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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Playbill for Dreamgirls

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[[advertisement]]

[[image: colour photograph of a rectangular bottle with a half-oval stopper filled with amber liquid, presumably perfume. It sits in front of a multi-coloured curtain or blanket]]

Do something colorful.

Parfum
Eau de Toilette
Milan
Paris
New York

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AT THIS THEATRE

[[image: line drawing of the marquis and front façade of "THE IMPERIAL" theatre, "STAN STARK" artist]]

THE IMPERIAL

The Imperial Theatre has been one of the most continuously successful theatres on Broadway since its opening in 1923. Starting in 1924, Rose Marie ran for 557 performances and involved Rudolf Friml and the North West Mounted Police. Sigmund Romberg turned out The New Moon]] in 1928, featuring the song "Lover Come Back to Me." Sweetheart Time and Oh, Kay!, the Gershwin hit featuring Gertrude Lawrence, were followed by Sunny Days with Jeannette MacDonald.

In 1930, the Imperial gave New Yorkers a revival of Victor Herbert's Babes in Toyland. Next came Ed Wynn starring in The Laugh Parade. Flying colors was another musical, starring Clifton Webb and Patsy Kelly. The 1934 season was devoted to Milton Berle and Bob Hope. In October of 1935, Jubilee opened. Written by Moss Hart, this successful production had music by Cole Porter, including "Begin the Beguine." You had to be On Your Toes to follow that one. The popular Rodgers and Hart musical featured a dance called "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue." Next Leslie Howard starred in Hamlet.

Mary Martin warbled, "My Heart Belongs to Daddy" in Leave it to Me and a star was born and Ethel Merman scored in Annie Get Your Gun in 1946.

Among the musicals of the 50's were Jamaica, with Lena Horne, Destry Ride Again and Ethel Merman in Call Me Madam. Carnival (1961) starred Anna Maria Alberghetti and Jerry Orbach. Lionel Bart's Oliver, continued the pace.

On September 22, 1964, the Imperial's curtain went up on Fiddler on the Roof, which became one of the world's favorite musicals and ran 3242 performances.

In November 1968 the Kander & Ebb musical Zorba opened with the



indomitable Greek played by Herschel Bernardi. The next production did not involve music--John Osborne's *A Patriot for Me*, starring Maximilian Schell, was a straight drama. Next came *Minnie's Boys*, starring a quintet of erstwhile Marx Brothers and Shelley Winters as Minnie Marx. A much more distant era of history was the subject of *Two by Two*, which brought Danny Kaye back to Broadway as Noah, singing the music of Richard Rodgers. Charlemagne's young son was the hero of *Pippin*, a musical which opened on October 23, 1972 and ran until June 1977. The show won several Tonys, including one for Bob Fosse's inventive staging and choreography.

[[image: black and white photograph of the cover of PLAYBILL featuring "Fiddler on the Roof"]]

Another of Neil Simon's long-running comedies, *Chapter Two*, came to the theatre in December 1977, starring Judd Hirsch and Anita Gillette. The same author was also responsible for the next tenant, the hit *They're Playing Our Song*.

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