A TALE OF TWO CITIES
AN ANALYSIS OF AUDIENCE BEHAVIOR
IN THE WEST END
AND ON BROADWAY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
in the Theatre Program
of School of the Arts

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
October 23, 2013
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mom (Rena Fogel) for her unconditional love and support
  Anne Bogart for her honesty
  Rachael Stevens for her guidance
  Steven Chaikelson for always challenging me
  Class of 2012 for three great years!

*It is a hopeless endeavor to attract people to a theatre unless they can be first brought to believe that they will never get in.*
  CHARLES DICKENS

*If London is a watercolor, New York is an oil painting.*
  PETER SHAFFER
INTRODUCTION:

Every year as a new theatre season begins we all wait with anticipation to see what shows will be in the line-up in both London’s West End and in New York on Broadway. Which shows will succeed and which shows will fail? We all have our predictions. Over the years many producers have transferred shows from Broadway to the West End and vice versa this is not a new practice to the theatre world, however, in the last couple of year the number of shows to transfer between the two countries has increased. Sometimes the shows succeed and sometimes they do not, but what has become evident is that some producers believe that the audience behavior in is the same in both countries. Meaning that some producers think that the taste of a potential audience goer is the same in both New York and London and the motivating factors is the same in both countries.

Theatre in both London and New York is a very long-standing tradition. London’s theatre history is long and diverse whereas New York may not be as long but certainly has the same enthusiasm and love of the art form behind it. Before we go any further it is important to look at the origins of the Broadway Theatre District and the West End. Before “Broadway” was even built there were theatres all over the lower part of Manhattan where the immigrant workers attended the theatre. Theatre in New York City in the 1800s was the most common form of entertainment and it was vastly popular. However, as getting around town was not very easy in the days before the subway, theatres were typically built in close proximity to where people lived, as opposed to a central location that would require the audience to travel. The majority of theatres were in downtown Manhattan, with additional theatres in individual neighborhoods. As people
began to move uptown so did the theatres; many of the old theatres were torn down and new ones were built. In 1870, the heart of Broadway was in Union Square and by the end of the century many theaters were opened near Madison Square (34th Street area). In the early 1900’s theatres started to be built in the Times Square area (which was called Longacre Square). The first theatre in Times Square was the Olympia Theatre and was built by cigar manufacturer Oscar Hammerstein. The theatres consolidated in the area in the 1920’s and 1930’s. As movies and network radio became more prevalent, theatres saw a major decline in attendance. Tickets to a movie were fifty cents and tickets to the theatre were two dollars. From 1900 to 1932 the number of theatres in New York City decreased in vast numbers. It is documented that in 1932 out of seventy-six theatres only six were operating. During the Depression, it was estimated that 25,000 people in the theatre community lost their jobs. President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Theatre Works Project, which distributed $46 million to the industry and financed more than 1,200 productions; many of them were extremely socially progressive. To help the war effort during World War II, the American Theatre Wing War Service opened the Stage Door Canteen where Broadway stars provided free food and entertainment to members of the military and traveled to war plants performing Lunchtime Follies to boost the spirits of the workers. In 1947, the American Theatre Wing held the first Tony Awards, named after Antoinette Perry, to recognize excellence in theatre. The 1940s also saw the birth of off-Broadway productions, with the growth of small theatres in Greenwich Village.

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1 Conte, pg. 75-81.
2 Broadway Theatre
3 Broadway Times Square
4 Conte pg 75-81
5 History of Theatre in New York City
6 History of Theatre in New York City
7 History of Theatre in New York City
1988, most of Broadway’s theatres were designated historic sites by the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission. Today, the Broadway district stretches from 41st street to 53rd street between Sixth Avenue and Ninth Avenue, encompassing 40 theatres. Broadway spends approximately $11.2 billion in New York City each season and supports 86,000 jobs, not to mention the indirect economic impact of visitor spending as well as selling an estimated 12 million tickets annually.  

The West End’s history goes back much further due to the fact that England’s history is much longer than that of America. London’s first playhouse was built at Shoreditch in 1593 and was named “The Theatre.” Prior to The Theatre, plays had been performed in makeshift venues such as courtyards, inn-yards or spacious homes. In 1597 the lease on The Theatre ran out and its owner Richard Burbage transported its timber across the Thames River and used the timber to build the first Globe Theatre on the South Bank. The Globe opened in 1599 with the company led by Burbage who became known as the first of London’s actor/impresarios. The West End was born in 1663 when the first of several theatres opened on Drury Lane. This theatre was destroyed in a fire in 1672, was rebuilt in 1674 and since then has remained in operation as a working theatre. 

During this time approximately fifteen other theatres were built and the concept of the West End theatre evolved. Today’s West End theatre took shape in the 19th Century when many of the theatre buildings of today were built. However, the backbone of the West End was put in place towards the end of the 19th century when Shaftesbury Avenue was created and theatres were built along it. New West End theatres continued to be built.

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8 History of Theatre in New York City
9 Theatreland History
10 Theatre Royal, Drury Lane
11 A history of a night at the theatre
throughout the early 20th century and the post war years saw the opening of two of the major non-profit theatres: the National Theatre and the Barbican which are not considered to be West End but are important to the history of West End theatre. And in a similar way to New York, London theatre suffered from the rise of technology such as the movies and the cost of maintaining such amazing buildings posed a constant challenge. However, West End theatre has continued to thrive despite all of the challenges that have arisen and in the same way as Broadway, brings in a great source of revenue to London. 12

While looking at the actual physical building up of Broadway and the West End it is important and also imperative that we look back on how the audiences in each place behaved. By understanding the behavior of the audiences of the past we can see where we are today. When theatre first started in New York it was done in the local communities. Because America was a land of newly arriving immigrants, most theater was imported from Europe. Plays and operettas were deeply entrenched in a heavy style soon to be identified as "Victorian." The great American playwrights did not appear until the 1920's. 13 A good example of the nature of theatergoers in the 1800’s is when the British Actor Edmond Kean came to the United States for his second tour. He performed in the play Richard III and Kean was driven from the stage by eggs and rotten fruit. The actor escaped, but the riot that followed wrecked the interior of the then named Park Theater.14

In the 1830's America was exporting "stars" to Europe. The first notable
American actor to make a successful tour was Edwin Forrest, who at nineteen, had played Iago to Edmond Kean’s Othello. Forrest’s second tour of Great Britain, in the following decade did not go so well. He was hissed off the stage. Though the disruption of his tour was the result of a personal feud with a British actor, its results were well publicized in the American Press and his return to the American stage was received with great passion among his fans. This “personal feud” became an international incident and demonstration of class struggle. On the night of May 10\textsuperscript{th}, 1849, when the British actor in question was scheduled to perform at the Astor Place Opera House in New York, a riot ensued, that in the end had to be put down with troops and cannons.\textsuperscript{15} This shows that theatregoers in the 1800’s were incredibly passionate about and involved in their theatre, to a point where they would riot in the streets and throw rotten food onto the stage. Additionally, this shows how audiences were not only more involved in what they were seeing but they also felt that these stage performances were part of their lives, so much so that they felt compelled to take to the streets in protest.

In the early 1900’s the audience was a mix of many different classes but the audience had progressed from throwing rotten produce to speaking or yelling at the actors while they were on stage, and booing or hissing.\textsuperscript{16} Before the United States entered World War One, the tendency was to produce cheerful plays. Once the war began, Broadway plays were used as an escape from the harsh reality of the war. Although Broadway plays were used mostly as an escape for the audience, the Broadway community became active in assisting the war effort. The play \textit{Yip, Yip, Yaphank} at the Century Theater was used to raise money for the war relief, marking the height of Broadway’s participation in the war effort in 1918.\textsuperscript{17} During the 1920s, many of the old buildings originally used for housing were now used to display signs, such as

\textsuperscript{15} The Great White Way
\textsuperscript{16} The History of Theatre on Broadway
\textsuperscript{17} The History of Theatre on Broadway
advertisements for "Lucky Strike" and "Pepsi Cola." One might describe Broadway at this time as being garish, and it had a reputation of being cheap and tawdry. Overall in the 1920s, Broadway was bursting with energy and enterprise. The theatre was filled with hope and fresh ideas and new styles of craftsmanship. Additionally, with the organization of the Theater Guild, Broadway became a brilliant center that influenced the theater of the world.

After the stock-market crash of 1929, and with the Great Depression overwhelming American politics and economics, Broadway plunged as well. The depression profoundly affected Broadway theatre, causing the number of productions to decline dramatically, and putting many theater people out of work. At the same time, since the American system seemed to be failing and the new Soviet system seemed promising, many Broadway actors, playwrights and other theater people in the theatre community joined the Communist party. They appreciated and wanted to show solidarity with the Soviet Union who had subsidized their theaters and giving the actors in Moscow a living wage. As a result of this shift to the Communist party, many off Broadway theaters now included dramas of social protest, using the slogan "Theater as a Weapon." The New Theater League and the Theater Union produced passionate dramas in order to propagandize the "working class," and left-wing productions became fashionable. Many playwrights used the theatres to make social commentary and advocate communist ideals.

During the 1940’s Broadway began to face competition from television and movies. The theatre business was declining all over the city to the point where there were not enough productions to support the available playhouses and not enough theatregoers who

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18 The History of Theatre on Broadway

19 The History of Theatre on Broadway
were willing to spend the money to go and see a production when they could watch television in their own living rooms. Times Square had degenerated into a carnival and sex bazaar.²⁰ Theaters all over the area were being torn down or turning into slums. Most of the theaters on Broadway were converted into film houses.²¹

In 1941, when the United States entered World War II, many people involved in the Broadway theatre volunteered to help the war effort, doing tasks that ranged from addressing envelopes to writing stage sketches. In 1942 the American Theatre Wing opened the Stage Door Canteen in the 44th Street Theatre.²² It was a place that entertained and provided food for servicemen during their breaks from the war, and nearly everything offered was free. The place was originally intended to serve about five hundred servicemen, but the number turned out to be close to four thousand. Some of the entertainers who came to volunteer their services were Ethel Merman, Gracie Fields and Ethel Waters. The Broadway community helped the morale for all during the war. The inspiring work that these individuals contributed helped keep the theatre business afloat and people coming in their doors. People were interested in what the Broadway community was doing and would come to the Times Square area to see for themselves.²³

After 1950, Broadway and the theater business continued the decline that began in the thirties. Between 1969-1970 there were only 62 productions, 15 of which were revivals, and by 1969 there were only 36 playhouses left, compared to the 70 or 80 in the twenties.²⁴ However Broadway was still attracting audiences from other parts of the country, approximately one-third of the people going to the theaters in New York were

²⁰ The History of Theatre on Broadway
²¹ The History of Theatre on Broadway
²² The History of Theatre on Broadway
²³ The History of Theatre on Broadway
²⁴ The Great White Way
out of town visitors who often saw as many as five shows during their stay.\textsuperscript{25} However also during this time indigenous New Yorkers were drifting away from theater. Tourist trip to New York to see theatre were becoming much more popular, the \textit{Louisville Courier-Journal} and the \textit{Columbus (Ohio) Citizen} were organizing "show trains." The newspapers advised their readers about the available Broadway productions, then arranged transportation and hotel accommodations, and even purchased the theater tickets. In the 1950's, Broadway became a popular holiday location.\textsuperscript{26} During this period some innovative musicals were produced and some were lavish. Some of the musicals to come out of this period of time were \textit{Hair}, \textit{West Side Story}, \textit{Fiddler on the Roof}, \textit{My Fair Lady} and \textit{The Sound of Music} just to name a few. This idea of the “Broadway Vacation” brought many tourists to New York City and kept the audience interested and diversified from out of town.\textsuperscript{27}

The audience in Britain has had a long history of being quite diverse. Drama in Britain grew out of church services at Easter from the 10\textsuperscript{th} century onwards. By the 14\textsuperscript{th} century plays based on the Bible were performed outside the church by members of craft guilds. Each play was staged on pageant wagons that would travel through the streets and would stop to perform at pre-arranged sites. By the end of medieval times, many towns had specific public theatre spaces.\textsuperscript{28} In the late 16\textsuperscript{th} and early 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries all classes of societies (apart from royalty) visited the public theatres. From 1576 indoor as well as these, purpose-built outdoor theatres started to appear in London, the most famous being Shakespeare’s Globe. Admission prices ranged from a penny to stand in the pit next to the stage all the way up to a sixpence for the most expensive seats. The more

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{The Great White Way}
\footnote{History of Theatre on Broadway}
\footnote{History of Theatre on Broadway}
\footnote{A History of a Night at the Theatre}
\end{footnotes}
affluent members of the audience would sit in the tiers of covered galleries or on the stage itself. The area around the thrust stage, called the yard, or pit, was standing room only; and here the ‘groundlings’ or ‘penny stinkards’ could stand and watch a play for a penny. In 1642 British theatres were closed by Parliament and did not reopen until King Charles II returned to the throne in 1660. When the theatres re-opened audiences went to the new indoor theatres, initially in converted tennis courts, to meet their friends, show off their clothes, flirt and catch up on the latest gossip. For a few extra pennies they could even sit on the stage. The most lavish productions in the 17th century were not open to the public but were performed for the royals and members of the court.

