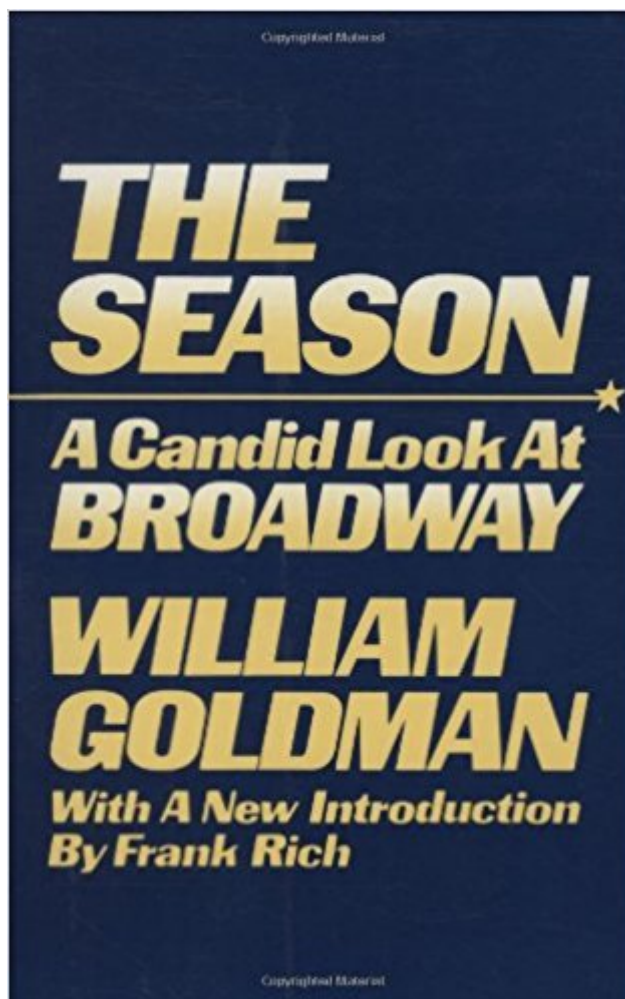




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THE SEASON A Candid Look At Broadway



Synopsis

(Limelight). Playwright/novelist/screenwriter Goldman analyzes Broadway from the perspective of the audiences, playwrights, critics, producers and actors. "Very nearly perfect... It is a loose-limbed, gossipy, insider, savvy, nuts-and-bolts report on the annual search for the winning numbers that is now big-time American commercial theatre." Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, The New York Times

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Customer Reviews

I'm really torn on this. On one hand Goldman's book offers some terrific and unusual pieces about Broadway that make for fascinating reading: Jean Arthur's disastrous comeback in *The Freaking Out of Stephanie Blake*, a brutal and deserved take down of Clive Barnes, and pretty much the only contemporaneous coverage you'll ever read (apart from original reviews) of such such forgotten shows as *Spofford*, *The Ninety-Day Mistress* with Dyan Cannon, Vincent Price in *Darling of the Day*, *Golden Rainbow*, Gore Vidal's *Weekend*, and *Scuba Duba*. Another highlight is one of the best appraisals of *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg* I've ever read. On the other hand, and it's been mentioned in other reviews here, is a weird thread that runs through the book--and that's Goldman's view of homosexuality. I know, it was written at a different time and all that but Goldman, if not obsessed, seems at least insanely preoccupied with "the problem." It's written as though no homosexual would ever read it, that it's a matter of "them" vs "us"--"us" presumably being the heterosexuals who simply don't know what to make of this gay infiltration of the macho world of Broadway. Otherwise *The Season* has too many wonderfully crabby, hot-headed, compassionate

and unique perspectives on New York Theater. It can't be dismissed by a long shot. I'm just saying that it's the only book about Broadway you'll ever read in which you'll see this in the index:

"Homosexuals, estimate of number in U.S., pp 237"

A brilliant book about Broadway, I only wish that a similar book was done each year about the previous "season" (like Presidential campaign books). Of course, no one currently working would speak openly, knowing that they'd be quoted, but... I had to subtract one star, however, for the rampant homophobia, especially the entire chapter entitled "Homosexuals", which is one of the nastiest pieces of writing I've ever read.

This is a fascinating book on the backstage world of Broadway but I suspect it is a little out-of-date. The Times Square revitalization has changed Broadway a lot and most theatergoers obtain tickets online. However, as an aspiring playwright, reading this book did get me to thinking that I ought to know more about how plays get produced and how theaters are run. I have no idea why some people are running festivals and producing plays without a permanent facility. Regional theater and Off Broadway must have completely different sources of funding and artist cultures. William Goldman does not describe how musicals go on tour around the country and the world. That whole system must have developed later but it is probably a big factor in how shows continue to make money long after they close on Broadway.

Been on a Broadway jag, and this is a fascinating, if dated, look at a single, more or less unremarkable year on the Great White Way. Some of Goldman's opinions are different than mine -- he's not much on self-consciously arty shows but I think he lumps into that category several shows that were worthwhile and then some. (He does, at least, love Stoppard's "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" and he skewers Harold Pinter hilariously.) Of real interest to me were his analyses of the Broadway audience and several chapters on the economics of the industry, which probably hold true in principle even today although you can multiply the money by a factor of about 50. I was brought to this book by Michael Reindell's much more contemporary RAZZLE DAZZLE, which is an essential book for anyone who's interested in Broadway as a business and/or as an art form.

I really looked forward to reading this after reading Razzle Dazzle. It was recommended as the quintessential look at a Broadway season. The problem is that even at my age there was too much I

couldn't relate to from the 1967-68 season. Late in the book were two of the most interesting chapters, one on the show *George M!* (which the author hated) and the other, a chapter about early feedback on *Hair!*. The chapter on *Hair* was interesting just to compare the vitriol of the late 1960's as compared to the revivals of today.

William Goldman is always a good read. *The Season* is particularly fun because it provides a time capsule (1968) for a time of transition and social change, which is reflected in the writing as well as showing up in the subject matter. Anyone would enjoy this book. If you were around and sentient in 1968, you'll enjoy it even more. If you're a fan of Broadway productions, too, you'll be in hog heaven.

Very cool and worth a read, if only for historical perspective. An example? One show thought they might increase attendance by accepting new fangled American Express cards at the Box Office! The money involved in putting on a show was amazing (as were the losses). Someone should do a follow-on book today to see how things have changed (or not!)

The best book ever written about Broadway. Nothing like has ever been attempted before and for anyone interested in the subject, it is indispensable. Beautifully written and extremely knowledgeable. A great read!

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