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**Adaptation of Broadway Musicals in the Czech
Republic**

Lucie Šindelářová

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Lucie Šindelářová

Vedoucí práce:

Mgr. Tomáš Hostýnek

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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1 Introduction

This bachelor's thesis deals with the Broadway Musical and its adaptations in the Czech Republic. The aim of this thesis is to define the terms *musical* and *musical theatre* and their usage, to map the phenomenon of this theatrical form both in the United States and in the Czech Republic, to find out how much the musical theatre in the Czech Republic is affected by the import of Broadway musicals and to analyse the Czech production of a particular Broadway musical.

The first chapter deals with the definition of the terms *musical*, *musical theatre*, *musical comedy* etc. Different possibilities of a definition according to the different conditions and surroundings are listed in this part.

The second chapter deals with the Broadway musical. It lists several different ways of division of the historical development of the Broadway musical, their possible benefits, and disadvantages. The chapter presents the history and development of the Broadway musical theatre, the most important milestones and moments in this development and the dates of crucial musicals and their contribution to the progress. It also presents the current state of the Broadway theatre.

The third chapter deals with the adaptations of Broadway musicals in the Czech Republic. It lists the dates of the Czech premieres of the most important Broadway musicals, from the initial ones up until the current productions.

The fourth chapter contains the analysis of the production and adaptation of a particular Broadway musical in the Czech Republic. It briefly presents the particular musical, which is *Finian's Rainbow (Divotvorný hrnec)*. It describes its creation in the United States, and it focusses on its Czech premiere, which had significant impact on the development of the musical theatre in the continental Europe, and selected follow-up productions. Period reviews from newspapers were used to analyse the critical reception. The chapter also presents an interview with Stanislava Topinková Fořtová, one of the starring actors in several Czech adaptation of *Finian's Rainbow*, where she compares the selected productions from the 1990s as well as the original musical *Finnian's Rainbow* with its Czech adaptation.

3 major types of sources were used in this thesis : Literature dealing with this issue, both in English and Czech, articles from both American and Czech newspaper, in particular

critical reviews, and online sources, especially websites of different theatres or articles published online. To get an authentic insight into the problematic, I also interviewed a Czech musical theatre actress Stanislava Topinková Fořtová.

2 Theoretical part

2.1 The term musical

“Everybody knows what a Broadway musical is—that is, until they try to define it.” (Everett, et al., 2008 p. vii) The term *musical theatre* or simply *musical* is rather difficult to define because of two reasons. Its meaning was evolving in the course of time, so its definitions from various eras might be different and yet they might all be considered valid. The second reason is the fact that the term as well as the genre, or theatrical form, does not seem to have fixed boundaries or limits. This makes it possible for each individual researching the phenomenon to form a new, unique definition based on some of the features, characteristics and attributes which are common to most of the known definitions today.

The word *musical* was originally an adjective derived from the word *music*. According to Merriam-Webster, there are several definitions of the adjective, such as *“of or relating to music, having the pleasing harmonious qualities of music, having an interest in or talent for music, set to or accompanied by music, of or relating to musicians or music lovers.”*¹ In the context of theatre, this adjective was used to explain that the given piece will have one of the qualities mentioned above. That is why, originally, the terms such as *musical comedy, musical play or musical fable* were used to describe something that could be described as predecessors of today’s musicals. Later on, by conversion this adjective started to be used as a noun to describe a whole category of theatrical forms. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 23)

Even though the origin of the expression is quite understandable and hence the form is clear, the content and meaning of this word not so much. There seems to be only one characteristic which most of the definitions in literature related to this topic have in common. There is a consensus that musical is a synthesis of music, spoken word and dance. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 21) Without one of these elements, a play cannot be described as a musical. How much these elements have to be integrated is a subject of debate.

¹ Merriam-Webster, Undated, Musical. Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/musical>

John Kenrick adds more elements while defining the form. Along with the already mentioned factors he adds staging, in the sense of all the movement happening on the stage, not only dancing, and physical production, e.g. the sets, costumes or technical aspects of the play. (Kenrick, 2010 p. 14)

In his book *American Musical Theater: A Chronicle*, Gerald Bordman suggests a definition of a musical play while talking about the premiere of *Showboat*. “*It was the first real "musical play": a lyric piece with a relatively serious romantic story about essentially everyday people set to music neither as clipped as typical musical comedy writing nor as fully arioso as operetta, although leaning toward the latter. It could be called American operetta, if only "operetta" could lose its pejorative connotations.*” (Bordman, 2001 p. 485) In this description, Bordman mentions the possibility of changing the name American musical to American operetta. It is true that if the elements of musical theatre and operetta are compared, they are seemingly identical. The possible differentiation may lie in the historical context, in which operetta comes from Europe and musical theatre has American origins. However, given the fact, that musical in America has been strongly affected by the European tradition, some literature classifies operetta as a genre of musical theatre. (Everett, et al., 2008 p. 256)

While talking about Broadway musical, William A. Everette in his *Historical Dictionary of Broadway Musical* states that “*(...) the “musical” part of the term can vary incredibly, defining different types of music and dance; comedy, romance, and tragedy; talented performers; and creative authors. These types of performances have also varied considerably in the past, with early ones being simple and even naive compared to the palette of emotions evoked and topics broached more recently, while individual songs that were once impervious to the surrounding action have increasingly been woven into the plot. Broadway musicals cover quite a range, from high brow to low brow, opera and operetta to musical comedies, and musical plays to revues and vaudeville.*” (Everett, et al., 2008 p. vii) This definition supports the idea mentioned earlier, that operetta is in fact a subgenre of musical. According to Everette, operetta is not the only subgenre, he mentions other forms as well, most of them are usually considered to be the predecessors of musical.

With the arrival of television and movies, the definition of musical got a new dimension once again. Movies based on popular musicals became well-known and were referred to

as musicals as well, without really making the distinction between these two forms. Over time the roles even reversed, with some of the ideas and themes from movies were later made into theatre musicals, emphasising even more how flexible the word *musical* is.

This thesis will be focusing on Broadway musicals, which for the purpose of this thesis were defined as musicals that premiered on Broadway in New York. Some definitions include other than geographical criteria, such as the size of the auditorium, (Everett, et al., 2008 p. ix) which will not be taken into account in this work.

2.2 Division of Broadway development

To map the history of the evolution of Broadway musical is quite a daring and challenging task. To approach such a long period of time, authors often divide it into smaller parts to capture the significant moments and changes. But similarly to the definition of the term, which was discussed above, this division is not unified, and it differs from author to author.

Perhaps the simplest possibility of division is to divide the period into decades. This is the approach used by Everett or Kenrick. (Everett, et al., 2008) (Kenrick, 2010) The advantage of this approach is the already mentioned simplicity; it is easy to navigate and very clearly arranged. However, it does not reflect the notable milestones, which changed the course of the evolution of musicals quite significantly. It is more about enumeration, without really emphasising the meaning of the listed events.

Another possibility is to use milestones, which are not completely connected to the culture, but more to the circumstances. This is the approach taken by Prostějovský. It is true that in the second and third part of his book *Musical Express* he is listing the most significant premiers chronologically and afterwards the most significant authors, but in the first part, where he summarizes the history of Broadway theatre, he is using quite specific milestones. He includes the Licensing act of 1737, the Wall Street Crash of 1929, or the invention of the TV. This allows him to put the cultural evolution into perspective and to better illustrate the links between those events. (Prostějovský, 2008)

More detailed division is another possibility, used by Bordman. His book is divided into specific periods, that seemingly do not have any major signification. These are then divided into seasons. His milestones are more connected to the Broadway theatre itself, such as the peak of popularity of opera bouffe, arrival of tapdancing, ragtime or emergence of hit songs. (Bordman, 2001) This detailed division makes it less comprehensible while seeming slightly excessive, but on the other hand, the division into the seasons makes it easy to find the exact premiere according to its date.

Some sort of fusion of approaches mentioned above is used by Block, who divides the evolution into 3 major periods, each marked with a significant musical premiere. These periods are then divided into parts with other notable musicals. (Block, 2009) All of it is put into perspective with the events outside of the theatre.

2.3 History of Broadway musical

2.3.1 Antecedents of musical

Like any other art form, musical theatre did not appear all at once out of nowhere. Its creation was a long and complicated process in which the new form arose from different already existing forms and genres with whom it often overlapped. Therefore, it is not unequivocal which form was the direct antecedent of musical, but it is quite evident which ones were somehow involved in its creation.

