come together and address issues facing the community. Among the organization's leaders were theatrical luminaries whose legacy lives on through the brilliant works of comedy, drama, and musical theatre they first brought to the stage: David Merrick, Cy Feuer & Ernest Martin, Robert Whitehead, Kermit Bloomgarden, James M. Nederlander, and the Shubert Brothers (Lee and J. J.), to name just a few.

AN EXPANDED SCOPE

DURING THE 1940S AND '50S, the League's mission grew beyond its early focus on ticket-selling issues and government relations. The organization took



The Pantages Theatre, Los Angeles, CA



a strong stand against McCarthyism and blacklisting in the entertainment industry. Unlike its counterparts in Hollywood, the League actively refuted

Times Square

attempts to shut down productions and ban performers from the stage due to their political convictions. Joining with Actors' Equity Association, the League organized boycotts of playhouses that segregated audiences by race in Washington, D.C. and other cities. The League further broadened its scope of activity as the membership grew to include presenters of nationally touring shows.

Over time labor relations became the main focus of the organization's activities. The League took on the responsibility of negotiating collective bargaining agreements on behalf of its members with the various unions representing employees on Broadway. Today the League maintains 17 collective bargaining agreements with 15 different unions.

A watershed event took place in 1960, when the League, Actors' Equity, and the City of New York came together to create the first-ever pension system that provided retirement security for stage performers. Equity had been pressing the issue of



The opening number of the 2000 Tony Awards show

pensions for years, and while producers embraced the concept in principle, they had been unable to agree with Equity on an appropriate funding mechanism.

Matters came to a head when Equity members went on strike. To resolve the dispute, the League worked out a plan with the union and Mayor Robert Wagner that redirected the city's much-reviled admissions tax on theatre tickets into a fund that would underwrite a pension system. As a result of this and other agreements, all union employees on Broadway are entitled to top-quality employee benefits, including healthcare and retirement plans.

The League's close involvement with the Tony Awards[®] began during a year when the Tonys almost didn't happen. Founded in 1947 by the American Theatre Wing, Broadway's most coveted awards were bestowed each spring at a dinner held in a midtown Manhattan hotel ballroom. In 1964 Helen Menken, then the Wing's executive director, decided to step down, throwing the future of the Wing, and therefore the Tonys, into question. The League initially stepped in to seek another home for the Tonys, but in the end producer Harold Prince personally reached out to Ms. Menken and successfully convinced her to stay on. Two years later, Menken's sudden passing just a month before the 1966 award ceremony threatened to derail the awards, and the League intervened to produce the ceremony on behalf of the Wing. The League saw the potential for the Tony Awards to serve as a high-profile, national celebration of Broadway, and, with the cooperation of the Wing, engaged Alexander H. Cohen to produce the first national telecast of the Tony ceremony, live from the Shubert Theatre in March, 1967.

Every year since then, the Tonys have continued to salute excellence on stage and behind the scenes while bringing exciting performances from Broadway into theatregoers' livingrooms. The League and the Wing continue to jointly present and administer the Tonys, which are broadcast each June on CBS in the U.S, as well as on other networks



Louis Lotito, President 1958–1960

globally. Since 2015 the Tonys have also been streamed live online via CBS All Access.

The Tony Awards presentation is widely recognized as the most entertaining award show on television. The telecast was nominated for Emmy Awards[®] as the best show in its class every year between 2006 and 2016, winning seven times.

The late 1960s saw a number of experiments with curtain times, designed to make the theatregoing experience as convenient as possible. Traditionally, most Broadway shows began at 8:30 p.m., which meant some shows played until after 11:00 p.m. In 1970 theatres adopted a new standard curtain at 7:30 p.m. However, at the urging of local restaurants, the League soon encouraged its members to switch to an 8:00 p.m. curtain, which allowed for enough time to enjoy a meal before the show. More recently, as productions have once again embraced a diversity of start times, the League plays a vital role in getting the message out that curtains rise at a variety of hours to accommodate theatregoers' convenience.

Other changes on Broadway in the 1960s and '70s included the arrival of several groups whose presence contributed greatly to both the League's membership and the community as a whole. These include the Nederlander Organization, a family-run producing and theatre owning/operating business established in Detroit in 1912. With nine NYC theatres, Nederlander is now the second-largest theatre operating chain, after the Shubert Organization. League membership also grew to include Jujamcyn Theaters, which currently operates five of the 41 Broadway houses in New York. In the ensuing decades, not-for-profit producing organizations began to play a significant role on Broadway. They



Robert Whitehead, President 1960–1962



Harold Prince, President 1964–1966



The Tony Awards® at Radio City Music Hall

joined the League as well, both as creators of Broadway shows and as theatre operators.