In the 18th century in order to gain admittance to a popular play in a London theatre, it was necessary to arrive at least an hour before the house opened. There were no orderly queues in those days and no individual numbered seats, so the rush, especially for the cheap bench seats in the pit sometimes resulted in fights and serious injury. Sometimes even the expensive sections were crammed. In 1763 audience members were banned from sitting on the stage at the Drury Lane theatre and other theatres followed suit. The seating capacity of theatres grew and by 1794 the rebuilt Drury Lane held over 3,000 seats. The cheapest seats were in the topmost gallery, known as the ‘gods’, followed by the pit closest to the stage. More wealthy members of the audience sat in boxes that encircled the pit. Concurrently during this period theatres were illuminated by candles and oil lamps and the auditorium was as brightly lit as the stage. This created an intimacy between the actors and the audience, but it also encouraged

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29 A History of a Night at the Theatre
30 A History of a Night at the Theatre
31 A History of a Night at the Theatre
people to chat instead of concentrating on the play. It is said that 18th century audiences were lively and there are several reports of riots among the cheap seats also known as the ‘footman’s gallery’. Traditionally people could come for half price toward the end of the evening, to see the short after-pieces that followed the main play. However, in 1763 the management of Covent Garden Theatre announced that for the play Artexes that only full price tickets would be available. The response was an organized riot which destroyed the interior of the theatre and forced the reinstitution of the half price concession. In the earlier part of the 1700’s it was clear that where an audience member sat in the auditorium, the position would show ones social-standing. For example the mistress to the Prince of Wales would sit in a box. However, after Covent Garden was rebuilt due to a fire in 1789, the theatre season changed. A less fashionable season was introduced, where boxes could be purchased by the general public and seats in the upper tier cost a guinea per person, making them affordable to many more people.

In the first half of the 19th century theatres were increasingly catering to popular taste which meant that support from upper and middle classes declined. Audiences were often noisy and not always well behaved. For example if an actor was disliked insults and ‘missiles’ such as apple cores or bottles were thrown. In the mid 19th century music hall and circus were in favor with the working class. Pierrot shows and Punch and Judy booths entertained audiences at seaside resorts. Opera was popular with the upper and middle classes and being appropriately dressed became a condition of entry. Evening dress was obligatory for those sitting in the boxes and the first gallery, which also became

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32 A History of a Night at the Theatre
33 A History of a Night at the Theatre
34 A History of a Night at the Theatre
35 A History of a Night at the Theatre
known as the dress circle because of this mandatory attire. From the mid 19th century the development of theatres in the West End with comfortable seating and facilities and a more refined repertory attracted the middle classes back to the wider theatre. By 1900 most theatres were lit by electricity and the auditorium was darkened during the performance. During this time it was often said that the audience was quite noisy both before and sometimes during the performances. As well as the disruptive elements there were others who were paid to go and be supportive. The author’s friends would applaud everything loudly regardless whether the play was good or bad and sometimes journalists were paid to write glowing reviews.

In the 20th century, theatre was an eclectic mix and was more like the theatre of today. West End commercialism was challenged by the repertory movement, which sprang up to promote drama with social and moral issues, and also by small companies that championed alternative theatre. Subsidized theatre began to flourish after World War II with the founding of the Arts Council of Great Britain. In 1968 the government finally abolished censorship, which provided a catalyst for a new wave of political writing and experiments with traditional theatres and how to use the space in novel ways. During this movement many small fringe theatres sprang up as well as warehouse and pub theatre spaces. Audiences seemed to evolve as well. There was a real hodge podge of all the different classes attending. Audiences interaction with the actors lessened and the launching of fruit and or cans had become a thing of the past. Today audiences seem to interact with the cast during the Christmas pantomime, which is always expected.
to be noisy and it encourages that kind of interaction. So while audiences may not be as vocal as they once were that does not mean they are any less engaged.

This thesis will examine the similarities and differences in audience behavior in the West End and on Broadway. While, producers seem to think the two audiences are very similar, they are actually quite different. Many producers and artistic directors try to emulate what their counterparts are doing across the pond by adapting aspects of one another's successful working systems. Producers transfer hit shows from one city to the other hoping for similar success. But often the shows do not achieve the same results as in their hometowns or they fail in unexpected ways. The theatrical community needs to stop comparing the two and realize that audience behavior on Broadway and the West End is different and that, while there is a lot to be learned from one another, we should not expect to achieve the same results on a show by show basis. Each project should be treated as a new and adventurous endeavor.

The paper will begin with a look at the similarities and difference between the audiences in both the West End and on Broadway. Chapter two will look at what audiences are seeing. Chapter three will examine audience satisfaction from the actual “product” meaning the performance, to the theatre that the theatregoer is seeing the production in. Chapter four will be a case study of several shows that have transferred back and forth between the Atlantic. This chapter will specifically look at a success, a mediocre result and a flop. Chapter five will look at the lessons learned and lastly there is the conclusion.
CHAPTER ONE
Audiences: Who is going?

Theatre going both in London and New York is a very long-standing tradition. Both cultures have a rich history that shows that the theatre has been an integral part of the culture reflecting the issues, dreams and life that reflects the audience’s background. Although London’s theatrical history may be considerably longer, there is tradition in both countries of people attending the theatre.

As technology grew and movies and television came into the picture, people spent their leisure time and money elsewhere and attended the theatre less and less. As ticket prices have increased and the cost of technology has declined, there was a definite decrease in theatre attendance. Technology in this case means the price of movies tickets being significantly less, the on-demand button on your television where you can watch “what you want and when you want it” at the click of a button or using a computer. Technology in this case means other forms of entertainment that would deter a potential theatregoer. As competition increased and producers could no longer count on theatergoing as a given, audience behavior became something of a mystery and people started to study who was attending shows and why. The thought was that if we can understand our audiences perhaps we could figure out what to program and how to target specific demographics.

This section of the paper will explore the many different factors that describe the audiences in both London and New York: age, gender, ethnicity, income, location, who they attend with, how many people they attend with and education. In this way we will be able to see the breakdown of who is actually attending and what are the key demographics in each country. This section will show that some of the factors are very
similar to each other but other key issues are vastly different. In an interview, Adrian Bryan-Brown co-founder of leading Broadway press office Boneau/Bryan-Brown explains the main differences between the audiences:

I think as a cultural Britain is kind of ahead, because a greater percentage of the potential audience has some kind of theatre going habit. Even if it’s going as a family to a pantomime at Christmas. I believe that there is more of a tradition in the culture and that is not to say that there are not more people that go in New York it is just more innately in the British culture. On Broadway there is huge national tourism and some international tourists that come to New York specifically to see theatre. So that kind of weighs it out. I think it makes for a different kind of audience because there is one that is more versed in the tradition and one that is looking more for entertainment.40

From Mr. Bryan-Brown’s comments we can already see how the differences between the two emerge and why we must take a closer look at the specific demographics to see where the exact distinctions lie

Age

Generally, when we think about the average age of a person attending the theatre, we tend to think of people who are above the age of forty. One does not think of theatre as a young person’s activity. The prices are too high for most young people to attend with a friend, and therefore one would expect that the young person has to be taken to the theatre by a parent or grandparent. When looking at Broadway audiences in 2009-2010, the average age of an audience member was forty-five which is up from the previous year of forty-two.41 This means, as the above conclusions suggest, it is hard to attend the theatre at a younger age because the prices are so high that a person must have a discretionary income, which most young people do not have.

40 Bryan-Brown Interview.
41 Demographics of Broadway pg. 20.
The Broadway League conducted a survey that broke age groups down into six categories: under 18, 18-24, 25-34, 35-49, 50-64, and 65 or older. Their findings were as follows: under 18 made up 9% of the audience, which is lower from the previous year where they made up 10% of the audience. 18-24 was 9%, which is also down from the previous year of 12%. 25-34 made up 13%, which again was down from the previous year of 16%. 35-49 was 22%, which was also lower than the year before with 25%. 50-64 which is by far the largest group attending the theatre made up 32% of the audience which was an increase from the year before with 25% and lastly 65 or older was 16% also with an increase from the previous year of 12%. 42

Another important demographic, when looking at age, is the difference in the age breakdown between those who attend plays and those who attend musicals. The average age of someone going to see a play is 53 and the average age of someone going to see a musical is 44. In general when looking at musicals, the range of who is going is generally lower. 43 The 50-64 year old group is still the largest with 30% but all the younger age groups are much higher than that of those going to a play. Of those going to a play, the largest group is still the 50-64 year olds but they make up 42% of the audience, which is almost half. Upon looking at Figure 1 in the Appendix A, we can see the break down and clearly see that the older generation attends plays more than they do musicals. One might think that this statistic is because musicals are generally more family oriented than plays. This topic will be covered later in Chapter 2.

Another interesting fact in the Broadway League study was that theatergoers from foreign countries are noticeably younger for both plays and musicals. The average age

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42 The age breakdown for Broadway can be examined in Figure 1 of Appendix A
43 The age ranges on Broadway for playgoers vs. musicals Figure 2 of Appendix A
of the international visitor was 39 while the American counterpart is 47. A couple of possible reasons might be that families often travel together and thus lowers the average age or younger people tend to travel more often hence lowering the age of theatergoers. Additionally it appears that when people from foreign countries plan to come to New York they also plan to see all of the attractions that New York has to offer which usually includes a Broadway show.

We might think that the West End would have almost exactly the same statistics as Broadway however, while they are similar, when we break down the information we see that there is more diversity of age in who goes to the theatre in the West End. The Society of London Theatre (S.O.L.T) conducted a similar survey as the Broadway League; in the S.O.L.T’s research, people under the age of fifteen were excluded for practical reasons. Their age groups were broken down into six categories: 16-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 54-64, and 65+ and the results were as follows: 16-24 at 16% which was the same as the last time the survey was conducted in 2003. The next level up, 25-34, made up the largest percentage of the audience making up 21% of the whole, which is 1% higher than the 2003 survey. 35-44 was 16%, which was 2% lower than the 2003 survey. 45-54 made up 20% of the audience, which is 2% higher than in 2003. 55-64 made up 18% of the audience, which is lower than in 2003, which was 19%. And lastly in the 65+ category made up 10% of the audience which remains the same from the previous survey. What is fascinating however is that the average age of the theatergoer

44Demographics of Broadway pg. 22.
45 S.O.L.T. reasons for not interview 15 and under is due to strict rules and guidelines which would require parental consent. They felt it would not be practical given the methodology of their research. If S.O.L.T had included the under 15’s the average age would be younger.
47 The age breakdown for Broadway can be examined in Figure 3 of Appendix A
is 43 years old, but when we look at the breakdown of who makes up the largest group surprisingly it is the 25-34 year olds. However, if S.O.L.T had included the under 15 year olds the average age would be lowered even further, especially when you consider that there is a tradition of taking public and private school groups to the theatre.

Similarly to Broadway, tourists have a younger age profile than locals. Ages 16-24 is the largest group with 23% and the average age of a tourist is 42. Additionally, younger tourists represent a greater proportion of those who buy their ticket on the day of the performance.\textsuperscript{48} This might reflect their lifestyle choice and show that younger people are more impulsive in their buying habits and are less likely to plan theatre visits in advance, where as their older counterparts may plan in advance. So while the average ages of theatergoers in both the West End and New York are similar, a close examination of the breakdowns actually demonstrates a significant difference.

**Gender**

When analyzing who is going to theatre, another distinction to be made is by gender. Who attends more, men or women? On Broadway women make up the majority of the audience, which continues to be a steady pattern since the 1980-1981 survey. Over the last several seasons, women have made up approximately two-thirds of the theatre audience attendees; in the 2009-2010 season women made up 66% of the audience while men only made up 34% of the audience.\textsuperscript{49} Furthermore, in the 2009-2010 season, 7.9 million tickets were purchased by women and only 4 million were purchased by men. The percentage of female Broadway theatergoers was actually 31% higher than the

\textsuperscript{48} West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 14.
\textsuperscript{49} The gender breakdown for Broadway can be examined in Figure 4 of Appendix A
percentage of women in the entire United States population.\footnote{Demographics of Broadway pg. 19.} In the West End, women also account for more than two-thirds of theatergoers, making up 68\% of the entire audience whereas men only make up 32\% of the audience. This is a change from the previous years of study in 2003 the divide was 65\% woman to 35\% men and in 1997 it was 61\% to 39\%.\footnote{West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 12.} This categorically shows that women are the primary theatergoers and men are attending less frequently. The S.O.L.T. also points out in the study that women are more likely to complete questionnaires than men, which may also account for some bias towards females in the results. Unlike the Broadway League study, the S.O.L.T. breaks down its numbers even further, and we are able to see that with younger audiences, an even greater proportion of the audience is female. 73\% of those aged under 34 are female and 27\% are male. Additionally, women are more likely to see a musical (71\%) whereas men are most likely probably going to see a play (38\%) or an opera (47\%).\footnote{West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 12.} Currently, in both London and New York, we are programming shows with this information in mind. Producers are planning shows based on what women might want to see rather than trying to appeal to men. The research regarding ticket purchasers also indicates that in New York and London women are the ones making the theatre going decisions. There are always shows that are the anomaly that men will request to see, such as \textit{The Jersey Boys} or \textit{The Book of Mormon}, but on the whole it is the women who make the decisions about what shows their spouse, boyfriend, partner, etc. will see. Either way one thing is clear, women make up the largest percent of the audience both on Broadway and in the West End.
**Ethnicity**

A large question we ask as producers is who will this show appeal to, and then we tend to look at the potential ethnic background of a targeted audience member depending on the subject of the play. For example, *The Mountaintop*, which was produced both in the West End and on Broadway, attracted black audiences in both places, similarly *August: Osage County* appealed to a white demographic. These results are presumably due to the subject matter of the plays. In New York, over three quarters of all Broadway tickets were purchased by Caucasian theatergoers. And although the audience has become very slightly more diverse over the past decade, it remains fairly homogenous.53 In the 2009-2010 season, the breakdown was as follows: Caucasians made up 76%, Blacks made up 3%, Asians made up 6%, Hispanics made up 7% and the last category which is “other,” made up 7% of the audiences.54 The minority groups over the past decade have grown, however, they still have not become a dominant force in theatre attendance. This also might have to do with what is actually playing on Broadway and whom it appeals to, but at this point in time people who attend are primarily Caucasian.