The first form which was already discussed is operetta. Operetta itself emerged from opera and gained significant popularity thanks to Jacques Offenbach, who is considered to be the first major author of this new genre. His goal was to create a form which would be considered as classical music but at the same time it would be more approachable and entertaining than opera. (Kenrick, 2010 p. 37) As a purely European invention, operetta, or *opera bouffe*, found the way on Broadway quite early on; Offenbach's *Orphée aux Enfers* was introduced on Broadway in 1867. (Bordman, 2001 p. 21)

Another notable genre was burlesque, described by Everette as a "*Theatrical form that originated in the 1840s and was based on satire, parody, and performance art. Female performers, such as the famous Gypsy Rose Lee, employed lush colorful costumes, novelty acts, and striptease to entertain their audiences. Music and dance segments were included, and humor was typically lowbrow and mocked high society.*" (Everett, et al., 2008 p. 47) It is true that burlesque originally started as a satirical genre, but it gradually lost this attribute and burlesque became a synonym for a show with a scandalous, even sexual subtext, and this shocking character made burlesque popular. (Kenrick, 2010 p. 68)

A significant genre for early Broadway days was revue, spelled also as review, indicating the content of the show, which was some sort of recapitulation of events. The first original American revue was *The Passing Show* from 1894. (Mordden, 2013 p. 98) But probably the most famous revues were the Ziegfeld's follies. Florenz Ziegfeld presented his first revue in 1907 and for almost 50 years it became the synonym for successful revue. He got the inspiration in France and quite successfully introduced the so called *French Folies* to American spectators. (Kenrick, 2010 p. 122)

Minstrel show became popular in the 1820s. The main characteristics of this type of show were so called blackface performers, white actors with black makeup on their faces. Songs which were parodying black slaves and their lifestyles were pivotal for this genre. (Kenrick, 2010 p. 52) Popularized by Thomas Dartmouth Rice, minstrel show as some sort of intermezzo between acts of shows and plays started to get attention. As they grew in popularity, the first independent minstrel was introduced in 1843. (Bordman, 2001 p. 11)

Another genre connected to musical theatre was vaudeville. Originally a French theatrical form is somehow close to what we would call a circus today. Essentially anything could be part of a vaudeville show; “...*musical numbers, comic routines, magic tricks, lectures, animal acts, operatic and dramatic excerpts, and athletic feats of various sorts.*” (Everett, et al., 2008 p. 359) Because of this fragmentation, vaudeville did not really allow for any major celebrities and stars to shine for too long, but it often became some sort of a steppingstone for future Broadway musical stars. (Bordman, 2001 p. 17)

Extravaganza is occasionally considered to be a separate genre, but sometimes it is used as an adjective describing the genres mentioned above and others, such as vaudeville extravaganza, burlesque extravaganza, ballet extravaganza, etc. Mordden describes extravaganza as “*the fairytale spectacle, a blend of pantomime, burlesque, and musical comedy aimed at family audiences, with wisenheimer jokes about modern mores and politics and, for the kiddies, high jinks and slapstick.*” (Mordden, 2013 p. 41)

Coexistence of all the genres and formats mentioned above made it possible for Broadway to become an ideal place for the evolution and creation of a new theatrical genre: musical comedy, musical play and finally, just simply, a musical. But it would be a mistake to think that these forms ceased to exist once the musical was created; all of the genres mentioned above existed side by side on Broadway and are still being produced today, in both theatres and on the silver screens.

2.3.2 The first musicals

As explained above, musical theatre originates from several different genres and styles. But it was not only these genres that made the creation of musical theatre possible. The European influence played a significant role, with European ensembles coming to the United States on tours and bringing the new style to the New World. This dates back to the year 1753, when an advertisement in the *South Carolina Gazette* read "On Tuesday the 18th inst. will be presented at the Courtroom the opera 'Flora, or Hob in the Well' with the Dance of the two Pierrots, and a new Pantomime entertainment, called the adventures of Harlequin Scaramouch..." (Bordman, 2001 p. 1) It is safe to say that most of the entertainment in these early Broadway days were provided by the British ensembles bringing their *ballad operas*. (Kenrick, 2010 p. 51)

This European influence, along with the mixing theatrical genres, increasing interconnection of acts which was missing in revues and burlesque, and more important and serious topics which were missing in vaudeville or minstrelsy finally made it possible for the first musical to come into existence. In 1927, the musical theatre was born in a form of the musical *Show Boat*.

Although the definition of the term, and the historical division of its development is mostly disagreed upon by many experts, when the first musical occurred is not. *Show Boat* premiered on the December 27, 1927 in the Ziegfield's Theatre, the same theatre where 20 years earlier, Florenz Ziegfeld introduced his *Ziegfield's follies* discussed above. With music by Jerome Kern, and book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, *Show Boat* marked the beginning of a whole new era of Broadway theatre. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 57) Not only was the music much more integrated with a dramatic plot, but the plot itself, the story of the boat Cotton Blossom and the ensemble on it, addressed the issue of anti-miscegenation laws and racism in general, which was unprecedented on Broadway and it was different from the cheerful stories from musical comedies. (Block, 2009 p. 20) The premiere was very well received not only by viewers but also by critics. The critical reviews were highlighting Kern's score, which was considered by many to be his best one. (Block, 2009 p. 20)

Several years later, two significant musicals were introduced. The first one, *Anything Goes*, premiered on Broadway on November 21, 1934, the second one, *Porgy and Bess*, had its opening night on October 10, 1935. *Anything Goes* was one of the successful

musicals written by Cole Porter and it is one of whose original form from the opening night has been changed multiple times. These changes were quite common in the early Broadway days and even *Show Boat* in its revival from 1946 was presented with a different book and some deleted songs. The revival of *Anything Goes* in 1962 “...incorporated no less than six songs out of a total of fourteen from other Porter shows.” (Block, 2009 p. 46) The goal of these changes was quite clear; to utilize the popularity and fame of Cole Porter’s songs as much as possible.

Porgy and Bess has been adjusted and rearranged as well, but unlike in *Anything Goes*, the changes were related not to the songs, but to the spoken parts. When the Gershwin brothers were working on the musical, George, who wrote the music, was in fact writing a new type of opera. To use his own words, he was working on a “...serious attempt to put in operatic form a purely American theme” and “a new form, which combines opera with theatre.” (Block, 2009 p. 58) Because of this, all the spoken dialogues were originally written as recitatives. But the critical reaction was rather negative, and after only 124 performances the production ended, considered to be a total flop. (Everett, et al., 2008 p. 272) In the next revival on Broadway, in 1942, the recitatives were replaced by spoken dialogue. However, being said that *Porgy and Bess* was originally written as an opera, it has been produced as both opera and musical and the operatic productions preserved the original recitatives. (Block, 2009 p. 58)

A signature milestone came in 1943, with the premier of *Oklahoma!*. This musical is by some experts considered to be the first musical (instead of *Show Boat*). The reason for this belief is the fact that *Oklahoma!* was the first musical which integrated dance into the plot. Dance numbers, also called dream ballet, were not just accompanying singing in musical numbers, but were actually developing the plot. The transitions between songs, dialogues, and dance sequences felt more natural instead of interrupting the story. (Kenrick, 2010 p. 248) Unexpectedly, *Oklahoma!* became the most popular show of its era. More than 2 thousand performances of the original production broke the record of number of reprises, and *Oklahoma* held this record until the arrival of a hit, which marked another new chapter of Broadway theatre, called *My Fair Lady*. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 88)

2.3.3 *My Fair Lady* and *West Side Story*

The majority of Broadway musicals were and still are to these days based on well-known stories, tales, myths, but also literary works such as books and dramas. Some of the musicals never surpass the artwork they are based on, but some of them become equally valuable and recognized, with viewer not even associating them with the original material. Such two musicals premiered in 1956 and 1957.

My Fair Lady premiered in Mark Hellinger Theatre on March 15, 1956. Based on a play written by G.B. Shaw *Pygmalion*, the authors Frederick Loewe and Alan Jay Lerner brought the story of a Cockney flower girl to Broadway, with a version quite faithful to the original play, except the ending. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 109) In *Pygmalion*, the love story aspect is not very present, and the end suggests more likely the birth of a new and independent Eliza, the main character. This ending however did not fit the emerging Broadway ‘pathos’, and since G. B. Shaw died 6 years before the premiere of *My Fair Lady*, it was possible for Loewe and Lerner to adjust the ending and add a hint of love and future relationship between Eliza and Higgins.² (Bordman, 2001 p. 652)

My Fair Lady became a strong success; it broke the records held by *Oklahoma!* in the number of shows performed. In 6 years the audience has seen *My Fair Lady* over 2700 times. A successful recording was released as well, and the movie adaptation with Audrey Hepburn, from 1964, created a profit of 800 million dollars. (Block, 2009 p. 260)

West Side Story premiered on September 26, 1957. The plot of this musical is based on Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. (Bordman, 2001 p. 659) Unlike *My Fair Lady*, *West Side Story* takes only the main motive of two rival groups and a love between two members of those groups. Montagues and Capulets were originally supposed to be replaced by Jews and Irish Catholics. This was later changed, because the conflicts between the two religious groups at that time were not quite common, unlike the conflicts between the young Americans and Puerto Rican immigrants. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 119) The initiative to create this musical came from the choreographer and director Jerome

² G. B. Shaw’s goal while writing *Pygmalion* was to undermine the typical happy ending. He was strongly against any musical adaptation of his work because he feared the added love aspect. In his essay published several years after the premiere of *Pygmalion*, Shaw poses the question : “*Will she look forward to a lifetime of fetching Higgins’s slippers or to a lifetime of Freddy fetching hers? There can be no doubt about the answer. Unless Freddy is biologically repulsive to her, and Higgins biologically attractive to a degree that overwhelms all her other instincts, she will, if she marries either of them, marry Freddy.*” *Bartleby*, 1999, *Pygmalion*. Available at: <https://www.bartleby.com/138/6.html>

Robins. He started to collaborate with the already famous composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein, and dramatist Arthur Laurents. They were later joined by Stephen Sondheim for the lyrics. (Everett, et al., 2008 p. 365)

The fact that the idea for the project came from a choreographer is quite symptomatic, with *West Side Story* being a musical in which the dancing was, until then, the most integrated. “*West Side Story went beyond these early landmarks in expressing essential dramatic action through the medium of dance. At least four major moments in act I are told exclusively or nearly exclusively in dance (Prologue, The Dance at the Gym, the “Cool” Fugue, and The Rumble); act II features a dream ballet based on “Somewhere” and a violent Taunting ballet.*” (Block, 2009 p. 280) Robin’s iconic choreography was appreciated by both critics and audience, all of them realizing that the opening night of *West Side Story* was opening a whole new type of musical theatre based on motion and choreography. (Kenrick, 2010 p. 284)

2.3.4 The fruitful 1960s

My Fair Lady and *West Side Story* started what is often called ‘*The Era of Classical Musicals*’. These two titles were then followed by numerous classical musicals premiering in the 1960s.

