

KINO LORBER

Presents



ON BROADWAY

A Film by Oren Jacoby

****Official Selection, DOC NYC****

**** Official Selection, Hamptons International Film Festival****

U.S. | 2019 | 85 mins. | Color | English

Distributor Contact: Clemence Taillandier, clemence@kinolorber.com

Publicity Contacts:

Sophie Gluck, sophie@gluckpr.com

Aimee Morris, aimeemorris1@icloud.com

Kino Lorber, Inc., 333 West 39 St. Suite 503, New York, 10018, (212) 629-6880

LOGLINE

As theatergoers prepare for the return of Broadway after an unprecedented absence of 18 months, an all-star cast tells the inside story of the last time Broadway came back from the brink. *On Broadway* shows how this revival helped save New York City, thanks to innovative work, a new attention to inclusion, and the sometimes uneasy balance between art and commerce.

SYNOPSIS

As theatergoers prepare for the return of Broadway after an unprecedented absence of 18 months, an all-star cast tells the inside story of the last time Broadway theater came back from the brink. *On Broadway* shows how this revival helped save New York City, thanks to innovative work, a new attention to inclusion, and the sometimes uneasy balance between art and commerce. Brand new interviews with legends of the stage and screen, including Hugh Jackman, Helen Mirren, Christine Baranski, August Wilson, James Corden, Alec Baldwin, John Lithgow, Viola Davis, and Ian McKellen take us behind the scenes of Broadway's most groundbreaking and beloved shows, from *A Chorus Line* to *Hamilton*. Archival clips of iconic performances by Lin Manuel Miranda, Patti Lupone, Bernadette Peters, James Earl Jones and Mandy Patinkin punctuate this hurly-burly ride through the main street of American show business. Now that New York City is facing an uncertain path forward in its recovery from a devastating pandemic, this documentary from Academy Award®-nominated director Oren Jacoby and the producers of *RBG* shows how Broadway led the way in the city's last great rebirth and provides a model of how it can come back again.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When we were interviewing Helen Mirren for ON BROADWAY, she suddenly questioned the very idea of people sitting together in a dark room to watch a story being told. "It's ridiculous, when you think about it. I mean...what a weird thing to do." Somehow, after months and months without live performances of any kind, the idea doesn't seem all that weird. A life-long New Yorker, I'm one of the weirdos who have been mesmerized over the years by actors like Mirren baring their souls on a Broadway stage and helping to make Times Square one of the most popular destinations in the world. All of that suddenly came to a halt on March 13, 2020, when Broadway, like the rest of the world, was forced to shut down by the pandemic. For eighteen months, all 41 Broadway theaters have been dark and life in NYC has, in many ways, been "on hold". Every year, for decades, millions of people traveled thousands of miles and spent billions of dollars to come to one tiny neighborhood along a street called Broadway, just to sit in the dark and watch a show. Last year, suddenly, that flow of people, the lifeblood of every great city, just stopped.

Now that Broadway is poised to return, our documentary tells the story of its survival over the past 50 years. Back in the 1970s, when I was growing up in Manhattan, there was another moment when this whole thing almost came to an end. Broadway was on the verge of bankruptcy; there was talk of tearing down all the theaters and replacing them with parking lots. The plays seemed old fashioned, the Broadway audience had declined more than 50% in 5 years, most theaters were sitting dark, so theater owners couldn't pay their bills, and the neighborhood was so scary that the police department was warning people to stay away after sundown. As a lifelong New Yorker, I was drawn to the surprising story of how an industry and an art form on the verge of extinction, not only avoided collapse, but managed to reinvent itself and come back stronger, in astonishing ways. Today, after an even more devastating crisis, I realize that the story of that comeback can show us all a way forward.

Making ON BROADWAY, I was given an extraordinary chance to meet and interview actors, directors, producers and playwrights who are the heart and soul of the American Theater. They tell the inside story of the remarkable changes that they helped initiate or witnessed over the past 50 years – a transformation that turned Broadway around. They track the breakthrough works and the artists who have made Broadway into a venue where you can find everything from the experimental and iconoclastic to the mainstream and commercial. More important, they tell how from the 70s onward Broadway started to more accurately reflect the diverse, complicated society in which we actually live.

Despite the fact that it is constantly changing, Broadway somehow continues to attract the most passionately loyal and devoted fans in the world. As Ian McKellen says, trying

to describe the force of Broadway pulling us all in... “Come on, come in, come here...
I’m going to give myself to you and you’re going to come and love me...”

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Oren Jacoby (Director / Producer)

Oren Jacoby is an Oscar-nominated documentary filmmaker. *Sister Rose's Passion* (HBO Films) was winner of Best Documentary Short at the Tribeca Film Festival and nominated for an Oscar. Other films include: *Shadowman* (Amazon Prime, Tribeca Film Festival), *My Italian Secret* (Amazon Prime), and *Constantine's Sword* "*Enthralling*" – *NY Times*, "*Magnificent*" - *Variety*. Jacoby's stage adaptation of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* was produced at Chicago's Court Theater, The Huntington Theatre in Boston and won the Joseph Jefferson Award for Best New Play adaptation. His company, Storyville Films, produced *RBG* (Sundance Film Festival 2018, Oscar nomination Best Documentary 2019). Jacoby's work has been recognized by the American Film Institute, the Sundance Institute, and the Alfred I. DuPont Awards.

