

# THE MIKADO *to* MATILDA

---

---

*British Musicals on the  
New York Stage*



THOMAS S. HISCHAK

# *The Mikado to Matilda*

**OTHER ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD BOOKS BY THOMAS S. HISCHAK**

*Boy Loses Girl: Broadway's Librettists*

*The Disney Song Encyclopedia, with Mark A. Robinson*

*The Encyclopedia of Film Composers*

*Enter the Players: New York Actors in the Twentieth Century*

*Enter the Playmakers: Directors and Choreographers on the New York Stage*

*The Jerome Kern Encyclopedia*

*1939: Hollywood's Greatest Year*

*1927: A Day-by-Day Chronicle of the the Jazz Age's Greatest Year*

*Noel, Tallulah, Cole, and Me: A Memoir of Broadway's Golden Age by John C. Wilson,  
co-edited with Jack Macauley*

*Off-Broadway Musicals since 1919: From Greenwich Village Follies to The Toxic  
Avenger*

*The 100 Greatest American and British Animated Feature Films*

*The 100 Greatest American Plays*

*Theatre as Human Action: An Introduction to Theatre Arts*

*Through the Screen Door: What Happened to the Broadway Musical When It Went to  
Hollywood*

*The Woody Allen Encyclopedia*

# *The Mikado to Matilda*

## **British Musicals on the New York Stage**

Thomas S. Hischak

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD  
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London



Published by Rowman & Littlefield  
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.  
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706  
www.rowman.com

6 Tinworth Street, London, SE11 5AL, United Kingdom

Copyright © 2020 by The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.

*All rights reserved.* No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote passages in a review.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Names: Hischak, Thomas S., 1951– author.

Title: The Mikado to Matilda : British musicals on the New York stage / Thomas S. Hischak.

Description: Lanham : Rowman & Littlefield, 2020. | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "In *The Mikado to Matilda: British Musical*s on the New York Stage, Thomas Hischak provides an overview of British musicals that made their way to Broadway, covering their entire history up to the present day"— Provided by publisher.


Identifiers: LCCN 2019049304 (print) | LCCN 2019049305 (ebook) | ISBN 9781538126066 (cloth) | ISBN 9781538126073 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Musicals—Great Britain—History and criticism. | Musicals—Performances—New York (State)—New York—History.

Classification: LCC ML1731 .H57 2020 (print) | LCC ML1731 (ebook) | DDC 792.6/45097471—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019049304>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019049305>

™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

For Kurt Gänzl,  
whose decades of research and writing about  
British musicals made this book possible



# Contents

Preface: Andrew Lloyd Who?	ix
Acknowledgments	xiii
Chronological List of Musicals	xv
A Brief History of the British Musical on the New York Stage	xix
THE MUSICALS, A-Z	1
Guide to Recordings, Films, and Videos	295
Bibliography	315
Index	319
About the Author	331



# Preface

## *Andrew Lloyd Who?*

Consider this fairy tale:

Once upon a time there was no such thing as the musical theatre until the Americans invented it. In the late 1800s and the early 1900s there were lots of old-fashioned musicals with old-fashioned songs, but audiences didn't know any better and enjoyed them. Then Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, the Gershwins, and other musical geniuses wrote better songs, but their musicals are hardly ever done anymore, except *Anything Goes* and *Annie Get Your Gun*. Then along came Rodgers and Hammerstein, who brought a lot of class and a lot of serious stuff to the musical, but that was all right because there were still musical comedies like *Guys and Dolls* and *Damn Yankees*, so the musical was doing fine. By the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s, some musicals started getting really serious, but that was mostly Stephen Sondheim's fault, and at least there was *Annie* and *La Cage aux Folles*. Then a weird thing happened: the British starting making good musicals. And they were very popular on Broadway, which was more than a little upsetting, because it was like the British showing up at Lexington and Concord all over again. Suddenly, *Cats* and *The Phantom of the Opera* were the biggest hits on Broadway, which didn't seem kosher. And some of these British musicals weren't really British, like the French-British *Miss Saigon* or the Scandinavian-British *Mamma Mia!* Luckily, this invasion lost steam, because even Andrew Lloyd Webber ran out of hit musicals. By the turn of the new century, there were fewer London musicals. *The Producers* and *Wicked* opened, and the big hits were American once again. By the second decade of the twenty-first century, there was the occasional *Billy Elliot* and such, but most of the shows were American, and some were even hip-hop and rap, but that was okay because it reflected America's national diversity. The musical theatre was saved. And it lived happily ever after.

While there is hardly any truth to this fairy tale, it is the scenario that many American theatregoers actually believe. It would take several books to untangle all the inaccuracies in such a fable, but this book aims to clear up one widely held misconception: the role of the British musical in the American theatre.

Just as the only theatre in the colonies was British theatre, so too, just about all of the musicals seen on Broadway for many years were from London. Ballad operas, comic operettas, and musical comedies from Great Britain filled the New York theatres for decades in the nineteenth century and continued to do so up through World War One.

The idea that *The Black Crook* in 1866 was the first American musical is true up to a point. Its combination of spectacle, dance, songs, and story was unique, and it laid the groundwork for the later all-American musicals. But there were dozens of British musicals before and after *The Black Crook* that captivated American audiences. For much of the history of the New York theatre, the idea of theatregoing without British musicals was unthinkable. So many hits came from London that for many New Yorkers the only kind of successful book musical was a British one. The American revues, such as the *Ziegfeld Follies*, and comic farces with songs, such as the Harrigan and Hart shows, were widely popular, but for a plot with hummable songs, one turned to the English imports. Only the fast-paced musicals by George M. Cohan early in the century gave the British a run for their money. In fact, the Cohan shows were anti-British (the villain was usually an Englishman putting on airs) and emphasized American-sounding songs. The Princess Musicals in the 1910s were also strong on plot and tuneful scores (most by composer Jerome Kern), but they had librettos and lyrics by Guy Bolton (raised in England) and the Brit P. G. Wodehouse, and they were closer to London musicals than a Cohan show. Not until the 1920s, when there were more Broadway musicals than in any decade before or since, was the American musical starting to dominate the genre in New York.

Because so few London musicals were imported to New York in the 1940s and 1950s, it was a bit of a surprise when a British production was a big hit in New York in the 1960s. Musicals like *Oliver!* and *Half a Sixpence* were exceptions, not the rule. By the late 1970s, so many Broadway hits were from London that there was actual panic over the United States losing its place as the source of the greatest stage musicals. Those American theatregoers with short memories or no sense of history saw the British on Broadway as upstarts. Even worse, the younger generation of musical lovers were more captivated by *The Phantom of the Opera* than *South Pacific*, which to some meant the beginning of the end of the American musical. Balance was restored in the new century, and the situation now is closer to that of the distant past, when American and British musicals played side by side on Broadway and the importing of overseas musicals moved in both directions.

While theatre artists tend to fade away, the musicals—at least the best of them—have a habit of sticking around. Theatregoers who today ask Noel Who? will someday be joined by a generation that asks Andrew Lloyd Who? Very few British songwriters have a long shelf life unless they are pop or rock stars. Similarly, so many of the British musicals and their creators who enthralled Americans in the distant past are long forgotten now. Of course, the same can be said for American musicals of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. That is where this book comes in. The aim is to describe the British musicals of the past and the present as they were appreciated or neglected once they reached New York. We have selected 110 British musicals to describe and to compare their success (or lack of it) in New York and London. There will be surprises along the way. Just as certain popular American shows did not go over well in the West End, so too there are London hit musicals that flopped in America. Just as surprising, some London musicals were even more successful in New York than they were back home. We will also look at the changes that were made to the British musicals when they were reworked for Broadway audiences. In some cases, the very Britishness of

the show was discarded to make the musical more American. Just as often, it was that very Britishness that was so appealing to New York theatregoers. We have not included foreign musicals that came to Broadway by way of Britain; *Irma La Douce* and *Les Misérables* were already hits in France before translated and adapted by British craftsmen. Yet *Miss Saigon*, which was written by French songwriters but put together and premiered in London, is included. In some cases, there have been thoroughly British musicals, such as *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Sail Away*, that actually premiered in New York before opening in London and we have included them.

