


# BUZZ EXTRA

# MEMPHIS

THE MUSICAL

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## WHEN MUSIC CHANGED FOREVER

“It’s time to lose the day, it’s time to head to Beale,  
Where the rhythm is hot, and the music is real.  
You can do without love, swear off the booze,  
But everyone alive needs to sing the blues.”

*Lyrics from “Underground” from MEMPHIS*

So, come on down to [MEMPHIS](#), part of the  
KeyBank Broadway Series at PlayhouseSquare  
February 28-March 11, and listen to the music of  
your soul.

“MEMPHIS explodes off the stage with a rhythm  
and a drive that soar through the house, creating a  
feeling of instant joy. – *The Record*

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Photo Credit: Quentin Earl Darrington (Delray), Felicia Boswell (Felicia) and the National Touring Cast of Memphis; Photo: Paul Kolnik

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WHEN MUSIC CHANGED FOREVER



Photo Credit: Authors Joe DiPietro and David Bryan, Producer Sue Frost and Producer Ryan Adams at the 2010 Tony Awards; Photo: CBS

"It's time to lose the day, it's time to head to Beale,  
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Lyrics from "Underground" from MEMPHIS

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"MEMPHIS explodes off the stage with **Vote Now** and a drive that soar through the house, creating a feeling of instant joy. - *The Record*

"The very essence of what a Broadway musical should be. MEMPHIS is sensuous, soulful, tuneful & theatrical, expertly cast & superbly sung. Take a deep breath as the curtain rises, because the exuberance doesn't stop. The propulsive choreography and sinuous, sexy dancing perfectly matches the music. The dancers are among the hottest in town." -

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"A rambunctious good time highlighted by rousing music and singing, spectacular dancing and a witty, moving story. MEMPHIS arrives on Broadway triumphant! The musical numbers are irresistible...original and incandescent dancing that no current musical and very few past ones could match. Add extremely inventive scenery, exhilarating costumes and unostentatiously incisive lighting." - *Bloomberg*

"An original, authentic, extraordinary show!" - *Newsday*

## Four Is the Lucky Number for MEMPHIS

With more than 20 nominations, MEMPHIS is the musical that received the most awards for the 2009-2010 Broadway season!

Winner of four Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Book, Score and Orchestration, MEMPHIS also was honored with four Drama Desk Awards (Best Musical, Best Actress, Best Music and Best Orchestrations) and four Outer Critics Circle Awards (Best Musical, Best Actress, Best Score and Best Choreography).

## Synopsis

MEMPHIS is the story of a time that changed music forever.

Huey Calhoun, a young, white man, falls in love with the wrong beat, the wrong rhythm, the wrong dancing, the wrong music and the wrong girl in 1950s Memphis, Tennessee.

This is the South, in the time of Jim Crow, when blacks and whites used separate water fountains. Blacks had to ride the back of the bus, and relations between blacks and whites consisted of blacks being hired help. And there was white music and black music.

But society didn't count on:

"The radio! The radio!  
I knew it could teach! I knew it could preach,  
I knew it could reach across the air!  
I knew it could sell, I knew it could yell,  
I knew it could tell the truth out there!"

## Lyrics from "Radio" from MEMPHIS

### Did You Know?

MEMPHIS has a great artistic pedigree.

The music and lyrics of MEMPHIS are by David Bryan, a founding member of Bon Jovi!

Choreography is by *Jersey Boys*, *Next to Normal* and *The Addams Family* whiz kid Sergio Trujillo.

Costumes are by Paul Tazewell, Tony nominated designer of *In the Heights*, *The Color Purple* and *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk*.

Lighting Design is created by five-time Helen Hayes award winner Howell Binkley.

The rest of the creative team have worked on *Xanadu*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Legally Blonde*, *Billy Elliot The Musical*, *Wicked*, *Mary Poppins*, *Shrek*, *Mamma Mia*, *West Side Story* and *The Lion King*. They have worked with The Joffrey Ballet, The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, The Guthrie Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, Apollo

Theatre as well as in London, Chicago, Toronto, Melbourne and Las Vegas.