Patricia Schoenfeld (Executive Producer)

Patricia Schoenfeld was born and raised in New York City and has had a long and varied career in the visual and performing arts. Despite being an accomplished ceramic artist and founding staff member of the International Center of Photography, Pat Schoenfeld has no official bio covering her long association with Broadway or with her husband, Jerry, the chief impresario and chairman of the Shubert Organization for almost 40 years. At age 92, Pat likes to say, she's "the only one still alive that's been around long enough, who experienced [Broadway's history] all first hand... *and* remembers it." Pat has maintained warm relations with dozens of people from her "life in the theater," from ushers and security guards at the Shubert theaters, to directors, playwrights and producers, to some of Broadway's most revered stars. Since her husband's death in 2008, Pat Schoenfeld has been on a mission to tell the world how close Broadway almost came to going out of business and how much its survival has meant to the recovery and the ongoing vibrancy of New York City. Her quest started a dozen years ago with her husband's memoir "Mr. Broadway," and has now manifested in this documentary.

ON BROADWAY TIMELINE

Pre-1970

1940s-50s: Golden Age of Broadway

Iconic plays and musicals turned into Hollywood films

1968-72: Broadway attendance hits an all-time low

New York heading towards bankruptcy

1970s

Early 70s: Theatre district goes dark

Times Square becomes dangerous "rat-hole"

Brothels, strip clubs, 5-6 reported crimes a day, 6pm curfew

1970: *Company* marks the first collaboration between composer-lyricist Stephen Sondheim and producer Harold Prince

1970s: Broadway dominated by three powerhouse theatre owners: The Shubert Organization, The Nederlander Organization, Jujamcyn

1972: Gerald Schoenfeld and Bernard B. Jacobs take over the Shubert Organization

Shubert invests in *Pippin* (1972) and *Chicago* (1975); Nederlander invests in *Annie* (1976). The Public Theatre produces *A Chorus Line* (1975) before it moves to Broadway.

Rise of Stephen Sondheim and choreographer-directors Bob Fosse and Michael Bennett's Broadway stardom

Non-for-profit theatres became a breeding ground for innovative works

1977: Broadway starts to make its return

I "LOVE" NY Campaign begins - Broadway is used to advertise New York

"Clean Up Times Square" initiative receives support from the Shubert Organization

Illegal establishments on Times Square are shut down

1979: "British invasion" - Big British performers, plays and musicals are introduced, raising Broadway's profile and prices

1980s

Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Evita* (1979) and *Cats* (1982) mark new beginning of theatre as a leader of world popular culture

1981: AIDS epidemic devastate the theatre community

Death of Bob Fosse and Michael Bennett

1982: 42nd Street Development Plan initiated

Morosco and Helen Hayes Theatres are demolished to build Marriott Marquis Hotel

Broadway becomes priced out of existence

Les Misérables (1987), *Phantom of the Opera* (1988), *Miss Saigon* (1991) mark the age of "spectacular" performance

1990s

The rise of great American plays - an emphasis on plays with immediacy that discuss the sociopolitical issues of the current times

August Wilson's collection of 8 plays introduces the Black audience into Broadway

Angels in America (1993) was created as a response to the AIDS epidemic

1994: Broadway in the "here and now"

Rent (1996) brings the young generation into Broadway

1994-6: Broadway Theatres are restored by the 42nd Street Development Project

*The Disney Company made its way to Broadway in 1994 and committed to renting a restored New Amsterdam Theatre on 42nd Street. *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) and *The Lion King* (1997) bring families to Broadway.*

2000s

Broadway begins to attract commercial corporations

The rise of the "jukebox" musicals - Musicals supported by IPs and big stars
Mamma Mia! (2001), *Jersey Boys* (2005), *Shrek* (2008), *The Book of Mormon* (2011), *Spiderman* (2011), *Motown* (2019)

2015: *Hamilton* premieres at The Public Theatre before moving to Broadway

Rise in the call for diversity on Broadway

2018: *Harry Potter* becomes the highest grossing Broadway play to open in its first week.

CREDITS

Pat Schoenfeld and
Metropole Film Board Inc. present a Storyville Films production

an Oren Jacoby film

Director / Producer

Oren Jacoby

featuring *The Nap* by Richard Bean stage production directed by Daniel Sullivan

Executive Producer

Pat Schoenfeld

Executive Producers

No Guarantees Theatricals

Stephanie P. McClelland

John Breglio

Betsy West

BarbaraH. Freitag

Riki Kane-Larimer

Producer

Holly Siegel

Co-Producers

Sam Jinishian

Harlene Freezer

Editors

Ted Raviv

Abhay Sofsky

Steven Wechsler

Directors of Photography

Bob Richman

Buddy Squires, ASC

Tom Hurwitz, ASC

Original Music

Joel Goodman

Featuring

Manny Azenberg
Alec Baldwin
Christine Baranski
Sidney Baumgarten
Richard Bean
Alexandra Billings
John Breglio
Cora Cahan
James Corden
Nancy Coyne
Michael Eisner
Oskar Eustis
Gianni Felidi