According to the above fairy tale, all is right with the American musical because it is, mostly, American. But much of the richness of musical theatre is lost if one does not consider the impact the British musical has made over the past two centuries. And is still making. The art of musical theatre is not exclusive to either Great Britain or the United States. We may be divided by our common language, as George Bernard Shaw once wryly stated, but we are unified by our musicals.





# Acknowledgments

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to my wife and proofreader Cathy Hischak. Thanks also to Jessica McCleary, John Cerullo, and Deni Remsberg at Rowman & Littlefield, and to the staff at Photofest. A very special thanks to Stephen Ryan, who has edited and guided me through fourteen books at Rowman & Littlefield.



# Chronological List of Musicals

Dates are those of the American premiere.

*The Beggar's Opera* (1750)  
*The Bohemian Girl* (1844)  
*The Lily of Killarney* (1868)  
*Trial by Jury* (1875)  
*Cox and Box* (1879)  
*H.M.S. Pinafore* (1879)  
*The Sorcerer* (1879)  
*The Pirates of Penzance* (1880)  
*Patience* (1881)  
*Iolanthe* (1882)  
*Rip Van Winkle* (1882)  
*Princess Ida* (1884)  
*The Mikado* (1885)  
*Erminie* (1886)  
*Dorothy* (1887)  
*Ruddigore* (1887)  
*The Yeomen of the Guard* (1888)  
*The Gondoliers* (1890)  
*The Red Hussar* (1890)  
*The Mountebanks* (1893)  
*Utopia (Limited)* (1894)  
*A Gaiety Girl* (1894)  
*Little Christopher Columbus* (1894)  
*The Shop Girl* (1895)  
*An Artist's Model* (1895)  
*The Geisha* (1896)  
*The Circus Girl* (1897)  
*The French Maid* (1897)  
*In Town* (1897)  
*A Runaway Girl* (1898)  
*Florodora* (1900)  
*San Toy* (1900)  
*The Messenger Boy* (1901)  
*A Chinese Honeymoon* (1902)

*The Toreador* (1902)  
*A Country Girl* (1902)  
*The Girl from Kays* (1903)  
*Three Little Maids* (1903)  
*Sergeant Brue* (1905)  
*The Catch of the Season* (1905)  
*The Earl and the Girl* (1905)  
*The Belle of Mayfair* (1906)  
*The Spring Chicken* (1906)  
*My Lady's Maid* (1906)  
*Tom Jones* (1907)  
*The Orchid* (1907)  
*The Girl behind the Counter* (1907)  
*Miss Hook of Holland* (1907)  
*The Belle of Brittany* (1909)  
*Havana* (1909)  
*The Arcadians* (1910)  
*The King of Cadonia* (1910)  
*The Quaker Girl* (1911)  
*The Sunshine Girl* (1913)  
*The Girl from Utah* (1914)  
*Chu Chin Chow* (1917)  
*The Maid of the Mountains* (1918)  
*Monsieur Beaucaire* (1919)  
*Good Morning, Judge* (1919)  
*Battling Buttler* (1923)  
*Charlot's Revue* (1925)  
*This Year of Grace* (1928)  
*Bitter Sweet* (1929)  
*Conversation Piece* (1934)  
*Tonight at 8:30* (1936)  
*Set to Music* (1939)  
*Under the Counter* (1947)  
*The Boy Friend* (1954)  
*Salad Days* (1958)  
*At the Drop of a Hat* (1959)  
*Valmouth* (1960)  
*Sail Away* (1961)  
*Stop the World—I Want to Get Off* (1962)  
*Oliver!* (1963)  
*Oh, What a Lovely War!* (1964)  
*The Roar of the Greasepaint—The Smell of the Crowd* (1965)  
*Half a Sixpence* (1965)  
*Pickwick* (1965)  
*Canterbury Tales* (1969)  
*Jesus Christ Superstar* (1972)  
*The Rocky Horror Show* (1975)

*Side by Side by Sondheim* (1977)  
*Evita* (1979)  
*A Day in Hollywood—A Night in the Ukraine* (1980)  
*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (1981)  
*Cats* (1982)  
*Song and Dance* (1985)  
*Me and My Girl* (1986)  
*Jerome Kern Goes to Hollywood* (1986)  
*Starlight Express* (1987)  
*The Phantom of the Opera* (1988)  
*Chess* (1988)  
*Privates on Parade* (1989)  
*Aspects of Love* (1990)  
*Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* (1990)  
*Miss Saigon* (1991)  
*Return to the Forbidden Planet* (1991)  
*Five Guys Named Moe* (1992)  
*Blood Brothers* (1993)  
*Sunset Boulevard* (1994)  
*Mamma Mia!* (2001)  
*By Jeeves* (2001)  
*Taboo* (2003)  
*The Woman in White* (2005)  
*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (2005)  
*Mary Poppins* (2006)  
*Billy Elliot* (2008)  
*Matilda* (2013)  
*School of Rock* (2015)  
*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2017)



# A Brief History of the British Musical on the New York Stage

Charleston's *South Carolina Gazette* announced in 1735 that the opera *Flora; or, Hob in the Well* would be performed in the courthouse on Tuesday, 18 February, along with a pantomime and a dance performance. This is the earliest record of a work of musical theatre in the colonies. It was, of course, British. Just as theatre in the New World was European theatre, so too musical entertainments were from abroad. Original forms of American music can trace their roots to the eighteenth century, but it takes quite a long time for homegrown musical theatre to fully develop its own character and style. There are instances of some American musicals as far back as 1767, the same year that the first play written by an American-born playwright (*The Prince of Parthia* by Thomas Godfrey) was produced. But for the most part, the musicals that colonists saw were products from Great Britain. The most popular form of musical at the time was the ballad opera, a more accessible form of opera, with dialogue scenes, individual songs that were sometimes already known to the audience, and a strong plot. Of all the ballad operas to play in the colonies in the eighteenth century, none was more popular than John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. It was first performed in England in 1728 and was an immediate success, revived in London and the provinces throughout the rest of the century. The first production of *The Beggar's Opera* in America was not until 1750 in New York City, and it eventually became a staple with theatres across the colonies except in puritanical New England.

By the end of the century, comic operas were finding a niche in theatres both in Britain and America. These were closer to musical comedies yet were still operatic, with recitatives and many of the conventions of opera. What made them so popular was their lighter plots and farcical characters, usually played by favorite stage comedians. In 1796, a notable comic opera, *The Sicilian Romance; or, The Spectre of the Cliffs*, opened in New York. It had been a hit in London and was brought to America by Lewis Hallam Jr. (The Hallams were pioneers in touring plays and musicals in the colonies before the Revolutionary War, and the son continued the practice in the new nation.) As would happen often over the next 130 years, the British score for *The Sicilian Romance* was replaced by American songs. It was the first, and far from the last, time a London success was Americanized for New Yorkers. The nineteenth century saw more and more British musicals finding audiences in New York. A good example was *Tom & Jerry; or, Life in London* (1823) which was billed as "An Extravaganza Burletta of Fun, Frolic, Fashion, and Flash." The musical was so popular that in 1856 it was remembered well enough to have an American musical counterpart titled *Life in New York; or, Tom and Jerry*



on a Visit. Ironically, the most successful musical from Britain to open in New York before the Civil War was not a ballad opera or a comic opera but the melodramatic operetta *The Bohemian Girl*. It was a sensation in London in 1843 and the next year it thrilled New Yorkers. It and *The Beggar's Opera* are perhaps the only two British musicals before the Civil War to still be performed today with any frequency.