In London, the demographic breakdown is slightly different and this might be due to a larger of percentage of Indians in the population. S.O.L.T. breaks down their ethnic groups slightly differently from of the way the Broadway League does. Its groups are as follows: Caucasian, Asian, Mixed, Other, Chinese, and Black. Asian, in the S.O.L.T. analysis would mean people from India rather than from China. Similarly to Broadway, Caucasians make up the largest percentage of the audience with 92% of the total. Asian made up 2%, Mixed made up 2%, Other made 2%, Chinese made 1% and lastly Black

53 Demographics of Broadway pg. 24. The ethnicity breakdown for Broadway can be examined in Figure 5 of Appendix A
54 Demographics of Broadway pg. 24.
made up 1% of the totally audience.\textsuperscript{55} This matches the profile of visitors seen in 2003. Additionally, as in New York, the nature of the show impacts the profile of who will come to see it. For example the “Hip-Hop” inspired musical \textit{Into the Hoods} attracted a larger proportion of Black audience members than other shows (17%).\textsuperscript{56} In London, however, there appears to be a much larger gap of who from these minority groups are attending the theatre. On Broadway all of the minority groups make up for at least more than 24% of the total audience whereas on the West End it seems as though the crowd is mostly homogeneous. This is neither good nor bad, it is just a factor that producers should take notice of when programming a show. And this raises a number of questions: would these minority groups come to the theatre more if the shows were targeted to their concerns, history or cultural interests? Or is this a question of increased outreach and the need for more direct marketing of individual shows to specific communities?

\textbf{Income}

A major theatergoing issue today is how expensive it is to go and see a show, regardless of whether it is a play or a musical. While cost would appear to be a significant factor both on Broadway and in the West End, a direct comparison is problematic due to the fact that the Broadway League and the S.O.L.T. break down income level very differently.

The Broadway League looked at people’s income whereas the S.O.L.T. looked at people’s working status and very loosely examined what people where actually earning. The other major difference, of course, is that the Broadway League reported in dollars and the S.O.L.T. reported in sterling. For the purposes of this paper, I am going to

\textsuperscript{55} The ethnicity breakdown for the West End can be examined in Figure 6 of Appendix A
\textsuperscript{56} West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 16.
convert sterling into dollars at the conversion rate from November 2011, which according to coinmill.com was £1 = $1.59. On Broadway, the average thea
tregoer reported an annual household income of $200,700.\(^{57}\) The Broadway League has broken down the Broadway Audience into nine different levels of income and what percentage of the audience they make up. Less than $25,000 made up 8%\(^{,}\) $25,000 - $49,999 made up 9%\(^{,}\) $50,000 – $74,999 made up 13%\(^{,}\) $75,000 - $99,999 made up 13%\(^{,}\) $100,000-$149,999 made up 18%\(^{,}\) $150,000-$249,999 made up 18\(^{,}\) $250,000- $499,999 made up 11%\(^{,}\) $500,000-$749,999 made up 4% and lastly $750,000 or more made up 7% of the audience.\(^{58}\) Additionally male attendees reported a higher annual household income than their female counterpart: $222,400 versus $189,300.

Steve Tate who formerly worked at AKA\(^{59}\) New York and now is the International Marketing Director of the National Theatre said:

Unfortunately, Broadway is an activity [that caters] to the 1% and those with a large amount of disposable incomes. When top ticket prices (such as The Book of Mormon) reach into the $400+ range for premium seats and $155 for regular priced seats, a middle class family of four cannot even play in that league. And when producers argue that they offer price points for everyone, it is often the last row in the balcony, limited student tickets, or a general lottery of 20 tickets in a house that seats thousands. This is a joke and a shame. Many of the performers wouldn’t even be able to attend their own shows!\(^{60}\)

On Broadway, the average thea
tregoer is more affluent compared to theatergoers in the rest the United States population; more than fifty percent of the attendees claimed that they earned an annual household income of more than $100,000,\(^{61}\) compared to only

\(^{57}\) Demographics of Broadway pg. 30.
\(^{58}\) The income breakdown for Broadway can be examined in Figure 7 of Appendix A
\(^{59}\) AKA is a transatlantic advertising agency that focus’ primarily on theatre
\(^{60}\) Tate Interview
\(^{61}\) Demographics of Broadway pg. 30
twenty percent of American households in general.\textsuperscript{62} This demonstrates that the people who are attending the theatre are on the higher end of the income pool, most likely because those individuals have more discretionary income. Conversely, in London, the average income of theatergoers is £31,500 ($50,120),\textsuperscript{63} which is significantly lower than the average income of a Broadway theatergoer. In a survey of 4,076 theatregoers, the S.O.L.T broke down its income levels into three categories and the results were as follows. Above £20,000 ($31,822) made up 31\%, £20,001-£50,000 ($31,823-$79,555) made up 38\% and, lastly, £50,001 ($79,557) and up made up 18\% of the audience. This percentage breakdown does not equal 100\%, but I believe that this result happened because some individuals decided to leave this portion of the survey blank. As we can see, on the West End the largest group attending the theatre is the income bracket between £20,001-£50,000 ($31,823-$79,555).\textsuperscript{64} This is the opposite of New York. On Broadway we see people attending the theatre from a more wealthy background, whereas on the West End the people those who earn less money and are presumably from the middle class make up a much larger percentage of the audience. This is a very important result. The S.O.L.T. reports that seven in ten theatergoers work either full or part-time. And amongst those that are not working, retirees and students make up the largest group.\textsuperscript{65} Additionally, male theatergoers earn on average £39,900 ($63,485), which is substantially higher than female visitors whose average annual income was £27,350 ($43,517). The point being that the men who attend the theatre in the West End make a considerable amount more than the women who attend.

\textsuperscript{62} Demographics of Broadway pg. 30.
\textsuperscript{63} West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 6.
\textsuperscript{64} West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 19.
\textsuperscript{65} West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 18.
Education

When addressing education in terms of audience behavior it becomes hard to compare. The educational system in the United States is completely different from the educational system in the United Kingdom. In the United States, one goes to school from the age of five through to the age of eighteen and then the student has the option to go to University. In the United Kingdom, one must also attend school from the age of five but, until recently, school was only compulsory until the age of sixteen when a student would have to take the GCSC exams that lead to A-Level exams, which are the deciding exams for entrance into University. The largest difference between the two countries, however, is that England has a National Curriculum, which requires students to study Shakespeare throughout their education. And, they are not just reading the plays, they are also encouraged to have a deeper understanding of Shakespeare by experiencing his work through theatre. Through their studies of English literature and drama, the students put on their own school productions of Shakespeare plays and then, in order to reinforce what they have studied, they go and see live performances of his work. Emma Laugier who grew up in the United Kingdom and works for the Ambassador Theatre Group thought that:

Shakespeare plays when I was younger were absolutely and definitely an important part of my education. I think, as a kid in Britain, Shakespeare is a huge part of your cultural heritage…People do not understand it straight away when they are very young but I think it was really key actually. I think reading Shakespeare helped introduce me to the theatre at an earlier age.66

In the United States, the study of Shakespeare is not a required part of the curriculum and some teachers may choose not to teach his work and so some students

66 Laugier Interview
miss out on reading his plays completely. There is currently no requirement for students
to read any plays from any era. Individual teachers might assign plays (this may perhaps
be a more common practice in private schools) but in the United States there is a greater
divide between reading plays and reading literature and, more often than not, teachers do
not allot time for theatrical works.⁶⁷

Currently, the S.O.L.T. does not have any data regarding education level of its
audience. This seems to be the sort of information that could provide useful data for
producers, however, for now we will look at data from a survey that was done for the
purposes of this thesis⁶⁸. The data reflects that the majority of theatergoers are college
educated with 62% having a bachelor’s degree and 29.7% having a graduate degree.⁶⁹
What this data shows us is that, similarly to Broadway, the West End theatergoer is an
educated group of people.

Conversely, on Broadway there is data about how educated the audiences are.
The Broadway League has broken down the data into six categories. In the 2009-2010
season, the breakdown was as follows: Completed High School or Less made up 7%,
Some College made up 11%, Completed College made up 30%, Some Grad School made
up 8%, Completed Graduated School made up 39% and lastly other Education made up
5% of the audience.⁷⁰ Of theatergoers over twenty-five years of age 77% of them had
completed college and 39% had earned a graduate degree, which is significantly higher
than the West End theatergoer. This shows that Broadway theatergoers are a very well

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⁶⁷ The Good School Guide
⁶⁸ The survey was sent to peers, friends, family and was forward around to others through the afore
mentioned. They anonymously answered and the sample size was 300.
⁶⁹ The education breakdown for the West End can be examined in Figure 8 of Appendix A
⁷⁰ Demographics of Broadway pg. 27. The education breakdown for Broadway can be examined in Figure 9
of Appendix A
educated group of people. Furthermore, audiences of plays had attained higher levels of
education than musical theatergoers; 82% of the audience at plays had completed college
and 45% had completed graduate school. At musicals 76% of the audience had completed
college and 39% a graduate degree.\footnote{Demographics of Broadway pg. 29.} It appears that people who have not completed
college do not come to the theatre as frequently. This result might reflect the educational
system, discussed earlier, which does not encourage the exposure or learning about plays
or playwrights in the United States If a student is introduced to plays and or theatre as
they are growing up there is more of a predisposition to appreciate theatre and possibly
attend as an adult regardless of education.

\textbf{Location}

When looking at who attends the theatre, a large question we have as producers is
where are people coming from? Are they local or from the surrounding suburbs?
Additionally, we look at tourism to see if we are attracting domestic tourists or
international tourists to our shows. These are questions asked in both New York and
London. Because this is a rather vast topic I am going to break this down first generally
and then more specifically within regions.

On Broadway in the 2009-2010 season, approximately 63% of all audiences were
tourists. Theatergoers from New York City made up 17% and those from the surrounding
suburbs comprised 21%. Domestic tourists made up 46% and international tourists made
up 17% of all Broadway Audiences.\footnote{Demographics of Broadway pg. 8. The location breakdown for Broadway can be examined in Figure 9 of Appendix A} In 2009-2010, domestic tourists made up 5.5
million visits to Broadway, which is up slightly from 2008-2009, when domestic tourists
made upwards of 5.1 million visits. However, the 2009-2010 season was slightly lower
than the 2007 and 2008 seasons, where domestic tourism and visiting the theatre was much higher: 6.12 million and 6.04 million respectively.\(^{73}\) It is important to look at recent years’ figures to understand how theatregoers behavior is adapting. An examination of the statistics of international tourists coming to Broadway demonstrates that, since 2002, there has been a steady rise in theatre attendance, however, in 2009-2010 there was a decrease to just under 2 million foreign visitors who attended Broadway and this is down from 2.5 million from the previous season. Moreover, there was a corresponding drop in the number of foreign tourists who came to New York City in 2009. Given that there were 8.6 million visits by foreign tourists,\(^{74}\) roughly one in four attended a Broadway show.\(^{75}\) New Yorkers from the five boroughs comprised 2 million of the total audience in 2009-2010, which is slightly, less than the 2008-2009 season when New Yorkers made up 2.16 million of the audience.\(^{76}\) And the last group of people, the Suburbanites, who are theatergoers from the New York City suburbs, rose slightly from the previous season from 2.4 million to 2.5 million.\(^{77}\)

On Broadway, musicals rather than straight plays attracted more tourists. In the 2009-2010 season, 66\% of attendees at musicals were tourists compared to 44\% at plays. In addition, 95\% of foreign theatergoers went to musicals in contrast to 74\% of New York City theatergoers. And lastly, the proportion of tourists in the audience rose in the summer months when most schools are on vacation and when the weather was warmer.\(^{78}\).

\(^{73}\) Demographics of Broadway pg. 10.  
\(^{74}\) Demographics of Broadway pg. 10.  
\(^{75}\) Demographics of Broadway pg. 11.  
\(^{76}\) Demographics of Broadway pg. 12. The location breakdown for Broadway can further be examined in Figure 11 of Appendix A  
\(^{77}\) Demographics of Broadway pg. 13.  
\(^{78}\) Demographics of Broadway pg. 14.
In summation when it comes to the Broadway audiences it is important to realize that the majority of people attending the theatre are tourists. More tourists are attending musicals and local New York Theatregoers are attending plays.

In the West End’s 2008 Season, approximately four in five audience members were from the United Kingdom and, amongst those, nearly half were from London. Theatergoers from London made up 38%, whereas theatergoers from elsewhere in the United Kingdom made up 43% of the total theatre audience, making the largest group who attends the theatre on the West End people who are from the United Kingdom outside of London. 20% of audience members are from overseas, with 25% out of the 20% being from Europe, 7% from North America and 7% from elsewhere overseas. 79 Compared to 2003, the group that has seen the largest decline is North American visitors, which was 17% in 2003 and down to 7% in 2008. A huge factor impacting on these results might be the strength of the pound in 2008, which made visiting the United Kingdom extremely expensive for American tourists.

In terms of the UK theatergoers from outside of London, 60% of theatergoers were from the South East, 11% were from the Midlands as well as the North and the South West. Smaller proportions came from Scotland (4%), Wales (3%) and Northern Ireland (1%). Areas, which have an easier commute to the West End, reflect a higher percentage of theatergoers. For example, both Kent and Surrey both are an easy commute to London, make up 9% of the theatre audience but these theatregoers do not live within in London. When it comes to theatergoers coming from overseas, the countries that are English-speaking made up the largest proportion of audience members:

79 West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 30. The location breakdown for the West End Can be further examined in figure 12 of Appendix A.
29% of overseas visitors were from the United States, 10% from Australia, 8% from Canada and 5% from Ireland.\textsuperscript{80} It would make sense that the people who attend the theatre the most have the same language in common. While tourists from non-English speaking countries do also attend the theatre, they make up only 34% of the total audience.\textsuperscript{81} Similarly to Broadway, musicals attracted more tourists than did straight plays. And in the summer months, a larger population of international tourists attended than in the rest of the year. In summation we can see that the majority of the audience in a West End theatre house is comprised of tourists but tourists from within the United Kingdom many of which could be deemed suburbs of the London area. This differs from the statistics in New York where the majority of theatregoers are tourists from other states and or other countries.