Although the overall number of Broadway playhouses had declined, a wave of newly constructed theatres in the 1970s, most operated by Nederlander, accommodated larger musicals and the increasing technical demands of modern Broadway shows.

Touring Broadway productions have always constituted an important segment of the North American theatrical universe. By the early 1970s "the Road" had begun to comprise an ever-increasing segment of Broadway's business. Consequently, the League's embrace of, and service to, touring Broadway productions and presenters grew exponentially. In 1973 the organization changed its name to the League of American Theatres and Producers, which better reflected the national scope of its membership. Producers of touring shows and local presenters and venue-operators who hosted those productions in cities across North America came to play a key role in identifying and setting national priorities for the industry.

By 1997 the League's embrace of the Road had become complete when the National Touring Theatre Council voted to fold itself into the League, with its executive committee reconstituted as the League's Road Presenters Committee. In 2010 a new governance structure formalized the inclusion of a Vice Chair of the Road within our organizational leadership structure.

MARKETING BROADWAY

THE 1970S WAS A TURBULENT TIME for Broadway. By the middle of the decade, the Times Square area was becoming seedy and audiences were beginning to turn away from theatregoing. Advances in technology were altering the way Broadway conducted its business both on stage and behind the scenes. American society itself began to change, as television viewership rose steadily and arts education disappeared from schools.



Richard Barr, Chairman 1967–1988

In response to these and other trends, the League once again shifted its organizational focus, placing new emphasis on marketing, public relations, customer service, research, and education. This eventually culminated in an industrywide branding initiative that would reinforce the position of Broadway theatre in the minds of both the consumer and the media, and generate

nationwide excitement for this vibrant and exciting form of live entertainment.

The first priority, however, was cleaning up midtown Manhattan's Theatre District, which had become scarred by a proliferation of crime, prostitution, and adult businesses. Beginning in the early 1970s, the

League set out on a successful campaign overseen by Gerald Schoenfeld, then chairman of the Shubert Organization, to improve conditions in the area, and especially to guarantee the safety and comfort of theatre patrons. The League worked closely with the New York City Police Department and the Mayor's office to bolster existing services for theatregoers, contain the spread of adult businesses, and increase the law enforcement presence in the neighborhood.

At the same time the League began laying the groundwork

for industrywide marketing campaigns, promotions, and events. Broadway's involvement with New York State's phenomenally successful "I Love NY" television campaigns of the late 1970s and early '80s is now legendary. For the first time, shows collaborated in a campaign



Gerald Schoenfeld, Chairman 2003–2007

that would promote theatregoing in general, not just individual productions.

Meanwhile, an ever-expanding roster of touring shows were attracting larger and larger audiences across the country. Touring Broadway productions became the most popular attractions at a series of new regional performing arts centers. Historic theatres in cities from coast to coast renovated their auditoriums and upgraded their backstage facilities to meet the increasingly sophisticated technical specifications of touring shows. Presenting organizations established Broadway subscription



The audience during the finale of a Broadway on Broadway[®] concert in Times Square.

series in many cities. The League made a concerted effort to support this growing and vital constituency with annual conferences and forums, publications, marketing toolkits, industry-wide promotions, and other resources. Since 1990 League-member producers and presenters have congregated in New York each year at the League's Spring Road Conference, the principal forum for the touring Broadway community to chart its future.

When New York City was selected as the host city for the 1992 Democratic National Convention, the event's organizers naturally turned to Broadway to entertain the delegates. The result was a free, giant outdoor party in the heart of Times Square featuring performances from the shows then running on Broadway. The concert, co-produced by the League and the Times Square Alliance, was such a hit that it was reprised the following year as "Broadway on Broadway[®]." For the next two decades, the concert served as the community's season-opener event, drawing tens of thousands of fans to the "crossroads of the world" each September.

The League has long served as the clearinghouse for information on the Broadway industry. In the mid-1990s, the League expanded its research program by publishing reports that tracked the demographics of our audience in New York (annually) and across the US (biennially). These ongoing, long-term studies are based on in-theatre surveys. Other key League research quantifies the economic impact of Broadway show production in NYC (\$12 billion in 2014–2015), as well as the impact on other metro areas where shows play on tour (\$3.2 billion).