The end of the first third of the decade however was marked by quite a significant milestone; on January 6, 1963 there was a Broadway premiere of a British musical *Oliver!* based on Charles Dickens’ novel. (Bordman, 2001 p. 685) *Oliver!* premiered in London 3 years earlier. Its Broadway premiere was the first premiere of a British musical on Broadway and even though for the next several years American authors managed to produce highly successful titles, *Oliver!* is believed to be some sort of a herald for the future of musical theatre. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 35)

In 1964 three classical musicals premiered on Broadway. The first one, *Hello, Dolly!*, by Jerry Herman and Michael Stewart, premiered on January 16. It was loosely based on a comedy by Thornton Wilder called *The Matchmaker*, which premiered 9 years earlier and whose title describes the plot of the musical, with the main character being Dolly Levi, the Matchmaker. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 153) The show itself was not innovative in any way, but the combination of great cast lead by Carol Charming, astonishing stage setting and a catchy title song with the same title as the musical, made *Hello, Dolly!* the show

Broadway needed after the gloomy winter of 1963 with the JFK's assassination. (Bordman, 2001 p. 689)

Two months later, *Funny Girl* was introduced to Broadway. The plot of the musical written by Jule Styne, Bob Merrill and Isobel Lennart is based on a true story - the life of a Broadway Star of 1920s, Fanny Brice, known for her lead roles in *Ziegfeld's Follies* and her romance with a gambler Nicky Arnstein. (Everett, et al., 2008 p. 117) The hits such as *People* or *Don't rain on my parade* found their way from stage to music charts and became fully-fledged popular songs. (Kenrick, 2010 p. 307)

Completely different topics, mood, and settings than those of the two previously mentioned musicals were brought by the premiere of *Fiddler on the Roof* on September 22. The story is set in a Jewish community in a Russian village at the beginning of the 20th century. (Everett, et al., 2008 p. 102) The plot revolving around Jews, interreligious relationships, pogroms, and eviction from a home country was considered heavy, but the musical gained popularity just because such a story was relatable for various cultures. Since the typically Jewish music was preserved in the score written by John Block, not only does the story keep the needed authenticity, but it is also recognizable upon first hearing. (Bordman, 2001 p. 693)

The year 1965 brought yet another classical musical, *Man of La Mancha*. Musical based on the Cervantes' stories about Don Quixote was created by Dale Wasserman, Mitch Leigh, and Joe Darion. (Kenrick, 2010 p. 309) The authors did not have high hopes for it, but surprisingly, it became a hit. "*Although it had no advance sale to speak of, generally excellent reviews and favorable word of mouth from audiences that no longer demanded the well-mannered niceties of an earlier era soon made it the "hottest" ticket in town.*" (Bordman, 2001 p. 703) To put it in context, *Man of La Mancha*, with the 2328 reprises, became the third longest running musical of the 1960s, after the *Fiddler on the Roof* (3242 reprises) and *Hello, Dolly!* (2844 reprises). (Block, 2009 p. W32)

The list of popular classical musicals of the 1960s may be closed with the 1966 premiere of *Cabaret*. The musical written by John Kander, Fred Ebb and Joe Masteroff is often referred to as a 'concept (or conceptual) musical' which is a musical where "*all elements of the musical, thematic and presentational, are integrated to suggest a central theatrical image or idea.*" (Block, 2009 p. 346) According to this definition, *Fiddler on the Roof* may receive this label, given the fact that it deals with the Russian pogroms and

antisemitism. In case of *Cabaret* the underlying topic is the rise of Nazism in Germany in the 1930s portrayed at events in the Kit Kat Klub in Weimar Germany. (Mordden, 2013 p. 220)

The opposite of all the musicals mentioned above was the musical *Hair* in 1968. To be accurate, it premiered in 1967 in New York, but off Broadway. Written by two actors and an organist, it shocked the audience by such controversial topics as drugs, nudity, and sexual innuendos, all within a group of young Hippies. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 172) Not only the depicted topics, but the music was different as well. “*While the composer employed the simple chord progressions associated with rock of the mid-1960s and rock’s instruments, amplification, and beat, he also used musical theater’s typical verse-refrain form,...*” (Everett, et al., 2008 p. 137) This revolutionary title not only marked an end of one era on Broadway, but it also influenced the artists of the upcoming generation.

2.3.5 Andrew Lloyd Webber

In the 1970s, the centre of musical theatre moved from the United States to London and the established system changed; most of the major titles premiered on West End and were then produced on Broadway. The main credit for this change went to Andrew Lloyd Webber. According to the criteria defined in this thesis, only *Jesus Christ Superstar* out of all Lloyd Webber’s musicals could be classified as a Broadway musical. All of his other musicals premiered in London and were produced on Broadway afterwards. However, in most of the literature and sources, his musicals are usually labelled as Broadway musicals, which is also the consensus of general public, since Lloyd Webber is possibly the most celebrated musical theatre composer today.

Lloyd Webber’s first two major hits were based on biblical stories, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* was originally written in 1968 for a London school as a children’s show but was gradually adjusted and enlarged. The West End premiere of *Joseph* in 1973 was followed by the Broadway one in 1982. (Everett, et al., 2008 p. 167) *Jesus Christ Superstar* was originally an album released in 1970. The premiere of the staged version of this ‘rock opera’ happened on Broadway in 1971. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 199)

Six years after *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Evita* premiered in London, followed by *Cats* in 1981. (Prostějovský, 2008 pp. 233, 259) In *Cats*, Lloyd Webber based the plot on poems written by T. S. Elliot called *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats*. This gives the musical

a revue-like character. (Block, 2009 p. 385) Possibly his most successful musical, *Phantom of the Opera*, premiered in 1986 and can be described by the term ‘megamusical’. This type gained popularity in the 1970s and is typical for its grandiosity in every aspect, from the costumes and stage settings to the choreography and singing. (Everett, et al., 2008 p. 215)

One of the most recent musicals by Lloyd Webber are *Love Never Dies*, which is a sequel to *Phantom*, which premiered in 2010 (Mordden, 2013 p. 132), *School of Rock*, based on the 2003 movie, which premiered in 2015, and *Cinderella*, which is set to premiere in 2020.³

2.3.6 New types of Broadway musicals

The evolution of Broadway musical since the 1970s is becoming less linear and more diversified than before. Authors have been creating musicals, which can be divided into several groups.

Conceptual musical was already mentioned above in connection with the musical *Cabaret*. In addition, one could put *Chicago* from 1975 and *Sweeney Todd* from 1979 in this category. *Cabaret* and *Chicago* have more in common than just their typology, both musicals were written by the same duo: John Kander and Fred Ebb. Set in a female prison, *Chicago* brought the theme of showbusiness, corruption and media exposure. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 209) In *Sweeney Todd*, the underlying theme is revenge and psychological portrayal of it. Written by Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler, the musical was unprecedented in terms of showing the dark side of human nature explicitly. (Kenrick, 2010 p. 339)

Another type of musicals which has been popular in the last 30 years on Broadway is the so-called backstage musical. As the name suggest, the plot revolves around a production of a musical. In a way, *Phantom of The Opera* could be considered a backstage musical as well, but thanks to its other attributes it is not often put into this category. Typical example would be *A Chorus Line* from 1975, by Marvin Hamlisch and Edward Kleban. (Bordman, 2001 p. 743) The idea for this musical was born in the head of a choreographer Michael Bennett, who based the musical on his interviews with real dancers and created a story of a Broadway chorus audition. (Kenrick, 2010 pp. 331, 332) Looking at the

³ *Encore tickets*, 2018, A complete guide to all Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals. Available at : <https://www.encoretickets.co.uk/articles/guide-andrew-lloyd-webber-musicals/>

