

young adults to Shakespeare and demonstrate to them how accessible and relevant Shakespeare remains today.

References

Cimolino, A. (2010). Who's afraid of the brave new world? What does the digital revolution mean for the future of classical theatre? Retrieved from http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/uploadedFiles/Stratford/media/2010_Speeches/10_AC_whos_afraid_of_the_brave_new_world.pdf?n=7812

Stratford Shakespeare Festival (n.d.). Stratford Shakespeare Festival. Retrieved from <http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/> Such Tweet Sorrow (n.d.).

Such Tweet Sorrow. Retrieved from <http://www.suchtweetsorrow.com/>

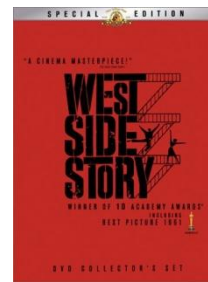
Modern Musical Adaptations

By Amanda Wilk

Introduction

One reason the works of Shakespeare are so brilliant is because the stories that he tells are timeless and can be reinterpreted and retold, illuminating countless themes in any time period. The following four musicals demonstrate how transferable the works of Shakespeare are and illustrate the timelessness of his works.

West Side Story



West Side Story is a musical retelling of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, which is reset on the streets of New York (Background Book, 2009). The story focuses on two gangs vying for control of the streets: the Jets: Native New Yorkers and the Sharks: Puerto Rican immigrants (Background Book, 2009). Tony, a reluctant member of the Jets meets Maria, the sister of the Sharks leader at a dance and they fall in love (Background Book, 2009). Though Maria and Tony try to live in peace they are

unable to escape the violence around them (Background Book, 2009).

Kiss me Kate



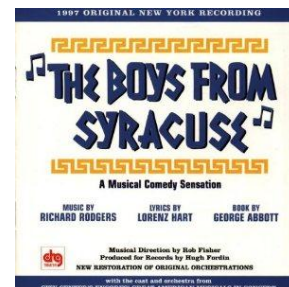
Kiss me Kate resets *The Taming of the Shrew* into the 1940's, where a Baltimore theatre company is attempting to stage a musical reproduction of this Shakespearean play (Musical Heaven, 2009). *The Taming of the Shrew* is retold both during preparations for the musical's opening and during the performance of the musical. In *Kiss me Kate*, the two leads, Fred and Lilli, are a divorced couple playing Petruchio and Kate. Throughout the course of the musical they come to terms with one another and Fred in a sense tames the so-called shrew (Musical Heaven, 2009).

The Lion King



Few realize that *The Lion King* is actually a musical retelling of *Hamlet* (Alpeche, 2004). In *The Lion King*, Simba is exiled after his uncle kills his father to become king of the jungle. Simba must act and avenge his father's death in order to take his rightful place on the throne (Alpeche, 2004). The main difference between *Hamlet* and *The Lion King* is that the female characters in *The Lion King* are much stronger than the women in *Hamlet*, and their lives do not end in tragedy. In fact, this musical retelling of *Hamlet* is on the whole much less tragic and is actually rather uplifting.

The Boys from Syracuse



The Boys from Syracuse was the first Shakespearean musical adaptation ever made, created back in 1938 (The Regents of the University of Michigan, 2008). It retells Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*, in which two sets of identical twins, separated at birth, end up in the same town – resulting in chaos and confusion for all. But everything turns out for the best in the end, when the families of the twins reunite and reconcile (The Regents of the University of Michigan, 2008).

References

- Background Book (2009). West side story: pp 7-11. Retrieved from:
http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/uploadedFiles/Stratford/Watch_and_Listen/Publications/Backgrounder/09_background_book.pdf/
- The Regents of the University of Michigan (2008). Syracuse/Syracuse overview. Retrieved from:
http://www.music.umich.edu/performances_events/productions/syracuse/syracuseoverview.htm
- Alpeche, J. (2004). 'Hamlet' and 'The Lion King': A comparison of sorts. Retrieved from:

http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/shakespeare_tragedies/110124

Musical Heaven (2009). Kiss me Kate. Retrieved from
<http://www.musicalheaven.com/Details/2608.html>

The Shakespeare Conspiracy?

by Tammy Whynot

In the centuries since the works of William Shakespeare were written, there has been doubt cast on the authorship of the thirty-seven plays and one hundred and fifty-four sonnets which bear his name. This controversy may be of interest to young adults who are intrigued by the elements of mystery and conspiracy that are brought up when debating the authenticity of Shakespeare as the actual author. They may feel compelled to learn more about history and literature in general in order to form their own opinion on the topic. As such, having a broad understanding of this debate will be of value to librarians should they be consulted on the issue.

Arguments for or against William Shakespeare having written all—or any—of the works attributed to him are varied and