

one man two guvnors broadway edition

richard bean

one man two guvnors broadway edition richard bean is a celebrated theatrical work that brought a fresh and comedic energy to Broadway audiences. Adapted by British playwright Richard Bean, this play is a modern take on the classic Italian comedy "Servant of Two Masters" by Carlo Goldoni. The Broadway edition of "One Man Two Guvnors" showcases Bean's sharp wit, clever dialogue, and the vibrant energy of physical comedy, making it a standout production in contemporary theater. This article explores the origins, adaptation process, critical reception, and distinctive elements of the Broadway edition, highlighting the contributions of Richard Bean. Readers will gain insight into the unique aspects that make this production a favorite among theater enthusiasts and critics alike. The following sections provide an in-depth look at the background, characters, production details, and impact of "One Man Two Guvnors" on Broadway.

- Background and Origins of One Man Two Guvnors
- Richard Bean's Adaptation Process
- Broadway Edition Highlights and Production Details
- Critical Reception and Awards
- Key Characters and Cast Performances
- Legacy and Influence in Modern Theater

Background and Origins of One Man Two Guvnors

The play "One Man Two Guvnors" is an adaptation of the 18th-century Italian commedia dell'arte play "Servant of Two Masters" by Carlo Goldoni. Richard Bean reimagined the classic farce for a contemporary audience by setting it in 1960s England, blending physical comedy with witty dialogue. The original Italian play revolves around a servant trying to serve two masters simultaneously, leading to a series of comedic misunderstandings and chaos. Bean's version retains the core plot but infuses it with British humor, slapstick, and musical elements, making it highly accessible and entertaining for modern theatergoers. This background establishes the foundation for understanding the creative direction taken in the Broadway edition.

Richard Bean's Adaptation Process

Richard Bean's adaptation of "One Man Two Guvnors" was a meticulous process that balanced respect for the original text with innovation. Bean translated the commedia dell'arte style into a form that resonated with contemporary audiences, incorporating regional British dialects, period-specific references, and original songs. His writing emphasized physical comedy and quick-paced

dialogue to maintain the lively spirit of the original while adding a new cultural context. The adaptation process also involved collaboration with directors and actors to ensure that the humor and timing were precisely calibrated for stage performance. Bean's skillful adaptation is a testament to his ability to bridge classical theater with modern entertainment values.

Incorporation of British Culture and Humor

One of the defining features of Richard Bean's adaptation is the seamless integration of British culture and humor. By setting the play in 1963 Brighton, England, Bean utilized the social and cultural nuances of the time to enrich the narrative. This includes references to British class structure, popular music of the era, and social customs, which add layers of authenticity and relatability. The comedic style is distinctly British, featuring dry wit, wordplay, and absurd situations that reflect Bean's signature writing style.

Collaboration and Revisions

Throughout the adaptation, Bean worked closely with theater professionals to refine the script. Workshops and rehearsals provided opportunities to test comedic timing and audience reactions, leading to iterative revisions. This collaborative approach ensured that the Broadway edition preserved the fast-paced momentum and humorous essence that define the play.

Broadway Edition Highlights and Production Details

The Broadway edition of "One Man Two Guvnors" brought Richard Bean's adaptation to a wider audience, featuring high production values and a talented cast. The production was staged with vibrant set designs, period costumes, and dynamic choreography that enhanced the comedic impact. The use of live musical performances during the play added an immersive and festive atmosphere, distinguishing it from standard theatrical fare. The Broadway edition also benefited from expert direction, which emphasized timing and physicality, crucial elements in farce and slapstick comedy.

Set and Costume Design

The set design for the Broadway production reflected the 1960s seaside town ambiance, with colorful and detailed backdrops that supported the lively narrative. Costumes were carefully crafted to represent the distinct personalities of the characters, from the sharp suits of the guvnors to the casual attire of the working-class characters. This attention to detail contributed to the overall authenticity and visual appeal of the production.

