

FOCUS ON **MUSICALS** OCTOBER



# GOTTA DANCE!

Get into the groove with a week of fantastic-looking feelgood movies  
in **Sky Movies Modern Greats HD's 24/7 Musicals Season...**

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**W**ith A-listers such as Meryl Streep, Johnny Depp, John Travolta and even Eddie Murphy all clamouring to expose their singing skills to potential public ridicule in films such as *Mamma Mia!*, *Sweeney Todd*, **Hairspray** and **Dreamgirls**, it's clear that Hollywood's movie musical revival is in full, glorious swing. We can credit the current musical revival to three important factors. Firstly, *Chicago* cleaning up at both the Oscars® and the box office in 2002. Secondly, our ongoing fascination with season-long crooning competitions such as *The X Factor* and *American Idol*. And finally,

our desire for fantasy escapism that increases whenever times look bleak.

That's right: blame Osama Bin-Laden, global warming and the credit crunch for bringing all-singing, all-dancing extravaganzas back into vogue. What

## 'Hollywood's movie musical revival is in full, glorious swing'

else could explain why it's suddenly socially acceptable to sing-along-a-Meryl as she belts out ABBA's 'The Winner Takes It All', chuckle at Travolta in a housewife fat-suit duetting with Christopher Walken or tremble in your

seat at Jennifer Hudson's lung-busting rendition of 'And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going', which landed her a Best Supporting Actress Oscar®?

**Hairspray**, *Mamma Mia!* and **Dreamgirls** all began life as stage extravaganzas before getting their movie makeovers. (**Hairspray** was actually a movie before it was even a musical...) The first two embrace the infectious, high-camp delirium that's often been used as a stick to beat the genre with, while the latter opted for serious, Oscar®-attracting depth and drama. But all three were single-minded in their quest to seamlessly unite music, lyrics and choreography to tell their stories. It's the same formula musicals >>



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WITH  
**SKY+HD** YOU  
CAN ENJOY  
CRYSTAL-CLEAR  
SOUND

**HD**



**They go together: the cast of Grease belt out their big finale.**

have been deploying ever since they first made the transition from vaudeville and music halls to the silver screen.

Back then, they were the perfect antidote to turbulent, uncertain times rife with economic hardship and the prospect of war. Hollywood swiftly latched on to the genre, concocting lavish musical fantasies, swimming

in elaborate dance sequences, fancy costumes, lush orchestration and melodic, memorable tunes written by some of the biggest music names of their time (Cole Porter, Irving

Berlin). If the studios hadn't discovered musicals, the foundations of Hollywood would have been very shaky; alongside Westerns and crime thrillers, musicals would be one of the most robust genres,

### 'Musicals are the perfect antidote to turbulent times'

grooming eager audiences to accept that characters bursting into spontaneous song-and-dance routines was just as legit on a movie

screen as gangsters mowing down coppers and Indians whooping on horseback.

In their Golden Age, musicals ran the gamut from Busby Berkeley's '30s spectacles to Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers confections like *Top Hat* (which concerns itself with little more than rich people getting their love-wires crossed) to the glorious heyday of Rodgers & Hammerstein, who etched their names into the musical Hall of Fame with the lush, vibrant, ballad-laden songfests **Oklahoma!**, **Carousel** and **The King And I**. The latter was buoyed by sublime, convincing star chemistry between Yul Brynner and Deborah Kerr as the King of Siam and the plucky English schoolmarm who charms him, ranking

in the pantheon alongside Fred Astaire and Audrey Hepburn in **Funny Face**, Travolta and Olivia Newton-John in **Grease** and Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer in **West Side Story**. It's this longing that marks out the great ones: members of the opposite sex pouring their aching hearts out in exuberant or melancholy tunes, romance and heartache stitched together side by side.

Taking on gang warfare and exposing America's Hispanic-Anglo divide with finger-snapping ballet numbers and weepy ballads may be the sort of thing that gets the anti-musical brigade's goat, but even they can't deny the enduring power of **West Side Story**'s 'There's A Place For Us' and 'Tonight'. (**West Side Story** is a UK HD premiere on Sky Movies Modern Greats!) It's what all the best musicals have: incredible songs that endure and grow with time. And, yes, that includes **Grease**, which may exist as a karaoke staple (how many appalling versions of 'Summer Nights' have you heard in your life?) but is still the stuff of repeat-listening heaven. Whenever a song manages to capture the public imagination, it's there to stay: **Holiday Inn**'s 'White Christmas' – as performed



**HD** Gangs of New York: George Chakiris in **West Side Story**.



**Sweet transsexual: Tim Curry vamps in The Rocky Horror Picture Show.**

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**HD** Nun finer: Julie Andrews enjoys *The Sound Of Music*.