Broadway world from a different perspective is the 2001 musical *The Producers*. Written by Mel Brooks, and based on his successful movie, *The Producers* is a satirical depiction of how Broadway works from the point of view of authors, producers, and investors. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 320)

2.3.7 The current Broadway

The 21st century brought several titles on Broadway which already proved themselves to be successful, some of them mentioned above (*Producers* and *Love Never Dies*). Early 2000s musicals such as *Wicked* from 2003 or *Monty Python's Spamalot* from 2005 can be added to this list. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 46)

To this day⁴, there are 41 professional theatres in New York which are considered to constitute the current Broadway, and in those theatres 32 musicals are currently running.⁵ Some of them are based on Disney movies, such as *Aladdin* or *The Lion King*, some are based on other movies such as *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* or *Mean Girls*. There are musicals based on life stories of famous people such as *Diana*, based on the life of princess Diana, or *Tina*, based on the life of Tina Turner, as well as some already well-known titles such as *West Side Story*, *The Phantom of The Opera*, or *Chicago*.⁶

A popular type of Broadway productions today are the Broadway tours, or Broadway touring shows. These productions based on Broadway have their own ensembles and those ensembles are performing all around the United States. Some of those titles are the same as the 'on-site' Broadway productions, but there are some additional titles, such as *Anastasia*, *Frozen* or *Jesus Christ Superstar*.⁷

⁴ May 2020

⁵ *Internet Broadway Database*, undated, Theatres. Available at : <https://www.ibdb.com/theatres>

⁶ *Internet Broadway Database*, undated, Shows. Available at : <https://www.ibdb.com/shows>

⁷ *Internet Broadway Database*, undated, Shows. Available at : <https://www.ibdb.com/shows>

3 Practical part

3.1 Czech adaptations of Broadway musicals

The tradition of musical theatre in the Czechoslovakia and later in the Czech Republic has been influenced by the political situation in the 20th century. The beginnings of a true musical theatre culture in our country were rather difficult because of the political situation after the February 1948, even though it was the same year when the very first Broadway musical premiered in Czechoslovakia.

The first imported American musical in the Czech Republic⁸ was *Finian's Rainbow*, written by Burton Lane, E.Y. Harburg and Fred Saisy. It will be discussed in detail in the following parts of this thesis, because the Czech premiere marked an important milestone in the European musical theatre and its adaptation is unique on a global scale.

After *Finian's Rainbow*, there was a gap of 15 years when there were no premieres of American musical. This gap was ended by the premiere of *Kiss Me, Kate* in the JK Tyl Theatre in Pilsen in 1963. (Viktora, et al., 2015 p. 156) This premiere helped to renew the import of Broadway musicals to the country. One year later, in 1964, the Karlín Theatre in Prague produced the musical *My Fair Lady* and two years later continued the premieres with *Hello Dolly*. The Karlín Theatre could be considered from its foundation in 1881 the only purely musical theatre in the country, meaning that it always has had variety shows, cabarets and operettas on its repertoire. (Bár, 2016 p. 318) Production of Broadway musicals could therefore be considered as a natural next step. That is why in the following years, Karlín also produced the Czech premiere of *Man of La Mancha* in 1967. (Bár, 2016 p. 132) However, the next Broadway musical premiered in Brno, in the Janáčkovo divadlo in 1968. It is true that *Porgy and Bess* was presented in the Czech Republic already in 1956 in the Karlín Theatre, but it was produced by a guest ensemble *Everyman Opera* from the United States and it was therefore performed in English. (Bár, 2016 p. 89) In 1968, another Broadway musical premiered in the Národní Divadlo in Prague: *Fiddler on the Roof*. To produce a musical in the Národní Divadlo in the late 1960s was quite unexpected and unconventional, as was the fact that the musical was being performed by

⁸ For the purpose of this thesis the author uses expressions with the adjective 'Czech'. Some of the premieres described in this thesis were also Czechoslovak premieres, but some musicals premiered earlier in the area of the current Slovak Republic. Therefore, in this thesis, the term 'Czech premiere' describes the first production of the relevant musical in the area of the current Czech Republic.

the drama ensemble, since the Národní Divadlo does not have an operetta or a musical theatre ensemble. That is why the drama ensemble was joined by some soloists of the opera ensemble. (Bár, 2013 p. 167)

Another Broadway musical, *West Side Story*, premiered in the Czech Republic in 1970 in two theatres: Státní divadlo Brno and Karlín Theatre. *West Side Story* presented a challenge for both theatres and both productions were received with quite unconvincing reviews. (Bár, 2013 p. 172) As it was already mentioned, *West Side Story* opened a new chapter of Broadway musical theatre, incorporating movement and dancing into the plot and actually using them to tell the story. This was something the Czech ensembles were not used to and according to the critics, they were not even ready for it. (Bár, 2013 p. 176)

The following years brought two Czech premieres of one of the very first musicals in history: *Showboat* and *Oklahoma!*. *Showboat* premiered in the Krušnohorské divadlo in Teplice (Bár, 2013 p. 234) but its premiere was shortly followed by the production in the Karlín Theatre. (Bár, 2016 p. 156) The Czech translation was done by Jan and Jana Werich and Pavel Kopta, while Jan Werich already had experience from *Finian's Rainbow* and Jana Werich previously translated *West Side Story*. (Bár, 2016 p. 156) *Oklahoma!* was introduced by the Reduta Theatre in Brno in 1976 and a year later, in 1977, *Cabaret* premiered in Reduta as well. (Bár, 2013 p. 231) The series of Broadway musicals premieres in Brno ended in 1978 with the Czech premiere of *Chicago* in the Divadlo bratří Mrštíků. The director of the premiere, Richard Mihula, directed *Chicago* a year later in the Theatre ABC in Prague with a big success. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 213)

The 1990s started with the Czech premiere of *Funny Girl* in the Karlín Theatre. The whole show was quite spectacular and the “American vibe” of this musical became popular amongst the viewers. 20 years earlier, one of the scenes, where the whole cast is marching in red and white stripes, white stars and are waving American flags would be unimaginable. (Bár, 2016 p. 186) But the Velvet revolution made it possible for the American musical to really enter the Czech scene in the way it was meant to be produced.

In the course of only four years there were two musicals that premiered in the Czech Republic written by one man: Andrew Lloyd Webber. The rising amount of private productions made it possible for both musicals, which were already iconic in the world, to be brought to Prague. The first one was the rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* which premiered in 1994 in the Spirála Theatre in Prague. Translated by Michael Prostějovský,

it became a great success and the production set the record of 1288 performances. (Vaněk, 1998 p. 90) Four years after *Jesus Christ Superstar*, the same production company, called Musical, presented another Lloyd Webber's musical, *Evita*. Performed in the Spirála Theatre as well, *Evita* stayed on for two seasons. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 232)

Between the two premieres of Lloyd Webber's musicals, the Czech premiere of *Hair* was produced in 1996 in the Pyramida Theatre in Prague. The Czech audience was already familiar with the story of this musical, mainly thanks to Miloš Forman, who in 1979 shot a Hollywood movie based on the musical. He changed and enlarged the plotline, which allowed him to communicate the ideas of the musical on the silver screen. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 174) The Czech premiere however was based on the book of the original Broadway version and so the success of it was not as big as expected, especially in comparison with the parallelly ongoing production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. (Vaněk, 1998 p. 90)

Andrew Lloyd Webber's musicals kept arriving to the Czech Republic even in the new millennium. In 2004, the Milenium Theatre in Prague produced the Czech premiere of *Cats*. The musical was produced by the same people behind the production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* 10 years earlier. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 258) However, *Cats* did not follow the example of the Lloyd Webber's rock opera. According to the reviews, the production team did underestimate the expectations of the viewers, especially in the dancing element, which is very present in *Cats* and some of the choreographies were not as spectacular as expected.⁹ The first musical written by Lloyd Webber's musical had its Czech premiere almost 40 years after its original premiere as a school show in London. *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* was introduced in 2006 in the Městské divadlo Brno. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 188)

In 2010s, the Czech premieres of Broadway musicals are mostly located in four cities: Prague, Pilsen, Brno, and Ostrava. In Prague, the Karlín Theatre continues with the tradition of Czech Broadway premieres. Five years after the premiere on Broadway, it presented the musical *Producers* in 2006. By this premiere, the Karlín Theatre reopened after major reconstruction, which was necessary after the floods in 2002. This reconstruction made it possible for the Karlín Theatre to produce spectacular shows by

⁹ *České noviny*, 2004, Kočky v Miléniu. Available at : <https://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/kocky-v-mileniu/101392>

using modern technologies, including the revolving stage and a modern light system. (Bár, 2016 p. 273) Two years later three well known Broadway authors Frank Wildhorn, Norman Allen, and Jack Murphy, wrote a musical inspired by the story of the opera *Carmen*, with the same name. *Carmen* was the first musical by American authors which premiered in the Czech Republic, in 2008. (Bár, 2016 p. 276) In 2018, *Carmen* celebrated the 10th year on the Karlín scene and it became the most performed musical of that theatre, which until that point was the musical *My Fair Lady*, which premiered in Karlín in 1964.¹⁰ Apart from *Carmen*, currently playing in the Karlín Theatre are the Broadway musicals *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *The Addams Family*, which premiered in 2014.¹¹