**Who are you visiting with?**

When one goes to the theatre, whom does one go with? Finding out who is going to the show, whether partners, friends, family, etc., is an important question because a show can be marketed differently if one knows who is sitting in the audience.

Unfortunately, at this time the Broadway League survey does not ask this question. This would be important information to have and therefore, this thesis will utilize the information from an independent study.\textsuperscript{82} The S.O.L.T. has conducted this research however, and we will take an in-depth look at its findings.

On Broadway, 51% of theatregoers attended the theatre with their friends, 30% attended with a partner, 13% attended with other family, 4% attended alone, 2% went

\textsuperscript{80} West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 32.  
\textsuperscript{81} West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 32  
\textsuperscript{82} The survey was sent to peers, friends, family and was forward around to others through therefore mentioned. They anonymously answered and the sample size was 300.
with a work colleague and, lastly, 4% went as part of an organized group.\textsuperscript{83} People by far seem to attend with their friends and/or loved ones the most. Because theatre is an expensive activity, perhaps it is more of an event that people like to share and do together. It would appear that most people prefer to go with others than spend the evening alone at the theatre.

In London and on the West End, 45% of theatergoers were visiting with a partner, 31% visited with friends, 25% with other family, 9% with children under sixteen, 6% attended alone, 5% as part of an organized group and lastly 4% came with work colleagues.\textsuperscript{84} People by far attend the theatre the most with their partners and that statistic has not changed from year to year. It would appear that people on both sides of the Atlantic like to go to the theatre on dates and with their significant others the most.

**Party Size**

The Broadway League has not yet reported on how many people are typically in a party size when attending a show. We will look at results collected for the purpose of this thesis in order to compare with what S.O.L.T. has reported. The average number of people attending the theatre together on the West End is 3.3 people, which is a drop from 2003 when the average size was 6.3 people. The most common group size was two people, which made up 57\% of the total audience. This reflects the results discussed in the prior section, in terms of the large number of people visiting the theatre with their partners.

When a group was comprised of three people, it made up 11\% of the audience, four people made up 12\%, five through seven people made up 6\%, in an organized group

\textsuperscript{83} Independent Study 2 pg. 9
\textsuperscript{84} West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 23.
of eight or more made up 6% of the total audience and, lastly, when eight or more, not organized in a formal group, attended the theatre they accounted for 1% of the total audience. Women were more likely to visit in a slightly larger group. This might suggest that women are more likely to visit the theatre on the West End with friends. Musicals by far attract the largest average party size than any other genre with 3.5 people and on average, when there are 4 people in a party, the tickets are usually booked more than a month in advance which might suggest the potential influence of an organized trip.

On Broadway the most common party size was comprised of two people, which accounted for 79% of the audience that was there. 8% went on their own, 6% went in a party of three, 5% in a group of four, 8% went with a group between five and seven people and, lastly, 1% of theatergoers went in an organized group of eight or more. This follows along with the data of who theatergoers are attending the theatre with. The majority said a friend or partner, which means that similarly to the West End people are going to the theatre on dates or because they have an occasion to attend.

From all the data that was collected in Chapter One the overall conclusions that I came to are that the audiences while similar are still different. In New York the audience is older with higher income levels than in London. And in London it appears that more local people attend the theatre. This section tells me that while the two audiences are similar they are also different and one must take into account things like age and education when trying to market to them. I think one should not pay attention that in England that audience may be younger and try to reach them through younger methods such as online while in New York one would try and entice and audience member through more conventional practices. It is important to look at each subsection to know
who and what you are producing too in order to know what will make the most sense commercially.
CHAPTER TWO
What are Audiences seeing and why?

Each year we look to see what audiences are attending more often: new plays, new musicals, or revivals. The answers depend not only on what shows are actually playing in a given season, but also what motivates members of the audience to go and see particular shows. Additionally, we have to take into account how often people are attending the theatre. Some might attend at a much higher rate than others. We will again take a look at both sides of the Atlantic and try to compare the two.

What is out there? And how often?

The Broadway League did not take every show that played in the 2009-2010 season into account. They only handed out surveys at 24 different productions over 72 individual performances. In this section I will use not only the Broadway Leagues data but the research I have done specifically for the purpose of this thesis. It is important to note the majority of people who took place in this study live locally in the New York City area. Each year Broadway offers a variety of shows and in the 2009-2010 season 39 shows opened (11 new musicals, 14 new plays, 6 musical revivals, and 8 play revivals)\(^8\) and that is not taking into account the long running shows such as *Wicked* or *The Lion King*. What this information shows us is that there were perhaps more opportunities for people to attend new plays rather than musicals some of which may been long running. So in terms of seeing work that is new to the season there were more plays to been seen than there were new musicals. Playgoers tended to be more frequent theatergoers than musical attendees. The typical straight play attendee saw seven shows in the past year.

\(^8\) Shevitz
whereas the musical attendee went to only five. According to our independent research the data matches that of the Broadway League with more people attending plays rather than musicals on Broadway. This data matches the figures from the Broadway League study that shows that people who live locally are more likely to go and see a play than a musical. The Broadway League also asked how many times a year people attended the theatre. The average theatergoer overall attended 4.5 Broadway performances last season: 66% of the audience saw more than one show; 41% of the audience attended 2-4 shows; and 14% attended 5-9 shows. The avid theatergoer who attended 15 or more performances made up only 6% of the audiences.

The Society of London Theatre (S.O.L.T.), similarly to the Broadway League, sampled from about 30 productions that were open in the West End. The S.O.L.T. information is from the 2008 season, during which 241 new productions opened. In the United Kingdom musicals remain the most commonly attended type of performance: 68% of theatergoers attended a musical, a number that is up from 2003 when only 67% of theatergoers attended a musical, and 32% of theatergoers attended a play. The rest went to a comedy, dance, opera or another form of entertainment. The average London-based theatergoer visits the West End theatre 6.4 times a year, with the specific breakdown as follows: 80% of audience members have been to the theatre more than once in 2008; just under 47% of audience members attended the theatre more than three times; and 5% of total audience members had been to the theatre more than twenty-one times, which would mean on average seeing a performance every two and half weeks. Overseas visitors attend the theatre on average 4.3 times and theatregoers from elsewhere

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86 Demographics of Broadway pg. 5.
87 Demographics of Broadway pg. 32.
88 West End Theatre Audience pg. 48.
in the UK attend 4.9 times. What this demonstrates is that attending the theatre is a key element of people’s itinerary when they travel to London. This assertion is made because the majority of theatregoers attend a performance once or twice a year so to think that overseas tourist will be on average 4.3 times to the theatre and a tourists from the UK goes 4.9 times would show these people are planning a trip to the theatre when planning their trips to London. If one were not planning to attend the theatre on each of these trips to London these numbers would be much lower.

The data from both countries shows us that people who attend theatre in London do so more frequently than in New York. This might be because there are far more shows opening and closing in the West End giving people more of an opportunity to see a variety of shows than in New York, or it might simply be because London is just more known for theatre than New York or more radically because the ticket prices are less of a deterrent. Broadway audiences are more likely to see a play than they are a musical, which is the complete opposite from the West End. The S.O.L.T. did not report on how many of the 241 shows that opened were musicals or plays, however, as we can see from the previous paragraph audiences were drawn to musicals more than they were to plays. This is an interesting fact considering musicals are known as an American pastime but on the West End the audience attends musicals 70% of the time while it attends plays only 42% of the time. This is a key difference in between theatregoers in the United Kingdom and in the United States. In the West End theatregoers attend the theatre more often. Ms. Laugier of The Ambassador Theatre Group explains this by saying:

89 West End Theatre Audience pg. 44. How often people are attending breakdown for the West End can be further examined in figure 1 of Appendix B.
West End audiences are more year round audiences, whereas on Broadway there is a lot of through traffic from tourists from other parts of the United States while there is an established audience in the West End that comes back and back.\footnote{Laugier Interview}

Because the United States is so vast it makes it hard for people visiting from other parts of the country to attend the theatre as often as people from the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom is significantly smaller than the United States and it is easier and less expensive to get to London from other parts of the country than it is to get to New York City from other parts of the United States. Furthermore, it is important to remember that most people who have grown up in Britain have studied some form of theatre at some point, which makes theatre a part of the culture. The last reason we think might influence West End theatergoers to attend the theatre more than the Broadway audience is the extremely extensive history of the theatre in London. Theatre has been part of the foreground for the majority of England’s history and is a huge part of its national identity.

**What is the Motivation?**

We as producers often wonder what motivates our audiences to see our shows in order to be able to emulate that success factor in a future endeavor. We try different techniques including social media and television commercial campaigns in order to try to attract people to attend our shows. We try many different ideas in both London and New York to see what will entice the audience to purchase tickets. There are many reasons a person might attend a show and they are complex and difficult to figure out. They are so complex that, for example, the Broadway League study had to break down the motivators into twenty-one different factors. The ways of motivating people are limitless and not all
of them are utilized. But for the purposes of this thesis we are going to examine the top reasons that motivate a person to attend the theatre.

In New York there are many different reasons an individual might attend a show, but by and large the principal influence is word-of-mouth. In both a study by the Broadway League and an independent study for this thesis, word-of-mouth motivated about half of the potential theatergoers to attend a show. Mr. Tate explains:

Word of mouth by far is the biggest factor in motivating audience members to see a show. The Internet has led to the proliferation of the personal recommendation and in all of the studies conducted by Broadway ad executives, a positive note from a close friend is always atop the list. I know very few audience members who attended a show solely because of an ad. If so, it’s usually due to previous familiarity with a show title (revival) or celebrity cast. Reviews come in a close second, however, I believe that with the advent of online reviewers, message boards, and blogs, the “official” critic voice has lost its resonance. The term “review” has morphed into a source deemed legit by the reader. This could a friend’s Facebook page or twitter feed, a no-name blogger, or a family member. Hence it circles back to word of mouth.91

The Broadway League broke down the motivators into different categories and looked at both musicals and plays differently because typically, as we know from our earlier discussion, with musicals we know we are mostly dealing with tourists and with plays we know the audience is primarily well educated people who live locally. Because the Broadway League broke down the categories many times, we are only going to look at the most persuasive influences for both musicals and plays. For musicals, 53% of theatergoers said that personal recommendation either by word-of-mouth or a post on a friend’s social media page was the most influential factor in deciding what show to see. Other influential factors were the musical elements (32%), critical reviews (23%), Tony Awards® (15%), having read an article about the show (15%) and having seen the show

91 Tate Interview
before (15%). What this shows us is that primarily when it comes to musicals people want a good recommendation and that is the leading factor. We may be able to account for this because the majority of people attending are not local and may not want to go and look up news about the show in a New York based paper or they may not have access to radio show interviews because of their location. When looking at the motivating factors for attending a musical we should remember that in New York the largest motivator is word-of-mouth so we should encourage people who have seen the show to blog, tweet, Facebook, etc. about their experience. For play audiences the most influential factors were Word-of-Mouth (33%), critics’ reviews (32%), to see a particular performer in the show (24%), the playwright (21%) and, articles and blogs written about the play (20%). This shows us that when it comes to plays, there are many different factors that motivate an individual to see a show and they are not the same reasons why people attend musicals. Because the majority of playgoers are mostly local, they usually will have more access to information regarding the show. Additionally because the majority of playgoers are well educated there is a good chance that they will have some prior knowledge about the playwright and/or a performer in the production. Furthermore, playgoers are the type of people who will most likely do their research before attending a performance so they will have read reviews and/or articles or blogs about the piece. Playgoers are known to be well-informed in New York. Another reason, according the Broadway League, that people attend plays is that they received a discount coupon (13%) to see that specific play. This also has to do with where they live, because most tourists

\[92\text{ Demographics of Broadway pg. 38. Motivation to see a Broadway musical can be further examined in figure 2 of Appendix B.}\]

\[93\text{ Demographics of Broadway pg. 39. Motivation to see a Broadway play can be further examined in figure 3 of Appendix B.}\]
will not be receiving these discounts due to the fact they are usually given to people from the local or surrounding areas of New York. This added incentive is a good way of getting people in the door to the theatre. Moreover, because there are more plays to see each theatrical season than there are musicals, it would make sense to have more incentives to get people into the house and to see a show. The overall conclusion from this is that while there are many reasons and incentives for people to attend Broadway shows, the most significant is word-of-mouth. Unfortunately, there is no sure fire way to get a theatergoer to give a particular show a good personal review.

In the study completed by the Society of London Theatres (S.O.L.T.), the type of data collected was completely different from the data collected by the Broadway League, which makes it challenging to compare the two. To begin with, the S.O.L.T. looked at plays and musicals together and did not differentiate between the two types of performances. They also only examined thirteen different factors that can motivate a theatergoer to see a show. The largest influence on a theatergoer in the West End seems to be the general reputation of the show (57%). While it is problematic to define “general reputation,” we presume it to be an amalgamation of many factors such as word-of-mouth, creative team or cast, awards won or a revival. A personal recommendation was the next most mentioned reason (37%) for why a person chose to go and see a specific show. However, this study did not include recommendations or posts on different social media outlets, which is an area of the market that is growing by leaps and bounds especially with word-of-mouth. A positive review of a performance in the media (35%) was the third most influential reason a theatergoer attended a specific show. A special offer or a promotion was mentioned by 21% of theatergoers as a reason for attending a
show. An interesting part of the study showed that more West End audience members were interested in the writer or composer of the show (11%) than a well-known actor (8%) or television or movie celebrity (7%). This is the opposite to and departure from what some Producers have been thinking in recent years. This shows that more people are interested in the actual play than the star or celebrity casting. Ms. Stevens explains:

> When motivating audiences to see a show, I think the 'package' is incredibly important - if a big (household) star is teamed with a well-known title and a distinguished director, that helps enormously. Otherwise, rave reviews across the board will definitely cause a buzz. Word of mouth is very important and buzz on social media as a result is very infectious. Ads are not hugely important, but they certainly 'remind' and 'reinforce' - and given there is so much going on in London, they are needed them as part of the strategy.