*The Black Crook* (1866) is usually credited as the first truly American musical. That is questionable, but it was the first successful mixture of song, melodrama, dance, and spectacle on a "Broadway" scale. *The Black Crook* featured chorus girls (French ballerinas, no less); tons of scenery and special effects; tuneful songs that changed as needed; and sometimes, during its long run, stars. No British importation had ever come up with something so big. Or so successful. *The Black Crook* ran over a year in its first engagement, toured and returned to New York over the rest of the century, and made more money than any theatrical venture the world had yet seen. Such a juggernaut spawned more American musical spectacles as well as musicals, like *A Trip to Chinatown* (1891), which succeeded on the merits of its story, characters, and songs. But *The Black Crook* did not diminish the number of British musicals crossing the Atlantic and finding a ready audience in New York. Perhaps the most notable of them was the melodramatic musical *The Lily of Killarney* (1868). Its Irish setting and characters were especially appealing to Irish Americans, though, in truth, immigrants in New York were flocking to the more street-savvy, rough-and-tumble musical comedies put on by Edward Harrigan and Tony Hart. Their raucous *Mulligan Guard* series of musical farces in the 1880s were a bold alternative to British musicals. Similarly, Lew Fields and Joe Weber presented their own series of musical burlesques at the turn of the century. Yet neither had much effect on the London imports that reached an all-time high between 1875 and World War One.

The impetus for this golden age of British musical theatre in America was, quite simply, Gilbert and Sullivan. Between 1875 and 1894, these very British, very Victorian artists brought the art of comic operetta to heights it had never seen before or since. Such blockbusters as *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, and *The Gondoliers* were as popular in America as they were throughout the British Commonwealth. This fertile era may have started with Gilbert and Sullivan, but dozens of other artists kept up the momentum and London was flooded with musicals, many of which they sent to New York. Just as George M. Cohan was developing the All-American brand of musical at the turn of the century, various British producers, playwrights, and songwriters were moving the British musical away from operetta to its own kind of musical comedy. Because of the economics of London theatre, several of these musicals were able to run hundreds of performances, some even over a thousand. The popularity of such musicals as *Erminie* (1886), *Florodora* (1900), *The Geisha* (1896), *San Toy* (1900), *A Chinese Honeymoon* (1902), *The Toreador* (1902), *The Arcadians* (1910), *Chu Chin Chow* (1917), and *The Maid of the Mountains* (1918) is remarkable even by today's long-run standards. But these long-run hits did not have Gilbert and Sullivan-like superior quality and very few can be revived today.

The Roaring Twenties saw a record number of homegrown American musicals on Broadway. With the emergence of such new songwriters as the Gershwins, Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Vincent Youmans, E. Y. Harburg, Harold Arlen,

and Oscar Hammerstein, the American musical was a clearly defined and ever-growing art form. London also saw a record number of musicals in the 1920s, but the traffic seemed to be moving mostly eastward across the Atlantic. British playgoers saw plenty of Broadway, but New Yorkers saw little of the West End. Only Noel Coward seemed to find audiences on both continents with his plays, revues, and book musicals. Coward was also able to brave the Depression in the 1930s when the number of musicals in both New York and London dropped considerably. The war years and the rest of the 1940s were a boom time for musicals in both cities. It was the beginning of the golden age for the American musical with *Lady in the Dark* (1940), *Pal Joey* (1940), *Oklahoma!* (1943), *Carousel* (1945), *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), *Brigadoon* (1947), and *South Pacific* (1949). Yet it was also a prodigious period for the British musical, despite the war and postwar recession. The strongest single force in the West End during this time was Ivor Novello. Too little known in the States, he was a dashing film and stage actor and a busy songwriter who gave London seven hit musicals between 1935 and his untimely death in 1951. Not one of them ever came to New York. *The Dancing Years* opened six months before World War Two broke out in 1939 and ran two and a half years before closing only because of so many London air raids. *Perchance to Dream* opened in 1945 and ran 1,022 performances. Novello's other hits during this period were *King's Rhapsody* in 1949 (839 performances) and *Gay's the Word* in 1951 (504 performances). If Novello's musical hits did not interest Broadway, what chance did the other 1940s London musicals have of going to New York?

The 1950s were the glory days for the Broadway musical with such memorable successes as *Guys and Dolls* (1950), *The King and I* (1951), *The Pajama Game* (1954), *Damn Yankees* (1955), *My Fair Lady* (1956), *The Music Man* (1957), *West Side Story* (1957), *The Sound of Music* (1959), *Gypsy* (1959), and many others. All of these plus several more went to London, and the West End was overwhelmed with American musicals. Considering the economic hardships in postwar Britain, the number of English works in the West End and in the developing fringe theatres was significant. But these musicals weren't being exported to America for various reasons. The British excelled in the revue format and audiences loved them. In the 1950s, over sixty musical revues opened in London. But these topical entertainments just did not translate to the New York stage. There was one surprising exception: the two-man revue *At the Drop of a Hat* (1959). Another favorite London pastime was the musical pantomime, which was prevalent during the holiday seasons. Here was a concept Americans did not even know about, much less yearn to see. There were successful book musicals as well, including the long-run champ *Salad Days* with 2,283 performances. But the only musical to travel to Broadway and thrive was *The Boy Friend* (1954). By the 1960s, when the British economy was stronger, music and musicals from Great Britain started to make quite an impact in the States. The Beatles led the invasion in popular music and Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice would, at the very end of the decade, be heard for the first time with the "concept" album *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Broadway saw some West End hits, such as *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off* (1962), *Oliver!* (1963), and *Half a Sixpence* (1965), but the focus was on such American products as *Bye Bye Birdie* (1960), *Camelot* (1960), *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* (1961), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), *Hello, Dolly!* (1964), *Fiddler on*

*the Roof* (1964), *Man of La Mancha* (1966), *Mame* (1966), *Cabaret* (1966), *Hair* (1968), *Promises, Promises* (1968), and *1776* (1969). Once again these and many other Broadway musicals transferred to London.

In the 1970s there was a turnabout on several levels. New York City was in economic crisis, tourism plummeted, the number of offerings on Broadway shrank to an all-time low, and the Theatre District had more crime and empty playhouses than entertainment that wasn't X-rated. Ironically, the quality of the musicals from the 1970s was very high, mostly due to songwriter Stephen Sondheim and director-producer Harold Prince. It may have been a time of rock-bottom business, but, thanks to Sondheim and Prince, it offered *Company* (1970), *Follies* (1971), *A Little Night Music* (1973), *Pacific Overtures* (1976), and *Sweeney Todd* (1979). These were not necessarily hits, but they were artistic high points. The musicals that made money and kept the American musical alive in the 1970s were *Grease* (1972), *Pippin* (1972), *The Magic Show* (1974), *The Wiz* (1975), *Chicago* (1975), *A Chorus Line* (1975), *Annie* (1977), *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (1978), and *Ain't Misbehavin'* (1978). There was also the beginning of what later became known as the British Invasion. Actually, in the 1970s it was more of a surprise than an invasion. After decades of not seeing many British musicals on Broadway, it was unusual to see *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971), *The Rocky Horror Show* (1975), and *Evita* (1979). These were followed in the 1980s with *A Day in Hollywood—A Night in the Ukraine* (1980), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (1981), *Cats* (1982), *Me and My Girl* (1986), *Starlight Express* (1987), *The Phantom of the Opera* (1988), and *Chess* (1988), not to mention the Franco-British *Les Misérables* (1987). Such a lineup can certainly be seen as an invasion, and not everyone on Broadway was happy about it. These musicals were not just West End hits in New York; several were international mega-musicals. Broadway produced many memorable musicals in the 1980s, including such noteworthy works as *Barnum* (1980), *Nine* (1982), *La Cage aux Folles* (1983), *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984), *Big River* (1985), *Into the Woods* (1987), *Grand Hotel* (1989), and *City of Angels* (1989). But there wasn't a mega-musical among them.

The status quo was regained in the 1990s, and since then there seems to be a balance between Broadway and the West End unlike any time in the past. Of course, it is the big spectacular musicals that get all the attention and make all the money, but that is true for the Broadway productions as well as the London ones. For every *Miss Saigon* (1991), *Sunset Boulevard* (1994), *Mamma Mia!* (2001), *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (2005), *Mary Poppins* (2006), *Billy Elliot* (2008), and *Matilda* (2013), there is the American-made *The Lion King* (1997), *Ragtime* (1998), *The Producers* (2001), *Hairspray* (2002), *Wicked* (2003), *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* (2011), and *Aladdin* (2014). The traffic across the Atlantic is now two-way and at any one time, the lists of musicals currently playing in London and in New York will have many of the same titles. While it is still true that a musical that succeeds in one city will not necessarily run in the other, the British musical on Broadway is an expected and accepted part of the theatrical landscape.

