

STRAIGHT FROM NEW YORK

From the restless avenues of New York, where capital and culture collide in equal measure, Avantika views India's wealth story through a global lens. This column offers a glimpse into the minds shaping tomorrow's capital, culture, and legacy, fringed with entertainment and layered with depth.

the ECONOMICS *of* APPLAUSE

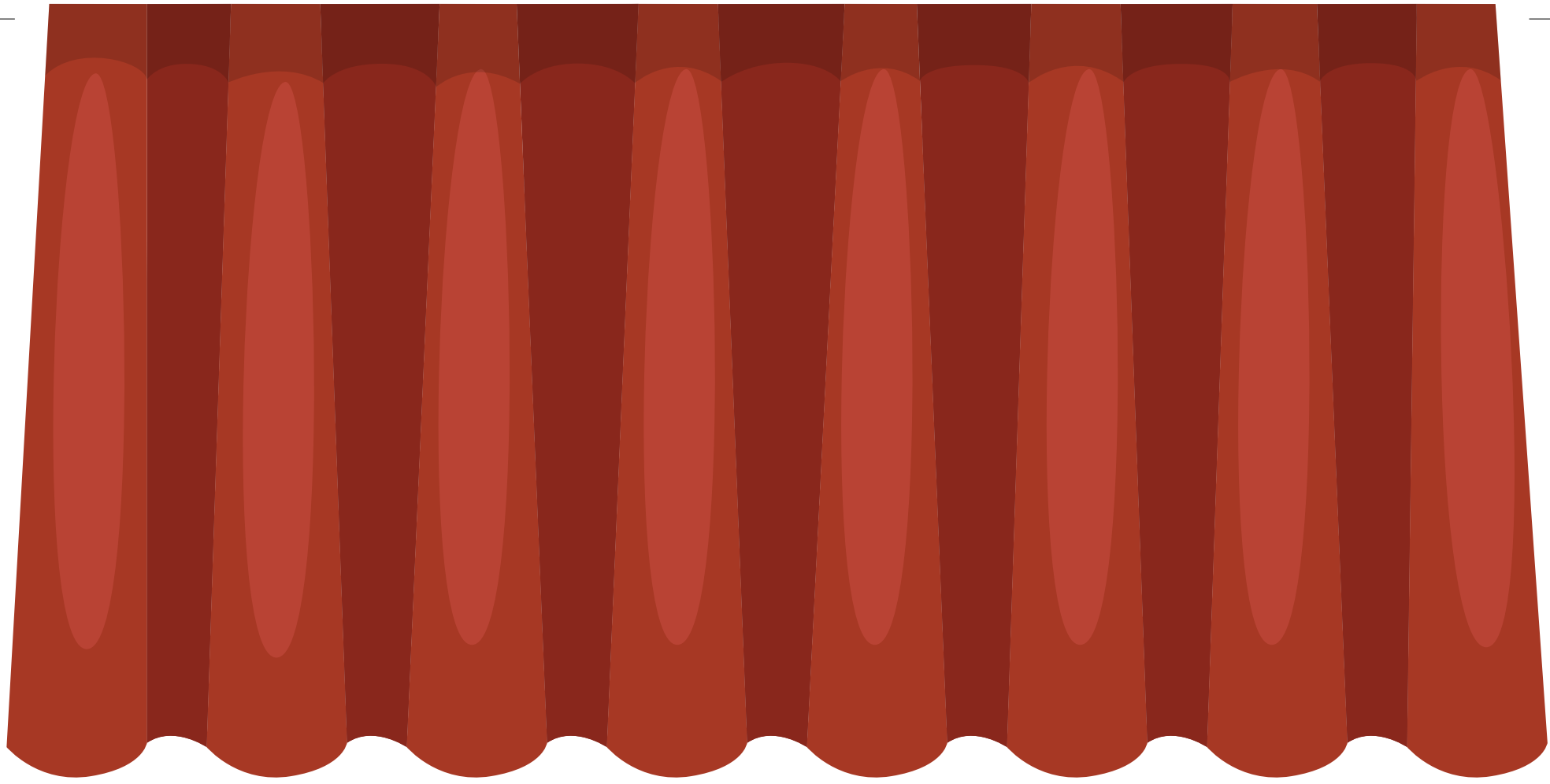
Broadway is undeniably my greatest temptation in New York City. More than the restaurants I bookmarked, more than the galleries and parks I promised myself I would return to, it was the pull of those theatres beyond my campus that defined my first months in the city.