There will always be some theatregoers for whom star casting matters but the according to the data given it would appear that the majority are not motivated to see a show with a television or movie celebrity. They are however, interested in the whole package and what their peers are saying about it.

Another form of audience development that the West End has that Broadway does not is “reality television shows” that deal with casting leads in musical revivals. Of those who participated in the S.O.L.T. survey, 40% said they would regularly watch a theatre-themed reality TV show – which increased to 56% among those who attended a musical. Of the most recent shows, 29% watched ‘Any Dream Will Do’ to find a new Joseph for *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, 29% watched ‘How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria’ to find a Maria for *The Sound of Music*, 25% watched ‘I’d Do Anything’ to find a new Oliver for *Oliver!* and lastly 11% watched the casting show for

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94 West End Theatre Audience pg.105. Motivation to see a West End show can be further examined in figure 4 of Appendix B.

95 Stevens Interview
Grease ‘Grease is the Word’ to find the leads for the show.\textsuperscript{96} Of all the people that watched these shows, about half (47\%) agreed that watching one of these shows actually made them more likely to see the musical featured on the television program.

Additionally, a fifth of those who watched one of these programs agreed that watching the show made them more likely to attend other non-musical productions in the West End. A similar proportion said that because they watched these programs they might be more likely to attend a production outside of London’s West End.\textsuperscript{97} What this shows us is that for the non-traditional theatergoer these television programs are reaching more diverse demographics of people and getting them excited about seeing a show whether in the West End or elsewhere in the United Kingdom. These television shows can be seen as a tool to help promote theatre visits for a particular show. Producers in the United States tried with a program called You’re the One That I Want to cast the two leads in Grease. However, it did not work for a couple of reasons one the show was not very good and two because America is so much bigger than England and by airing a show that played throughout the entire country it had little relevance for those who lived far away or who had no travel plans. Audiences did not grow to care about the contestants each week because the results would never affect their lives. This is not the case in the United Kingdom, because the U.K. is significantly smaller than the United States people can watch the shows and feel they are helping to cast a show they might actually get to see.

What we can deduce from the results in both the West End and Broadway is that the largest motivator for a theatergoer is “Word of Mouth”. Although there are other influences in both countries the most significant one is a personal recommendation.

\textsuperscript{96} West End Theatre Audience pg.106
\textsuperscript{97} West End Theatre Audience pg.106
Advertisements in both countries were not reported to have been influential in making the purchasing decision. But what we do see is that when a potential audience member feels as though they can be a part or a weekly witness of a show, as in telephoning or texting a vote to cast a lead from a television program, they are more inclined to feel ownership of the show and therefore want to go and see it. Furthermore, as Facebook and Twitter’s influence become more prevalent in the everyday lives of people, so will the personal recommendations made by one’s peers. So far, Broadway has just begun to record the data from these social media recommendations. The West End has not yet is just beginning to look to see what results may be gleaned from these online social sites. The West End producers are a bit behind on the social media front, but they are catching up. Additionally, another important factor in what motivates someone to see a show is whether or not a person enjoyed his or her prior experience at the theatre. If they did then they are more inclined to come to the theatre again, and this is true of both the West End and Broadway.

**How are tickets booked?**

When someone goes to the theatre one of their most important actions is to purchase their tickets. Not only is it important for the theatregoer but also it is vital for the producer and show as this is the way that a show on both Broadway and the West End makes its revenue. The producer learns a lot from studying how theatregoers purchase their tickets, the timeline in which the tickets are purchased and whether theatregoers paid full-price or purchased at a discount. These are important details because, as producers, we ideally want people to want to see our shows and tell their friends, family, work colleagues, etc. weeks in advance that they have booked tickets to see our shows.
This helps increase the word of mouth, the most important motivator for theatergoers to see a particular show. Moreover, as ticket purchases equates to revenues, we want our tickets to be purchased at the full price. It is important to know the habits of the theatergoer in order to know how to target them in the most efficient manner. This is true for both the West End and Broadway.

There are several ways to purchase tickets for a Broadway show: the three most common are by telephone, over the Internet and in person at the box office. The Internet was the most popular method of purchasing tickets and 34% of theatergoers reported that method was how they obtained tickets. Going to the box office was the second most frequent way that people purchased tickets, at 23%. However, on closer examination, we see that 36% of international visitors went to the box office to purchase their tickets. This might imply that they were staying in nearby hotels, were less aware of the other methods of ticket purchasing, or they preferred to deal with a person than with a website or phone operator. Only 9% of theatergoers used a telephone charge, which is a vast change from ten years ago when using the telephone was the primary way people purchased their tickets.  

In the 1999-2000 season only 7% of theatergoers used the Internet. This has to do with the rise of technology and more people having personal computers, smartphones and Internet access today than they did in 2000. There are several other ways to purchase tickets for a Broadway show, and the ones that the Broadway League looked at were: the TKTS Booth (10%), Broadway Concierge and Ticket Center (2%), Part of a Group (8%), Hotel Concierge (2%), a Broker or Scalper (2%) and lastly a ticket outlet 2%.  

While these are the most popular ways to obtain

98 Demographics of Broadway pg. 14.
99 Demographics of Broadway pg. 14.
tickets to a show, through an independent study we were able to see that people also bought tickets through special groups such as the Theater Development Fund, or they purchased house seats or received complimentary tickets. These are some other examples of acquiring tickets that the Broadway League has not taken into account. Granted, these ways of acquiring tickets are not in the majority because in all three of the latter cases a person would have to know someone affiliated with a particular production. But this is still a factor to take into account when considering the whole.

In the West End the results are similar to that of Broadway. Since S.O.L.T.’s study in 2003 there has been a large increase in the number of theatergoers using the Internet to book their tickets: 48% use the Internet to purchase tickets, compared to only 17% in the 2003 study; 29% of theatergoers booked their tickets in person; and 18% booked their tickets over the telephone. Both these methods decreased from the previous study where ticket purchasing both in person and by telephone was at 38%. What this shows us is the rise of the Internet and how the Internet purchasing has become more accessible over time. Upon further analysis we see that amongst UK based theatergoers, 52% used the Internet to book tickets, whereas 50% of overseas visitors book their tickets in person. This statistic reflects the fact that domestic visitors are more familiar with where tickets can be booked online and additionally might reflect reluctance of international tourists to purchase their tickets which then must be collected at the theatre (almost always tickets are to be picked up at the box office and not shipped overseas). The S.O.L.T. did not take into account tickets purchased from brokers or scalpers or even purchasing tickets at one of the many ticket booths located throughout

\[100\] West End Theatre Audience pg. 67
\[101\] West End Theatre Audience pg. 67
London which means they included these types of purchases in the ‘book in person’ category. The latter method would account for some of the ticket sales, perhaps not a huge amount, but at least a small proportion. Furthermore, through the study done for the purpose of this thesis, in a similar manner to New York some people purchase house seats or are given complimentary tickets. This is a very small cluster of theatergoers and similarly to New York, they are people who have a personal connection to the show.

When looking at both the West End and Broadway it is safe to say that the most popular way to purchase a ticket to a performance is to go onto the Internet. These websites have made purchasing tickets online much easier for people than going in person to the box office or even telephoning. It is easier because at the box office option might necessitate a long wait or might result in the theatergoer arriving at the theatre only to find out the show was sold out. The phone purchaser could face long wait times and in the end may not even get to speak with a live person due to the lack of patience on the part of the caller or because the computer operator goes around in circles to a point where it is confusing and just plan tedious. Buying tickets on the Internet is the most time efficient method, which in this day and age is really valued in both the United States and the United Kingdom.

On Broadway, 34% of theatergoers purchased their tickets more than one month in advance of a performance, 22% purchased their tickets one to four weeks in advance, 20% booked their tickets less than one week in advance of the show and 24% purchased their tickets the same day as the performance. When we delve further into the research we see that domestic visitors and people from the surrounding suburbs to New

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102 The data set that I have supplied included some industry insiders, which is of note because if the League or S.O.L.T. asked them to participate it would be less likely they would have.
103 Demographics of Broadway pg. 37.
York are more likely than others to arrange their tickets in advance. International tourists were mostly likely to purchase their tickets the same day as the show. Theatergoers at musicals were more likely to purchase tickets in advance than playgoers. 22% of musical attendees bought their tickets more than two months prior to the performance, compared to 10% at plays. However, same-day purchases for both plays and musicals were almost the same with 25% for plays and 24% for musicals. These statistics inform us that people from the United States might have easier access to information about what is playing on Broadway and therefore they will book their tickets in advance. Or when these individuals plan to come to New York City they have the intention of seeing a show and buy some of their tickets in advance. Additionally most international tourists do not speak the same language so there might be a language barrier that prevents them from purchasing tickets before they get to New York.

In the West End, the S.O.L.T.’s research has gone a step further than the Broadway League and reported their timeline for purchasing tickets more in-depth. 19% of theatergoers purchased their tickets the same day, 23% purchased one through seven days prior, 21% purchased their tickets eight to thirty days prior, 23% purchased one to three months prior and 11% booked their tickets more than three months prior to the performance. The remaining 4% didn’t know when they purchased their tickets. Overseas visitors, similarly to a Broadway show, were more likely to purchase their tickets on the same day of the performance (37%) compared to the 14% of those from London who would purchase their tickets on the same day. International tourists were also more likely to use the official TKTS booth in Leicester Square which only sells on-

\[104\] Demographics of Broadway pg. 37.
\[105\] West End Theatre Audience pg. 64.
the-day tickets. The majority of theatergoers going to see musicals purchased their
tickets one through seven days in advance (23%) or within a month of the performance
(63%). Of those theatergoers that were going to see a play, 29% of them would purchase
their tickets one through seven days in advance and 72% would purchase their ticket one
month prior to the performance.

From this data we can infer that some of the ticketing purchasing timelines are
similar in both Broadway and the West End. But what is most striking is that on
Broadway people more commonly purchase their tickets on the same day unlike people
attending the theatre in the West End. In the West End theatergoers are more likely to
book for either plays or musicals in advance. The West End theatre goers might book
his/her ticket further in advance because there are more options of what to see in the West
End than on Broadway, but also because as we know from our earlier research that the
average theatergoer in the West End goes more than once a year and they actively choose
what they want to see. It also might be a cultural difference that the English plan their
schedule further in advance than the Americans do which would be a reason why the
West End theatre tickets are purchased further out than that of a New York theatre goer.

Whether a person pays full price or pays for a ticket at a discount is an extremely
important question facing us in the theatre industry. The Broadway League did not find
out what theatergoers purchased more: discounts or full priced tickets. However, for the
independent study done for the purpose of this thesis we found out that the majority of
the time people purchased their tickets at a discount. Discounted tickets were purchased
87% of the time while full-priced tickets were purchased 13% of the time. Mr. Tate’s theory on discounted tickets has some interesting perspectives:

The Broadway pricing scheme is completely broken. Severely and completely broken. The moment a show is announced and tickets are placed on sale, what do the producers and theatre-owners do? The immediate put out a mailer and e-blast discounting their product by 40%, basically telling their buyers that it is not worth a full priced ticket. The theatergoing audience has been conditioned to NOT buy full-priced tickets. The only time this occurs is when word of mouth is so high pricing is irrelevant. This is RARE and happens maybe one show a season. The rest of the productions undercut their product consistently. And the customer service end on pricing is horrendous as those who do pay full price come to find out that the person next to them paid half price and feel cheated and robbed.

The Broadway League did report on discounted versus full priced tickets purchased and the results according to box office statistics was that the average paid admission for the 2009-2010 season was $85.12. However, theatergoers reported having paid an average of $104.90 and this reflects added service charges and/or broker fees. However, this does not take into account the people who pay for tickets at a premium, where some shows, currently on Broadway, are charging around $477 per ticket for their premiums. Furthermore the average price is $104.90 whereas some shows charge $155 per ticket. So depending on the show and whether it is a very popular show, a theatergoer may pay a higher or lower price. Local theatergoers paid less than tourists, which may suggest that they were more aware of discounts than tourists were. However, international tourists paid less than domestic tourists, probably because they were more likely to buy on the same day, so as a result they could take advantage of last-minute

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106 Independent Study 1 pg. 14.
107 Tate Interview
108 Demographics of Broadway pg. 54.
109 Book of Mormon - Telecharge
deals or because the international tourists went to the box office and were able to avoid surcharges.\textsuperscript{110}

The West End also faces the problems of rising tickets prices and whether theatergoers buy full price or discounted tickets. The S.O.L.T. reported that in 2008 just under half of all theatergoers (47\%) purchased their ticket at full price while 42\% purchased their tickets at a discount. 4\% of theatergoers reported getting free tickets and 7\% did not know if their tickets were full price or discounted.\textsuperscript{111} For the 2008 theatre season, the S.O.L.T. box office data reported that the average ticket price before any fees was £34.89 ($54.48). When the S.O.L.T. took into account the booking fees, transaction fees, restoration fees, etc. they realized that all charges and fees amount to 15\% of the ticket price which made the average paid ticket price £40.12 ($62.63).\textsuperscript{112} This data also does not take into account the premium ticket prices, usually around £80 ($124.93), that are charged by some shows. Half of the theatergoers from London bought their tickets at a reduced price, whereas a large number of visitors from elsewhere in the UK and from overseas bought their tickets at full price. A possible explanation for this result is that London theatergoers are possibly more aware of the discounts, whereas a visitor (domestic or foreign) may not have known where or how to obtain discounted tickets for a West End show.