Also located in Prague, the GoJa Music Hall introduced one of the most popular musicals of all time, *The Phantom Of the Opera*. As his own project, it was produced by František Janeček in 2014, and his investment into this musical was the biggest in the history of Czech theatre production.¹² The reviews were predominantly positive, Hrdinová from *Právo* newspaper wrote “*The Phantom Of the Opera brought a musical theatre event, for which Prague has been waiting for many years. It will not disappoint the viewers by its astonishing spectacularity and the quality of music, which the production of Phantom requires.*”¹³ The most recent Czech premiere of a Broadway musical in the GoJa Music Hall has been the 2019 premiere of *Wicked*, which was meant to follow the success of *Phantom*, but the reviews were considerably less favourable.¹⁴

The JK Tyl Theatre in Pilsen produced one of the first Broadway musical in the Czech Republic, *Kiss Me, Kate* in 1963. It continues with the production of Broadway musicals in the present, while some of those productions being the Czech premieres. In 2010 a Broadway Musical *Monty Python’s Spamalot* was introduced to Pilsen audience, which was after Broadway, London, and Cologne the fourth audience able to see this comedy

¹⁰ *Musical.cz*, 2018, Muzikál CARMEN oslavil 10 let od premiéry. Available at : <https://www.musical.cz/recenze-reportaze/fotogalerie/muzikal-carmen-oslavil-deset-let-od-premiery/>

¹¹ *Hudební divadlo Karlín*, undated, Muzikál. Available at : <https://www.hdk.cz/repertoar/muzikal/>

¹² *Týden.cz*, 2014, Fantom Opery, Pomáda I Addamsova Rodina. Na Čechy se valí muzikály. Available at : https://www.tyden.cz/rubriky/kultura/divadlo/fantom-opery-pomada-i-addamsova-rodina-na-cechy-se-vali-muzikaly_318277.html

¹³ „*Fantom opery přinesl na scénu muzikálovou událost, na kterou Praha mnoho let čekala. Rozhodně diváky nezklame ohromující výpravností i hudebními kvalitami, které jeho inscenování vyžaduje.*“
Author’s translation

Novinky.cz, 2014, Úžasná hudba i podívaná diváky nadchne. Praha má konečně svého vysněného Fantoma Opery. Available at : <https://www.novinky.cz/kultura/clanek/recenze-uzasna-hudba-i-podivana-divaky-nadchne-praha-ma-konecne-sveho-vysneneho-fantoma-opery-241392>

¹⁴ *Musical.cz*, 2019, RECENZE: Do Prahy přilétla ČARODĚJKA. Očaruje české publikum stejně jako zahraniční?. Available at : <https://www.musical.cz/recenze-reportaze/do-prahy-priletla-carodejka-ocaruje-ceske-publikum-stejne-jako-zahranicni/>

inspired by the Monty Python's movie.¹⁵ In 2015 came the Czech premiere of *Anything Goes*. The musical which premiered on Broadway in 1934 allowed the musical theatre ensemble in Pilsen to produce one of the most classical musicals and according to the director Roman Meluzín "It is a very exhilarating comeback to the roots for everyone who is taking part in it."¹⁶ In 2012, *Spamalot* was followed by the Czech premiere of *Nine* and *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. (Viktora, et al., 2015 p. 251) The most recent Czech premiere production of Broadway musical in Pilsen was *Sweeney Todd* in 2018. It has become one of the most popular shows in Pilsen and both main protagonists, Stanislava Topinková Fořtová as Mrs. Lovett, and Jozef Hruškoci as Sweeney Todd, were nominated for Thálie award for those roles.¹⁷

The Městské divadlo Brno has been producing Czech premiers of Broadway musicals, which are not as well known for the Czech audience. Probably the most familiar musical for Czech audience has been *The Witches of Eastwick*, which premiered in 2007.¹⁸ Czech premiere of *Young Frankenstein*, musical written by the authors of *Producers*: Mel Brooks and Thomas Meehan, followed in 2014.¹⁹ In 2015, Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *Whistle Down the Wind* premiered in the Městské divadlo Brno, with rather positive reviews, even though the musical is almost unknown in the Czech Republic.²⁰ The most recent premiere of an American musical in Brno was supposed to be *The Grand Hotel*, which was planned on March 21, 2020. However, this premiere had to be postponed indefinitely due to the current situation with the coronavirus pandemic.²¹

¹⁵ *DJKT*, Undated, Monty Python's *Spamalot*. Available at: <https://www.djkt.eu/monty-python-s-spamalot>

¹⁶ „Pro všechny zúčastněné je velmi radostný tento návrat ke zdrojům, tzv. ke klasickému muzikálu, ...“
Author's translation

Musical cz, 2015, DĚJ SE CO DĚJ (*Anything Goes*) premiérově již tuto sobotu v Plzni. Available at: <https://www.musical.cz/zpravy/dej-se-co-dej-premierove-jiz-tuto-sobotu-v-plzni/>

¹⁷ *Plzeňský deník.cz*, 2019, Plzeň má šanci na čtyři Thálie. Available at: https://plzensky.denik.cz/kultura_region/plzen-ma-sanci-na-ctyri-thalie-20190911.html

¹⁸ *Městské divadlo Brno*, Undated, Čarodějky z Eastwicku. Available at: <https://www.mdb.cz/inscenace/71-carodejky-z-eastwicku>

¹⁹ *Musical cz*, 2013, Mladý Frankenstein v Městském divadle Brno zná své obsazení. Available at: <https://www.musical.cz/zpravy/brno/mlady-frankenstein-v-mestskem-divadle-brno-zna-sve-obsazeni/>

²⁰ *Musical cz*, 2015, RECENZE: Úžasná hudba i podívaná diváky nadchne. Praha má konečně svého vysněného Fantoma opery. Available at: <https://www.musical.cz/recenze-reportaze/piskani-po-vetru-dalsi-z-muzikalu-andrew-lloyd-webbera-si-odbyl-svou-ceskou-premieru/>

²¹ *Městské divadlo Brno*, 2020, Premiéra muzikálu Grand Hotel. Available at: <https://www.mdb.cz/aktuality/premiera-muzikalu-grand-hotel-1768?p=3>

3.2 Czech adaptations of the musical *Finian's Rainbow*

3.2.1 Broadway premiere in 1947

Finian's Rainbow is a musical written by Burton Lane, E.Y. Harburg and Fred Saidy. It premiered on Broadway in the early 1948, in the 46th Street Theatre. (Everett, et al., 2008 p. 106) One of the first mentions of the premiere of the musical can be found in the *New York Times*, in the issue published on January 5, 1947. In the "Openings of the Week" section, it stated "*Finian's Rainbow – Friday night at the Forty-sixth Street Theater. A musical comedy, with book by (...) In it are Ella Logan, Albert Sharpe, Donald Richards,...*" (*The New York Times*, 1947, p. 188) In the same issue, readers could find printed pictures from the upcoming play with the commentary "*Opening on Broadway this week is "Finian's Rainbow," a musical comedy offering fantasy, social significance and satire on American economics in approximately equal doses. The mixture results from an Irish leprechaun's visit to a mythical state called Missitucky.*" (*The New York Times*, 1947, p. 160) Another article from the issue published on the opening night outlines the plot, the main characters, and the high hopes of the 46 backers who invested into the play. (*The New York Times*, 1947, p. 17)

The musical premiered on January 10, 1947. The first review published in the *New York Times* the following day, written by Brooks Atkinson, is titled simply "The New Play". Only one day after the premiere, it was clear the musical was going to a different direction than the classical ones that people were used to on Broadway, such as *Show Boat*, *Porgy and Bess*, or other. "*Jettisoning most of the buncombe of the traditional musical show, E.Y. Harburg and Fred Saidy have written an original and humorous fantasy.(...) It puts the American musical stage several steps forward for the imagination with which it is written and for the stunning virtuosity of the performance.*" (*The New York Times*, 1947, p. 23) A couple of days later, in his article *Formula is broken*, Atkinson pointed out that "*Beggar's Holiday and Finian's Rainbow are large, noisy, lavish musicals that have somehow managed to avoid the traditional formula. They are not tailored to fit flamboyant show personalities. They have personalities of their own.*" (*The New York Times*, 1947, p. 209)

Concerning the particular performances of the actors, the review sees positively both the main female actress, Ella Logan, with "*...her pair of potent pipes, (she) is bellowing some rapturous Irish songs...*" and the male protagonist of Finian, Albert Sharpe, who was

originally Irish and so “*the producers had the good sense to import a rare Irish entertainer...*”. The main star however turned out to be the actor playing the Leprechaun Og, David Wayne. According to Atkinson, “*His best song, sung once with Miss Logan, is entitled “Something Sort of Grandish.” It and he should be inscribed in the Hall of Fame.*” (*The New York Times*, 1947, p. 23) Atkinson’s review soothsaid the future for Wayne. In the first ever Tony awards in 1947 Wayne received a Tony for the Best Featured Actor In A Musical.²²

