

V&A celebrates the glittering world of musical theatre with free display, *Re:Imagining Musicals*

Re:Imagining Musicals

15 October 2022 – 27 November 2023

Theatre and Performance Galleries

- Brand new acquisitions go on display for the first time, including Paul O’Grady’s Miss Hannigan costume from *Annie* gifted to the V&A by the actor especially for this display.
- Also on display for the first time are new costume acquisitions from *SIX the Musical*, *Everybody’s Talking About Jamie*, *Moulin Rouge! The Musical*, *Company*, and *A Chorus Line*.
- Other highlights include the rarely displayed beaded gown designed by Cecil Beaton and worn by Julie Andrews in *My Fair Lady* in 1958; the toy Olaf puppet from *Frozen the Musical* and an original poster from the off-Broadway premiere of *Hamilton* signed by the cast and creatives.

Opening on Saturday 15 October, *Re:Imagining Musicals* will celebrate the vibrant world of musical theatre and explore the cultural significance of some of the industry’s most iconic stories. This free display showcases 100 objects, the majority of which are being displayed for the first time, bringing together brand-new acquisitions and unseen classics in the V&A’s Theatre and Performance Galleries.

Highlights include: Eliza Doolittle’s beaded gown designed by Cecil Beaton and worn by Julie Andrews in *My Fair Lady* at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane (1958). New costume acquisitions including Miss Hannigan’s dress, wig and whistle worn by Paul O’Grady in the 1998 West End revival of *Annie* and donated to the museum especially for the display; Gabriella Slade’s Tony award winning costume for Catherine of Aragon in *SIX the Musical*; Jamie New’s costume designed by Anna Fleischle for *Everybody’s Talking About Jamie* and Catherine Zuber’s Tony and Olivier award winning ‘Sparkling Diamond’ costume worn by Satine in *Moulin Rouge! The Musical*. Further highlights include a toy Olaf created especially for *Frozen the Musical* designed by Christopher Oram; a 1965 original cast recording of *Hello Dolly!* signed by Carol Channing; an original poster for *Hamilton* signed by the cast and creatives; Bunny Christie’s Olivier and Critics’ Circle award winning costume design, model and costume for Rosalie Craig as Bobbie in the 2019 West End revival of *Company* and Shakespeare’s first folio, which celebrates its 400th anniversary in 2023.

Simon Sladen, Senior Curator for Modern and Contemporary Theatre and Performance, said:

“Musicals are one of the most exciting and complex forms of theatre to see and stage. In Re:Imagining Musicals we celebrate the power and skill of creativity, along with the many people who help bring these shows to life for audiences to enjoy night after night. From idea to inception, we can’t wait for visitors to step inside and explore the inspiration, imagination and evolution of musical theatre.”

Celebrating the rich lineage and astounding craftsmanship behind some of the best-loved musicals, *Re:Imagining Musicals* explores how they have been created, adapted, revived, and retold for new audiences. The display will journey through themes such as:

- **Literature, Film and Popular Culture** exploring how Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was retold as *West Side Story* and inspired *& Juliet*, and how *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* evolved from L. Frank Baum's 1900 novel to its stage and screen adaptations, which themselves inspired *The Wiz*'s celebration of African American culture and *Wicked*'s exploration of what it means to be an outsider.
- **History, Society and Conflict** examining how musicals such as *Hamilton* and *1776* both take radically different approaches to adapting the story of American Independence, and how *SIX the Musical*, *Kings and Clowns*, and *Rex* all explore the Tudor era and reign of King Henry VIII. This section also considers how musicals, such as *Hair* and *Oh What a Lovely War*, often respond to, capture or criticise conflict, reflecting the public sentiment of the time.
- **Biographical Musicals** focuses on performances that bring real people's lives to the stage. Exploring how musicals can transform public perception or bring an unknown person to fame from historical figures such as the Egyptian Queen Nefertiti to 16-year-old British Schoolboy Jamie.

Many of the objects featured in the display are from the **Bunnett-Muir Musical Theatre Archive**, the UK's largest private collection of musical theatre-related memorabilia which was donated to the V&A in 2018. Joining this extensive collection of posters and cast recording LPs is a rich array of costumes and props that explore the role and evolution of musicals throughout history.

- ENDS -

For further PRESS information about *Re:Imagining Musicals* please contact s.nash@vam.ac.uk (not for publication).

Images

A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from <https://vam.app.box.com/folder/176794286698>.

Notes to Editors

- Re:Imagining Musicals will run from 15 October 2022 – 27 November 2023
- This free public display is located in the Theatre and Performance Galleries at V&A South Kensington.
- The display has been curated for the V&A by Simon Sladen (Senior Curator for Modern and Contemporary Theatre and Performance), and Harriet Reed (Curator of Contemporary Performance).
- The display will be accompanied by a family trail, as well as interactive events across October Half term. More info on the events can be found [here](#).

About the V&A's Theatre and Performance collection

The Theatre and Performance collections are dedicated to the history, craft and practice of the performing arts both live and recorded. Their emphasis is on drama, dance, music, popular entertainment and film. Founded in 1924 by Gabrielle Enthoven, the collection constitutes one of the oldest and most significant in the world. They are widely acknowledged as the National Collection of Performing Arts and hold a diverse range of material types including playbills, posters, programmes, photographs, paintings, costume, designs, stage properties, stagecraft, letters, legal documents, published books, unpublished manuscripts, prompt books, scripts, scores, set models, puppets, backcloths, performance recordings, born digital material and files on practitioners, companies, theatres and productions.

Social Media

SIX the Musical: costume design for Catherine of Aragon [SIX the Musical: costume design for Catherine of Aragon | V&A](#)



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