

THE BOX OFFICE EFFECTS OF CASTING CELEBRITIES
AS REPLACEMENT ACTORS ON BROADWAY

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Television, Radio, Film, Theatre
San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

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May 2009

ABSTRACT

THE BOX OFFICE EFFECTS OF CASTING CELEBRITIES AS REPLACEMENT ACTORS ON BROADWAY

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This thesis addresses the commercialization of Broadway theater through the casting of celebrities from another medium. The celebrities are brought in as replacement actors for trained theatrical performers with the intention of extending a production's longevity. Twelve Broadway musicals that have opened since 1994 are examined through a series of case studies to determine the effectiveness of this casting technique through analysis of box office gross proceeds, theater capacity, and overall ranking of theater capacity compared to weekly competition. Case studies include *Grease*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, *Rent*, *Chicago*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Cabaret*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Aida*, *Hairspray*, *Monty Python's Spamalot*, and *The Color Purple*. The research explains why this trend is financially successful and the potential benefits for producers, actors and theater professionals.

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