A review with the same title was published the same day in *The New York Sun*. Written by Ward Morehouse, it coincided with the already mentioned review by Atkinson; “*The new show is a good one. It is fresh and jubilant and imaginative, and something not to miss.*” (*The New York Times*, 1947, p. 5)

Both Atkinson and Morehouse found negative moments in the musical; Atkinson remarked that “*It concludes the first act with a conventional finale calculated to split your ear drums. In the second act it gives you an eyeful of tawdry musical show enticements descended from Ziegfeld.*” (*The New York Times*, 1947, p. 23) Despite these minor flaws, the premiere of *Finian’s Rainbow* and its first run on Broadway may be considered a success. It closed after 725 performances on October 2, 1948. Following Broadway productions of *Finian’s Rainbow* opened in 1955, 1960 and the most recent one in October 2009.²³

3.2.2 Czech premiere in 1948

The Czech Republic (or rather Czechoslovakia) owes two men for the import of the musical *Finian’s Rainbow*: Jan Werich and Jiří Voskovec. Those two versatile artists gained their popularity prior to the World War II in their Osvobozené divadlo (the Liberated Theatre) where they portrayed two clowns commenting satirically on the current events and situation. Both of them emigrated in early 1939 and spent the war in America.²⁴

²² *Finian’s Rainbow* also received the 1947 Tony award for the Best Choreography, which was done by Michael Kidd, and a year later, Max Meth received a Tony for the Best Conductor and Musical Director. *Internet Broadway Database*, Undated, *Finian’s Rainbow*. Available at : <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/finians-rainbow-1507#Awards>

²³ *Internet Broadway Database*, Undated, *Finian’s Rainbow*. Available at : <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-show/finians-rainbow-3537>

²⁴ *Radio Prague International*, 2007, Voskovec and Werich: A fruitful cooperation that continued across the Atlantic. Available at : <https://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/voskovec-and-werich-a-fruitful-cooperation-that-continued-across-the-atlantic>

After their return they opened their own theatre called Divadlo V+W in 1946, following the tradition of the Osvobozené divadlo. However, the anti-fascist and satirical anti-regimes topics were no longer up to date and the duo found themselves unable to come up with a new play. That's when the idea of producing someone else's title came to life. During Voskovec's trip to America in 1947, he managed to get the rights to produce a brand-new American musical called *Finian's Rainbow*. (Bár, 2013 p. 81)

As it was discussed above, until this point, the Broadway musicals were being moved from New York to London, from one Anglophone country to another. Thus, there was no need for the issue of translation and adaptation to a culturally different audience to be treated. With the Broadway musical being moved to the Czech audience, it was necessary for it to be translated and adapted. And that was done by Voskovec and Werich as well. Given the fact that they have both lived in the United States for a period of their lives, their English was good enough to not only translate the dialogues and lyrics, but also to transfer the meaning and atmosphere of the original musical. (Bár, 2013 p. 84)

Voskovec and Werich probably realized that the original setting of the musical with Irish immigrants and leprechaun would not be understandable and, maybe more importantly, not relatable for the Czech audience. That is why they decided to make the setting "more Czech" and bring the whole story a little closer to an average Czech viewer. And it should be noted that these were relatively significant interventions. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 100) First of all, the Irish immigrants were replaced by Czech ones, Finian McLonergan became Josef Maršálek, Sharon McLonergan became Káča Maršálková. (Bár, 2016 p. 79) Possibly the most significant change is the replacement of the Leprechaun Og by a typical Czech fairytale character, a water goblin. Vodník Čochtan, unlike the Leprechaun Og, became a leading role of the Voskovec and Werich's adaptation. The reason for this was partially because Jan Werich wrote the role of Čochtan for himself and actually played the role for some time. That is also why he added several dialogues for this character and made it very personalised with a lot of improvisation in each performance. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 100) Lastly, the name of the musical was not translated literally, but it was changed to *Divotvorný hrnec*, which would be translated into English as something like "The Miraculous pot." This name has been preserved to all following productions of this musical in the Czech Republic, as well as the names of characters and setting.

Divotvorný hrnec premiered in the Divadlo V+W on March 6, 1948. Jiří Voskovec directed the whole musical, Karel Vlach conducted his orchestra, which was not very well known yet. As it was mentioned above, Jan Werich portrayed the leading role of Vodník Čochtan and he was joined by Václav Trégl as Josef Maršálek and Soňa Červená as Káča Maršálková. (Bár, 2016 p. 79)

For the Czech Republic, the year 1948 was marked undoubtedly by the February Coup d'État, when the Communist party assumed the control over the country. And so the reviews of an originally American musical were heavily influenced by the new propaganda. The critic from *Rudé právo* wrote, "*The form of this comedy is typically American and operetta-like, so the fans of this genre will get one's money worth. The old friends of the Osvobozené divadlo will be reminded, that the work of foreign authors does not let the artistic abilities of Voskovec and Werich to be fully utilized, especially in a conventional comedy. Who wouldn't wish for the old times to come back, with Werich and Voskovec writing their own plays dealing with the domestic affairs?*"²⁵ (*Rudé právo*, 1948, p. 2) The critic from the list *Obrana lidu* takes the criticism even further, saying "*Voskovec and Werich were going to dinner for too long and were left with an empty pot; the only miraculous thing in it is the dancing,*" while making a pun out of the Czech title.²⁶ (*Obrana lidu*, 1948, p. 6) Another review published in the magazine *Vlasta* added "*The American music by B. Lane is suitable for this American folk operetta, but it cannot replace Jaroslav Ježek as well as it cannot replace Voskovec, whom we would love to see on stage.*"²⁷ (*Vlasta*, 1948, p. 9)

The only positive aspect in these reviews seems to be the performance of the popular Jan Werich. The reviews were describing him as "*carrying away the viewers with his irresistible humour, his songs about kids, his jokes and his comedian sketches,*"²⁸ (*Rudé právo*, 1948, p. 2) or "*Jan Werich is irresistibly portraying the Vodník Čochtan, (...)*

²⁵ „Ovšem forma této komedie je v základě typicky americká a typicky operetní, takže především milovníci tohoto druhu her si zde přijdou na své. Staří přátelé osvobozeného divadla si zase připomínají, že vloze i hereckému stylu Voskovce a Wericha zůstávají cizí autoři hodně dlužni, zejména, když jejich práce nevybočují z rámce konvenční komedie. Kdo by si proto nepřál, aby se vrátily doby, kdy Werich s Voskovcem sami psali hry, zaměřené do našich domácích poměrů.“ Author's translation

²⁶ „W+V chodili tak dlouho na večeři, až jim zbyl prázdný hrnec; jedině divotvorným je v něm tanec.“ Author's translation

²⁷ „Americká hudba B. Lanea je vhodná pro tuto lidovou operetu ale Jaroslava Ježka nám nenahradí právě tak, jako Voskovce bychom rádi viděli na jevišti.“ Author's translation

²⁸ „Werich (...) tu strhuje hlediště dávkami svého neodolatelného humoru, svým popěvkem o dětech, svými vtipy a komickými výstupy.“ Author's translation

Since the moment he gets on stage he is proving what an excellent actor he is, the kind which is rare in our country.”²⁹ (Vlasta, 1948, p. 9)

Despite the predominantly negative reviews, *Divotvorný hrnec* became popular among the general population. The success of this musical in the Czech Republic was and still is quite a unique phenomenon, in comparison with the productions in other countries. (Bár, 2013 p. 93) This popularity may be caused by the successful adaptation of the settings and characters done by Voskovec and Werich, which caused the Czechs to “adopt” this musical as their own. Seeing *Divotvorný hrnec* as their own play, which was only inspired by the *Finian’s Rainbow*, has insured that it is now living its own life.

