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American Musical Theatre

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**Common Knowledge Pre-Annotated Bibliography: America Becoming Great**

**High court backs women's jury rights, January 22, 1975**

In the case of Taylor vs. Louisiana it was argued whether woman should be disallowed to serve as members of the jury during trials in the United States. This was really an argument of women’s worth in America a how they contributed to society. The court ruled against the exclusion of women in juries mainly because of the ability to make the courts less bias, their economic contribution to society, and the fact that this should be a natural right to all citizens. This case was extremely important because it tested on what its true beliefs were. It was an 8-1 court decision. This text is very important for the musical ‘A chorus Line’ because both males and females were fighting for these spots. However, there happened to be more women than men in the final running’s. This case helps to prove that overall women are very important in our society and they should never be looked upon as inferior to men. They are talented, and gifted in the arts, providers, nurturers, and caregivers so their significance in society will always remain.

**DOWN AND OUT IN AMERICA: In anger and sadness, people in Buffalo tell the story of unemployment, February 9, 1975**

This very common story in an America. These people were totally sick of the unemployment rate in America, they needed jobs to support their families. This article was about different people in different situations. It hosted people of all ages struggling to keep and find their jobs. This really hits home with ‘A Chorus Line’ because hundreds of people were auditioning for only eight spots on the show. Like the grind of finding a job in America we are auditioning with our resumes and many times we do not receive the job of our choice because they don’t necessarily fit the requirements.

**Broadway Comes to Life with Opening of Musicals: Broadway Comes to Life with Reopening of Musicals**

This article is very important because it covers many events of this year. Broadway musicians had gone on strike for the lack of finances coming in. So, in their return, Broadway went back to the spotlight and flourished. This also speaks the time of employment in 1975, people struggled with joblessness and if they did have a job lot of times they needed better pay to support their families and being that musicals are an everyday job, so they went on strike for a correct purpose.

**'Lovers,' a New Homosexual Musical, January 28, 1975**

On January 27, 1975 a new musical premiered called ‘Lovers.’ This was somewhat of a breakthrough for the gay community. For years they had been doing musicals, dancing for different shows, sand spreading their talents, but they had always had to keep their lifestyle secret. This show granted them the opportunity to watch something similar to their love life, something very different from the average romantic musical. This show entailed a love story about homosexuals that showed that anyone had the right to live that lifestyle. The subtitle of the musical was “The musical hit that proves it’s NO LONGER SAD TO BE GAY.” The show was a liberation for the gays. As we seen in a ‘Chorus Line,’ the women talked about how the ballet was their salvation and sanctuary, a place where nothing else mattered. In addition, homosexuals had ballet, dance, and music, but with the arrival of this musical it was like the theatre world had finally come to recognize their way of living. Whether people believed if it was correct or incorrect the group that would probably be known now as the LGBT had a musical about them. This pertains to ‘A Chorus Line’ because it is about liberation and during the musical the 17 dancers had to have felt freedom to share their life stories and lay it all down for the part.

**Song Analysis: ‘I Hope I Get It’**

The song was truly relatable to those who are in the theatre because they were auditioning with more than a hundred people for the same spot. At this point you must find a way to stand out from the others. However, this also speaks to the unemployment rate in America and how people were so desperately looking for a job, and not just any job, they were seeking to find their dream job. The unemployment rate had grown from 9% to 12% during 1975. These young men and women wanted to find a job of their choice that they could finally establish the career of their dreams. This is a very important song because it corroborates the common theme of America in 1975. People didn’t just want jobs they needed them. Husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, son and daughters needed to support their family, but at the same time do something that they enjoy. This song is all about the struggle for everyone to receive a spot on this show. These are talented dancers, singers, actors/actresses who all are beginning to doubt themselves and are not necessarily confident that they will attain the job. They sing ‘I hope I get, I hope I get it, how many people does he need? How many boys, how many girls?” The song was about the lack of confidence they had in themselves, however it also showed that for all these people dancing was their passion.

**Blacks Gain on Broadway; Lag in 2 Other Arts, June 6, 1975**

This is another essential article because it speaks on African American contribution to the musical world. African Americans didn’t have many opportunities in the theatre because in American culture romance was white romance, action heroes were white, protagonist or antagonist of most theatrical shows were white. So, having African Americans come to stage was eccentric and different. What the article shows is that having black actors and actresses attracted more of a black audience which helped the theatre even though sometimes promoters will not admit it. The article shares stories about how black dancers have struggled and how people have told them that they had to be better than the rest just to get a part. It was ultimately a tragedy because in most cases, even when they were more talented then everyone else in the cast they couldn’t be the stars. Similar, to people like Nat King Cole and Sammy Davis Jr. who couldn’t just be a good singer or a good musician. Sammy Davis was a great dancer, great singer, great musician, great comedian, and that is why he became a star. Nat King Cole was a phenomenal singer, had excellent stage presence and was an outstanding musician and that brought him to stardom. This very important to ‘A Chorus Line’ because there was that one black dancer who had to make it clear to everyone that he was there, and he could do it.

**Context**

‘A Chorus Line’ was choreographed by Michael Bennet who, at the time, was at the peak of his career in theatre. Similar in popularity Marvin Hamlisch was also at the peek of his career and won a Grammy that year. With Bennet’s choreography and Hamlisch music the musical came to life and conveyed the main idea of ‘A Chorus Line’ which was, know yourself and appreciate your journey so that you can reach your destination and appreciate the process. Every dancer had a different story whether it was a positive one or negative, but because of that story they were chosen to be the dancer of the chorus Line.

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