Hello, Dolly Encyclopedia Article

Hello, Dolly

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Hello, Dolly

Hello, Dolly! occupies an enduring place in popular American culture. Not only has it become one of the most popular Broadway musicals since its opening in 1964, but it is a musical adaptation of playwright Thornton Wilder's *The Matchmaker.* The original production furnished Carol Channing with one of her trademark roles as turn-of-the-century New York widowed matchmaker and "fixer" for all occasions, Dolly Gallagher Levi. Dolly's second-act entrance at the Harmonia Gardens Restaurant, where she sings the title song as she descends a red-carpeted staircase into the company of her admirers for a show-stopping production number, has become one of the classic scenes of the musical theater.

With music and lyrics by Jerry Herman, book by Michael Stewart, and choreography and direction by Gower Champion, *Hello, Dolly!* played 2,844 performances in its initial New York run. The show won a myriad Tony Awards, including best musical, book, score, actress (Channing), and director-choreographer. Channing's co-stars in the original cast included David Burns, Eileen Brennan, and Charles Nelson Reilly. The 1969 film version, which Herman considers definitive, starred Barbra Streisand and Walter Matthau, was directed by Gene Kelly, and marked the last of the big Hollywood musicals. It is oft-revived all over the world and on Broadway.

Further Reading:

Hirshberg, Jack. *Hello, Dolly! Journal.* Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation, 1969.

Suskin, Steven. *Opening Night on Broadway: A Critical Quotebook of the Golden Era of the Musical Theatre, Oklahoma! (1943) to Fiddler on the Roof (1964).* New York, Schirmer Books, 1990.