In July 1948, *Divotvorný hrnec* was played for the last time in the V+W theatre, as it is described in the article published in *Obrana lidu*. (*Obrana lidu*, 1948, p. 5) Jiří Voskovec decided to leave the country for good, went to work in Paris for UNESCO and then emigrated to the United States where he spent the rest of his life. (Bár, 2013 p. 94) Werich then moved with the ensemble into the newly established Divadlo Umění Lidu in Karlín, Prague, where he reopened *Divotvorný hrnec* once more. (Bár, 2016 p. 79)

The significance of the premiere of *Divotvorný hrnec* in 1948 was not only for the Czech musical theatre scene, but for the whole Europe. Voskovec and Werich’s premiere was the very first premiere of a Broadway musical in the continental Europe. However, due to the political situation previously mentioned, the Czech version of *Finian’s Rainbow* from 1948 remained for over 15 years the only American musical produced in the Czech Republic. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 99)

3.2.3 Karlín Theatre adaptation from 1991

The production, which premiered on May 2, 1991 was the third production of *Divotvorný hrnec* in the Karlín Theatre, after the premiere Karlín produced the musical in 1965 as well. (Bár, 2016 p. 299) The 1991 production was directed by Evžen Sokolovský and the main role of Vodník Čochtan was played by Josef Dvořák. He was not a part of the ensemble in Karlín but was invited to portray the role as a guest star. (Bár, 2016 p. 203) The rest of the cast were Karel Gult and Ladislav Županič playing Josef Novák, Stanislava Fořtová and Lenka Loubalová playing Káča, his daughter, and Karel Greif and Zdeněk Mahdal playing Woody Rychtařík. (Prostějovský, 2008 p. 103) The important change of

²⁹ „Jan Werich nám neodolatelně ztělesnil vodníka Čochtana, (...) Od okamžiku, kdy se objeví na scéně, dokazuje nám, jaký je znamenitý herec, jakých je u nás pomálu.“ Author’s translation

this production was the change of the name of the main protagonists; Josef and Káča Maršálkovi were renamed Josef and Káča Novákovi. (*Scéna*, 1991, p. 4)

The critics highly appreciated the cast, Josef Dvořák being the most recognized in the reviews. Josef Holý wrote *“A stellar performance? It was, on an extraordinary level, provided by Josef Dvořák playing the role of Čochtan. I do not remember Werich or Kopecký playing Čochtan, but the Čochtan played by Dvořák is from the 1991. The actor is using his broad acting, and enteratining experience (...) The audience does not know if he is playing by the script or if he is improvising.”*³⁰ (*Rudé právo*, 1991, p.4) Josef Herman noted *“He dominates the stage and does not neglect a single opportunity to elaborate on a joke, momentary idea or observation in an escalating pace, until he reaches the final furore.”*³¹ (*Scéna*, 1991, p.4) Not only Dvořák won critical acclaim for his performance. The critic from *Květy* described the performances *“Probably the most convincing is Ladislav Županič playing the role of Josef Novák. In his case, the long-time experience from Karlín is paying off in the form of a masterful and tasteful usage of voice and gestures. Stanislava Fořtová is staying true to the good traditional way while portraying Káča...”*³² (*Květy*, 1991, p. 38) The only main character with predominantly negative reviews is Woody *“I have my doubts about the third character, Woody Rychtařík played by Karel Greif. His singing abilities are disputable, but mostly I miss a little bit of the inner confidence, which would transform the mannequin into a dramatic character.”*³³ (*Scéna*, 1991, p.4)

Stage setting done by Ladislav Vychodil was described as *“giving room for the dramatic actions and charmingly completing the fairy tale atmosphere of the plot.”*³⁴ (*Květy*, 1991, p. 38) and the stage direction and choreography, the latter done by Petr Boria, are

³⁰ „A hvězdný výkon? O ten se vskutku na mimořádné úrovni postaral Josef Dvořák v roli Čochtana. Nejsem pamětník, neznám Čochtana Werichova ani Kopeckého, ale Dvořákův Čochtan je prostě z roku 1991. Herec v něm zřetelně uplatňuje své ohromně široké zkušenosti z práce herecké, kabaretiérské, ale také estrádní (...) Divák vlastně ani nepozná, kdy je Josef Dvořák ještě v roli a kdy prostě improvizuje“ Author’s translation

³¹ „Ovládá jeviště a nezanedbá jedinou příležitost, aby ve stupňovaném tempu rozváděl účinný vtíp, postřeh nebo momentální nápad až do závěrečného furore.“ Author’s translation

³² „Asi nejpřesvědčivější je Ladislav Županič v roli Josefa Nováka, v jehož případě se dlouholetá zkušenost z karlínského prostoru zúročuje v suverénním a uměřeném použití hlasových i gestických prostředků. Stanislava Fořtová ztělesňuje Káču v intencích dobré tradice,“ Author’s translation

³³ „Pochybnosti mám o třetí hlavní postavě, o Woody Rychtaříkovi Karle Greifa. Sporné jsou už jeho pěvecké kvality, ale nejvíc u něho postrádám ždíbec vnitřní přesvědčivosti, která by z reklamní figuríny udělala dramatickou postavu.“ Author’s translation

³⁴ „Scénografické řešení Ladislava Vychodila dává prostor hereckým akcím a přitom půvabně dotváří pohádkovou atmosféru děje,“ Author’s translation

dominated by a “*return to the staging tradition of this title.*”³⁵ (Scéna, 1991, p.4) However, the quality of the company and ballet are described in the reviews as the weak point of the whole musical.

3.2.4 Josef Dvořák’s Theatre Company adaptation from 1993

In 1991, the situation in the Karlín Theatre was not ideal. The theatre was facing economic problems as well as an outflow of audience and the management wanted to solve the situation by a wave of redundancies. That led to a great displeasure and indignation of the ensemble. (Bár, 2016 p. 204)

A year earlier, Josef Dvořák, who played Čochtan in Karlín in 1991, founded his own Theatre Company formed by his friends and former colleagues from the Semafor Theatre.³⁶ After the closing night of *Divotvorný hrnec* in Karlín Theatre, Dvořák decided to produce his own adaptation. In his biography *Netahej čerta za fousy* he remembers the origin of the idea of his own production of *Divotvorný hrnec* “*The same situation happened with Čochtan. I’ve been playing the role of Čochtan in the musical called Divotvorný hrnec in the Karlín Theatre. The musical was on repertoire for one season and after the closing night I did not want to part ways with it. (...) When you have your own theatre company and an ensemble, is there anything easier than taking a play and putting it on the repertoire? Well, I did that.*”³⁷ (Dvořák, et al., 2008 p. 115)

This version of the musical, which Dvořák renamed *Čochtan vypravuje*, was directed by Rudolf Fleischer and it premiered in February 1993. Dvořák kept his role of Čochtan and he was joined by several colleagues from the previous Karlín production: Karel Gult as Josef Novák and Stanislava Topinková as Káča, as well as new actors, such as Milan Duchek and Rostislav Trtík playing Woody. (Dvořák, et al., 2008 p. 115)

The musical premiered in the ABC Theatre in Prague. The place for the premiere was not chosen randomly. A short article from 1993 remarked “*It was not a coincidence that for the premiere he (Dvořák) chose a place where the very first Čochtan was born, played by Jan Werich. Dvořák, who is following Werich’s and Čochtan’s footsteps, expressed*

³⁵ „návrát k inscenační tradici tohoto titulu“ Author’s translation

³⁶ Josef Dvořák, Undated, Životopis. Available at : <http://www.josefdvorak.cz/zivotopis/>

³⁷ „Stejná situace (jako s Lucernou) nastala s Čochtanem. Hrál jsem roli Čochtana ve hře, která se jmenuje Divotvorný hrnec, v Hudebním divadle v Karlíně. Hra byla na programu jednu sezónu a když skončila, nechtělo se mi s ní rozloučit. (...) Co je snadnějšího, když máte svou divadelní společnost a svůj soubor, než hru vzít a zařadit ji do repertoáru? A tak jsem to udělal.“ Author’s translation

admiration for Werich in the playbill.”³⁸ (*Rudé právo*, 1993, p.7) Given the fact that Josef Dvořák’s Theatre Company does not have a stable home scene, *Čochtan vypravuje* is being performed in the theatre halls and community centres all around the country since 1993 up to the present.

3.2.5 JK Tyl Theatre adaptation from 1994

Divotvorný hrnec was introduced to the audience in Pilsen for the first time in 1950, shortly after its Czechoslovak premiere in 1948. It returned in 1976 for the second time and for the third time in 1994. In his review, Jiří P. Kříž wrote “...*according those who witnessed it, the third production is in a way a nostalgic throwback to the second one. Numerous actors just repeated their roles.*”³⁹ (*Český deník*, 1994, p. 12) The Pilsen adaptation was directed by Miroslav Doulík, the art director and main director of the operetta ensemble in the JK Tyl Theatre, and it premiered on July 1, 1994. (1995 p. 35) The main role of Vodník Čochtan was played by Rudolf Kutílek and František Dvořák and they were joined by Stanislava Fořtová as Káča, Karel Tišnovský as Josef Maršálek and Zdeněk Sedláček as Woody. (*Český deník*, 1994, p. 12) Unlike the Karlín Theatre, the JK Tyl Theatre preserved the original names of the main protagonists created by Voskovec and Werich – Josef Maršálek and Káča Maršálková.