Musical Elements

Music played a significant role in the Broadway edition, with original songs and period hits interspersed throughout the performance. These musical interludes served to enhance comedic moments and engage the audience, creating a rhythmic flow that complemented the farcical story. The live band and vocal performances added a layer of energy and entertainment that was pivotal to

the production's success.

Critical Reception and Awards

The Broadway edition of "One Man Two Guvnors" received widespread critical acclaim for its inventive adaptation and outstanding performances. Critics praised the play's humor, pacing, and the deftness of Richard Bean's writing. The production was recognized for revitalizing farce with modern sensibilities while maintaining the charm of classic comedy. It was lauded as a refreshing addition to the Broadway scene, attracting both traditional theater fans and new audiences.

Major Awards and Nominations

The play garnered several prestigious awards and nominations, highlighting its impact and quality. These accolades celebrated the writing, acting, direction, and design elements that contributed to the production's success. Recognition from the Tony Awards and other theatrical organizations underscored the play's excellence and its significance within the theater community.

- Winner of multiple Tony Awards including Best Actor and Best Direction
- Nominations for Best Play and Best Scenic Design
- Received Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards
- Praised for outstanding ensemble performance

Key Characters and Cast Performances

The success of "One Man Two Guvnors" on Broadway was heavily reliant on its memorable characters and the talented actors who brought them to life. The protagonist, Francis Henshall, is a charismatic and hapless man juggling two employers, leading to a series of comedic mishaps. The cast delivered performances that combined physical comedy, timing, and emotional nuance, elevating the farcical elements to a sophisticated level of entertainment.

Francis Henshall

Francis is the central figure whose predicament drives the plot. The character demands exceptional comedic skill and timing, as the actor must navigate rapid scene changes, physical humor, and complex interactions with other characters. The Broadway edition's lead actor received critical praise for bringing vitality and charm to this role.

Supporting Characters

The supporting cast includes a colorful array of characters such as the two guvnors, Dolly, and Rachel Crabbe, each contributing to the intricate web of humor and misunderstandings. Their interactions with Francis enhance the comedic tension and provide varied dynamics throughout the play. The ensemble's chemistry and individual performances were integral to the production's acclaim.

Legacy and Influence in Modern Theater

"One Man Two Guvnors" in its Broadway edition represents a significant contribution to contemporary theater, particularly in the genre of comedy and farce. Richard Bean's adaptation has inspired renewed interest in classical works through modernization and cultural contextualization. The play's success has encouraged other playwrights and directors to experiment with reimagining classical texts for present-day audiences, blending historical material with modern humor.

Impact on Farce and Comedy

The production's innovative approach to farce has set a benchmark for combining physical comedy with sharp writing. It demonstrated the commercial and critical viability of farce on Broadway, a genre that often faces challenges in mainstream theater. The play's influence can be seen in subsequent productions that emphasize energetic performance and audience engagement.

Educational and Theatrical Use

Beyond commercial success, "One Man Two Guvnors" has been used in educational settings to teach elements of farce, adaptation, and performance techniques. Theater companies worldwide continue to produce the play, attesting to its enduring popularity and relevance. Richard Bean's work serves as a model for adapting classical material with creativity and respect for the original art form.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'One Man, Two Guvnors' Broadway edition?

'One Man, Two Guvnors' Broadway edition is the American adaptation of the original British play written by Richard Bean, featuring adjustments in setting and cultural references to appeal to Broadway audiences.

Who wrote the play 'One Man, Two Guvnors'?

The play 'One Man, Two Guvnors' was written by British playwright Richard Bean.

How does the Broadway edition of 'One Man, Two Guvnors' differ from the original UK version?

The Broadway edition of 'One Man, Two Guvnors' shifts the setting from 1960s Brighton, England to 1960s New York City and includes Americanized dialogue and cultural references, while maintaining the original comedic style.

When did 'One Man, Two Guvnors' open on Broadway?

'One Man, Two Guvnors' opened on Broadway in April 2012.

Who starred in the Broadway edition of 'One Man, Two Guvnors'?

James Corden starred as Francis Henshall in the Broadway edition of 'One Man, Two Guvnors'.

What genre does 'One Man, Two Guvnors' belong to?