As a freshman, going to the theatre often felt like an indulgence, an evening taken, a deadline stretched, time spent in a way that felt difficult to justify within the logic of college schedules and measurable outcomes. Still, over the course of the semester, I watched Wicked, Aladdin, The Great Gatsby, &Juliet, and Chess. On the surface, these productions offered exactly what one expects from Broadway: spectacle, scale, and applause carefully timed to signal success. Yet their repetition, night after night, began to feel unresolved. Despite running for years and relying on stories many audiences already knew, tickets remained scarce. Revivals returned with renewed enthusiasm. The theatres stayed full. I began to wonder what exactly was being sustained here, and why I kept returning to it myself.

Beneath the glamour of Broadway sat a structure built around endurance. This was visible not only in the length of runs, but in how continuity itself was handled. Familiar stories returned largely intact, shaped through careful casting rather than reinvention. In other cases, performers carried histories with them onto the stage, linking present productions to earlier versions. These choices did not aim to surprise but rather they aimed to be recognised.

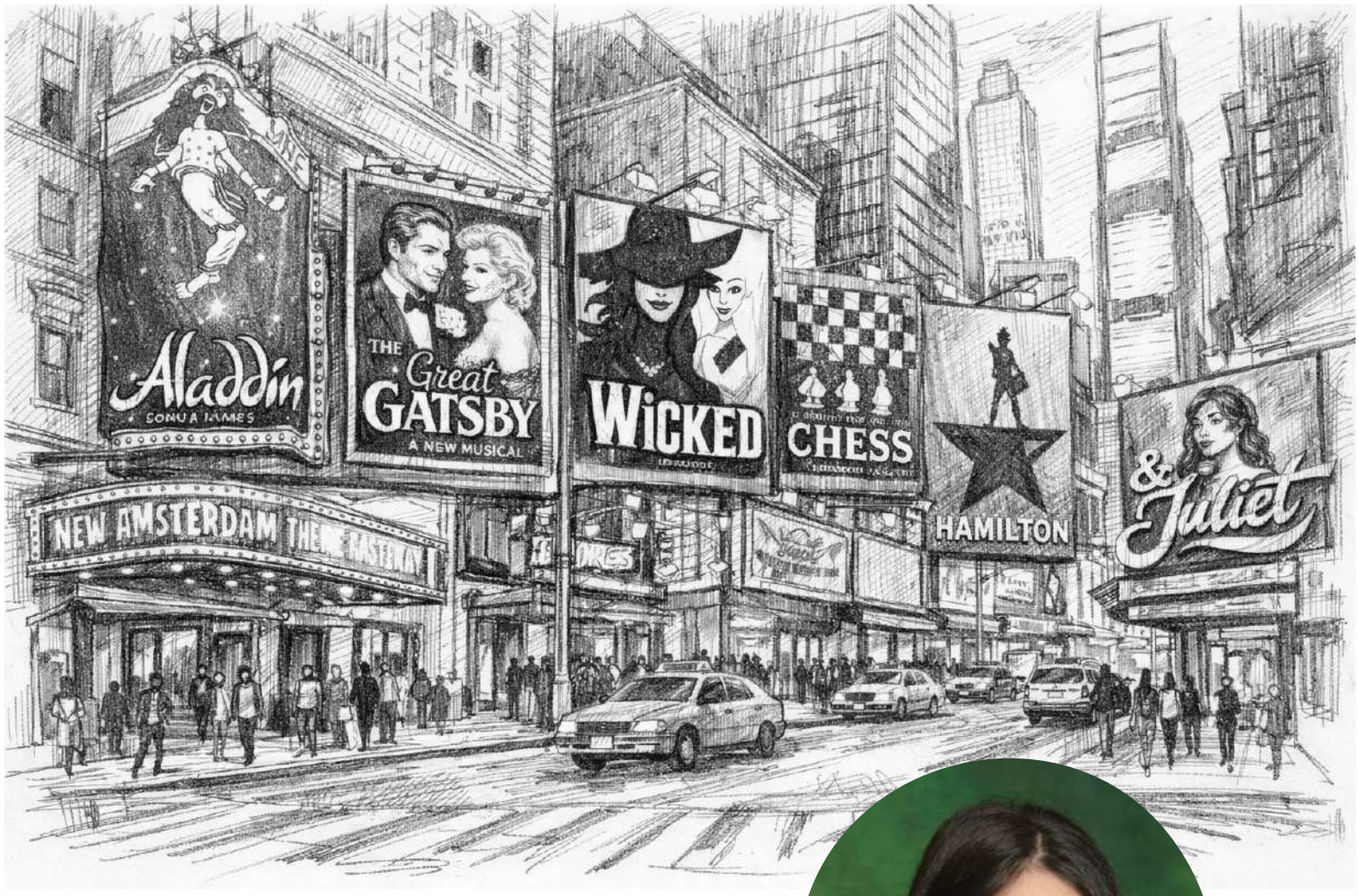
At the same time, access remained limited. Tickets were difficult to secure even for long-running shows. Attendance did not deplete with familiarity, nor did repetition seem to dilute demand.