Throughout the 1990s, the League continued to focus on its original mission—improving the climate for



Cy Feuer, Chairman 1989–2003

purchasing tickets—but with a new twist. Several initiatives demystified ticket-buying by giving consumers the tools to access Broadway tickets directly from the source by phone, in person at theatre box offices, via the Internet, and now on mobile devices.

Support for the League's wide array of consumer and industry services



Enthusiastic fans at the 2015 edition of Stars in the Alley, the League's annual outdoor spring concert presented by United Airlines.

came in part through a series of strategic corporate sponsorships. For the first time, companies who wished to associate their brands with the excitement and prestige of Broadway could form industry-wide partnerships that provided enormous benefits for all parties, including financial and promotional support for League programs and events. Continental Airlines (now United) became the first League cornerstone partner in 1997. Since then, Anheuser-Busch, Avis, Chase, IBM, *The New York Times*, Sprint, and Visa have been Broadway League sponsors.



Host Neil Patrick Harris and company in the opening number of the Emmy-winning 2013 Tony Awards® telecast



Broadway gathered in Times Square in the aftermath of September 11, 2001.

BROADWAY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

IF ONE SINGLE EVENT PROVED THAT BROADWAY encapsulates the very heart of the energy and dynamism that make New York unique among the world's great cities, it was the community's response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. With lower Manhattan in chaos and the Pentagon aflame, Broadway shows were forced to cancel their performances. But at the urging of then Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, curtains went up again just two days later at every show on Broadway. The theatre community joined together to help get the message out that the Big Apple was once again open for business.

Later that month, the League coordinated a nationwide Broadway ad campaign saluting the city's resiliency and urging tourists to return to New York. At its center was a remarkable event: Cast members from all the shows then playing donned their costumes and assembled in Times Square to sing the Kander & Ebb anthem "New York, New York."



Nina Lannan, Chair 2007–2009

The resulting TV public service announcement helped New York City communicate that although bruised by the attacks, the spirit of this great city would never falter.

As Broadway began to embrace the Internet, the League migrated many of its programs and services on-line. Our main consumer site at Broadway.org, the official on-line headquarters for Broadway information in NYC and across North America, offers show information and ticketing in eight languages. Consumers can also access these features via the Broadway.org app. Our active social media presence engages audiences, and the new BwayZone.com provides a unique, curated platform for consumers to experience all shows' social media in one place, along with original video content.

In 2001 the League launched Internet Broadway Database[®] (IBDB.com), a comprehensive on-line database that contains cast and credit information about

every show that has opened on Broadway in the past two centuries, and the history of each theatre. The site has continued to grow, and by 2016 IBDB.com added information on Touring Broadway productions and theatres as well.

Government relations remain at the center of the League's activities. A new chapter began in 2013 with the formation of a national Legislative Council of members from every state where we have a member, to support local and federal government relations efforts. Recent key achievements include an amendment to the federal tax code to provide live theatrical productions with benefits similar to those offered to the film and television industries; and the Better Online Ticket Sales Act (BOTS) Act, federal legislation that protects consumers by banning "bots" and other software that circumvents security measures used by primary ticket sellers' websites.

During the administration of NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg, we worked with the Mayor's Office of Media & Entertainment to create Spotlight on Broadway (SpotlightOnBroadway.com), an on-line initiative to preserve the history of Broadway and its impact on Times Square and the entire city. Video documentaries on Broadway playhouses chronicle the history of the theatres themselves, as well as moments from their most celebrated productions. Broadway actors, restoration architects, union members, producers, historians and others share their memories and help frame the cultural significance of the Broadway district. A "Careers on Broadway" section highlights 32 job paths, giving viewers information about where to go to find out more about those careers.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY HAS CONTINUED to evolve, so has the League. In 2007 the membership enthusiastically adopted another name change, and the organization became The Broadway League. By emphasizing the term "Broadway," our identity now reflects the brand that consumers and the media associate with top-quality plays and musicals in New York and throughout North America. Meanwhile, a new category of international members embraced Broadway's spread across the globe.

Touring shows and the organizations that present them in as many as 240 cities across North America each year remain central to the business of Broadway. We continue to work closely with our membership to raise awareness for Broadway shows and theatregoing in New York, across North America, and beyond. Examples include partnerships with Apple to promote shows through cast albums; and with Fathom Events to screen video trailers for current shows in movie theatres nationwide. Other media partnerships promote Broadway via network TV, print, and online outlets.