# A

## ***THE ARCADIANS***

(1909/1910)

A musical comedy fantasy by Mark Ambient,  
Alexander M. Thompson, and Robert Courtneidge

*Score:* Lionel Monckton, Howard Talbot (music), Arthur Wimperis (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 29 April 1909; Shaftsbury Theatre; 809 performances

*Original New York production:* 17 January 1910; Liberty Theatre; 193 performances

*Notable songs:* The Pipes of Pan (Are Calling); The Girl with the Brogue; Charming Weather; My Motter; All Down Piccadilly; Half Past Two; Arcady Is Always Young; Light Is My Heart; Truth Is So Beautiful; Come to Arcady; The Joy of Life; Back Your Fancy; The Two-Step

A tuneful gem from the Edwardian stage, this London hit managed a run of only seven months in New York yet was the most successful British import of the 1909–1910 Broadway season. *The Arcadians* is considered one of the most satisfying musicals of the era because it is filled with variety: fantasy, satire, romance, spectacle, farce, and a set of songs that remained in favor for decades. Theatre historian Kurt Gänzl put it best when he described the musical as “the most complete of all British Edwardian musical comedies.” The idea for *The Arcadians* originated with the struggling writer Mark Ambient, who went to the successful producer-director Robert Courtneidge, who saw possibilities in Ambient’s premise: an English businessman plucked down into a land where telling an untruth is unheard of. He teamed Ambient with the experienced librettist Alexander M. Thompson and even contributed to the script himself. Courtneidge secured the services of composers Lionel Monckton and Howard Talbot, then at the peak of their careers, and lyricist Arthur Wimperis; together they came up with the delightfully memorable score.

Arcadia is an inaccessible land forgotten by time and hidden somewhere in the snowy North where the inhabitants celebrate the joy of telling the truth and cannot conceive of uttering a lie. The scrappy hotel owner James Smith from London is flying over Arcadia when engine trouble forces him to parachute out of his airplane and land among the happy Arcadians. The citizens are friendly to the stranger until they catch him in several lies and are horrified. To cure Smith, they

dip him in the Well of Truth. Now known as Simplicitas, he is a handsome shepherd who captures the love of the maiden Sombra. Smith has a wife back in London but revels in his new demeanor and looks, which will last only as long as he refrains from telling an untruth. Hearing that London is filled with such wicked tellers of lies, several of the Arcadians accompany Simplicitas and Sombra back to England where they have a series of adventures. Using Sombra's magical powers, Simplicitas wins a horse race at the Askwood racetrack. Various romances are formed, Smith encounters his wife who doesn't recognize him, and the Arcadians open a restaurant in which telling the truth becomes a fad. But Londoners are hopelessly untruthful, and Simplicitas tells a lie and becomes James Smith again. Sombra and the Arcadians give up hope on converting the civilized Brits and return to Arcadia.

The fantastical script is surprisingly logical in its way and is filled with some colorful characters to keep the plot moving, such as the sassy Irish girl Eileen Cavanaugh and the morose jockey Doody, who never wins a race. The libretto also opened up opportunities for two love stories, comic scenes, large production numbers, and some exotic locales. The land of Arcadia was rendered as an idyllic Utopia, with both sets and costumes curiously floral. The Askwood racetrack scene climaxed with an exhausted Simplicitas riding onstage grasping onto the back of the horse "Deuce." Courtneidge's elaborate staging was roundly applauded, as was the cast. Comic actor-singer Dan Rolyat shone as Smith/Simplicitas, the diminutive and bewitching Florence Smithson used her light soprano voice to great effect as Sombra, and the Gaiety Theatre comic Alfred Lester turned the gloomy jockey Doody into a hilarious sad sack. During the run of *The Arcadians*, the producer-director's daughter Cecily Courtneidge made her London stage debut in the cast, eventually playing Eileen and launching a long and memorable stage and screen career.

Much of the success of *The Arcadians* must be attributed to its superior score. Both Monckton and Talbot came up with music that the British public listened to, hummed, and danced to up through World War Two. The score has as much variety as the rest of the production. Three ballads written for Sombra—the bouncy "The Pipes of Pan (Are Calling)," the anthem-like "Arcady Is Always Young," and the buoyant "Light Is My Heart"—were thrilling operatic airs that allowed the coloratura Florence Smithson to shine. Phyllis Dare, as Eileen, stopped the show with her saucy "The Girl with the Brogue" and sparkled in two catchy duets: the up-tempo march "Charming Weather" and minuet-like "Half Past Two." The downhearted jockey Doody had only one song, "My Motter," about his relentlessly cheerful mother, and it was a winner. Perhaps most popular of all was a sing-along ditty titled "All Down Piccadilly," which was added after the musical opened and remained a British favorite for years. Also added during the long run were the dance number "The Two-Step" and the lyrical "Come to Arcady," both of which caught on as well. *The Arcadians'* score is filled with memorable songs, right down to the chorus numbers, and for many these tunes best represent the musical stage of the Edwardian era. *The Arcadians* ran two years and two months, breaking the house record for the Shaftsbury Theatre, then toured the British Isles for the next thirty years. There were also successful productions in Melbourne, Vienna, Bombay, and (atypically) Paris.

	1909 London cast	1910 New York cast
James Smith/Simplicitas	Dan Rolyat	Frank Moulan
Sombra	Florence Smithson	Ethel Cadman
Peter Doody	Alfred Lester	Percival Knight
Eileen Cavanagh	Phyllis Dare	Julia Sanderson
Jack Meadows	Harry Welchman	Alan Mudie
Bobby	Nelson Keys	Alfred Kappeler
Mrs. Smith	Ada Blanche	Connie Ediss
Chrysea	May Kinder	Audrey Maple

*The Arcadians* was such an immediate hit upon opening in London that American producer Charles Frohman wasted no time in buying the rights. The Broadway production opened eight months later and was very similar to the English original. Only music by Monckton and Talbot was used and, although a few numbers were cut, others from the British tour were added. The very-British "All Down Piccadilly" was slightly altered to "Willy of Piccadilly" and was still a showstopper. The script also survived pretty much intact. The role of Mrs. Smith was enlarged to feature comedienne Connie Ediss but the cast of characters remained close to the original. Frank Moulan, a comic star on Broadway since the turn of the century, was a merry Smith/Simplicitas, Ethel Cadman delivered Sombra's ballads with style, and comic Percival Knight delivered "My Motter" as the farcical climax of the third act. The multitalented Julia Sanderson found her first major recognition on Broadway playing the feisty Eileen and singing the waltzing "The Girl with the Brogue." (Four years later, Sanderson would make musical theatre history when she introduced Jerome Kern's "They Didn't Believe Me" in the British import *The Girl from Utah*.)

While *The Arcadians* on Broadway did not enjoy as long a run as the London original, it was a considerable hit and was also very successful during its nationwide tour. The popularity of the songs was also less durable than in Britain. The cockney and Irish flavor of some of the numbers may have limited some of the score's appeal in America. Also the musical never returned to Broadway or received many subsequent productions across the country over the years outside of operetta companies. Despite its fantasy-land setting in the first act, *The Arcadians* is thoroughly British. The citizens of Arcady are described as some kind of noble savages but they have strictly British demeanors and manners. The satirical aspects of the musical, of which there are many, are aimed at Edwardian England. British audiences continued to enjoy the script's W. S. Gilbert-like sarcasm well into the 1920s and 1930s, but a similar nostalgia did not repeat itself in America. With the new musical sounds of Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Hammerstein and Kern, and others, the Broadway musical was coming into its own and a fondness for Edwardian musical comedy faded away. In 1927, a silent film version of *The Arcadians* was made in Britain, directed by Victor Saville with American comic Ben Blue as Simplicitas. The plot was barely recognizable and, of course, there were no songs.

