

Naomi Graber and Lindsey Mantoan

Editors of *Studies in
Musical Theatre*

Q
&
A



Naomi Graber is associate professor of music at the University of Georgia. Her research interests focus on twentieth-century American music, especially Broadway and film of the 1930s and 1940s.

Lindsey Mantoan is the Ronni Lacroute Chair in Theatre Arts and an associate professor of theatre and resident dramaturg at Linfield University. As a scholar-artist, Lindsey teaches courses on musical theatre, theatre history, queer theory, contemporary American drama and political and protest performance. She also directs musicals, plays and readings and is an intimacy director.

Congratulations on your appointment as editors of *Studies in Musical Theatre*. What attracted you to the role and what excites you most about this new chapter for the journal?

NG: Thank you! I love editing and mentoring, so taking on a journal editorship seemed like a good fit. I'm acutely aware of how much I've benefitted from good mentors and editors and I hope can pay it forward. The potential to shape the field is also appealing to me. As for what excites me, musical theatre studies is a relatively young field, which makes everything exciting! Beyond seeing the newest cutting-edge scholarship, I'm excited about finding new formats to communicate those ideas, whether written, audio or visual.

LM: I second so much of what Naomi says! I also view editing as a way to create a platform for underrepresented voices and new ideas. I'm honoured to be in this role working with Naomi and eager to see how this young discipline evolves

Could you each tell us a little about your academic backgrounds and how your research journeys led you to musical theatre studies?

LM: I came to musical theatre through the pit. I play double bass/bass guitar, and in college I was constantly being asked to play in orchestras for musicals. I ended up conducting, then stage managing, then doing a bit of this and that – and ultimately directing. But my early research as an academic was on the intersections of war and performance. It took a while for me to realize that I could research this form of theatre that I loved to practice.

NG: I've always loved musical theatre, but until recently it was not something that serious musicologists studied. I was very lucky. I entered my Ph.D. programme intending to study Mozart, but my prospective adviser had recently published a book on *Oklahoma!* As soon as I realized I could be a Broadway scholar, I knew I had found my niche. A field trip to the Library of Congress and an early encounter with the Bob Fosse collection sealed the deal.

As you take on the editorship, what are your priorities for the journal over the next few years?

NG: Our predecessors made this journal a home for a truly international group of scholars and we hope to continue that. We'd also like to shine a light on the ways musical theatre has been a haven and a mouthpiece for communities that are under political and cultural attack. We want to amplify marginalized voices and provide a forum for explorations of care and resistance amid the frightening realities too many of us are facing.

How do you see the field of musical theatre studies evolving and how can the journal help shape those conversations?

LM: Musical theatre will inevitably continue to grapple with the influences of technology on both the art and scholarship. We are also curious about the global roots and routes of musical theatre storytelling practices and this artform as a site of cultural exchange. And as the field turns its attention forward to emerging technologies, we also anticipate it will continue to delve into its deep historic roots and trouble the origin stories we've inherited.

Are there any emerging areas of research, methodologies or critical approaches that you are particularly keen to encourage through the journal?

NG: We always love seeing interdisciplinary work and we want to encourage scholars, scholar-practitioners and practitioners to submit. Anything that encourages dialogue between different stakeholders in the musical theatre community is especially welcome in the journal. If that work can address how musical theatre communities have engaged with ideas of power, identity, belonging or resistance, so much the better.

What do you see as some of the most exciting developments currently taking place in musical theatre scholarship?

NG: I'm especially enthusiastic about the work being done on musical theatre beyond Broadway and the West End, whether that's outside the Anglophone world, in amateur communities in our own backyards or in virtual spaces.

In what ways has musical theatre studies changed since you first entered the field?

LM: When I first waded into musical theatre scholarship, the majority focused on musical theatre practitioners, with monographs dedicated to single artists. The pioneers of the field – Raymond Knapp, Stacy Wolf – investigated the ways musical theatre represented identity and challenged the dominant histories of the industry. Now we have subfields – juke box musicals, the 'Golden Age', the megamusical, rock musicals. Scholars investigate the roles nostalgia, capitalism and digital technologies play in the narratives we tell on musical theatre stages and how we tell them. It's a very exciting time for the field!

Musical theatre is increasingly being studied through lenses such as race, gender, disability, queerness and transnationalism. How do you see these perspectives shaping the future of the discipline?

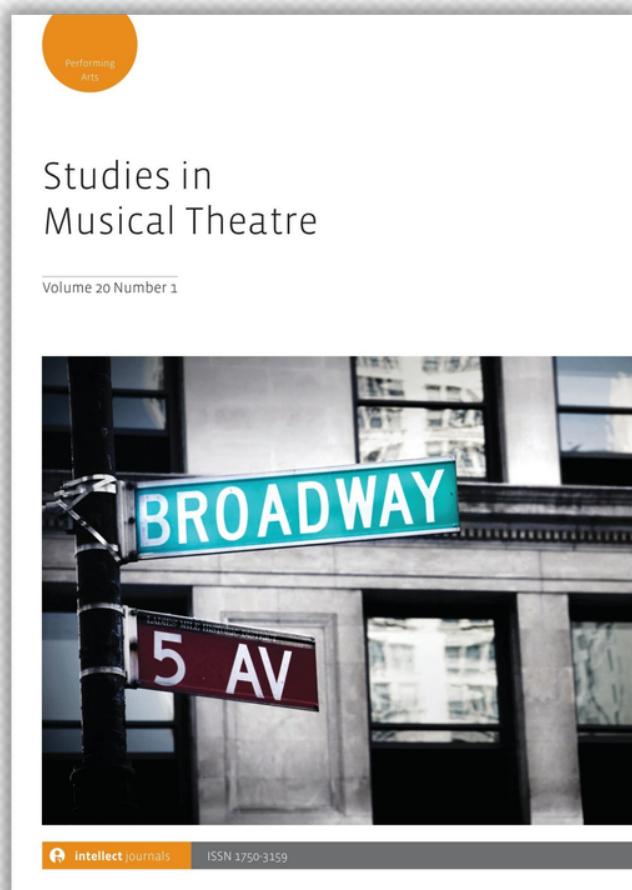
NG: A lot of early work explored these issues from a contemporary perspective, and that has shaped the field since. My personal hope is that we can train those lenses onto the past and explore how historical communities navigated the vicissitudes of identity and community through musical theatre. However, I am by nature an historian and the field is much larger than that. Right now, there is a lot of exciting work exploring how these facets of humanity interact. The field is becoming increasingly intersectional and for the better. We're also seeing work adding new facets of identity into the frame: age, body type, regional affiliation, etc.

What advice would you give to early career researchers looking to publish their work in *Studies in Musical Theatre*?

LM: It's always a good idea to get feedback from a writing group or colleagues in the field before submitting to an academic journal. Make sure you're clear on your argument and what your work is contributing to the field. And, per our publisher's policy, avoid reliance on AI; we want to hear your voice.

How do you hope the journal will support emerging voices and foster a diverse and inclusive scholarly community?

LM: We've developed a mentorship programme that we are optimistic will bring diverse new voices to the discipline. And the 2026 Song, Stage and Screen conference had a global reach that we hope this journal parallels. We're eager to see how next year's conference in Australia develops and to search for continuing connections between the journal and the annual gathering. And, as Naomi says above, we're eager to explore a range of formats for creating dialogue and debate in the field.



Studies in Musical Theatre

Edited by
Naomi Graber
University of Georgia

Lindsey Mantoan
Lindfield University