The MEMPHIS creative team has assisted Eartha Kitt, Phoebe Snow, Dionne Warwick, Missy Elliot, 98 Degrees, Barbra Streisand, Chita Rivera, Patti LaPone, Bette Midler and Scooby Doo!

No wonder *AM New York* says, "MEMPHIS is irresistible, invigorating and truly entertaining."

For information on this show go to: [memphisthemusical.com](http://memphisthemusical.com)



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**JIM CROW: CHANGE DON'T COME EASY**



Photo Credit: Bryan Fenkhart as Huey Calhoun and the Broadway Cast of Memphis in the National Tour of Memphis Photo: Randy Morrison

1950s Memphis, Tennessee.

"I was taught to hate them, was taught to denigrate them,  
I was taught they were lesser in the good Lord's eyes.  
Can't drink from the same fountain."

Lyrics from "Change Don't Come Easy" from MEMPHIS

**Jim Crow** was a series of anti-black laws that supported racial segregation. The laws were supposed to promote a separate but equal lifestyle for blacks and whites. But in actuality, the separate accommodations were **Vote Now** al and the inferiority provided for Black Americans often resulted in educational, economic and social difficulties.

Some of the **Jim Crow laws in Tennessee** mandated:  
It was unlawful for any school or college to permit white and colored persons to attend the same school. Penalty: \$50 fine, or imprisonment from 30 days to six months, or both.

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Any person with any Negro blood would be classified as "Negro."

Railroads and Streetcars had to have separate accommodations for white and colored races.

All well-behaved persons would be admitted to theaters, parks, shows, or other public amusements, but it was also declared that proprietors had the right to create separate accommodations for whites and Negroes.

Hospitals for the insane had to have separate buildings for black and white patients.

Separate washrooms in mines were required.

Hotelkeepers, carriers of passengers and keepers of places of amusement had the right to control access and exclude persons as "that of any private person over his private house."

Intermarriage between white persons and Negroes, or descendants of Negro ancestors to the third generation, was prohibited.

The penalty for intermarriage between whites and blacks was labeled a felony, punishable by imprisonment in the penitentiary from one to five years.

### Miscegenation

These last two laws were referred to as anti-miscegenation laws. Miscegenation comes from the Latin words *misce* meaning to mix and *genus* meaning race. According to the Oxford American Dictionary, miscegenation is "the interbreeding of people considered to be of different racial types."

Miscegenation laws were first passed in Tennessee in 1741 and prohibited Blacks and Native Americans from marrying whites. In 1948, 30 out of the 48 United States forbade miscegenation. Often, people were arrested for adultery and fornication instead of miscegenation. Many states also criminalized cohabitation and sex between whites and persons not white.

It is not surprising, then, that MEMPHIS characters Huey and Felicia encounter trouble:

"Colored women got few chances,  
 Got few choices on our plates.  
 Mama told me there are limits  
 For dark-skinned girls stuck in this light-skinned world.  
 Once in a while I lose myself in dreams -  
 A silly girl full of silly schemes.  
 Now along comes a man whose skin is white and pale,  
 A shiny fool full of shiny tales.  
 He says he'll make the people hear me.  
 He'll force this world to fin'ly see me."

### *Lyrics from "Colored Woman" from MEMPHIS*

It wasn't until 1967 that the Supreme Court declared miscegenation as "designed to maintain White supremacy" and overturned the law declaring it unconstitutional. It took 226 years from the time when anti-miscegenation was first put into law in Tennessee for the law to change.

"But change don't come easy, you gotta believe me  
 It ain't gonna happen overnight.  
 Change don't come quickly, no, not partick'ly,  
 It takes time to make all the wrongs right."



*Lyrics from "Change Don't Come Easy" from MEMPHIS*

Have times changed?