Overall, it is significantly cheaper to see a show on the West End than on Broadway. The premium price in the West End is just over the average cost of a ticket to see a show on Broadway. And the average price of a ticket on the West End is comparable to an Off-Broadway ticket in New York. Granted, it is cheaper to produce a

\textsuperscript{110} Demographics of Broadway pg. 54.
\textsuperscript{111} West End Theatre Audience pg. 74.
\textsuperscript{112} West End Theatre Audience pg. 140.
show on the West End due to less union influence and lower costs in renting theatres, but the comparison in price is nevertheless a bit alarming. London, known to be an expensive city, has cheaper ticket prices than New York. This might account for why a younger demographic of people go to the theatre in the West End. Because on Broadway a person has to pay a large amount of money to see a show, it would stand to reason that he or she must make a certain amount of money and have discretionary income making it harder for people without that sort of income. In the West End it is possible to see shows even if an individual does not have a lot of discretionary income. Because the West End is more affordable, it becomes a more popular form of entertainment. While going to the theatre is still not an inexpensive activity, lower ticket prices make it more accessible while maintaining the sense that it is an event. Lowering ticket prices in New York would be a worthy enterprise but that is a topic for another thesis.
CHAPTER THREE
Satisfaction

Each time an audience member attends the theatre, we have to wonder about their level of satisfaction, from the overall performance to the actual theatre space. This is a very hard question to ask and even harder to measure because no two people think exactly in the same way. An additionally hard question is what prevents theatergoers from attending the theatre more often? But it is a question that must be asked so that we may find answers that will help attract people to return to the theatre. For the purposes of this thesis, the Broadway section was measured by an independent study with about 300 people participating. For the West End section, the Society of London Theatre (S.O.L.T.) completed a study about theatergoer satisfaction. We will look at the levels of satisfaction on both sides of the Atlantic and examine what prevents people from going more often to the theatre. We will compare the two but it is also important to think about what is satisfying about visiting the theatre and what makes the experience unique and a one-of-a-kind event.

“Satisfaction!”

On Broadway there are many different aspects of the theatre that theatergoers may or may not be satisfied with. Adrian Bryan-Brown, a New York press agent, has said the following about Broadway: “There is an excitement and a pulse about theatre because it is live. It is the best standard in the world. People come from all over the world to come to Times Square and see a Broadway Show.” And John Tiffany, Tony Award® winning English Director said of the West End: “There is a certain glitz and glam of

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113 Byran-Brown Interview
going to the West End. People can be satisfied with the sense of event. For this section, the survey was broken down into seven categories: performance, overall enjoyment, value for the price of the ticket, theatre facilities, staff at the theatre, comfort of the auditorium, and lastly the comfort of the seating. For performance, the leading answer was “fairly good” (61%) which means that of all the shows that people attended over the year that this response was the average. An anonymous quote from the survey stated: “The performances ranged significantly. Some were great while others were very poor.” The second highest response was “very good” (29%) and the third highest response was “fairly poor” (8%). The answers varied because, as stated above, no two people share the exact same opinion and because this question was asked about a multitude of performances and shows over a given year instead of just one performance of one show. Because of this, the answers might be a bit skewed. It is positive, however, to see that on average most people enjoyed the performance they saw on Broadway. Overall enjoyment had a very similar breakdown to performance. “Fairly good” was the highest answer (62%) followed by “very good” (30%), 6% said “fairly poor” and only 1% said “very poor.” The rest did not know or skipped the question. “Overall enjoyment” is another one of the questions that is difficult to answer because this response varies from show to show. However, most theatergoers appeared to enjoy their experience at the theatre. The next question asked is if the money they paid was worth the value of the ticket. The majority thought the value of money for their ticket was “fairly good” (50%) and 23% thought it was “very good,” 20% thought it was “fairly poor,” 5% thought it was “very poor” and 3% did not know the answer to this question.

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114 Tiffany Interview
115 Independent Study 1 pg. 18.
When looking at some of the written responses to this question we found out that some of the people who took the survey were lucky and had the great fortune to have received complimentary tickets through their University or from someone affiliated with the show. This information might show that these answers are somewhat skewed, because when a ticket is free an individual can either be very appreciative for not having paid for a seat or will go to the other extreme and completely bash the performance because it was free so it is hard to judge these people because they have been given complimentary tickets. A person who has paid a large sum of money to see a show might be more critical because they want to make sure they are receiving their money’s worth of entertainment. This is one of those questions that no two people are going to answer alike, so one can only get a vague sense of what the overall demographic of people thought. Generally, just over half of those taking the survey found that the staff, facilities and comfort of the auditorium to be “fairly good,” with the largest complaint being that at some theatres there were not enough bathroom stalls for the women’s restroom. The last question asked in this part of the survey was “How would you rate the comfort of the seating?” This question followed the formula of the other question regarding facilities and broke down similarly: 48% said the seat’s comfort was “fairly good,” 33% said “fairly poor,” 11% said “very poor” and 7% said they were “very good.” Furthermore, this question received the most responses of all the questions with most complaining about legroom. Two examples are: “Seat legroom excruciatingly tight” and “The seats are too narrow, but I think that's because my hips are too wide.” This shows us that generally theatergoers are satisfied with going to the theatre and the shows they are seeing, but their greatest source of dissatisfaction comes from the physical seats they have to sit in and

116 Independent Study 1 pg. 18.
with the bathrooms. Most theatre owners know about both of these complaints and as they renovate each theatre they are working on both legroom and bathroom stalls to accommodate the audience.  

In the West End on the whole, satisfaction with visiting the theatre remains quite high. Of those theatergoers who gave an opinion, 63% rated their overall enjoyment as “very good” while 31% said it was “fairly good.” This probably has to do with one’s own personal experience when they attend the theatre. No two performances will be the same so each experience visiting the theatre will offer different results. The performance itself yielded the highest satisfaction levels with 75% rating it “very good” and 18% rating the performance “fairly good.” Half (51%) of theatergoers rate their ticket as “very good” value for the money. This appears to be particularly striking, given the increase in ticket prices from previous years and all the additional surcharges put on the price of tickets. 

The theatre facilities overall were mostly said to be “fairly good” (57%) and “fairly poor” (29%) , which we took to mean that because the theatres are all so different, each different theatre’s facilities have to be rated differently, so when you have to average, it out the theatre’s overall facilities tend to fall somewhere in the middle. Additionally on the positive side of attending the theatre, the response to the theatre staff in general was rated “very good” (48%) or “fairly good” (38%). However, different aspects of the theatergoing experience scored less well. The comfort of the seating received the highest level of negative ratings – 14% rate the comfort of the seating as “poor,” 10% rate the restrooms as “poor,” and 8% of audience members rate the overall comfort of the

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117 This information comes from the Shubert and Jujamcyn classes we take as part of the Columbia University Theatre Management and Producing program.
118 West End Theatre Audience pg. 56.
119 Independent Study 2 pg. 18.
auditorium as “poor.” While the majority of theatergoers thought these three categories fell in the “fairly good” category, it is important to take note of the “poor” rating because they have received the largest ratings at the lower end of the spectrum with questions about the theatre experience.

When we look to both Broadway and the West End we find that audience members are having the same issues with the physical theatres in both countries. The overall performance does not appear to be an issue for theatergoers but the seats and bathrooms are. So if audience members are going to shell out the money to see a show perhaps we, as producers, should think about their comfort a bit more. It might even entice people to attend the theatre more if when they attend they can sit in comfortable seats and use the bathroom with less effort. Granted, to make these renovations it would cost a significant amount of money [and, in many cases, due to the physical constraints of the theatre it is impossible to do anything about the bathrooms] but it must make a good deal of sense for the theatre going experience in both countries.

**Why not go more?**

As we know from Chapter Two, on Broadway the average theatergoer will go 4.5 times a year and on the West End the average theatergoer will go 6.4 times a year. I found both sets of these numbers to be surprisingly high but it must be asked how do we get potential theatergoers to see more theatre? People attend films and other forms of entertainment such as sporting events many more times in a year so what is preventing people from attending the theatre more often?

In my independent study, I asked Broadway theatregoers what prevented them from visiting the theatre more often. The answers varied but, of the 252 individuals who
took the Broadway-based survey, by and large the main reasons were the price of tickets (70%), going to the theatre was generally too expensive (60%), and that people were just too busy and did not have enough time to commit to seeing a show (29%).\footnote{What prevents theatergoers from attending Broadway shows more often can be further examined in figure 1 of Appendix C.} In the Broadway League’s study 72% of the respondents said that some kind of incentive would encourage them to attend shows more often. Most people were looking to save money with a package deal, restaurant or parking discounts. Or potential audience members wanted to get some kind of free merchandise with their ticket purchase.\footnote{Demographics of Broadway pg. 47.} When they broke this down further by type of theatregoer, it revealed that tourists wanted more package deals whereas suburbanites wanted more restaurant and parking discounts.\footnote{Demographics of Broadway pg. 49.} Basically, both the Broadway League and our study gave the same results. Not only do theatergoers find the price of tickets too high, but also the overall experience, with the cost of going to dinner, hiring a baby sitter, paying for parking, taking a cab, etc. becoming a hindrance when it comes to attending the theatre more often.

The West End, similarly to Broadway, has some of the same issues attracting theatergoers to attend the theatre more often. The biggest deterrent to visiting the theatre is the price of the tickets themselves: 52% of theatergoers say attending the theatre is generally too expensive, while 23% say they just do not have enough time or are too busy. They are also other factors such as booking fees and ticket availability, but these are not the central reasons why people are not attending the theatre. There are also some considerations that have nothing to do with cost, such as the show ending too late or that there is not enough information out available on the show, however, this is such a small
percentage of people that while it is important to consider these reasons they are not a
main deterrents to people attending more often. When looking at the reasons the
S.O.L.T. came up with and what we found from our study, we see again the results are
very similar. In both cases the biggest hindrance was the price of tickets and that people
are more likely to attend the theatre more often if they are offered some sort of incentive.

What we can take away from this data is that both on Broadway and in the West
End people are struggling with the rising cost of ticket prices. Additionally, we are
currently in a recession and while theatre is important for social, cultural and educational
reasons, it is also a form of entertainment and therefore, to some, it is not a necessity. As
of right now, it appears that the only people who can attend the theatre are those with
discretionary income. Perhaps if we offer more deals or target deals to people who are
currently traveling, we may be able to entice more people to see shows on a regular basis.

Furthermore, theatre has to contend with cinema entertainment, which is more accessible
because tickets are less expensive. In addition movies play in more locations and have
multiple screenings per day versus the one or two performances a day that theatre offers.
Individuals can also see a film at location that is much more convenient and a person can
generally work a film in their schedule where as to see a show an individual has to work
around the schedule of the production. So, if we can make theatre more accessible in
terms of cost, we might have a chance of attracting more people. It appears to be a catch
22 though, because while people complain that the prices are too high, that particular
income from ticket sales pays the salaries for those involved in the show. As producers

123 What prevents theatergoers from attending West End shows more often can be further examined in
figure 1 of Appendix C.
we should look to new and different pricing models that might help incentivize theatergoers to attend more often.
CHAPTER FOUR
Case Studies

Each year producers transfer several shows between the West End and Broadway. In this section we are going to look at examples of shows that transferred to the West End from Broadway and to Broadway from the West End. We are going to look of examples of shows that had a great level of success, a moderate level of success and those that flopped. It is important that we define what these terms mean. Success for the purpose of this paper will mean financial success and that follows with moderate success and a flop. Success is how you define it sometimes it can be when an audience walks away giving a rave review but for this paper it means financially it has recouped and exceeded its initial investment. We hope in this section to learn from these specific examples about what worked or what did not work in terms of audience development.

A Hit on Broadway

There have been several shows that have transferred from the West End to Broadway that have been considered a success. For the purpose of this thesis we are going to look at the shows The History Boys and War Horse. Each of these shows is interesting because both of them started their runs at the National Theatre before transferring to the West End and then ultimately to Broadway. Whereas The History Boys by Allen Bennett was a box office smash in London before it moved to Broadway, there were some doubts whether the play would be as successful. The play is set in the 1980’s and tracks eight public school students as they study for their exams that will win them history scholarships to either Oxford or Cambridge. A status-seeking headmaster assigns two utterly different teachers to help the “working-class” boys. The question for the American producers was: would American audiences understand what was going on or
feel left out of a play filled with references to English literature, culture and history?

According to John Lahr the senior dramatic editor for *The New Yorker*:

“American audiences will surely miss a few things, but it hardly matters because boys will be boys, on the West End or Broadway, and the human story will entertain on either side of the Atlantic. However, literate English drama can be a wild card in the States…You have to just jump in and the American audiences either are flattered because they can understand what’s going on, or they are outraged because they’re forced to actually think…”124

Mr. Lahr was not the only one with these concerns. However, these concerns proved to be unwarranted because, in the end, the story of teenage concerns proved to be universal. The producer’s biggest contribution to the show was recognizing the artists’ incredible storytelling ability and being able to support them. *The History Boys* opened to rave reviews on Broadway, so much so that leading *New York Times* critic Ben Brantley said it was “madly enjoyable.” He went on to say, “The play has a seductive polish that New York audiences have seldom experienced of late…”125 The play went on to win six Tony Awards® in 2006 and was a hot ticket making them hard to get a hold of.

*War Horse* started differently to *The History Boys* in that originally it was a children’s book by Michael Morpurgo. *War Horse* is the poignant story of a poor British boy, Albert, who becomes the owner and best friend of a horse named Joey, only to lose him when Albert’s father sells him to an officer to use in World War I. Albert is completely shattered by this loss, so much so, that he enlists underage to fight in the war and ultimately find his best friend and beloved horse, Joey.126 The associate director of the National Theatre, Tom Morris, initially conceived the play. He had been looking for plays in which he could collaborate with the South African Handspring Puppet Company.