What struck me most was how naturally loss was absorbed. Productions closed quietly, making space for others to take their place. Failure was not treated as disruption, but as part of the district's rhythm. The theatre continued regardless, sustained by the assumption that not everything needed to succeed for something to endure.



The (not so) curious case of Hamilton

Hamilton, one of Broadway's most successful productions, reveals what happens when patience is held. Long after its initial surge of cultural attention, the production remains difficult to access. Demand has not softened with familiarity; it has settled into permanence. The show no longer feels as though it is running its course, but as though it has entered a different phase of its life. What sustains this demand is not novelty. The production does not rely on spectacle alone, nor does it constantly refresh itself to remain visible. Continuity is preserved deliberately. For example, this season, the presence of an original cast member (Leslie Odom Jr. as Aaron Burr) subtly reinforces lineage, anchoring the current performance to earlier iterations without slipping into nostalgia. Beyond the theatre, Hamilton exists across multiple forms at once. Touring productions extend its reach. Licensing allows it to be reinterpreted in new contexts. Its presence in educational spaces ensures its narrative continues to circulate beyond the stage. The work no longer depends solely on nightly performances to assert relevance. It has become something that travels and accumulates presence rather than exhausting it. In this sense, Hamilton's value does not lie in opening-night success, nor even in sustained applause. What endures is the structure surrounding it, the ownership of narrative, protection of rights, and the ability to unfold over time without dilution. Its longevity suggests that what Broadway sustains is not attention, but cultural capital capable of compounding quietly.





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Familiarity does not diminish demand. Instead, it invites return. Audiences arrive not to be surprised, but to participate in stories they already trust. The work lies not in invention, but in execution that maintains a balance between preservation and reinterpretation. Slowly, a pattern emerges. Broadway favours assets that can be revisited without being exhausted. It accepts risk and absorbs failure, thereby allowing success to unfold gradually. Value is not extracted quickly; it is cultivated over time.

Seen from this lens, Broadway begins to resemble something far beyond entertainment. It models a way of thinking about value that resonates deeply with how legacy wealth is preserved rather than spent. The most enduring assets, whether cultural, financial or institutional, are rarely those that chase attention. They are the ones designed to last, stewarded carefully across time, protected from dilution, and allowed to mature in public view. Returning to India, this distinction feels increasingly relevant. As Indian wealth grows more confident and globally engaged, the question is no longer how to acquire more, but how to sustain meaning across generations.

Broadway offers no direct answers, but it does offer a framework:

- Invest in what can endure familiarity
- Protect what has already earned belief
- Accept that not all value reveals itself immediately

Applause fades quickly. What remains is what has been built to last once the noise disappears. Broadway understands this instinctively. In allowing stories to repeat, to fail, to return, and to persist, it reminds us that the most valuable forms of capital are those that compound quietly, long after the curtain falls.