## *AN ARTIST'S MODEL*

(1895)

A musical comedy by Owen Hall

*Score:* Sidney Jones (music), Harry Greenbank (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 2 February 1895; Daly's Theatre; 392 performances

*Original New York production:* 23 December 1895; Broadway Theatre; 56 performances

*Notable songs:* The Gay Tom-Tit; The Lady Wasn't Going That Way; The Laughing Song; Daisy with the Dimple; Is Love a Dream; Mine, Oh Love, at Last; Music and Laughter; The Popular Art of the Day; I Love Only Him; Antici-tici-pation; Queen of the Sea and Earth; Gay Bohemi-ah; My School Is Most Select; Give Me Love

Besides being a substantial hit in its day, *An Artist's Model* is important because it established a tradition of witty, modern, tuneful musical comedies that were built around a romantic singing couple and an equally important secondary comic couple, a pattern that would become very familiar on the musical stage on both sides of the Atlantic. The useful and ingenious structure, like many developments in the theatre, was a happy accident. Producer George Edwardes, flush with his runaway success with *The Gaiety Girl* (1894), reassembled librettist Owen Hall (the nom de plume of journalist Jimmy Davis), composer Sidney Jones, lyricist Harry Greenbank, and leading lady Lottie Venne to present another modern musical farce, this one set in the art world of Paris. Titled *A Naughty Girl*, then later *A Woman's Portrait*, the popular soubrette Venne was cast as Madame Amélie, a Parisian lady "with a past" who, with the British tomboy Daisy Vane, enjoys a series of misadventures in Gay Paree and stodgy London. It was a slight but serviceable vehicle, and the Jones-Greenbank songs filled in the gaps nicely. Before the musical went into rehearsal, Edwardes learned that popular singing star Marie Tempest was returning to England after performing in America for five years. He signed her up posthaste then went to Hall and asked that a new libretto be written with Tempest's talents in mind. Not wishing to lose his "gaiety girl" Venne, Edwardes insisted on keeping the original plot with Madame Amélie, thus featuring two female stars—a classy singer and a comedienne—in his new production. Hall's new storyline ended up being the stronger of the two and actually made the musical unique. Tempest played the title model Adele, who had abandoned her lover, the struggling artist Rudolph, years ago when she married into wealth. She is now a "merry widow" and wishes to rekindle their former romance. The libretto moves effortlessly from this wistful tale to the madcap doings of Daisy on the run from her guardian, Sir George, and Madame Amélie running her unorthodox art studio with her sidekick, Smoggins. Jones and Greenbank wrote some additional songs well suited to Tempest and to the more romantic aspects of the libretto and all seemed to be well.

Because the production was so complicated and the scenery so elaborate (the ballroom setting arrived only hours before the opening night curtain), the

now-titled *An Artist's Model* was the size of two musicals and nearly as long. The first performance ran over four hours and the audience, though delighted with the performers and the songs, became discernibly restless during the book scenes, and the critics' notices the next day were mixed to disparaging. Had the musical not had such a huge advance sale, it might have closed in a week. Instead Edwardes and the creative team immediately went to work cutting scenes and songs, adding new songs, eliminating some characters, and building up others. So many changes were made that the production of *An Artist's Model* playing a few weeks after opening was not only a better show but an outstanding one. The musical was so popular that it had to change theatres twice before it closed thirteen months later. Librettist Hall, who had received the brunt of the poor reviews on opening, must be credited with much of *An Artist's Model's* success. His double plot was both unique and satisfying, showing audiences that musical comedy need not be paper thin in its structure. Hall's script is also filled with a kind of wit reminiscent of W. S. Gilbert, often barely surviving the keen eyes of the censors. One added song, "Queen of the Earth and Sea," was deemed too critical of allies Germany and the Kaiser and had to be altered. Also, the Paris setting lent itself to a kind of non-British *joi de vivre* that audiences expected and secretly enjoyed. Perhaps the original title, *A Naughty Girl*, was still an accurate one.

So many songs were written before and during the run of *An Artist's Model* that an "original score" is not a very useful or accurate term. For example, the musical's most enduring number, the snappy "The Laughing Song," was added later and sung with great success by Maurice Farkoa in the supporting role of Carbonnet. Farkoa not only sang the ditty throughout his career but made several gramophone recordings of it, both in English and in French. It is believed that his 1896 record made in New York City is the first "original cast" recording from a British musical. Two duets written for Tempest and C. Hayden Coffin as Rudolph are first class: the rhapsodic "Mine, Oh Love, at Last" and the lilting "Is Love a Dream." There is a rousing song for the art students, "Gay Bohemi-ah"; Madame Amélie sang about her questionable past in the sly "The Lady Wasn't Going That Way" and about her studio in the wry "My School Is Most Select." There is a playful patter song for Sir George about "The Popular Art of the Day" and a merry trio about "Antici-tici-pation." Letty Lind charmed with "Daisy with the Dimple," but the number most audiences remembered with fondness was her rendition of the fable song "Gay Tom-Tit." All in all, *An Artist's Model* is treasure trove of top-notch songs.

The musical enjoyed a profitable tour and saw several revivals regionally over the next two decades. The format (and often the success) of *An Artist's Model* was repeated in other productions by Edwardes, most memorably *The Geisha* (1896), *A Greek Slave* (1898), *San Toy* (1899), and *A Country Girl* (1902), making for a decade of memorable musical comedy at Daly's. One of London's most prolific producers, Edwardes presented seventy-one musicals between 1885 and his death in 1915. He is credited with first introducing "musical comedy," as opposed to comic operetta, to the British stage. *An Artist's Model* was far from his first hit, or his last.

Before 1895 was over, *An Artist's Model* opened on Broadway, jointly produced by Al Hayman and Charles Frohman with Australian star Nellie Stewart as Adele



	1895 London cast	1895 New York cast
Adele	Marie Tempest	Nellie Stewart
Rudolph Blair	C. Hayden Coffin	John Coates
Daisy Vane	Letty Lind	Marie Studholme
Madame Amélie	Lottie Venne	Christine Mayne
Carbonnet	Maurice Farkoa	Maurice Farkoa
Algernon St. Alban	Joe Farren Souter	Harry Eversfield
Sir George St. Alban	Eric Lewis	Percy Marshall
Lady Barbara Cripps	Leonora Braham	Gladys Homfrey
Maud Cripps	Violet Lloyd	Lucy Golding
Apthorpe	Gilbert Porteus	Gilbert Porteus
Smoggins	William Blakeley	E. W. Garden

and much of the rest of the cast filled with British performers. Maurice Farkoa reprised his Carbonnet, singing “The Laughing Song,” and the score consisted of numbers written before and during the London run. The producers took the best of the many musical options and Broadway audiences heard Jones and Greenbank at their best. The New York production lacked the star power of the British original, so even with favorable reviews *An Artist’s Model* ran only seven weeks, enough to turn a profit and to go on tour. Why Americans did not embrace the show wholeheartedly is debatable. A British musical with a mostly British cast and no major star is an easy answer. Had Marie Tempest chose to return to Broadway as Adele, things might have been different. But another more likely possibility is the French aspect of *An Artist’s Model*. It was unabashedly “naughty” in both of its plots, and the loose Parisian morals displayed in the libretto might have been a touch too Gallic for Victorian-era America, even in New York City. Edwardes’s newfangled kind of British musical comedy would not totally win over Broadway audiences until the next year with his whirlwind hit *The Geisha*.