In 2009, in Louisiana, a justice of the peace refused to officiate a wedding ceremony for an interracial couple.



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**BIRTHPLACE OF THE BLUES**



Photo Credit: Felicia Boswell (Felicia) and Bryan Fenkart (Huey) in the National Tour of Memphis; Photo: Paul Kolnik

"There's a town that I call home  
Where all the streets are paved with soul  
Down on Beale there's a honky-tonk bar  
So hear the wail of a blues guitar..."

The blues sing softly in the air  
Like a Sunday morning prayer...  
That cheers you up, it sets you free  
That's how Memphis lives in me."

Lyrics from "Memphis Lives In Me" from MEMPHIS

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**Beale Street**  
Beale Street, in downtown Memphis, was originally half shops and half residential. But in the 1860s, traveling black musicians began performing on the street. After a yellow fever outbreak in the 1890s, an Opera House and Park were added to the neighborhood and they both quickly became a place for musicians to gather.

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As the neighborhood grew, shops, clubs and restaurants sprang up, bringing even more musicians to the street.

### Father of the Blues

Then **W.C. Handy** came to Memphis and in the early 1900s, in a bar on Beale Street, Handy penned the first commercial Blues tune. Handy would become known as the "Father of the Blues."

Many variations of African-American music came together in Memphis. Since some black musicians could not afford instruments, they often improvised on homemade items such as the jug, washboard, jaw harp and kazoo. The African-American musical styles of Gospel, Blues, Jazz, Rhythm and Blues, Rock and Roll and Soul combined to make an innovative sound that everyone wanted to hear and dance to.

"Everybody wants to be black on a Saturday night.  
Everybody wants to jump back and feel their spirit take flight!"

*Lyrics from "Everybody Wants to be Black on a Saturday Night" from MEMPHIS*

### Other Musicians

Others followed in Handy's shoes to sing or play the blues. Beale Street Blues Boy King (later known as B. B. King), Alberta Hunter, Muddy Waters and Bessie King are just a few of the early musicians who played in Memphis.

In 1966, Beale Street was declared a National Historic Landmark, and then in 1977, an act of Congress proclaimed it to be the Home of the Blues.

Memphis continued to grow in music.

### Radio

Memphis radio station, WDIA, went on the air in 1947 playing a mixture of country music and pop. But the station did not do well.

In 1949, WDIA hired the first black DJ to play Rhythm and Blues. WDIA had been about to go under, but Nat Williams turned the station around by having all black programming. Soon, more DJs, such as B. B. King, began playing black music on the radio. WDIA became the number one radio station from Missouri to the Gulf coast.

"So turn the volume up now! Let the music have its say!  
Ain't no use holdin' back-...  
The rhythm's gonna get you anyway!  
We use it to jive, we use it to thrive!  
And I came alive"

*Lyrics from "Radio" from MEMPHIS*



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## BROADWAY COMES TO THE MOVIES



Photo Credit: Felicia Boswell (Felicia) in the National Tour of Memphis; Photo: Paul Kolnik

In 1975, Bob Fosse changed theatrical marketing forever.

He simply took a one-minute snippet of his hit Broadway show "Pippin" and filmed it to appear on TV. It was the first Broadway TV commercial that showed scenes from the actual performance.

The show had played since 1972 and needed a boost in sales. The TV commercial brought in new audiences.

### Marketing Broadway

Today, we often see commercials for performing arts events such as concerts, operas, comedians and national tours, and it all **Vote Now** from Fosse.

Marketing strategists today have taken it a step further by filming live performances and showing the film in movie theaters across the nation.

The model for filming live performances is the "Live in HD" series of the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Now in its sixth season, this series brings the Met to all parts of the world.



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Of course, theatrical producers at first balked about putting a show, in its entirety, on the silver screen. They thought it might compromise the live show.