**Soul man:** Eddie Murphy hit a career high in *Dreamgirls*.

by Bing Crosby – is still the best-selling single of all time, with over 30m sales.

In the late '50s and early '60s, the rise of rock'n'roll threatened movie musicals. But Hollywood merely upped the ante, steering Elvis Presley into a multi-film career that included the likes of *Love Me Tender*, and ruling the box-office roost (and the Oscars®) during the flower-power decade with *My Fair Lady*, *Dr Dolittle*, *Mary Poppins* and, of course, the genre's undisputed big daddy *The Sound Of Music*, (another UK HD premiere) whose majestic Alpine scenery, Julie Andrews' hilltop-spinning ex-nun and classic score has penetrated most people's consciousness to the point that it will never be erased.

Perky governess turns dysfunctional Austrian family into a happy, wholesome unit with Nazis baying at the door – what's not to like?

In the '70s, musicals became cool, from peace-love-and-hippies romp *Hair* to Kander & Ebb's divine *Cabaret* to the freaky cult of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*

## 'Moulin Rouge and Chicago put musicals back on the map'

(also a UK HD premiere). But after *Grease* came a few genre-killers (*Annie*, *Can't Stop The Music*) and musicals entered a fallow period. The '80s and '90s were grim – although there were signs that the pulse was still beating, including Dolly Parton-Burt Reynolds romp *The Best Little Whorehouse In Texas* and a film version of the Gilbert & Sullivan swashbuckler *The Pirates Of Penzance*.

But just when the fat lady was finally set to sing, two razzle-dazzle saviours arrived. *Moulin Rouge* was a combination of pop lyrics, classic inspiration (opera *La Bohème*) and star power, while *Chicago* transcended its stage origins to become a glitzy fantasy with zippy turns from Renée Zellweger and Catherine Zeta-Jones. Musical was back on the map, letting Hollywood clasp the genre back to its crowd-pleasing bosom. Coming soon are *Hairspray 2* plus Daniel Day-Lewis and Nicole Kidman in Rob Marshall's *Chicago* follow-up, *Nine*. Love or loathe 'em, it seems movie musicals are set to twist and shout for a little while longer...



**HD** The fat lady sings: John Travolta added padding for *Hairspray*.

## MUSICALS WEEK

SKYMOVIESMODERNGREATSHD  
MON 20 – SUN 26 OCTOBER  
ON 24 HOURS A DAY, FOR A WEEK

### MON 20

5.45pm **THE KING AND I**  
8pm **GREASE**  
10pm **GREASE 2**

### TUES 21

7.05am **OKLAHOMA!**  
4.20pm **LOUISIANA PURCHASE**  
6.15pm **FUNNY FACE**  
8pm **THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW**  
9.45pm **DREAMGIRLS**

### WEDS 22

6.05pm **HOLIDAY INN**  
8pm **THE SOUND OF MUSIC**  
11.05pm **GREASE**  
1.10am **IDLEWILD**  
3.25am **PIRATES OF PENZANCE**

### THURS 23

5.45pm **CAROUSEL**  
8pm **HAIRSPRAY**  
10.05pm **PAINT YOUR WAGON**

### FRI 24

6pm **GREASE**  
8pm **WEST SIDE STORY**  
10.35pm **THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW**

### SAT 25

6.25pm **LOVE ME TENDER**  
8pm **DREAMGIRLS**  
10.15pm **WEST SIDE STORY**

### SUN 26

5.30pm **DOCTOR DOLITTLE**  
8pm **THE SOUND OF MUSIC**  
11pm **HAIRSPRAY**  
1am **THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS**

For all other times, please see the October A-Z listings on pages 32-41

## Make a song and dance about HD...

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, YOU CAN SEE **THE SOUND OF MUSIC**, **THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW** AND **WEST SIDE STORY** IN GLORIOUS HD AS THEY MAKE THEIR UK HD PREMIERES!