## ASPECTS OF LOVE

(1989/1990)

A sung-through musical by Charles Hart and Don Black,  
based on the novel by David Garnett

Score: Andrew Lloyd Webber (music), Charles Hart, Don Black (lyrics)

Original London production: 17 April 1989; Prince of Wales Theatre; 1,325 performances

Original New York production: 8 April 1990; Broadhurst Theatre; 377 performances

Notable songs: Love Changes Everything; The First Man You Remember; Seeing Is Believing; She’d Be Far Better Off with You; There Is More to Love; Anything But Lonely; Everybody Loves a Hero; Other Pleasures; A Memory of a Happy Moment; Chanson d’enfance; The Journey of a Lifetime; Falling; Mermaid Song; Hand Me the Wine and the Dice



The actress Rose Vibert (Ann Crumb, far left) and her daughter Jenny (Danielle DuClos) dance to the delight of the aging, sickly George Dillingham (Kevin Colson) in the 1990 Broadway production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "small chamber musical." New Yorkers preferred their Lloyd Webber musicals big, so *Aspects of Love* lost money on Broadway. *Photofest*

What does the most successful theatre composer of the twentieth century do after he has launched the most popular musical of his career? A year after *The Phantom of the Opera* (1988) opened on Broadway, *Aspects of Love*, which Andrew Lloyd Webber described in his autobiography as "my small chamber musical," premiered in London. It was indeed small, particularly in comparison to his previous mega-shows like *Phantom*, *Cats* (1981), and *Starlight Express* (1984). The focus was on a handful of characters over a period of twenty years, the style was realistic and, though it was an exquisitely designed production, *Aspects of Love* was light on spectacle. In the opinion of many, it remains Lloyd Webber's most intimate and satisfying musical. London audiences certainly embraced the romantic drama, allowing it to run over three years; Broadway was less enthralled, and *Aspects of Love* lasted just under a year. Both productions were identical, offering the same director, design, and superb (but starless) cast. And, because of the runaway success of *The Phantom of the Opera*, the new Lloyd Webber musical had a huge box office advance in both London and New York. (It was this advance that kept the show running in New York for its 377 performances.) So why was *Aspects of Love* a hit in the West End and an unprofitable venture on Broadway? Looking at the reviews gives one a hint. The London critics were mostly supportive, encouraging the composer in his efforts to write musical theatre on a more intimate scale. Some of the London notices were even more enthusiastic, claiming *Aspects of Love* to be Lloyd Webber's best work to date. The New York reviews, generally critical of all of the Lloyd Webber musicals, ranged from mixed to disparaging, the *New York Times* going so far as proclaiming

that the musical “generates as much heated passion as a trip to the bank.” This reference to the financial success of the past Lloyd Webber musicals is indicative of the American press, the attitude being that no one that popular can be that good. All the same, other Lloyd Webber musicals ran on Broadway despite negative reviews, most notably *Starlight Express*. Why not *Aspects of Love*?

Perhaps looking at the musical closely might explain its failure in America. Lloyd Webber had been considering musicalizing David Garnett’s 1955 novel *Aspects of Love* for several years. (In 1979 he and Tim Rice were slated to adapt the book into a movie musical but nothing materialized from the plan.) The book was far from a bestseller but gained considerable attention because its complex romantic triangle was supposedly based on the unconventional Bloomsbury Group of writers and artists of which the bisexual Garnett was a member. In post-World War Two Europe, a handsome Englishman, the seventeen-year-old Alexis Dillingham, joins the army when he is “sent down” from boarding school. While on leave he falls in love with the older Rose Vibert, a struggling actress forced to play provincial towns. He invites her to his rich Uncle George’s empty villa while she waits for her next acting job, and the two have a passionate affair that is interrupted by the unexpected arrival of George. Although he has a bisexual mistress in Paris, the sculptress Giulietta Trapani, George is also swept away by the free-spirited Rose, and eventually she drops Alexis and weds George. Years later they have a thirteen-year-old daughter, Jenny, who is a life spirit like her mother, now a successful stage actress. When Alexis is reunited with the family, his passion for Rose is rekindled, but he also finds himself falling in love with the young Jenny, especially when she returns his affections. This development causes such a strain that the now elderly and sickly George has a fatal heart attack. Alexis realizes a relationship with his cousin Jenny is impossible and that life with Rose would be a perpetual torment; thus, he ends up in the arms of the wily Giulietta. The libretto for the musical version of *Aspects of Love* follows the novel closely, making only a few changes, such as renaming the hero Alex and making Jenny fifteen years old. The complexity of the characters was retained and their sometimes self-destructive natures even embellished when musicalized. These are very confused and frustrated people who either connect with you emotionally or become tiresome over the plot period of twenty years.

As with the previous Lloyd Webber musicals, *Aspects of Love* was sung-through, Don Black and Charles Hart providing a kind of conversational recitative between the actual songs. Such an artificial kind of dialogue seemed more palatable in a period piece like *The Phantom of the Opera* than in a modern tale like *Aspects of Love*, and some critics and theatregoers found the musical banter between songs irritating. This “chamber musical” featured a small cast of characters and scenic elements were on a smaller scale, yet Maria Björnson, who had designed *Phantom*, created sets and costumes that were so ravishing to behold that the production seemed bigger than it needed to be. (Later productions done on a smaller scale would end up being closer to Lloyd Webber’s original intent.) *Aspects of Love* was directed with delicacy by Trevor Nunn and the cast was roundly applauded. Michael Ball (Alex), Ann Crumb (Rose), Kevin Colson (George), and Kathleen Rowe McAllen (Giulietta) were not box office names, but their performances were so thrilling that Lloyd Webber insisted on all four reprising their roles on Broadway.

The score for *Aspects of Love* has been championed as one of the composer's best. The musical's theme song, "Love Changes Everything," was recorded by Ball and was already on the charts before the London opening. It is an insistent and catchy melody and for many is best enjoyed as a separate song. In the musical it is reprised no less than six times by different characters with different lyrics and for many theatregoers the number became something of a chore. The most emotional song in the score is Rose's pathetic "Anything But Lonely" heard near the end of the musical. Also noteworthy is the gushing duet "Seeing Is Believing" (also reprised a lot), the entrancing "The Last Man You Remember," the lively "Give Me the Wine and the Dice," the knowing female duet "There Is More to Love," and the lovely "Chanson d'enfance/Song of Childhood." For some, the music throughout is often more entrancing than the lyrics which sometimes wallow in predictable clichés. But to be fair, these are operetta-like lyrics and easier to accept than the recitative which aim to be conversational.

	1989 London cast	1990 New York cast
Rose Vibert	Ann Crumb	Ann Crumb
Alex Dillingham	Michael Ball	Michael Ball
George Dillingham	Kevin Colson	Kevin Colson
Giulietta Trapani	Kathleen Rowe McAllen	Kathleen Rowe McAllen
Jenny Dillingham	Diana Morrison	Danielle DuClos Deanna DuClos

*Aspects of Love* was brought to Broadway one year after the London opening by Lloyd Webber's The Really Useful Company and was wisely housed in the Broadhurst Theatre, a mid-sized playhouse rather than a large musical house. The West End production was re-created down to the last detail, every song intact, the principal actors again on board, and the same designs on view. The advance was substantial, but so was the cost of bringing this "small" show to New York: an estimated \$8 million. As stated earlier, the American press was not overwhelmingly supportive. Elements of the musical, such as the performances and the designs, were roundly praised, while there was a widely mixed reaction to the script and score. Theatregoers expecting another giant musical spectacle were, of course, disappointed, and others, hearing that the piece was more of a realistic drama, stayed away. Sarah Brightman, who had found fame as the original Christine in *The Phantom of the Opera*, took over the role of Rose during the New York run and Broadway favorite John Cullum played George when Colson returned to England. But box office sales were sluggish, and once the advance was used up the musical faltered. By the time *Aspects of Love* closed one year later, it had lost its entire \$8 million investment. How was this possible? The Broadhurst seated only 1,155 seats, so the few times it sold out could not compensate for the many performances with empty seats. By the end of the 1980s, the economics of producing any kind of musical on Broadway were skyrocketing and *Aspects of Love* was one of the early victims.

During and after its successful run in the West End, *Aspects of Love* saw other productions in Canada, Australia, Hungary, Denmark, Germany, and Japan, some of which were reconceived as true “chamber” musicals and worked very well. Yet the musical has never joined the ranks of Lloyd Webber’s frequently revived pieces. A movie or television version was never made, and it has become one of the composer’s lesser-known works. All the same, *Aspects of Love* remains a favorite for many lovers of British musicals.