But *Theater Mania's* Solange DeSantis noted, "the fact that Broadway's *Phantom of the Opera*, *Chicago* and *Mamma Mia!*...not only continued to run – but... thrived - after the release of traditional film versions has perhaps caused some producers to reevaluate their thinking." MEMPHIS producer Randy Adams agreed claiming, "those films certainly didn't hurt those brands."

Then, producers realized a limited release of the show on film could not only boost sales on Broadway, but also help boost sales for the National Tour, especially for a show that is not well known or features big name stars.

#### Filmed Shows

*Legally Blonde*, *Rent*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Smokey Joe's Café* and *Putting It Together* are just some of the shows that have been filmed to air on PBS' *Great Performances*, *Live at Lincoln Center* or on HBO. A pattern had been set.

#### Groundbreaker

Usually shows that have been filmed are released after they have closed in New York, but MEMPHIS is a groundbreaker. The showing of MEMPHIS on film is the first time a Tony-award winning Best Musical was seen on movie screens nationwide while it was still playing on Broadway!

MEMPHIS was filmed during five live performances with the original Broadway cast. The final cut, professionally edited from nine cameras and re-mastered from the sound of 96 tracks, put the film audience right in the middle of the action.

#### Is Filming A Mistake?

MEMPHIS, the movie, is amazing, but of course, there is nothing like seeing the production live according to David Bryan, MEMPHIS composer and lyricist, "Some people think it's a mistake, that it will hurt the Broadway production ---- that people won't want to go see it in New York if they've already seen it on screen, but we don't believe that theory. The live experience is something that can't be duplicated. This just gets the word out. Also, (the movie) is only for four nights in 530 theaters across America, so it's not over-saturating the market. Plus we get a DVD out of it, so it will be memorialized for all of us."

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## TALKING WITH DAVID BRYAN

David Bryan is a Tony and Grammy awarding composer, songwriter, singer, programmer and founding member of the band *Bon Jovi*. The band has sold 100 million albums and played music in 50 countries for millions of fans. He is a national spokesperson for VH1's Save the Music Foundation and an Honorary Board Member for Only Make Believe, an organization that creates and performs interactive theater for children in hospitals and care facilities.



Bryan has composed two musicals, *MEMPHIS* and *The Toxic Avenger*. A true music lover, as evidenced by his solo album *Lunar Eclipse* which highlights his blues, jazz, rock and roll and classical background, Bryan has been in the music business for more than 20 years.

EXTRA: How did you go from classical piano as a kid into rock and roll?

BRYAN: I started classical piano lessons when I was 7. When I was older, I listened to rock on the radio and wanted to do that. My teacher said, "let's break it down to see how it's composed." At 13, I got into bands and at 16, in high school, I started a band with Jon [Bon Jovi]. We played clubs in New Jersey and I learned a lot.

EXTRA: How did you transition from **Vote Now** roll into musical theater?

BRYAN: I'm a songwriter. I just want to write songs, outside of the band, just write for different people. That's what I was doing for my publisher. Then the agent god came down and gave me the *MEMPHIS* script. When I was reading it through, I heard the music, what you see today on stage, in my head. So, I just started writing songs.

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Then I told them I was also a lyricist and asked if I could mess around with the lyrics. They said to pick a song, write the lyrics and send it to them. I picked "The Music of My Soul" since it was the journey of the lead character's world, the heartbeat of Huey.

Now, I talked to them at about noon and I knew 6:30 was my FedEx deadline. I went down to my studio, got the drumbeat, wrote out lyrics, put all the keyboards down, sang it, did the background vocals, burned it on to a CD and FedEx-ed it so he [Joe DiPietro, who wrote the book for MEMPHIS] would have it first thing in the morning.

EXTRA: Amazing. I guess he liked it.

BRYAN: He got it the next morning and couldn't believe it. Our relationship started there. That song is still in the show. Joe wanted a composer who was a rock and roll guy. That guy was me.

EXTRA: What's the difference between rock and roll and musical theater?

