

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND

PRO

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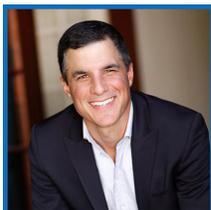
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WELCOME

Happy August, Pros!

We're in the swelter of summer now! Hard to believe that we've only got one more month of summer heat . . . and summer theater!

The summer is such a great time for the theater. There are more tourists here in Times Square. Summer stock theaters are active all over the country. And of course, here in New York City, the festival season is in full swing. The New York Musical Festival had a terrific season (if you missed it this year, put it on your calendar for next year - it's a great opportunity to see what else is out there in the "emerging" musical sector, which is important for any of you developing musicals of your own - gotta take a look at the competition!). And August is all about the Fringe Festival (I found the book writer of *Altar Boyz* at a Fringe show - so it's a great place for all you producers to go shopping not only for shows, but for future creatives).

Wherever you are, look around for a festival or summer theater near you. And if there isn't one? Well, maybe some entrepreneurial person you know should start one. :-)

P.S. I'm not kidding! Starting a summer theater festival isn't as hard as it sounds. You don't have to start with a full orchestra version of *West Side Story* with original choreography. What about a simple reading of a show?

P.P.S. This month's webinar is all about "The ABCs of National Tours Explained" at every level, from union to non-union. Tune in on Wednesday, August 10th at 7 PM EDT!

UPCOMING EVENTS

8/10 @ 7 PM: Monthly Webinar: The ABCs of National Tours Explained

As a member of Pro, you're automatically registered for the Monthly Webinar!

To sign up for other seminars or events, visit www.theproducerperspectivepro.com.

LAST MONTH AT THE BROADWAY BOX OFFICE: THE BOX OFFICE ISN'T HEATING UP THIS SUMMER

Uh-oh.

Last fall I predicted that in the next twelve months, we would see a market correction on Broadway. It was based on my historical analysis of Broadway grosses and when they tend to flat-line and decline. There were three events that I found that always seemed to take a bite out of our box office:

- 1) It happens every 3.67 years.
- 2) It happens around presidential elections.
- 3) It happens during the Summer Olympics.



Unfortunately, it looks like I might be right, as July grosses were not what the industry was expecting (which is why we saw shows like *Motown* disappear quickly, and *An American In Paris* revise their closing date to earlier than they had previously announced).

And, we're not even into the thick of the election or the Olympics yet.

Brace yourself. I'm now predicting we'll see another long running show or two announce their closing before the end of the year.

Here are this year's July Broadway grosses and attendance as compared to the year before.*

This July's Broadway Gross: \$130,099,717.14
Last year's July Broadway Gross: \$137,621,804.09
Increase/Decrease: -5.47%

This July's Broadway Attendance: 1,239,086
Last year's July Broadway Attendance: 1,277,070
Increase/Decrease: -2.97%

*You can get the weekly grosses by subscribing to my blog or by getting the The Producer's Perspective app! Download it today in the iPhone or Android store!

(Want to read the original blog about my prediction? Google "Ken Davenport Market Correction" and it should pop up!)

ON THE BLOG

Just in case you missed it, here were the top read articles on the blog last month:

- The Nominees for the 2015-2016 Broadway Marketing Awards are . . .
- The (shockingly) worst thing you can hear about your show.

- A Musical By Any Other Name is . . .

Make sure you don't miss a single blog. Subscribe today or download the iPhone or Android app.

THIS MONTH ON THE PODCAST

Since I started the Producer's Perspective Podcast last year, the guest list has been a veritable who's who of Broadway insiders. As a member of PRO, you're the first to know who I have coming up:

- Brian Mahoney - Vice President of Ticket Sales for the Shubert Organization
- Barry Weissler - Producer of *Chicago*, the most successful revival ever
- Craig Zadan & Neil Meron - The team behind the rebirth of the live TV musical
- Manny Azenberg - Broadway Producer and General Manager
- Stan Shaffer - Box Office Treasurer for the Eugene O'Neil Theatre

Make sure to check out my blog each Monday to hear the podcast!

MARKETING FOR PROS: A MARKETING STORY FROM THE TRENCHES!

A little bit of a different marketing column this week, my PROs! At our social, PRO Elise Gainer told me a story about how she used some of the marketing tips from a previous newsletter on a show that she was IN down in DC! I asked her to write down what she did so I could share it with all of you . . . and it's below! While talking about marketing is great, you never learn more about marketing than when you actually try to market something! So, kudos to Elise, and to all of you out there who are working every angle to try and get butts in seats.

Enjoy Elise's initiative, and if you've got a great story about marketing (or raising money, or writing, or whatever) email it to me at ken@theproducersperspective.com and maybe you'll see yours in a future newsletter!



PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"There are potentially more talented writers and directors than I working in shoe stores and Burger Kings across the nation; the difference is I was willing to put in the nine years of effort and they weren't."