The League continues to develop audiences for the future by joining with our members to invest in a deep, ongoing commitment to nurturing the next generation of theatregoers. Nationwide, our members provide arts education to more than 20 million individuals each year.

Kids' Night on Broadway[®] (KNOB), created in 1996, has become our flagship nationwide audience development program, inviting young people ages 6–18 to see a show for free when accompanied by



Signing autographs at Kids' Night on Broadway®

a full-paying adult. KNOB also offers parking and restaurant discounts, pre-show activities, online resources, and educational programs. In each city, touring productions put their own spin on the event.

Other League audience development initiatives include grant programs that support Leaguemember theatre education and engagement



Paul Libin, Chairman 2009–2011

programs in both touring markets and New York City. By 2016, the total amount granted under this program had topped \$1 million.

In addition, our Family First Nights® program seeks to establish theatregoing as a family practice by offering underserved families opportunities to see Broadway shows together at a subsidized ticket price. This nationwide program established in 2005 has served more than 2,000 families in New York City and touring markets.

The National High School Musical Theatre Awards[™] (NHSMTA), managed and administered by The Broadway League Foundation since 2015, elevate the importance of theatre arts education in schools and reward excellence in student performance. Established by the Pittsburgh CLO and the Nederlander Organization in 2009, the program impacts over 50,000 students annually who participate in more than 1,000 high school musical theatre talent showcases sponsored by more than 30 League-member theatres throughout the US. Each June, regional winners perform at the Jimmy Awards[®] ceremony in a Broadway theatre.

In 2016 the League created Broadway Bridges[™], a partnership with shows, theatres, and not-for-profit organizations that will invest in a lofty but attainable goal: to assure that every NYC public high school 10th grade student sees a Broadway show before he or she graduates. The program will offer schools \$10 tickets.

A focus on professional development dates back to the co-founding of Commercial Theater Institute with Theatre Development Fund in 1982. In addition



Nick Scandalios, Chairman 2011–2014

to CTI, League members also participate in the Broadway Speakers Bureau[®], which educates high school and college students about nonperformance careers in the theatre. Regular conferences and forums keep members up-todate on selected topics and encourage them to learn from each other's successes. League mentorship initiatives

include the new Rising Stars program for early-career professionals. Our internship program has trained more than 200 young professionals since 2000.

As the population makeup of the U.S. and Canada evolves, Broadway has embraced a Diversity and Inclusion Initiative to ensure that our offices and workforce reflect the demographics of our country. A partnership with ATPAM invites theatre management students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds to shadow with managers in NYC and Touring Broadway productions.

Similarly, our new Fellowship program offers earlycareer professionals hands-on experience working on Broadway and Touring Broadway productions. Preference is given to those whose backgrounds are underrepresented in our industry.

The League created Viva Broadway in 2012. This national initiative builds bridges between Broadway and Hispanic/Latino audiences. The program includes concerts (such as the landmark fifth-



Family First Nights[®] participants attending *Shrek The Musical*.

anniversary celebration of *In the Heights*, staged in Upper Manhattan), promotions, panel discussions, and more. The sold out 2015 "Gloria Estefan & Miami Sound Machine: A Benefit Concert for Viva Broadway" brought Gloria Estefan and her band back to NYC to perform a concert of their greatest hits. The event featured special performances and cast

members from the Broadway musical On Your Feet!, and raised more than \$86.000 to support Viva Broadway audience development initiatives. In 2016. thanks in part to current Viva Broadway Advisory Board Chair Luis



Gloria Estefan performing at the 2015 Viva Broadway benefit concert.

Miranda, the League received a key grant from the Rockefeller Foundation that will support extending Family First Nights programming to Latino families through Viva Broadway.

In all of our programs and services, the League continues to serve an active and involved membership. With Disney joining the League in 2013, the organization now embraces virtually all of the key producers and theatre operators in New York City, as well as presenters of Touring Broadway. Labor relations remains the cornerstone of our mission, and we remain committed to working together with the theatrical unions to provide exemplary employment circumstances for Broadway employees, as well as to maximize opportunities for League-member productions to attain solid economic footing while providing great production value. Likewise, we continue to create programs and services that support members' ticket sales and improve the climate for profitable theatrical production.

Through industry-wide programs, consumer services, special events, and advocacy with elected officials and government agencies at all levels, the League is dedicated to reinforcing the position of Broadway theatre nationwide as the pinnacle of live entertainment.

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