

Program Narration

By John Jacobson

(One person walks out on stage or to a microphone and deliberately starts snapping even quarter notes on the fingers of one hand. After eight to sixteen beats, another person joins him on stage and begins clapping on the offbeats. Keep it very steady. Next, one or more performers start to step heavily on the downbeat of each four-count measure. These performers keep this going while one cast member speaks directly to the audience.)

SPEAKER 1: Do you hear that beat? It's the sound of people entering the theater on the most famous street in the world.

SPEAKER 2: Do you hear that beat? It's the sound of dancing feet and orchestras tuning up.

SPEAKER 3: Do you hear that beat? It's the sound of Rodgers and Hammerstein.

SPEAKER 4: Lerner and Lowe.

SPEAKER 5: Webber and Rice.

SPEAKER 6: Stephen Sondheim and Stephen Schwartz.

SPEAKER 7: It's the sound of *Oklahoma!*

SPEAKER 8: *Cats!*

SPEAKER 9: *The King and I!*

SPEAKER 10: *Wicked!*

SPEAKER 11: *Fiddler on the Roof!*

SPEAKER 12: Do you hear that beat? It's the sound that dreams are made of.

SPEAKER 13: Do you hear that beat? It's the sound of Broadway!

SPEAKER 14: And nobody can stop it!

(The entire cast starts clapping. One third of the class claps half notes, one-third quarter notes, and one-third eighth notes. Keep clapping louder and louder until the music starts.)

SONG 1: You Can't Stop the Beat! (from *Hairspray*)

SPEAKER 15: That's right! You can't stop the beat on Broadway!

SPEAKER 16: Speaking of Broadway, do you know who was known as "the father of American musical comedy?"

SPEAKER 17: Why sure! That was George M. Cohan.

SPEAKER 18: That's right! Do you know what the "M" stands for?

SPEAKER 17: Umm. Maestro?

SPEAKER 19: Nope!

SPEAKER 17: Mario?

SPEAKER 19: Hardly!

SPEAKER 17: Marcello?

SPEAKER 19: Not even close. George M. Cohan was a playwright, composer, entertainer, lyricist, actor, singer, dancer and producer. (takes a BIG breath)

SPEAKER 17: Marcus?

SPEAKER 20: His first big hit was *Little Johnny Jones*, a story about an American jockey who went to England to ride his horse Yankee Doodle in the Derby.

SPEAKER 17: Marcaroni?

SPEAKER 21: So, here is our salute to Mr. George "Michael" Cohan.

SPEAKER 17: Michael! I knew that. I knew that!!

SONG 2: Give My Regards to George M. Cohan

SPEAKER 22: In 1957, a new show hit the Broadway stage.

SPEAKER 23: It was written by Meredith Willson. It was about a con man named Harold Hill who pretends to be a band director and sells expensive band uniforms and instruments to the people of River City, Iowa.

Copyright © 2010 by HAL LEONARD CORPORATION
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved

The original purchaser of this book has permission to reproduce this narration for educational use only. Any other use is strictly prohibited.

SPEAKER 24: The show was a huge hit. It won five Tony awards, the highest honor for a Broadway show.

SPEAKER 25: Do you hear that beat? It's the beat of marching feet and seventy-six trombones!

SPEAKER 26: It's the sound of *The Music Man*.

Song 3: Seventy-Six Trombones (from *The Music Man*)

SPEAKER 27: Rodgers and Hammerstein were two of the greatest writers of Broadway shows ever.

SPEAKER 28: They wrote such classics as *Oklahoma*, *South Pacific*, *Carousel* and, of course, *The Sound of Music*.

SPEAKER 29: In 1951, Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote a musical based on the true story of an English woman named Anna who went to Siam to be the tutor for the king's children.

SPEAKER 30: The show was called *The King and I*, and one of the most popular songs in it was this one called "I Whistle a Happy Tune."

4: I Whistle a Happy Tune (from *The King and I*)

SPEAKER 31: The hit musical *Wicked* was written by Stephen Schwartz and debuted on Broadway in 2003.

SPEAKER 32: But his success began long before that. He wrote *Godspell* shortly after graduating from college . . .

SPEAKER 33: And at the young age of twenty-three, Stephen Schwartz was an instant Broadway success.

SPEAKER 34: Seeing a great Broadway show, singing a great Broadway song, or even performing in a Broadway show can change you.

SPEAKER 35: Just like making a new friend can change you.

SPEAKER 36: For the better?

SPEAKER 35: Maybe.

SPEAKER 37: For worse?

SPEAKER 35: Perhaps.

SPEAKER 38: Forever?

SPEAKER 35: Well, maybe not forever, but certainly "For Good."

Song 5: For Good (from *Wicked*)

SPEAKER 39: In 1996, the rock musical *Rent* hit Broadway.

SPEAKER 40: The show went on to win four Tony awards . . .

SPEAKER 41: And ran on Broadway for 12 years!

SPEAKER 42: The Broadway beat is the rhythm of life that can take us on fantastic adventures, exploring feelings that sometimes only music can capture . . .

SPEAKER 43: like a legion of honor . . .

SPEAKER 44: a belly of laughs . . .

SPEAKER 45: a bundle of courage . . .

SPEAKER 46: or a season of love.

Song 6: Seasons of Love (from *Rent*)

SPEAKER 47: Since the first shows opened in the early 1800s, the Broadway beat has been pounding steadily.

SPEAKER 48: And it doesn't show signs of slowing down.

SPEAKER 49: It takes a lot of effort to put on a Broadway show. The most successful ones are the shows where all the pieces come perfectly together.

SPEAKER 50: (*overly dramatic*) The singers singing . . .

SPEAKER 51: (*doing a dance step*) . . . dancers dancing . . .

SPEAKER 52: (*striking a dramatic pose*) . . . actors acting . . .

SPEAKER 53: (*encouraging the audience to clap*) . . . audiences applauding . . .

SPEAKER 54: (*interrupting and rolling her eyes*) . . . and hams hamming it up!

SPEAKER 55: Let's go together to Broadway, where every day and every night, the beat goes on!

Song 7: We Go Together (from *Grease*)