Robert Fox
Sonia Friedman
Jeremy Gerard
David Henry Hwang
Nicholas Hytner
Hugh Jackman
Natasha Katz
Rocco Landesman
John Lithgow
Cameron Mackintosh
Elizabeth McCann
Sir Ian McKellen
Lynne Meadow

Helen Mirren
Nelle Nugent
Jack O'Brien
Michael Paulson
Albert Poland
Harold Prince
Michael Riedel
Rebecca Robertson
Jeffrey Seller
Daniel Sullivan
Tommy Tune
Carl Weisbrod
August Wilson
George C. Wolfe

Graphics by

Kook Ewo
Ronan Guitton
Yu Hu
Laura Nespola
Cheryn Park
Scott Alexander Ruderman
Timothy Trotman

Archival Consultant

Prudence Arndt

Associate Producer

Hugo Lau Erica Rose

Researcher

Fengmei Li

Additional Editor

Claire Ave'Lallemant

Assistant Editors

Jen Ackerman
Brady Darragh
Aaron Brummer
Ian Dwy

Additional Cinematography

Blake Hottle
Colin Rogal, Don Lenzer

Assistant Camera

Jared Ames
Keith Barefoot
M'Wasi T. Berkley
Quin Jessop
Olivia Kimmel
Michael Martin
Corey Lopez Thomas
Alon Mor

Mattheau O'Brien
Scott Osterman
Andrew Pisaturo
Mike Puckett
Jenny Rogal

Picture finishing by Goldcrest Post NY

Sound Recordists

Roger Phenix Mark Roy
Eddie O'Connor
Peter Miller
David Calvert

Gaffer

Jordan Elvie
John B. Foster
Ned Hallick
Elias Morales
Mattheau O'Brien
Lee Walker

Still Photographer

Hank O'Neal

Production Accountant

Brooke Bassin

Additional Research

Madison Hartke-Weber
Qi Wu

Production Assistants

Hunter Anderson
Russ Chave
Teegan Curitz
Caitlin Ferrell
Brandon Lang
Andrew DeWitt

Music Supervisor

Ian Herbert

Post Production Assistant

Arielle Swedback

Hair/Make-Up

Rakhil Shamailova
Tracey Mattingly

Transcription

Natalie Abruzzo
CLK Transcription, Inc

Legal Counsel

George H. Cohen
Karen Shatzkin, Shatzkin & Mayer, P.C.
Law Offices of Innes Smolansky

Distribution Services by

Cinetic Media

DI Colorist

Ken Sirulnick, CSI

DI Assist

Jordan Thompson-DeSon

Sound Design

Margaret Crimmins

Sound Re-Recording Mixer

Greg Smith

Additional Music

David Bramfitt, Benjamin Krause & Irene
Garc

Music Production Manager

Featuring The Manhattan Theatre Club production of *The Nap*
Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director Barry Grove, Executive Producer

Cast

Alexandra Billings
John EllisonConlee
Johanna Day
Ahmed Aly Elsayed
Ethan Hova
Heather Lind

Max Gordon Moore
Bhavesh Patel
Thomas Jay Ryan
Ben Schnetzer
John Wojd

Creative Team

Richard Bean, Playwright
Daniel Sullivan, Director
David Rockwell, Scenic Design
Kaye Voyce, Costume Design
Justin Townsend, Lighting Design
Lindsay Jones, Music / Sound Design
Anne Ford-Coates, Hair / Makeup
Design

Florie Seery, General Manager
Stephen Kaus, Associate Artistic
Producer
Kevin Bertolacci, Production Stage
Manager
Janet Takami, Stage Manager
Company Manager: Robert Carroll MTC
Director of Production: Joshua Helman

MTC Filming made possible with the support of: Actors' Equity Association /
SAG/AFTRA SDC , LocalOne IATSE, Theatrical Wardrobe Union IATSE Local 764
United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829, IATSE, IATSE LOCAL 798

KINO LORBER

With a library of over 4,000 titles, Kino Lorber Inc. has been a leader in independent art house distribution for 35 years, releasing 30 films per year theatrically under its Kino Lorber, Kino Repertory and Alive Mind Cinema banners, garnering seven Academy Award® nominations in nine years. In addition, the company brings over 350 titles yearly to the home entertainment and educational markets through physical and digital media releases. With an expanding family of distributed labels, Kino Lorber handles releases in ancillary media for Zeitgeist Films, Cohen Media Group, Greenwich Entertainment, Artsploitation, Palisades Tartan, Menemsha Films, Raro Video, and others, placing physical titles through all wholesale, retail, and direct to consumer channels, as well as direct digital distribution through over 40 OTT services including all major TVOD and

SVOD platforms. In 2019, the company launched its new art house digital channel Kino Now which features over 1000 titles from the acclaimed Kino Lorber library. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kino Marquee initiative was launched in 2020 pioneering "virtual theatrical" releases of art house films with revenue shares that allows audiences to support almost 400 local independent theaters.