124 “London’s ‘History Boys, ‘Bound for Broadway.”
125 Brantley - *History Boys*.
126 The Story.
He came across the children’s book of *War Horse* and both parties were immediately intrigued.\(^{127}\)

Unlike with *History Boys*, there were not the same fearful concerns when the play was being considered for transfer to the United States. According to National Theatre International marketing Director Mr. Tate:

The National workshopped *War Horse* in their studio theatre and spent a good amount of time discovering what worked and what did not in crafting the story. The developmental process was the majority of the work. Once it became a hit, transferring it to the States was the lowest risk in the entirety of the show’s development. American producers rode on the coattails of the reviews, word of mouth, and production/developmental process taken place in London. *War Horse* had spectacle and awe on its side.\(^{128}\)

So transferring the play to New York was an obvious decision for the producers. The story is universal and one that anyone who has loved an animal will connect with. The play opened to somewhat mixed reviews but because the word-of-mouth was so strong it did not seem to matter. Mr. Brantley wrote

“A show that might otherwise have registered as only an agreeable children’s entertainment has been drawing repeat grown-up customers, who happily soak their handkerchiefs with wholesome tears.”\(^{129}\)

Despite having the show set in France during the battles in Worlds War I the puppets and the love story between a man and his horse give the show its magical elements and audiences wanted to come and share in the incredible production that is *War Horse*. It went on to win the Tony Award® for Best New Play.

What both of these shows did well was to use the buzz and reviews from the previous productions in London. Additionally, having a show begin its life at the National Theatre gave an aura of authenticity and the caliber of work that is unmatched

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\(^{127}\) Healey.  
\(^{128}\) Tate Interview  
\(^{129}\) Brantley – *War Horse*. 
anywhere in the world. The producers used that reputation as a major selling point. *History Boys* brought the original and full company to the New York production while *War Horse* was re-cast with an American company. As several industry insiders have speculated, there is no magical formula that made these diverse shows a hit. However, what producers did do successfully was to use the positive press from across the pond and they built successful marketing campaigns from the already good word-of-mouth to initially get brisk ticket sales. From that initial thrust, the shows’ success was truly a result of the combination of the performance, the reviews, the word of mouth and simply the whole of the production.

**Hits in the West End**

The West End produces many more shows in its season than Broadway does. However, it would appear that fewer shows transfer from Broadway to the West End than the West End to Broadway in any given year. In this section we are going to look at shows that are a success in the West End that came from Broadway, specifically *The Lion King* and *Legally Blonde, The Musical*. These two musicals did not start at a non-profit, but they did have out of town try-outs, which means that they were originally not produced in Manhattan but only later moved there after successful runs. Disney’s president Thomas Schumacher hired avant-garde director Julie Taymor to direct the stage version inspired by the film that audiences loved five years earlier. Disney’s *The Lion King* opened on Broadway in 1998 to great acclaim and went on to win six Tony Awards®. *The Lion King* opened in the West End in 1999. The story follows a young lion cub named Simba who is tricked into thinking that he killed his father. As the guilt consumes him he flees into exile and abandons his identity as the future King. The
strength and attraction of this musical lies in its accessibility to everyone. All ages feel they can relate to this coming-of-age story. Additionally, Ms. Taymor’s production is so beautiful and innovative, that it encourages a theatergoer to want to see this production more than once. Furthermore, the music is written by Englishman Elton John and according to Producer Rachael Stevens (who is not affiliated with *The Lion King*):

Elton John’s link with Lion King would have helped it be seen as a 'quality' product with definite talent attached. The UK loves Disney and Disney appeals across ages/backgrounds to some extent. You know it's a good safe show to take anyone of any age to and so the risk is somewhat eliminated, it got fabulous reviews, and once it started selling out people took that as a sign that it must be great, and so it’s continued.\(^{130}\)

Because of the recognition the movie and the Broadway show had already garnered, it was an obvious decision to bring the show to the United Kingdom. *The Lion King* opened twelve years ago on the West End and it continues to be one of the most popular shows. Last year alone *The Lion King* broke its own box office records, earning £34 million ($53,295,000) in 2010, which was about £2 million more than the previous year.\(^{131}\) *The Lion King* is a show that you want to return to and can have a big family outing to see. When the show opened on the West End it was marketed by building off the Tony Award® wins and all the buzz that was coming from New York. The show had a cross-generational appeal, making it a success wherever it played.

*Legally Blonde, The Musical* was a different story. The show that is a success in London is largely known as a flop on Broadway, closing at a loss after an eighteen month run. It is known among insiders that the show was reworked for its London premiere, the script becoming a little more tongue in cheek and poking a little more fun at Americans (which London audiences eat up!). The story is about sorority girl Elle

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\(^{130}\) Stevens Interview.  
\(^{131}\) Kennedy – *The Lion King*. 
Woods who does not take “no” for an answer. When her boyfriend, Warner, breaks up with her for someone seemingly more serious, Elle decides it is time for her to become more serious and heads to Harvard Law School. This musical is also based on the widely popular film starring Reese Witherspoon. Producers were worried that the West End production would have the same failings as the Broadway production. In a smart move, they hired Sheridan Smith, a well-known television actress in the United Kingdom, for the lead role. With the re-working of the script and the combination of Ms. Smith’s acting and star power the, the play took off. Teenage girls were flocking to see the production and soon success followed. The musical opened to mixed reviews with most critics feeling that, while the show left them empty, Ms. Smith’s performance was remarkable. The London critics did not seem to understand why teenage girls were returning in droves to see the show. Emma Laugier of the Ambassador Theatre Group explains why the show is a hit: “Legally Blonde appeals to young female audience which is not that well catered for in the West End and it is tapping into a very recent sort of cult phenomenon.”

There are no formulas given or real strategies that both of these shows used in their marketing campaigns. The Lion King had had a large success before it transferred, whereas Legally Blonde did not, so where Lion King did not need to completely re-do its marketing campaign, Legally Blonde did market the show as a completely new entity. Both shows had the hit movies behind them, which may have been the cause of the initial boost of ticket sales and after that word-of-mouth and the performances of the actors and the productions ultimately have led to their box office, critical and audience successes meaning audiences were raving about the show.

132 Laugier Interview.
Moderate Success - Broadway

The next genre of show we will look at are the ones that achieved a moderate level of success. In this case we will look at *Jerusalem* by Jez Butterworth, which started at the Royal Court, which is another non-profit theatre, before it transferred to the West End and ended up on Broadway. When producers decided to transfer the show to Broadway there were many doubts as to its potential success. Mr. Brantley even wrote:

"I was apprehensive about the show on Broadway. *Jerusalem*, you see, is partly a state-of-the-nation play, the nation being Britain. And the mind-set of its characters is definitely British provincial, or as provincial as the age of television and the Internet allows."\(^{133}\)

The main problem with *Jerusalem* was that the subject matter was so extremely British, so much so that some feared it might need subtitles even for the Londoners.\(^{134}\) *Jerusalem*, which is also the title of a popular hymn adapted from a poem by William Blake, is about Johnny “Rooster” Byron who is about to be evicted from his mobile home. He is the local drug dealer and all the town’s youth hangs out with him despite their parents’ disapproval. The play starred the amazing Mark Rylance and scored many exceptional reviews. However, as David Cote pointed out to The Guardian

Can five-star reviews and strong word-of-mouth mitigate the fact that *Jerusalem* has no stars, no brand title, and deals explicitly with, what some might call, obscure regional English issues? So far, there’s been no serious jump in ticket sales. Last week, the average seat was $53 and the production took in $341,000 at the box office. Unless those numbers go up, Jerusalem will have a rough summer and close at a loss, becoming more of a "snob flop" than a "snob hit".\(^{135}\)

Mr. Cote wrote this during the summer before the Tony Awards® and the play did not seem to fare well despite Mr. Rylance winning the Tony Award®. People were just not interest in seeing *Jerusalem*. Mr. Tate put it best:

\(^{133}\) Brantley – *Jerusalem.*
\(^{134}\) Kennedy – *Jerusalem.*
\(^{135}\) Cote.
Jerusalem was a story steeped in British references and was surrounding a United Kingdom only holiday, St George’s Day. It would be as if a play about Thanksgiving was sent over to the United Kingdom. In the end, a good play is about the characters it encompasses and the lead character had universal appeal. No matter where you lived, you knew someone who resembled the main character and his outlandish band of partiers. Mark Rylance carried the show and if it were not for his winning the Tony, the show would have closed early (as I worked on the marketing). This is a prime example of awards and accolades saving a productions’ life.  

The play just did not reach American audiences in a way they found accessible, so although Mr. Rylance, who might be one of today’s best stage actors, was somewhat of a draw, he was not a big enough draw to make the show a financial hit or a hit with audiences. There was nothing Producers could have done differently besides having the play rewritten with an American audience in mind.

**Moderate Success - the West End**

Tracy Lett’s August: Osage County, a show on the same level as Jerusalem, transferred from Broadway to the National Theatre. While the National is a non-profit theatre in London many shows start there and transfer to the West End and, according to the Society of London Theatres, The National is considered to be a part of the West End. August: Osage County is quintessentially an American story. The action revolves around members of the Weston family who are forced to confront their reality both from their past and their present. No one in this play has an easy life and the drama that ensues is like a car wreck that one cannot help but stop and stare at. The play came to London after winning the Pulitzer Prize and winning five Tony Awards®. It had terrific reviews and had great buzz heading over to the National. However, when August: Osage County opened in London it was met with mixed reviews. Some of the critics seemed to love it.

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136 Tate Interview
because it was such an American story, while others found it depressing and not representing what they thought of as the American dream. Charles Spencer from The Daily Telegraph goes on to say:

“The simmering rage, violence, addiction and infidelity that Letts depicts are clearly meant to represent a dark vision of dysfunctional American society today. It feels more like good old American Gothic entertainment to me…The greatest works of art have a unique tone and quality of their own, which I don't detect here.”

The entire cast was comprised of company members from the Chicago-based Steppenwolf Theatre Company, who also had starred in the Broadway production. None of the actors were stars that anyone would have heard of in London. So while people who usually attend shows at the National theatre saw it, the show’s buzz did not pick up and theatergoers were generally not interested in seeing another dark show with issues that did not relate to their lives. According to Ms. Stevens:

I could guess that a strange sounding play title probably did not help, and possibly the fact that the subject matter seemed quite dark and heavy - 'the collapse of American idealism' (as one critic put it) - might not have been hugely attractive. I am not sure if they had any stellar quotes to 'sell' the play on - the reviews seemed to be good, but not really help with the selling.

This is one of those shows, by all accounts, that should have done well but it was missing a connection with the local audiences and that is what ultimately brought about its demise. It was a moderate success because it made some of its money, it was also produced with a council funded theatre in London making it easier to produce because there was less financial risk.

**A Flop on Broadway**

Over the past two years, the best example of a show that was a success in London,
first at the Royal Court and subsequently in the West End, and then completely flopped on Broadway was *Enron*. English playwright Lucy Prebble wrote *Enron* and the play detailed the rise and fall of the notorious, eponymously named, Houston-based energy company, which collapsed because of fraud in 2002. Though it enjoyed two sold-out runs in England, where it debuted, *Enron* had only played 15 official performances (in addition to 22 previews) at the time it closed in New York. There were many problems with this production; producers thought this play would be able to bring in new and younger audiences because of the subject matter, but it did not have the desired affect the majority of the time the theatre was quite empty. Mr. Brantley of *The New York Times* gave the play a scathing review calling “*Enron* [a] flashy but labored economics lesson”\(^{139}\) which did not help to boost box office sales. Lauren Cooper of *The Daily Financial* explains some of the reasons for its failure:

> Part of the problem is that crisis-weary U.S. audiences have had far too many economics lessons of late. When Enron collapsed back in 2001, a stunned public watched with the impression that we were witnessing a once-in-a-generation event. Nowadays, financial scandal has become the norm...For theater-goers seeking a fun night out in America's financial capital, it was always going to be hard to relish a play that reminded them of the economic terrors they encountered in the news each day Americans proved less than eager to pay up for a theatrical lesson about the perils of greed and corruption in the executive suite. \(^{140}\)

> Furthermore, Americans do not like to be mocked by the British in their own town. So having a play written by a young British woman produced in New York was likely to be a hard sell. As stated earlier when we were looking at *Legally Blonde* it was noted that the British love to satirize Americans, however, American audiences do not like to watch shows where they are being made fun of. As a result, much of the humor of Ms. Prebble’s play was “lost in translation.” Most plays are not so obviously cut out to

\(^{139}\)Brantley – *Enron*.
\(^{140}\)Cooper.
flop, however, due to the reasons noted above and perhaps just bad timing, this show was bound to fail. Another issue was that the people who could afford tickets to see Enron worked in the financial sector and there was no way that they would want to come and see a show that did not entertain them but rather reminded them of the stress and the failings that they had to deal with on a daily basis. In this case hindsight was twenty-twenty, but because of the success in London producers thought they would have a chance in New York.

**A Flop on the West End**

As mentioned earlier, it is not as common for productions from Broadway to move to the West End, it is usually the other way round. So when Producers risk bringing a show to London they usually have a thorough plan of attack in terms of audience development.

When producers brought *HAIR: The American Tribal Rock Musical*, they thought they were going to have the same level of success they had had on Broadway. *HAIR* tells the story of a “tribe” of politically active, longhaired hippies living a bohemian life in New York City who fight against enlistment into the Vietnam War. The show opened first at Shakespeare in the Park and then moved to Broadway to fantastic reviews and won the Tony Award® for best revival of a musical in 2009. Producers went so far as to bring the entire New York Company to London, which is no small feat. Lead producer Cameron Mackintosh told *The Guardian* he felt that it was the right time for the revival: "The rejection of the war in Vietnam has now morphed into the world's concern at what is happening in Afghanistan. A period musical is once again as contemporary as today's
headlines. Unfortunately he could not have been more wrong as the musical opened in April and only played until the beginning of September. Audiences found the musical to be dated and a period piece and they could not find the parallels, as American audiences had done, between the war in Vietnam and the war in Iraq. Critic Michael Billington of *The Guardian* said: “The great thing about *HAIR* is that it can be seen in two ways. It recognizes that Hair was a product of its time, yet it also presents it as a vibrant, joyous piece of living theatre.” However, despite mixed to mostly positive reviews, English audiences were not appreciative of what the musical was trying to achieve. Some felt that their personal space was being invaded by performers who tried to involve them to participate in the show, while others responded that the kids on the stage were lazy and should just get jobs. This is one of those shows that most people cannot give a specific reason for why it did not work in London. It had good reviews, good buzz, and a great feeling of nostalgia that reminded theatergoers that the political times are not so different from the late 1960’s. Needless to say it is never so cut and dry as to why a show fails but this is an example of show that flopped for no apparent reason.

