One of the things that I love the most about my profession is that research never ends. Every worthwhile production that comes along takes me back to the library, the bookstore, the museum, or - in this instance - the silver screen.

The silver lining of the past two years, when so many theatre projects had to be postponed, was that I had plenty of time to revisit my favorite noir films and to watch many more for the very first time.

I started out with the genre-defining classics by Billy Wilder, Nicholas Ray, and Fritz Lang. Then I watched several dazzling movies by Ida Lupino, the only woman director in old Hollywood who had the opportunity to leave her mark on the noir genre. I revisited more recent neo-noir masterpieces by Lawrence Kasdan and Stephen Frears. And then I sailed overseas with the genre, and discovered: the French masterpieces of the 1950s, directed by Louis Malle and Jules Dassin; the Japanese jewels of the 1960s, directed by Akira Kurosawa and Masahiro Shinida; and the grimy but powerful British contributions of the 1980s, directed by John Mackenzie and Neil Jordan. Thanks to the Criterion Channel and Amazon Prime, I think I ended-up watching several hundred noir and neo-noir movies. Silver lining, indeed!

Here, in chronological order, are the posters for ten great movies, the ones that proved to be most helpful - to me and to our creative team - in bringing Noir, the musical, to life on stage.
**The Hitch-Hiker**

Directed by Ida Lupino, 1953


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**Elevator to the Gallows**

Directed by Louis Malle, 1958

The movie that made Jeanne Moreau a star. It features an innovative and influential soundtrack composed by Miles Davis.

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**Vertigo**

Directed by Alfred Hitchcock, 1958

The haunting “green light” sequence (you can look it up on YouTube) informed Alexander Dodge’s set design and Ben Stanton’s lighting in our production.

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**Pale Flower**

Directed by Masahiro Shinoda, 1964

Haunting. Impeccably composed. A movie that unfolds like a kinesthetic woodblock print.

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**Body Heat**

Directed by Lawrence Kasdan, 1981

From Lana Turner in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* to Kathleen Turner in *Body Heat*, the more conniving the femme fatale, the more likely that she will be dressed in white.

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**Mona Lisa**

Directed by Neil Jordan, 1986

I love this gritty thriller, featuring Bob Hoskins and Cathy Tyson, even more than Jordan’s acclaimed and very popular *The Crying Game*, from 1992.

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**The Grifters**

Directed by Stephen Frears, 1990

I think that few film actresses get the opportunity to go to the scary places that Anjelica Huston braves in *The Grifters*. The Los Angeles setting - the nefarious doings set in seedy motels - influenced the set design and even some of the fight choreography in *Noir*. 