- 3-time Academy Award nominee and creator of *The Walking Dead*, Frank Darabont

Dear Ken,

I wanted to let you know how much I appreciate *The Producer's Perspective Pro* and the monthly newsletter! In the May issue you wrote an article titled "Marrying Your Marketing with Your Message." I loved how you shared your unique marketing idea of letting virgins get into your show *My First Time* for free, and the clever way you determined if they were virgins :-). I'm an actor in a new show that just appeared at the Washington, DC Fringe Festival in July. It was important that we create some buzz before our show appears in New York this fall, and with so many choices for the Fringe audience, it was important that the entire cast work at getting butts in the seats. You said the key was to ask "What is your show about?" Our show chronicles the last days of Mrs. Surratt, the first woman hung by the U.S. Government for being involved in the conspiracy to assassinate President Lincoln. The question of whether she was really guilty is the core of the play, so my idea was to create protest signs reflecting both positions as well as two buttons with both messages. Since I play Mrs. Surratt, I often carried a "Mrs. Surratt is innocent!" sign and admitted to folks that I was biased, but hoped they would come to the show and decide for themselves. Our marketing worked. We attracted attention, making conversation about the show easier, which translated into tickets sold. Plus folks loved getting the buttons for free. Thanks for sharing your wealth of knowledge and helping all of us be successful etc.



WRITING FOR PROS: LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

No, no, don't worry. I'm not suggesting that any of you writers out there adapt the 1989 movie *Look Who's Talking* into a musical. (But if you could pull off the baby stuff, it might be amazing!)

But I am suggesting that you take a very close look at your characters and not only what they are saying, but how they are saying it.



In plays and musicals, it's essential that every character have their own particular speech patterns, word choices, etc. A person's language and how they speak that language is as unique as their fingerprints.

The challenge that all writers face is to make sure that as they write, the character is speaking in the character's voice and not the author's. I spoke to Eric Webb, my Director of Creative Development who runs our script coverage and writer's coaching service, about this recently, and he said one of the ways he can tell if a writer is inexperienced is if the language of the characters are too similar and sound too much like the author.

Want to test your stuff?

Here's a great exercise I've used on on my own shows that I learned from one of my first playwrighting teachers years ago.

Take your script. Remove ALL character names. So instead of:

Juliet: O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?

Your script would say:

O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?

Make sense?

You'll just have lines. Dialogue.

Now, read your play. Can you tell who is speaking . . . and can you paint the picture of that character, without their name?

If you're up for the challenge, give the play to a friend . . . without the character names (and no character descriptions at the beginning, cheater!). Tell them to read it (or a few scenes) and then describe the characters to you.

What did they say? Could they distinguish between characters? Did they get a good picture?

If you can pass this test, then your characters will leap off the page and onto the stage with ease.

You see, scripts are deceiving. Characters don't wear name tags when they appear in plays. They only have the words you give them, which have to sound like they came from them . . . not from you.

NETWORKING EVENT PHOTOS

Check out these photos from our PRO networking event on July 26th. Hope to see you at the next one!



RAISING MONEY FOR PROS: WHO IS THE MOST LIKELY PERSON TO PRODUCE AN OFF BROADWAY SHOW?

Here's a cold, hard fact . . . I don't know of a single person who makes their living as a commercial Off Broadway Producer.

It's hard enough to make a living as a Broadway Producer without several other revenue streams, but Off Broadway? The economics make it too challenging.

What does that have to do with raising money?

Many of my consulting and coaching clients come in and ask me how they find a commercial Off Broadway Producer or a Broadway Producer willing to do commercial Off Broadway.

And the unfortunate reality is that unless these Producers see a chance that your show will bounce to Broadway (and fast), or that it could be replicated in a billion places (and fast) in order to generate licensing money to justify the Off Broadway capitalization, most just won't be interested.

Does that mean you should give up? Does that mean you shouldn't have your show produced Off Broadway?

No!

First of all, these folks don't know everything. Secondly, and more importantly, it just means you need to alter your targets to people that are more likely to produce your show.

If you look at all the Producers who have produced Off Broadway shows in the last 10 years, you'll find that a vast majority of them have never produced a show before. They are usually individuals that are looking to start a producing career (that's how I started, by the way), or people that have



such a strong affinity for the material, or the writers involved that they are willing to work their butts off to make the project happen.

And it doesn't matter that they haven't done it before. They can always hire people (a General Manager, an Exec Producer, a Marketing Director) who can help them through the process.

So when you start targeting Producers or Co-Producers for your Off Broadway show, don't ignore people who have never done it before. Because as history teaches us, those are the people who are most likely to actually put their money where their mouth is.

*Want more tips on raising money? Get *Raise It - My* course guaranteed to raise you the money you need, when you need it. Associate Producers Pro Members get 10% off. Co and Lead Producers get 25% off. Sign on to Pro to get your exclusive discount code and visit www.RaiseMoneyForYourShow.com today.

UPDATES FROM PROS

Here is what your fellow Pros are up to:

- Composer Michael Sgouros and lyricist Brenda Bell's musical adaptation of *Frankenstein* opens Off Broadway this September!
- Erik Przytulski's show, *Alien Vs. Musical*, was just in the Hollywood Fringe Festival!

Got a project update?

Let me know at ken@theproducersperspective.com.

OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY

Here are the rumors people are whispering about these days . . .

- There's talk that Gloria Estefan may soon take a role in *On Your Feet!*, the musical about her own life.
- I hear that James Corden is already being courted to host next year's Tony Awards, but an insider gives it a less than 50/50 shot. However, my TV contacts say that CBS isn't too happy with the *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* . . . and people are already saying Corden may take his chair. That would mean getting James to NYC, which could get a lot of Broadway shows a lot more airtime.
- Everyone is already talking about when the Hogwarts Express will bring *Harry Potter* to Broadway. All I know is all the theater owners are drooling for it, and making their appeals now. To me, it feels like the Imperial is the perfect spot for it. Or the Broadway. One exec said, "We've found our next *Hamilton*." They were wrong. *Potter* will be bigger.



Got a rumor?

Send 'em to me at ken@theproducersperspective.com.

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