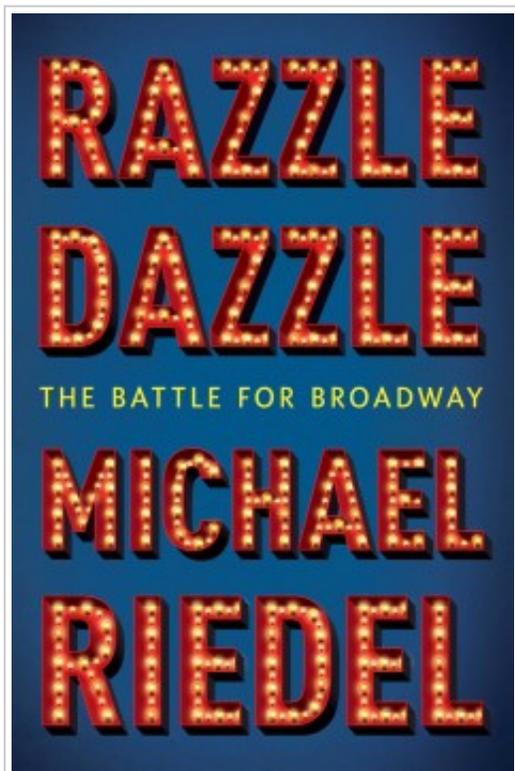


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## Razzle Dazzle

**The Battle for Broadway**

by Michael Riedel

**Price: \$27.00**(Hardcover)

Published: October 06, 2015

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

**From the Publisher:** Broadway's most respected (and feared) commentator pulls back the curtain on its stars, its producers, and its mega-hits to reveal all the shocking drama, intrigue, and power plays that happened off stage.

Razzle Dazzle is a provocative, no-holds-barred narrative account of the people and the money and the power that re-invented an iconic quarter of New York City, turning its gritty back alleys and sex-shops into the glitzy, dazzling Great White Way—and bringing a crippled New York from the brink of bankruptcy to its glittering glory.

In the mid-1970s Times Square was the seedy symbol of New York's economic decline. Its once shining star, the renowned Shubert Organization, was losing theaters to make way for parking lots. Bernard Jacobs and Jerry Schoenfeld, two ambitious board members, saw the crumbling company was ripe for takeover and staged...

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## What We Say

New York Post journalist Michael Riedel may have delicious fun stirring up trouble, pointing out the obvious (like falling box office) and otherwise playing devil's advocate in the vicious but nominally one-big-family world of Broadway. But his first book reveals how seriously Riedel takes theater: seriously enough to do the work and deliver an ambitious profile of the Schuberts and thus the history of Broadway itself. It begins with a bang as corruption scandals (the "ice" that plagued/plagues theater box office) threaten to tear the community apart. Then he jumps back to the early days and how theater survived the Great Depression. Then it's on to the heart of his novel: the dark days of the 1970s when Times Square was a dangerous, dirty place and the parade of golden hits had dried up. Riedel's strength here is focused portraits of major figures like the Schuberts, their rivals the Nederlanders (given short shrift here), and talent like Michael Bennett, along with the making of shows like "A Chorus Line." It's about backroom dealings as much as artistry because both are essential for Broadway. A lot of it is fun, like the Tony showdown between "Dreamgirls" and "Nine." Keeping it from greatness is a confused, sprawling nature: the jumping back and forth gets confusing at a few points, certain chapters start to feel like random features plopped in out of nowhere and a rush to cover literally everything results in a flat-footed rush through some material. It's vivid and serious and good enough to make you wish it was great. Nonetheless, it's substantial and sure to be entertaining and informative for all but the most ardent theater buffs. Let's hope Riedel's next book gets either a tighter focus or takes its time and really sprawls out. If this were an out of town tryout, the critics would say it could become a winner. Opening cold on Broadway, it's one the cognoscenti will enjoy but may not play to tourists. Whatever it's commercial fate, Riedel is sure to be back. -- Michael Giltz

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## What Others Say

"This book is a love letter to Broadway, both a splendid history of this American institution and a wonderful account of how art gets made. It made me fall for Broadway's magic all over again: its history and its myths, its heroes and its villains, its up and its downs, its dirt and its dish, its failure and its glory." - **Hugh Jackman**

"There have only been a handful of books in history that have come close to accurately depicting the energy and drive that run the business of Broadway. Michael Riedel's Razzle Dazzle joins that very short list that includes William Goldman's legendary The Season and Richard Maney's classic Fanfare—and is every bit the equal of those books that those of us who love Broadway can recite by heart." - **Scott Rudin**

"Razzle Dazzle is a fantastically fun book, full of high energy, anecdotes, and wit. Michael Riedel lays bare the secret history of Broadway in all its grease paint, shady dealings, and shining moments. Written with love but also a piercing eye, this is one show no one should miss."

- **Amanda Foreman**

"If you've ever wondered how Times Square got its..."