**AT THE DROP OF A HAT,  
AN AFTER-DINNER FARRAGO**

(1956/1959)

A musical revue by Donald Swann and Michael Flanders

*Score:* Donald Swann (music), Michael Flanders (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 31 December 1956; New Lindsay Theatre; 808 performances

*Original New York production:* 8 October 1959; John Golden Theatre; 215 performances

*Notable songs:* Madeira, M'Dear?; The Hippopotamus; A Gnu; The Reluctant Cannibal; Sea Fever; Songs for Our Time; Kokoraki; A Song of the Weather; The Hog Beneath the Skin (The Warthog); A Transport of Delight; The Wompom

An unlikely and surprise hit in both London and New York, this unpretentious little revue might have felt like an intimate cabaret or supper club attraction (as suggested by its wry subtitle, “an after-dinner farrago”), but it held its own in traditional West End and Broadway playhouses. Pianist and composer Donald Swann and actor, singer, and lyricist Michael Flanders first started performing their original revues when they were students together at the Westminster School and at Christ Church College at Oxford University. While serving in World War Two, Flanders contracted polio and was confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Nevertheless, they reteamed in 1956 and offered their revue *At the Drop of the Hat* at a small London theatre. The duo would go on to perform it and variations of the program over two thousand times in over six countries over the next decade.

*At the Drop of a Hat* was unique in its simplicity and casual nature. Swann sat and played at the piano while the wheelchair-bound Flanders sang their songs and delivered much of the comic commentary between numbers. The tone ranged from very droll to downright silly, but the comedy was never loud or boisterous except in a few songs. Although their banter seemed off-the-cuff and even improvised, it was meticulously prepared and timed, so the program was as much a comedy revue as it was a musical one. In fact, some songs did not involve any singing at all but offered musical accompaniment under some ridiculously farcical tale, such as the history of the old ditty “Greensleeves.” Because some of the songs were released as single novelty records, they were well known enough that the audience was able to join in on the chorus, as with the childish number “The Hippopotamus” in which one reveled in the “mud, mud, glorious mud!” There were other animal songs about a warthog, an armadillo, a rhinoceros, and a sloth, but most memorable was “The

Gnu” in which Flanders’ lyrics went slaphappy adding “g” to various words. Other highlights in the score include “The Reluctant Cannibal,” in which a father and son argue over the tribe’s dietary traditions; “Kokoraki,” a zany list song about barnyard critters sung in rapid-fire Greek complete with animal sounds; “A Song of the Weather” that mocks an optimistic old English ditty about the local climate; and the sly seduction number “Madeira, M’Dear?” filled with merry wordplay.

<i>1956 London cast</i>	<i>1959 New York cast</i>
Michael Flanders	Michael Flanders
Donald Swann	Donald Swann
	Luba Langdon

Flanders and Swann convinced the owner of the New Lindsay Theatre, an out-of-the-way fringe theatre, to book *At the Drop of a Hat*, but the authors/performers had to pay the rent. The revue opened quietly in 1956 but soon both critics and audiences discovered the two-person piece and the demand for tickets prompted a transfer to a West End theatre, The Fortune, where it entertained theatregoers for two and a half years. American producers Alexander H. Cohen and Joseph I. Levine took a gamble in 1959 and brought the very small, very British revue to Broadway, wisely putting it in the relatively intimate John Golden Theatre. The New York reviews were nearly all enthusiastic, Walter Kerr in the *Herald Tribune* noting that the revue “has no scenery, no costumes, no orchestra—just two men alone on stage completely surrounded by talent.” Although neither Flanders and Swann nor their songs were much known in America, *At the Drop of a Hat* was a surprise hit, running over seven months on Broadway. Such unlikely success may appear puzzling until one experiences the duo’s songs and banter, preserved on several LPs, video, and CDs. This is tame and quiet entertainment when put in light of the later, more raucous, British humor in *Beyond the Fringe* and *Monty Python’s Flying Circus*. Yet there is a silliness in Flanders and Swann that ranges from the satirical to downright goofy. New York was experiencing an American form of this kind of comedy in Off-Broadway revues but to find a niche on Broadway was surely unique.

After touring Britain and Switzerland, Flanders and Swann put together the follow-up revue *At the Drop of Another Hat*, which offered new material and reprised some past favorites, all in the same simple but satisfying format. The revue opened in the West End in 1963 and, in two separate engagements, entertained theatregoers for nearly twelve months. Cohen again brought the program to Broadway in 1966, and it was welcomed with another set of favorable notices and a run of thirteen weeks. In 1967 Flanders and Swann dissolved their partnership and parted on friendly terms. Over the next two decades, Swann continued to write songs for various singers and composed many hymns and art songs set to Victorian poetry. Flanders also remained active, writing opera libretti, children’s books, radio and stage plays, and poetry until his premature death at the age of fifty-three in 1975. Fortunately, the results of their collaboration in the two *Hat* musical revues is well documented and preserved, so the special talents of Flanders and Swann are there to be enjoyed.

# B

## **BATTLING BUTLER (BATTLING BUTTLER)**

(1922/1923)

A musical farce by Stanley Brightman, Austin Melford, and Ballard MacDonald

*Score:* Philip Braham and others (music), Douglas Furber and others (lyrics)

*Original London production (BatTLing Butler):* 8 December 1922; New Oxford Theatre; 238 performances

*Original New York production:* 8 October 1923; Selwyn Theatre; 312 performances

*Notable songs:* Dancing Honeymoon; Apples, Bananas and You; It's a Far, Far Better Thing; Why Can't I?; Diaries; We Both Have an Axe to Grind; Will You Marry Me?; Growing-Up Time; Piccaninny; In the Spring; As We Leave the Years Behind

With a bit of tinkering with the score, the libretto, and the title, this London hit found even more success on Broadway and later served as inspiration for a notable Buster Keaton film. The London production was the work of comic singer-hooper Jack Buchanan, who produced and starred in the musical comedy, which was titled *BatTLing Butler*. Loosely based a British play and a French farce, the script was a complicated yet satisfying farce about Alfred Butler, who has married an older woman with money who keeps him on a strict allowance and very close to their home in the village of Little Thatchley. In order to get away for some fun weekends with his old friends, Alfred claims to be the celebrated prizefighter known as the Battling Butler and tells his wife he is off to training camp. The deception goes smoothly until Alfred's ward, Marigold, unknowingly gives the scheme away by boasting of her guardian to some friends of the real Battling Butler. A suspicious Mrs. Butler goes to the "training camp" at the Four Crowns Inn in Wivingdon, where the real Butler and his wife show up and comic complications mount. At one point, Alfred tries to continue the ruse by going into the boxing ring himself, only to be saved from a certain battering by the substitution of the real Butler. His subterfuge destroyed, Alfred return to Little Thatchley with his wife, and Marigold ends up in the arms of her sweetheart, Hugh Bryant.

Buchanan, who was one of London's favorite lightweight song-and-dance stars of the period, knew the role of Alfred was tailor-made for himself and made sure



novice writers Stanley Brightman and Austin Melford put in plenty of opportunities for him to show off his particular talents. The same could be said about Buchanan’s songs. There were several hands involved in the lighthearted score but the most memorable numbers were by composer Philip Braham and lyricist Douglas Furber. For Alfred, they wrote the risible confidence song “Why Can’t I?” and the mocking farewell number “It’s a Far, Far Better Thing,” the latter sung with trepidation by Alfred before he enters the ring to face imminent decimation. The most popular song to come from *Battling Butler* was the flowing ballad “Dancing Honeymoon,” which Alfred sang with his wife in one of their less turbulent moments. The couple also sang the silly but oddly touching “Apples, Bananas and You.” Marigold delivered the enticing ballad “Growing-Up Time” and with Hugh the duets “Marigold” and “Diaries.” Two up-tempo numbers that gave the musical sparkle were the comic duet “We Both Have an Axe to Grind” and the slapstick “Piccaninny” with spirited wordplay.

