



## Smithsonian Institution

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

### Playbill for Ma Rainey's Black Bottom on Broadway

Extracted on Dec-05-2021 10:03:26

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[[image: theater seat]]  
on the aisle  
with Harry Haun

### The Big Broadway Musical is Back in Business

During a four-day span in December, at three different theatres, \$25 million worth of musical spectacle was thrown on Broadway. It seems to be sticking.

[[image - color photograph, Baz Luhrmann and Catherine Martin revel in the La Boheme opening-night excitement, photo by Aubrey Reuben]]

The man of La Boheme is very much the man of the moment: BAZ LUHRMANN's brash bid to bring opera down from its pedestal--to make it Broadway-accessible to the young and restless--would seem to have worked if you'd tallied up the \$1 million raked in the day after its opening; and [[end column 1 this page]]

[[begin column 2 this page]] Luhrmann's gorgeously kinky TV ad (all black and white, save for the bordello-red signature logo) should entice a few more impressionable customers. To that end, the Broadway Theatre, where Miss Saigon held court for so many years, is perfect Puccini placement for La Boheme. Its \$6.5 million tab has been wrung dry on the sets and costumes of Mrs. Luhrmann (CATHERINE MARTIN, who took home what Oscars there were for Moulin Rouge). I asked her where she found such fat snowflakes; "I had them custom-made in New York, and they are a little too big." And that atmospheric movie poster is from the European rendering of The Wild One, with BRANDO in a stock glossy pose rather than motorcycle garb (boy! did Europe miss the boat on that one!)

[[image - color photograph, Katie Couric waves to fans outside the Broadway Theatre on La Boheme's first night, photo by Aubrey Reuben]]

[[image - color photograph, Man of La Mancha's opening-night curtain with Ernie Sabella, composer Mitch Leigh, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio and Brian Stokes Mitchell, photo by Aubrey Reuben]]

The [\$6.5 million] Man of La Mancha likewise works the set and costumes pretty heavily in its fifth Broadway appearance, with BRIAN STOKES MITCHELL, MARY ELIZABETH MASTRANTONIO, ERNIE SABELLA, MARK JACOBY and STEPHEN BOGARDUS heading the hard-working, high-altitude, apparently vertigo-free cast.

Finally, MICHAEL CRAWFORD was also back among us (briefly) in a ghost of Phantom past called Dance of the Vampires. The recently departed musical had announced a budget of \$12 million (rumored by ink-stained wretches to have been closer to \$15 million, making it the most expensive show in Broadway history (It looked it.)

4

[[end page]]  
[[start page]]



[[advertisement]]  
[[images - star shape with montage of photos; tote bag and backpack]]

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THE PERFECT GIFT  
WE HAVE A FREE\* GIFT FOR YOU!

Floor after floor of perfect gifts for your Valentine, from dazzling jewelry to sizzling fashion to decadent chocolates and lots more! Plus, bring this ad along with your current receipt for any Macy's Herald Square purchase of \$50 or more to the Visitor Center on the 34th Street Balcony and receive a free\* Macy's signature tote bag or backpack!

[[image - photograph of tote bag and backpack]]

\*Receipt must be within 5 days. Limit one bag per person. While supplies last.

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HERALD SQUARE  
[[/advertisement]]

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