

# *Broadway is back and business is booming*

As tourism surges in the summer months, Broadway ticket sales augment, show turnover resumes frequency and COVID-19 safety protocols loosen.

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Civilians wait in line to purchase Broadway tickets from a TKTS ticket booth. Edén Leavey



By **Edén Leavey**

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NEW YORK CITY – It has been over two years since Broadway shut down due to the rapid spread of COVID-19 March 12, 2020. As the ebb and flow of the pandemic began to settle and tourism rose, theaters lifted safety protocols and welcomed full houses into their seats at long last.

During the 2018-2019 season, Broadway supported nearly 97,000 jobs, according to [Times Square NYC](#). When Broadway closed, many were severely impacted by a lack of financial stability.

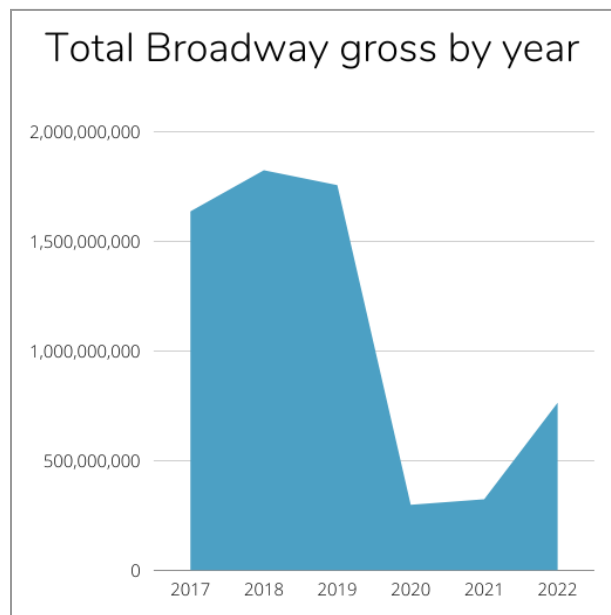
TKTS ticket seller Kuji Kelly said these summer months will be imperative for the recovery process of the industry and its artists since theaters tend to “jack up the prices” of tickets because of the increase in tourism.

This year’s Tony Awards, in particular, held June 12, caused a huge uptick in ticket sales for Broadway, said Vice President of Communications at Times Square Alliance TJ Witham.

As for Times Square itself, Witham said “we are definitely back and hitting our numbers on a regular basis.” He said Times Square Alliance, a business improvement district, tracks pedestrian counts. The area saw an average of 420,000 people come through from July 15 to 17, which is 9.8% higher than that same window of time in 2019.

Native New Yorker Rew Starr, a woman handing out flyers on West 52nd Street for the musical “Funny Girl,” hosts a rockstar talk show entitled [“Rew & Who”](#) and is a third-generation artist herself. Starr said though cases are on the upswing due to the B5 Omicron subvariant, tickets are still being sold and theaters are operating at full capacity.

She said theaters have recently been successful at maintaining larger audiences because when a COVID-19 outbreak occurs within a cast, there are more working understudies to fill in that were not available six months ago.



After a plunge in sales, Broadway has recently been on an upswing. Data per [Broadway World](#)

Theater enthusiast Brett Rubin said she has grown up watching Broadway shows. Now that theaters are up and running, “I want to make sure I see ‘Company’ before it closes,” said Rubin while standing in line for tickets.

Echoing Rubin, Starr said many productions are coming and going, which means that Broadway is in a position to resume its frequent turnover, bringing in larger audiences.

Although COVID-19 is becoming less threatening to theater operations, some theatergoers remain uncomfortable returning to their seats. Kelly said she has spoken to people who expressed reluctance to attend a Broadway show with theaters being mask-optional and at full capacity.

Nonetheless, Rubin said lifting various safety protocols will not discourage her and the majority of theatergoers from attending shows as vaccination rates in New York are high and individuals can make the personal choice to wear a mask.

Rubin said the unique experience of watching shows in person will ultimately draw Broadway’s audience back to its theaters.

“Everyone binged Netflix and got really used to seeing stuff on TV,” she said. “But I don’t think there’s any replacement for live theatre.”