BRYAN: The training ground, when you write songs for a publishing company, is that you write for different artists, girls, guys, different genres. So when it came to writing songs for MEMPHIS, I can write a Huey song, a Felicia song, a Mama song. It's something I can do. I write it from the character. I write what I feel it should be.

EXTRA: How do you and Joe collaborate to write a song? Do you write the music first? Do you sit down and have an idea?

BRYAN: Yes and yes and yes. There is no standard. I'll work on stuff or I'll start some lyrics and he'll start some lyrics. There's no real set way. That's the beauty of collaboration. He and I sit down and we can put out one or two songs a day. We get on the same page pretty quick.

EXTRA: How is writing a song for musical theater different from writing a rock and roll song?

BRYAN: I consider writing a song, writing a song. I don't say that's rock and roll and this is musical theater. I just say here's our character, what's the title, what are we saying, how does it feel, is it fast, slow, the time period...then we get into the details of it and we just write it. The orchestrations make it sound like a whole song.

EXTRA: Would you say the lyrics are more important in musical theater?

BRYAN: I think the lyrics are always important because you have to say something. The music backs up the emotion of the lyrics and then hopefully you have a good enough hook that people will remember it.

EXTRA: What emotion did you have when you won the Tony award?

BRYAN: The best emotion I could have, short of the birth of my children and marrying my wife. It's been a very long journey getting the show from our brains to Broadway, from always believing in it and knowing it touches people.

EXTRA: How involved are you in the national tour?

BRYAN: Anything that has to do with my work, I'm involved 100%. From the casting of MEMPHIS, to the set design, to the costumes, to fiduciary questions, to theaters, to lighting, auditions, you name it. Our team is a fabulous creative team with great producers, Christopher [Ashley] is a great director, Sergio [Trujillo] is a great choreographer...they're

retooling it for the road, but I'm involved in every inch of it.

EXTRA: What's next for you? We heard you and Joe [DiPietro] are working on a new musical called *Chasing the Song*.

BRYAN: It's about 60s songwriters and is still in development. We have about 17 songs written for it.

EXTRA: We heard that someone called you and Joe the modern day Rodgers and Hammerstein.

BRYAN: It's not a bad moniker. We enjoy each other's work. We enjoy each other's company. We're each other's best critic and we're not afraid to try something, we give ourselves that freedom. It's a great working environment.

EXTRA: Then you plan to keep on writing musicals.

BRYAN: There's more here, yes. They're fun to write. It's a great thing to look at an empty page and make something out of it, make a story that matters to people, that they care about. It's a great challenge and a great reward.

EXTRA: What will audiences walk away with at the end of MEMPHIS?

BRYAN: It's a gripping story, a moment in America that was an important time of change. It's the birth of rock and roll and the birth of Civil Rights. But we're never preachy. When you preach something at somebody, it doesn't come across as strong as when it unfolds and you realize it for yourself. Audiences will walk away feeling positive that the world is a better place because we are smarter every day and learning from our mistakes and there are songs you can walk out singing.

*Photo Credit: David Bryan; Photo: Anita Shevett*





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Want to find out even more about the show? Come get "buzzed" with host Joe Garry at the Broadway Buzz Pre-Show Talk! Join us one hour before performances of MEMPHIS in the Idea Center® at PlayhouseSquare.

The Idea Center is located just two doors west of the Allen Theatre at 1375 Euclid Avenue. You can enter the Idea Center quickly from the PlayhouseSquare parking garage by taking the elevator or stairs to Level 1. Exit through the red doors and cross at the crosswalk which will lead you directly into the rear entrance of the building. You also may enter the Idea Center from Euclid Avenue.

Can't make it to the Pre-Show Talk? Listen live on opening night (February 28) at 6:30 p.m. on WCLV 104.9 FM or watch live on [wclv.com](http://wclv.com). The video will be available for viewing after opening night at [playhousesquare.org/broadwaybuzz](http://playhousesquare.org/broadwaybuzz). [Vote Now](#)

Catch our Post-Show Chats with the Cast following Thursday evening performances (March 1 and 8).

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