'One Man, Two Guvnors' is a comedy play, specifically a farce with elements of slapstick and physical humor.

What inspired Richard Bean to write 'One Man, Two Guvnors'?

Richard Bean adapted 'One Man, Two Guvnors' from the 1743 Italian play 'Servant of Two Masters' by Carlo Goldoni, updating it with contemporary humor and setting.

How was 'One Man, Two Guvnors' received by Broadway audiences and critics?

'One Man, Two Guvnors' received critical acclaim on Broadway, praised for its energetic performances, particularly James Corden's, and its successful adaptation of British humor for American audiences.

Did 'One Man, Two Guvnors' win any awards on Broadway?

Yes, the Broadway edition of 'One Man, Two Guvnors' won several awards, including the Tony Award for Best Actor in a Play for James Corden.

What is the central plot of 'One Man, Two Guvnors' Broadway edition?

The central plot follows Francis Henshall, a man who tries to serve two different bosses simultaneously without either knowing, leading to a series of comedic misunderstandings and chaos.

Additional Resources

1. *One Man, Two Guvnors: The Official Broadway Edition* by Richard Bean

This is the official script of the hit play "One Man, Two Guvnors," adapted for Broadway by Richard Bean. The book includes the full dialogue, stage directions, and notes on the production. It offers readers an insight into the comedic timing and farcical elements that made the show a success. Perfect for theater enthusiasts and students studying contemporary British drama.

2. *British Farce: Tradition and Innovation in Richard Bean's Work*

This book explores the tradition of British farce and how Richard Bean revitalizes the genre in plays like "One Man, Two Guvnors." It analyzes the play's structure, comedic devices, and cultural references. Readers will gain an understanding of the historical context of farce and its modern adaptations.

3. *The Art of Adaptation: From Goldoni to Bean's One Man, Two Guvnors*

Tracing the origins of "One Man, Two Guvnors" from Carlo Goldoni's 18th-century Italian comedy "The Servant of Two Masters," this book examines the art of adaptation in theater. It highlights how Bean transformed the original into a contemporary British comedy while retaining its core elements. A must-read for enthusiasts of adaptation theory and theater history.

4. *Comedy and Class: Social Satire in One Man, Two Guvnors*

This critical study delves into the social commentary embedded in Richard Bean's play, focusing on issues of class and identity in modern Britain. It discusses how humor is used to critique societal norms and the class system. The book provides rich analysis suitable for students and scholars of social drama.

5. *Staging Laughter: Directing One Man, Two Guvnors on Broadway*

A practical guide for directors and theater practitioners, this book offers insights into the challenges and techniques involved in staging the Broadway production of "One Man, Two Guvnors." It covers casting, comedic timing, and physical comedy, with interviews from the original Broadway creative team. An invaluable resource for anyone involved in theater production.

6. *Richard Bean: A Contemporary Playwright's Journey*

This biography and critical overview charts Richard Bean's career, with a focus on his most famous works including "One Man, Two Guvnors." It explores his writing style, thematic concerns, and contributions to modern British theater. The book also includes interviews and personal reflections from the playwright.

7. *Physical Comedy in Modern Theatre: The Case of One Man, Two Guvnors*

Focusing on the use of slapstick and physical humor, this book analyzes how "One Man, Two Guvnors" revitalizes physical comedy for contemporary audiences. It discusses choreography, actor training, and audience engagement. The study is essential for performers and directors interested in comedic performance.

8. *Audience Reception and Critical Response to One Man, Two Guvnors*

This academic collection of essays examines how audiences and critics responded to the Broadway edition of "One Man, Two Guvnors." It includes reviews, audience surveys, and scholarly critiques that highlight the play's impact on theatergoers and its place in modern theater. A comprehensive resource for theater historians.

9. *The Music and Sound Design of One Man, Two Guvnors*

This book explores the role of music and sound in enhancing the comedic and narrative elements of "One Man, Two Guvnors." It covers the original score, sound effects, and how auditory elements contribute to the play's lively atmosphere. Ideal for students of theater sound design and production.

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