Ms. Stevens in an interview states that:

> That when *HAIR* was on Broadway the audience did not need any warming up - they were with the actors from the off, and ready to have a great time. I rarely feel this in the West End. We tend to have a natural skepticism to people invoking us to have a good time and I wonder if this played any part. However, the reviews were mainly very good which is puzzling. Perhaps there were just other more enticing shows running which people could see at that point.

What Ms. Stevens further points out is that audience behavior on Broadway is less

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141 Brown.
142 Billington.
143 This particular point came from conversations with people who wish to remain anonymous.
144 Stevens interview.
reserved and less skeptical of its performers than the West End audiences. The show worked in New York because on the whole Americans like to be involved and have a good time at a show they are seeing. English theatergoers appear to be more reserved and may not appreciate having half naked men standing over them. The reasons for this show not working are not clear but we can learn from this show that sometimes no matter how good the reviews and the buzz are, it does not affect the box office or the theatergoers.
CHAPTER FIVE
Lessons Learned

After our thorough research into both West End and Broadway audiences, we have learnt that although the two are similar they have some fundamental differences. In each section there have been similarities and differences but the important part is how we, as theatre makers, use the information. In this section we are looking to reflect on what we have learned and how to use the information to avoid making the same mistakes again in the future when transferring hits from one side of the Atlantic to the other.

How to Learn From the Criteria

One of the major differences in audience behavior is that theatergoers in Britain are going to the theatre more often than they do in New York. Moreover, when we examine the age-related attendance data more closely, it is clear that the 25-34 year age group is attending the theatre the most in the West End while in New York the largest group attending is the 50-64 year age group. The annual household incomes in both countries were also exceptionally different. The people who attended the theatre on Broadway on average made almost three times as much as the average theatergoer in the West End. This might have to do with the price of tickets: the average ticket price to see a show on Broadway is $104.90 (£67.22) while the average ticket price to see a show in the West End £40.12 ($62.63). It would make sense that the average theatergoer on Broadway would make a significant amount more than the average West End theatergoer
simply because of the cost it takes to see a show. Because ticket prices in the West End are significantly cheaper than those on Broadway this data also showed us that more people were attending the theatre more often in the West End. On Broadway the majority of audience members are either national or international tourists whereas in the West End the majority of the audience is made up of theatergoers from the United Kingdom but not necessarily from London.

The similarities are that in both places women are the primary audience members and ticket purchasers. The audiences are fairly undiversified with Caucasians making up the large majority of the audience. The audience in both countries is also homogenously educated meaning that the majority of theatergoers in both the West End and Broadway have a college education if not higher. However, there is more of a chance of getting people with lower education levels into the West End due to the fact that in England there is significant emphasis in the educational system to study Shakespeare and theatre [and the lower ticket prices do not exclude them!].

The most important thing we see in trying to market a show that is transferring is to try and generate some good buzz and get word-of-mouth going. This is done through successful press campaigns, marketing, social media, etc. and increasingly we find that theatergoers want to hear the opinion of the ‘everyman’ through blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc. and not just from the critics. According to producers, on Broadway a New York Times review can either make or break a show, and we believe that no two critics should feel they have that type of power. In the West End there are many more leading newspapers such as The Evening Standard, The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, The Financial Times etc. and not one of these papers dictates whether a show is financially
successful. This seems much more healthy for a cultural environment and a show, in our
case, to have several diverse reviews matter, rather than just the one from one leading
paper. Such a range would give producers the opportunity to use those reviews further
and generate better word-of-mouth.

What we can take away from this information is that when transferring a show it
is important to consider why that particular show might be a good fit on the other side of
the Atlantic. For example, as was shown in Chapter Four, in hindsight it should have
been obvious that a show like *Enron* would not work in New York. Just because a show
is a hit in the West End, it does not mean that it will translate and become a hit on
Broadway.

Audiences are very different. An English person’s education and upbringing
affects them as an individual, as a member of society and therefore it affects the culture
and vice versa. Theatre in the United Kingdom is innately an activity that one is engaged
in on a regular basis. We must look at each individual project that comes to us as
producers as a new venture, regardless of whether it has been successful on Broadway or
the West End. In the end there is no logical reason that we can anticipate or predict as to
why some shows succeed or fail. If there were a formula for success, producers would be
using it by now. However, more judicious planning, comparing the two audiences, data
and statistics and historical responses, might ensure greater success or calculated risks
when transferring shows.
CONCLUSION
Looking Forward

As each year comes and goes there are going to be hits on both sides of the Atlantic and there are going to be transfers between them. Just looking into the next few months there are *One Man, Two Guvnors* and *Matilda* transferring from the West End to Broadway and *The Book of Mormon* moving from Broadway to the West End. It will be interesting to see how these productions fare.

In the case of *One Man, Two Guvnors* the show is extremely British from the humor to the plot line and it will be intriguing to see if American audiences can pick up, understand and appreciate that particular sense of humor. The play has one major element going for it and that is the show’s star James Cordin. Mr. Cordin is a household name and hugely popular both as a television and theatre star in the United Kingdom, a fact which Mr. Bryan-Brown, the press agent for the show, has said the marketing will focus around. But will that be enough to ensure success, as James Cordin is unknown in the USA. I believe it will as the show is very funny and Mr. Cordin gives an amazing performance, so although the piece may be a bit dated in its farcical elements, I believe audiences will find in Mr. Cordin charming and end up rooting for his character to succeed. Sometimes a lighthearted piece is a much-needed form of entertainment.

Furthermore, transferring a big musical such as *The Book of Mormon* to the West End where the knowledge of Mormons is extremely limited, may be a challenge. The focus on marketing that show will be around the writers Matt Stone, Trey Parker, and
Bobby Lopez whom audiences may know from the television show “South Park” and Avenue Q. “South Park” has quite a large following in the United Kingdom however it is not on the same level as in the United States, also comedians in the Great Britain are very “in your face” so British audiences may not find the material as shocking as Broadway did.  The Book of Mormon will be a great test as the word of mouth is strong but whether that will equal financial success is yet to be seen.

When producers are deciding what shows to produce they should always ask themselves what elements will determine a successful show for them? Does it mean having universal success such as The Lion King or is it perhaps just having a solid run? If a show such as Jerusalem does not sell as many tickets in its Broadway run as it did in either of its West End runs, does that mean the show was not a success? If a show recoups its investment in the West End but not on Broadway is that considered a failure? Or lastly what lessons can be learned if a show wins the Olivier Award in London for best new play such as The Mountaintop and then moves to Broadway and gets panned by the critics? Does this mean that the show is a success? As producers we need to figure out the criteria for success. Having a show transfer between the West End and Broadway or vice versa, while it is an exciting endeavor, does not guarantee a success. Also as producers we need to think about whether success means that people are seeing our shows and talking about them or if it means winning awards and making money or perhaps just not losing money.

Moving forward it is important to remember that not all hit shows have to transfer. When considering the possibility of transfer, it is vital to study the subject matter and consider whether audiences will be interested or just not care about the piece.
Most shows that come to Broadway these days have had an out-of-town tryout and some companies are looking to produce these shows in London now first as their try out. What these producers should be encouraged to remember is that the audiences while similar are not the same and the show will most likely have completely different responses and results on the West End.

Additionally, it is important to remember the difference between the two audiences, in that the West End is younger and is accustomed to seeing more theatre. The Broadway audience is most likely going to be more critical because it is seeing less theatre. As shows transfer, it is essential that we treat them as if they are brand new shows. Just because a show was a hit on the West End that does not mean it will be a hit on Broadway. It should be marketed and advertised as such, it can use some of the buzz and hype surrounding the show but it is important to think of the show as new entity. For example, *One Man, Two Guvnors* is completely redesigning its central image for its Broadway run because the producers do not believe that the image that was used for the West End run will resonate with American audiences. In London, the image they chose was a seedy sixties old Penguin Paperback book, with references to *Ealing* comedies and movies of that era. That type of image will not work in New York, because people will not understand or recognize those references. Mr. Bryan-Brown shared during his interview that for the Broadway run they are completely changing the image to show that *One Man, Two Guvnors* is an accessible comedy but finding an image that does not rely on a relationship with sixties pop-culture at the time of the Beatles is going to be the challenge. However, they are going to use some of the quotes from the good reviews to help market the show but they are not going to rely entirely on them.
Another idea, which is relatively new, is the streaming of theatre in cinemas. So far the National Theatre and The Metropolitan Opera have been doing this successfully, however, instead of filming these events and showing them in cinemas around the different metropolitan cities, perhaps it would be help expand audiences by showing these live events in many different countries. The National Theatre is already doing this and they project their NT Live productions around the world but perhaps this can be done more with other shows that are being considered for transfer to Broadway and in this way producers could gauge to see if the show would resonate with audiences or not. Granted this is still a flawed technology because it is exorbitantly expensive and it is essentially the camera is zooming in on actors and so one does not come face to face with the live theatrical experience. However, in terms of seeing shows that are performed in other countries, these events do help to make theatre a more universal rather than perceived elite art form. At the present time, filming and broadcasting live events is cost prohibitive for most producers but perhaps this is a tool or element that could be incorporated more often as part of a marketing campaign in the future.

What is important to remember from all this research is that theatre is an elective activity. While we, in the theatre world, consider it to be extremely valuable, we have to remember that it is not an essential activity. What we can do is to try and make theatre more accessible and to try to make the “product” of Broadway and the West End more mainstream. Right now theatre is seen as a luxury. Broadway during the early to mid twentieth century was considered to be popular culture however, with the advent of such television series as “Glee” and a resurgence of movie musicals, musical theatre has become more accepted by mainstream audiences. We have to find ways to help engage
potential audience members and shows such as “Glee” are a great way to open that door in both countries.

In summation, when deciding to bring a show over from the West End or Broadway it is important to remember that the United States is massive in comparison with the United Kingdom. Due to the vastness of the United States, Broadway is much more likely to be influenced by the out of town tourists. This might be a reason that there is a stronger reliance of star names on Broadway but people are also coming to see the lights, glitz, buzz and the spectacle of Broadway. In London, many plays seem to be coming to the West End from their subsidized houses where these plays have a chance to work up a great deal of buzz beforehand. This does not seem to happen as much on Broadway because so often producers prefer to have their show open as the “New York Premiere.” Whereas in London moving a show from a small house to a large house becomes an incentive to want to see the show either for the first time or for an additional time. The audiences, while similar are not the same and just because a show is a hit on Broadway does not mean it will be a hit in the West End and vice versa. We have to treat each show as a separate entity and market it to the town they are in. There are also cases where plays can transfer well and to make that happen it is important to look at its universal appeal. The Greek classics are still performed, studied and adored around the world and these texts are thousands of years old. When the story and the characters transcend the details and hit a human chord then the country of its origin of production does not seem to matter. Perhaps making money should not be the only aim of transferring a show?
APPENDIX A

Figure 1

Demographics of Broadway pg. 20
Figure 2

Age Ranges for Playgoers vs. Musicalgoers


Figure 3

West End Admissions by Age Group 2008

Demographics of Broadway pg. 22

Figure 4

Demographics of Broadway pg. 18.
Figure 5

Demographics of Broadway pg. 24.

Figure 6

West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 16.
Figure 7

Annual Household Income of the Broadway Audience 2009–2010

Demographics of Broadway pg. 30.

Figure 8

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Independent Study 2 pg. 6.
Figure 9

Highest Level of Education Completed by Broadway Theatregoers (over Age 25) 2009-2010

Demographics of Broadway pg. 27.

Figure 10

Geographic Breakdown of the Broadway Audience

Demographics of Broadway pg. 8.
Figure 11

Geographic Composition of the Audience by Type of Show

Demographics of Broadway pg. 14.

Figure 12

Geographic Breakdown of West End Audience 2008

West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 30.
APPENDIX B

Figure 1

Amount of visits to the West End Theatre 2008

West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 44.

Figure 2

Influential Factors for Show Selection: Musicals

Demographics of Broadway pg. 38.
Figure 3

Influential Factors for Show Selection: Plays

Demographics of Broadway pg. 39.

Figure 4

What influences you to see a West End Show? 2008

West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 104.
APPENDIX C

Figure 1

If you would like to visit the theatre on Broadway more often than you do, what if anything, stops you from doing so?

- Price of tickets on Broadway: 29.0%
- Too expensive generally: 14.7%
- Not enough time/too busy: 18.4%
- Booking fees on tickets: 0.9%
- Availability of tickets: 24.9%
- Shows finish too late: 5.2%
- Choice of shows: 6.6%
- Don't know what is on/lack of information: 3.2%
- Exchange rates/cost of currency: 0.0%

Independent Study 1 pg. 19.

Figure 2

What prevents people from visiting the West End more often? 2008

- Exchange rates/cost of currency: 5%
- Don't know what is on/lack of information: 5%
- Choice of shows: 5%
- Shows finish too late: 5%
- Availability of tickets: 15%
- Booking fees on tickets: 23%
- Not enough time/too busy: 23%
- Too expensive generally: 32%
- Price of tickets in the West End: 52%

West End Theatre Audience Report pg. 96.
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