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*The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz: From Godspell to Wicked and Beyond* by Paul R. Laird (review)

Allison Gibbes

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anthology suggest, it is impossible to completely separate the material from the textual, and *Shakespeare's Theatres and the Effects of Performance* contains much of value for both literary scholars and theatre historians.

**Joe Falocco**  
**Texas State University**

***The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz: From Godspell to Wicked and Beyond.* By Paul R. Laird. Latham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014. Cloth \$50.00, eBook \$49.99. 480 pages.**

As one of the most popular and enduring composer/lyricists in the US musical theatre canon, Stephen Schwartz's career has spanned four decades. Schwartz's triumvirate of wildly well-loved musicals, *Godspell* (1971), *Children of Eden* (1991), and *Wicked* (2003), along with his myriad of lesser-known pieces, has firmly ensconced him as a leading figure in the field. In *The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz*, Paul R. Laird likens Schwartz to Andrew Lloyd Webber. Both have achieved vast commercial success, but scholars have largely dismissed their music. Laird, who is a professor of Musicology at the University of Kansas, uses his expansive technical knowledge to explore Schwartz's musical compositions for both film and musical theatre. He rigorously discusses the scores themselves as well as the musical influences—both those inherent in the idioms of the music and those expressed by Schwartz himself—and effectively demonstrates Schwartz's legitimate musical abilities and talents. Laird also puts Schwartz's works in nuanced conversation with each other, commenting on the progression of his compositions throughout his career and the ways in which his earlier music influences his later pieces.

Previous researchers have certainly considered the social implications of Schwartz's musicals, as in Stacy Wolf's *Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical*, which includes a chapter that focuses on a queer reading of *Wicked*. But Laird's scholarship fills a void by exploring the musicology of Schwartz's scores and analyzing in detail the dramatic effects of his music. In each chapter he tackles a different work by Schwartz, such as *The Baker's Wife* (1976), *Pippin* (1972), and *Children of Eden*. While Laird does include some biographical information (collected almost exclusively from Carol De Giere's comprehensive biography, *Defying Gravity: The Creative Career of Stephen Schwartz from Godspell to Wicked*), he concentrates largely on Schwartz's creative process in developing pieces with different collaborators. Laird delves into a series of previously unavailable primary sources for the bulk of his analysis, including

various versions of musical scores and scripts, a wealth of correspondence between Schwartz and his collaborators, and a series of personal interviews that Laird conducted with Schwartz and other key members of his artistic teams: director John Caird, Schwartz's son and sometimes director Scott Schwartz, composer Charles Strouse, and many more.

Laird begins the book with a brief description of Schwartz's professional and preprofessional biography. Schwartz's career in music seemed a forgone conclusion from an early age; he was a childhood prodigy in classical piano, spent four years studying musical composition at Julliard, and took his first steps as a musical theatre composer with his fellow theatre majors at Carnegie Mellon. Laird discusses Schwartz's lack of success with the Tony Awards—he received his first Tony in 2013 for the revival of *Pippin*—and debunks the significance of the awards by showing the arbitrariness of each year's competition. The book then progresses in approximate chronological order, beginning with *Godspell* and concluding with Schwartz's latest work, an opera called *Séance on a Wet Afternoon* (2009), followed by a short discussion of Schwartz's minor, yet notable, projects. Laird also devotes chapters to Schwartz's work as a lyricist and as contributor to the music and/or lyrics of animated features. His chapter on *Wicked* is deceptively short. Instead, Laird refers readers to his much more exhaustive 2011 monograph about the musical, *Wicked: A Musical Biography* (Scarecrow Press). He also writes extensively about *Séance on a Wet Afternoon*. The project transpired during the period in which Laird was writing the book (2005-2007), allowing him invaluable firsthand access to Schwartz's creative process. Laird's writing and research on Schwartz's musical scores is extensive and thorough. In some instances, such as *Children of Eden* and *Séance on a Wet Afternoon*, he includes charts to track different musical motifs throughout the scores, which provide a visual illustration of the ways in which Schwartz repeats themes in order to create meaning.

As Laird points out, the availability of materials from one show to another varied enormously, resulting in an unavoidably uneven treatment of each musical project. In his highly detailed chapter on *Children of Eden*, for instance, Laird had access to multiple variations of the score and script as well as documentation resulting from years of collaboration and communication. In contrast, in the chapter on *The Magic Show* (1974), Laird is forced to rely on the cast recording and a copy of the published vocal selections, presumably the only materials he could acquire for study. This illustrates a problem that many musical theatre scholars contend with in terms of procuring materials that are heavily protected by proprietary organizations. While Laird demonstrates a keen ear for musical intricacies by writing from the cast recording, the limited materials necessitate a much shallower discussion of the score.

*The Musical Theatre of Stephen Schwartz* is not an introductory text, but a companion, and it presumes a fairly in-depth knowledge of Schwartz's music. Rather

than using graphics of musical notations to illustrate his assertions, Laird refers to timestamps on cast recordings so that readers listening to the recordings while reading Laird's analysis can find the precise moment he is analyzing. Undoubtedly, this is the most efficient and effective way to read and understand Laird's musical dissection of each case study. The disadvantage to this approach becomes clear when recorded versions of songs are not readily available or not in the reader's personal library. In the case of *Séance on a Wet Afternoon*, no cast recording has yet been published, although Laird notes that readers can access the score via the Internet.

Perhaps the most striking aspect that Laird's research reveals about Schwartz's career is his persistence in reworking and revising those works that initially failed commercially. In each case, Laird tracks the development of these musicals from their inception. Where materials are available, he discusses the changes in the scores and scripts, and the overall dramatic effect of each change. For instance, *The Baker's Wife* took nearly thirty years to complete from its 1976 pre-Broadway tour to the definitive 2005 version that premiered at the Paper Mill Playhouse. Laird's detailed monograph shows that Schwartz is a versatile composer and his music provides much fodder for scholarly discussion, and it should be of interest to scholars of both musical theatre and popular music.

**Allison Gibbes**  
**Florida State University**

***The Pekin: The Rise and Fall of Chicago's First Black-Owned Theater.* By Thomas Bauman. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014. Cloth \$55.00, eBook \$30.00. 264 pages.**

Surprisingly, Chicago's Pekin Theatre—billed as “the first and only colored theatre in America” when it was founded in 1904—has received relatively little scholarly attention prior to Thomas Bauman's book (xiii). Rather than start with “lamentations over the scholarly injustice of it all,” Bauman views this oversight as “an opportunity. . . an invitation to think in fresh ways about seemingly settled historical issues and practices” (xiii). It is with this invitation that Bauman launches a comprehensive survey of the Pekin's development and its brief but important theatrical life. The book presents an overview of the institution using the limited archival materials still extant (not a single script from the Pekin's repertoire appears to have survived), and draws on the work of theatre scholars, cultural historians, and musicologists, such as Thomas Riis, Lynn Abbott, Doug Seroff, James Hatch, and Errol Hill, among others.

Bauman follows the trajectory of the Pekin Theatre chronologically, dividing the six chapters into general eras of the theatre's growth and its later decline. The