In his review, Kříž used a quotation of Kutílek about his experience with playing Čochtan in the earlier adaptations: “*I was lucky to be able to play the roles of Jan Werich in the era, when we decided to put some of the plays from their Osvobozené Divadlo in the repertoire in Pilsen. Werich always found time to come and see it. I was always very nervous. But the meeting with him is unforgettable.*”⁴⁰ (*Český deník*, 1994, p. 12) The review is generally positive and speaks highly of the performance of the actors, saying “*Dvořák approached the role as a tribute to Jan Werich, which is ,however, not to the detriment of the role. (...) Stanislava Fořtová in the main female role of Kačenka beamed*

³⁸ „Nebylo náhodou, že k premiéře zvolil místo, kde spatřil světlo světa náš první Čochtan v podání Jana Wericha. Jemu také Josef Dvořák, který kráčí v jeho „čochtaních“ stopách, vyjádřil v dedikaci programu obdiv.“ Author’s translation

³⁹ „...a pamětníci tvrdí, že vlastně je jeho třetí nastudování tak trochu nostalgickým ohlédnutím za oním druhým. Mnozí herci si zkrátka role zopakovali.“ Author’s translation

⁴⁰ „Měl jsem to štěstí hrát role Jana Wericha za časů, kdy jsme se rozhodli zařadit v Plzni několik her Osvobozeného divadla. Werich si vždycky našel čas a přijel se podívat. Měl jsem vždycky obrovskou trému. Ale na setkání s ním není možné zapomenout.“ Author’s translation

with happiness and the performance of Karel Tišnovský as her father Maršálek is worth taking off one's hat."⁴¹ (Český deník, 1994, p. 12)

⁴¹ „...který postavu pojal jako hold Janu Werichovi, vůbec ne ale na škodu věci. (...) Stanislava Fořtová v hlavní ženské roli Kačenky zářila štěstím, její otec Maršálek Karel Tišnovský odvedl výkon, před kterým smekám pomyslný klobouk.“ Author's translation

3.3 Interview with Stanislava Topinková Fořtová, The comparison of Czech adaptations of *Finian's Rainbow*

Before we start talking about you starring in the musical *Divotvorný hrnec*, let's start with the original musical *Finnian's Rainbow*, do you know it? Could you compare these two?

Yes, I've seen the movie with Fred Astaire and Petula Clarke. Given the fact that I am Czech, I definitely prefer the fairy tale-like character in the Czech adaptation, which is closer to me than the leprechauns. The movie is created in a very revue-like style, I felt like the whole thing is based on Fred Astaire, his singing and dancing numbers. If I were to compare the singing of the Americans and of us, I feel like their version is very polished and revue-like, it does not feel as heartfelt as the Czech version. It is a fairy tale for the Americans. So if I were to choose between the two, I would choose the Czech version. Not only because it is fit for our nature as a fairy tale, but also because Voskovec and Werich replaced Og with a typical Czech water goblin. They also depicted a typical Czech character in Maršálek, not because he stole the gold, but because he wanted to find welfare with help of supernatural creatures instead of working hard.

***Divotvorný hrnec* owes its success on the Czech stages to the adaptation of Voskovec and Werich. I feel like many people in the Czech Republic think that it is in fact a Czech musical.**

Exactly. Many people do not know that it was the first musical, which was brought here and translated and adapted by Voskovec and Werich and they think that it is originally a Czech musical.

In the 1990s you were part of three productions of *Divotvorný hrnec* in the Czech Republic – in Karlín, in the Josef Dvořák's Theatre Company and in the JK Tyl Theatre in Pilsen. Were the creators approaching the musical differently each time?

I wouldn't say so, it is so well written, that if the director wants to keep it in the traditional way, there is not much else to do with it. The first director was Mr. Sokolovský in the Karlín Theatre. He was a nestor of directors and he was mostly directing drama, so he was very interested in the acting element, I remember we discussed it a lot. Josef Dvořák, who played the role of Čochtan, and who is an actor, feared the role quite a lot, thinking that it is a difficult singing role for him. When he talks about, it he recalls that he was

tempted by the role, because he knew that he was a water goblin type and the role was very well written, but he was scared of the singing. But he sang it excellently.

Once the one era ended in Karlín, the management changed, many solo actors left, or were forced to leave. I terminated my employment contract, because I had some sort of backdoor here in Pilsen thanks to Mr. Doutlík. And so Josef Dvořák came and asked us, if we would be willing to continue with the title with his theatre company, because it would be a shame not to, since we've already rehearsed it. So it had to be renamed with the new title *Čochtan vypravuje*, and it was based purely on Josef. The text was pruned, Josef added some of his own lines, but we kept the plot line and all the Voskovec and Werich's original gags. At the beginning we had chorus and more characters, but later on it was reduced due to financial and practical reasons, so now we only have Čochtan, Káča, Woody, Novák, Bellinda, Zuzana and Randall. We've recorded backing tracks, so we do not have to have an orchestra.

I love to recall those times and I cannot say that one production was better than the other one, all of them had their own thing and I something stuck with me from each one.

If you were to compare all the Čochtans you have encountered, is it possible to compare them?

Each one was different. If I were to compare them, the first was Rudolf Kutílek, he has a completely different type of humour, he always seemed to me as a teddy bear, then František Dvořák approached it in a rather earthy way, but they all have a very kind approach. Well and Josef Dvořák is a water goblin, he is so unique you can't compare it.

You have been playing *Čochtan vypravuje* with Josef Dvořák for almost 30 years. Would you say that the audience reacts differently today than they did 30 years ago? Because the demand is still high, most of your performances are sold out.

The demand is high, we have travelled the republic criss-cross and I think people react to it the same way. It is a fairy tale and that is a genre which everyone goes through. And this is a smart fairy tale. They sit down, it is funny, so they laugh, it is smart, and the music is wonderful, the songs get stuck in your head and you hear them as you leave the theatre. And that is the magic, when you are leaving somewhere you are supposed to feel good and maybe even sing.

In Pilsen, May 2020, translated by the author.

4 Conclusion

The terms used to describe musical theatre are often vaguely defined and so there is no exact and universal definition of the terms *musical* or *musical theatre*. Similarly, there is no universal timeline of development of Broadway musical, since most of the authors dealing with this topic consider different milestones and events to be important.

Musical theatre as a genre has been influenced by several genres and styles during its creation, such as operetta, revue, or burlesque. Musical theatre differs from these genres in that it has an intertwined and continuous plot and uses the three main elements: music, dance and spoken word. Since the first musicals in the 1920s, musical theatre has been evolving, incorporating the three main elements further. In the late 1950s and 1960s, which is considered to be the golden era of Broadway musical, the so-called classical musicals became popular. Those were then replaced by the premieres of musicals written in different genres, mostly rock music. Andrew Lloyd Webber created a new type of musicals called the megamusicals and started the tradition of big, expensive, and spectacular shows. In contrast with it, more intimate musicals, such as conceptual ones were being created as well. The current trend is to use movies or life stories of famous people write a new musical, but some of the older and well-known musicals are still being produced as well.

The first Broadway musical was introduced to the Czech Republic in 1948 and since then Broadway musical became a notable part of our culture. Some of the musicals premiered in the Czech Republic shortly after their world premiere and other musicals were introduced to our country quite a long time after their opening night on Broadway. Most of the current productions of Broadway musicals are situated in four cities : in Prague, Brno, Ostrava, and Pilsen.

Analysis of the critical reviews of the Czech premiere of *Finian's Rainbow* showed how much the reviews were affected by the political situation in the Czech Republic after February 1948, especially in comparison with the popularity of the musical among general public. Analysis of other Czech productions as well as the interview with Stanislava Topinková Fořtová suggested that the Czech adaptation of the musical *Finian's Rainbow* has become one of the most popular musicals in the Czech Republic and 70 years after its Czech premiere it is being produced the classical traditional way as it was intended by Voskovec and Werich.

5 Resumé

Bakalářská práce se zabývá tématem uvedení muzikálů z Broadwaye v České republice. Teoretická část představuje jejich vznik, postupný vývoj a také současnou broadwayskou muzikálovou scénu. V první části se práce věnuje také vymezení základních pojmů a uvádí možné rozdělení vývojových etap broadwayského muzikálu. Praktická část zkoumá uvedení broadwayských muzikálů v České republice od roku 1948 až do současnosti. Následuje analýza muzikálu *Finnian's Rainbow* a vybraných uvedení jeho české adaptace s názvem *Divotvorný hrnec*. Konkrétně se jedná o původní broadwayskou premiéru z roku 1947, českou premiéru z roku 1948, uvedení v Karlíně z roku 1991, uvedení Hereckou společností Josefa Dvořáka z roku 1992 a uvedení v Divadle Josefa Kajetána Tyla v Plzni z roku 1994. K analýze jsou použity především dobové recenze jak ze zahraničního, tak tuzemského tisku. Praktická část je na závěr doplněna o rozhovor s herečkou Stanislavou Topinkovou Fořtovou, ve kterém na základě osobní zkušenosti porovnává tři uvedení *Divotvorného hrnce* z devadesátých let.

The bachelor's thesis deals with the adaptation of Broadway musicals in the Czech Republic. The theoretical part presents their origins, development, and the current situation of the Broadway musical theatre scene. In the first part the thesis also covers the topic of definition of key terms and it introduces different possibilities of division of the development. The practical part studies the Czech productions of Broadway musicals since 1948 to the present. It also analyses the musical *Finnian's Rainbow* and selected Czech productions of its Czech adaptation called *Divotvorný hrnec*. These are the productions from Broadway in 1947, the Czech premiere from 1948, the Karlín Theatre adaptation from 1991, the Josef Dvořák's Theatre Company adaptation from 1993 and the JK Tyl Theatre adaptation from 1994. To analyse these productions, historical critical reviews are used from both foreign and domestic newspapers. In the end, the practical part is complemented by an interview with the actress Stanislava Topinková Fořtová, which is used to compare the three productions of the musical *Divotvorný hrnec* from the 1990s based on her personal experience.

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