



# The Impossible Musical: The "Man of La Mancha" Story

*Dale Wasserman*

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(Applause Books). Man of La Mancha is arguably the most popular musical drama of all time, most recently on Broadway starring Brian Stokes Mitchell. Dale Wasserman, however, had more trouble getting it on to a Broadway stage than Don Quixote ever had with those damn windmills. For centuries, writers all over the world had tried to stage Cervantes' comic masterpiece, and all had failed. On a sabbatical to Spain in the late 1950s, screenwriter-stage director Dale Wasserman had the insight to change that Don Quixote the novel was too rambling to be dramatized, but the almost equally incredible story of the novel's creator wasn't. Wasserman wrote, first, a tv drama of Man of La Mancha (Cervantes is the Man, not Quixote, by the way), which David Susskind produced as "I, Don Quixote." What happened next, and for the next several decades, to this remarkable drama is an incredible drama in its own right. Many writers tried to get Wasserman to contribute to an "official" account of the making of Man of La Mancha , but Wasserman knew he was the only writer who both knew all the facts, all the facets, and would eventually get around to writing the story as it should be written, as both a "making of" and a "commentary on the state of" story. From the Costa Del Sol to Hollywood, Broadway and beyond, with a host of spectacular people, including Ava Gardner, Colleen Dewhurst (whom Wasserman discovered for La Mancha ) and John Huston, this is the full story of Man of La Mancha , before Broadway and beyond. Included is the full script of the original TV version, "I, Don Quixote."

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