	1922 London cast	1923 New York cast
Alfred Butler/Buttler	Jack Buchanan	Charles Ruggles
Mrs. Alfred Butler/Buttler	Sydney Fairbrother	Helen Eley
Bertha Butler	Sylvia Leslie	Frances Halliday
Marigold	Peggy Kurton	Mildred Keats
Hugh/Frank Bryant	Fred Leslie	Jack Squire
Mr. Dumble	Stockwell Hawkins	
Mrs. Dumble	Beryl Harrison	
Ted Spink	Douglas Furber	Teddy McNamara
Nancy	Helen La Vonne	
Algernon/Ernest Hozier	Austin Melford	William Kent
Battling Butler	Fred Groves	Frank Sinclair
Edith		Marie Saxon

Although Buchanan received the most praise from the London press, there were many compliments for the fast-moving libretto and catchy score. Also lauded were the fine comic performances in the supporting cast, particularly Sydney Fairbrother and Sylvia Leslie as the two Mrs. Butlers. *Battling Butler* was popular enough that when Buchanan’s lease on the New Oxford Theatre ran out, he moved the musical to another playhouse and tallied a run of seven months.

The New York version of the musical that opened on Broadway the following fall retained most of the farcical plot, but writer Ballard MacDonald totally Americanized the piece, setting the tale in a secluded New England town and using Long Island and New York City for the hero’s escapes. His name was changed to Alfred Buttler and the musical was titled *Battling Buttler* and, to add to the confusion, *Mr. Battling Buttler* during the long run. American producer George Choos billed the piece as “a musical knockout in three rounds” and wisely signed up comic actor Charles Ruggles to play Buttler. Ruggles had been appearing on Broadway since 1914 and had starred in a handful of musical hits even as he



was beginning his prolific movie career in silent films. Although a very different kind of performer from Buchanan, he shone as the cowardly dandy Buttler and was arguably most responsible for the successful run of *Battling Buttler*. The rest of the cast was strong, and they were joined by a chorus line of "Twelve English Rockets," a dozen comely British females whose physical dancing was billed as "musical calisthenics." Just about all of the London score was dropped, only the popular "Dancing Honeymoon" and the oddball "Apples, Bananas and You" being retained for the Broadway production. Various hands provided the new songs, none of which found much popularity outside of the musical. Yet they served their purpose, and *Battling Buttler* was a hit with both the critics and the theatregoers, running nearly nine months before touring. (To add to the title confusion, the musical was titled *Dancing Honeymoon* on the road in order to cash in on the popularity of the song.) Silent screen star Buster Keaton saw *Battle Buttler* as fertile material for a very physical comedy and in 1926 produced, directed, and starred in a movie version that used the title *Battling Butler*. The screenplay took many liberties with the stage script, turning Alfred Butler into an unmarried weakling who tries to impress a girl and her family by pretending to be a prizefighter. It is a first-rate Keaton film, and the comic boxing sequences are the highlight of the movie.

*Battling Buttler* again brings up the theory that a British musical can find success in New York if it is thoroughly Americanized for Broadway audiences. Would the original West End production have survived in New York? Certainly not with Buchanan, who was not yet known to New Yorkers. (He would make a bit of a splash on Broadway in *Charlot's Revue* in 1924, but he rarely returned to the American stage.) *Battling Buttler* supports the argument that making a London musical "less British" is one way to come up with a Broadway hit.

## ***THE BEGGAR'S OPERA***

(1728/1750)

A comic ballad opera by John Gay

*Score:* various (music), John Gay and others (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 29 January 1728; Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre; 63 performances

*Original New York production:* 3 December 1750; Nassau Street Theatre; c. 5 performances

*Notable songs:* Oh, Ponder Well! Be Not Severe; O What Pain It Is to Part!; The Modes of the Town; Let Us Take the Road; When You Censure the Age; Through All the Employments of Life; Pretty Polly, Say; Fill Ev'ry Glass, for Wine Inspires Us; In the Days of My Youth; O Polly, You Might Have Toy'd and Kist; Why How Now, Madam Flirt?; How Happy I Could Be with Either; I'm Bubbled; Virgins Are Like the Fair Flow'r; Gamesters and Lawyers Are Jugglers Alike

By general consensus, the British musical starts with John Gay's ballad opera *The Beggar's Opera*. It was not the first of the many musical pieces that refuted Italian

opera in eighteenth-century Britain and used familiar "street songs," but it was by far the most popular, and it still holds the stage effectively today. Gay wrote the piece in frustration, his career as a "genteel" playwright writing about upper-class society not finding success with the public. Unable to secure royal or aristocratic patronage, essential in the 1700s, Gay decided to write about the London underworld, a subject that would never find favor with such patrons but might appeal to the general public. He peopled his satiric piece with thieves, prostitutes, and other low-life characters, making them sly, funny, and, in an odd way, even heroic at times. As with the other ballad operas of the time, the action stopped for chorus numbers, duets, and solos (called airs or arias from the opera genre). These songs were often already familiar to the audience though Gay and others frequently reworked the lyrics (and usually the titles) to better fit the voices of the characters. The resulting musical was a success from the start. With *The Beggar's Opera*, the British musical was launched.

Gay's original plot, narrated by a beggar, is solid, and the characters are effective types. In the criminal world of London, the dashing thief Macheath falls in love with Polly, the daughter of Mr. Peachum, a ringleader and powerful fence among the beggars and pickpockets. Macheath elopes with Polly, so Peachum and his wife plan to turn their new son-in-law in to the police for the reward. Before they can, Macheath is betrayed by the prostitute Jenny, who loves him and is jealous of Polly. But Lucy Lockit, the daughter of the jailer, also loves Macheath, and she helps him escape, hoping to win his love. Recaptured and sent to the gallows, Macheath is reprieved at the last moment and returns to the arms of Polly, only because the narrator-beggar decides on a happy ending. While the plot is original, some of the characters were based on known figures of the day, most notably the celebrity-thief Jack Sheppard for Macheath and the well-known "middle man" Jonathan Wild for Peachum. British theatre historian Robert Lawson-Peebles calls *The Beggar's Opera* "a rough work about tough lives." Moving away from the sophisticated manner of the plays of the time, Gay found a cockeyed kind of poetry in the crude characters. They may be uneducated rascals but they have a colorful way of expressing themselves, something that is extenuated when they burst into song. All of the characters (except the innocent and somewhat naive Polly) are corrupt, self-serving, greedy, or jealous. They are also a lot of fun. Gay's intention was to draw comparisons with the upper class, showing that the hierarchy and "system" in high society was not much different from that in the underworld. Such a satire was meant to be an affront on British society but, ironically, *The Beggar's Opera* caused little controversy and was enjoyed as a musical comedy romp. Perhaps that is why the piece is still produced today and still entertains.

The score for *The Beggar's Opera* has changed over the 150 years of its strong popularity, as new songs were incorporated into the piece. Yet we know that the captivating music and the roguish lyrics audiences heard in the original 1728 production must have seemed both fresh and familiar, a happy respite from continental opera. There are many musical numbers in *The Beggar's Opera* (though all of the songs are short), but the piece does not feel overly operatic. These are songs rather than extended musical sequences and as such they are often captivating. The most remembered selection is Polly's entrancing ballad "Oh Ponder Well! Be Not Severe," which seems to float up and down the musical scale. Her duets with

Macheath include the rhapsodic “Pretty Polly, Say” and the lullaby-like “O What Pain It Is to Part!” Peachum’s philosophical “Through All the Employments of Life” sets the tone of the musical, just as Mrs. Peachum’s duet with her daughter, “O Polly, You Might Have Toy’d and Kist,” is as lyrical as it is amoral. Lucy and Polly have two sassy rivalry duets—“I’m Bubbled” and “Why How Now, Madam Flirt?”—and Macheath has several short solos that serve as wry soliloquies, revealing his true feelings as opposed to what he tells his many women. The score also has two catchy chorus numbers, the drinking song “Fill Ev’ry Glass, for Wine Inspires Us” and the robust “Let Us Take the Road.” All the various tunes used in the ballad opera were arranged by Johann Christoph Pepusch who also put together an enticing overture. While most of the lyrics were adapted by Gay from existing “street songs,” some were taken from poetry, such as John Dryden’s 1690 verse “The Prophetess,” which had already been musicalized by Henry Purcell. Other writers to provide lyrics included Jonathan Swift, Lord Chesterfield, and Sir Charles Williams. Surprisingly, the hodgepodge that is *The Beggar’s Opera* is remarkably consistent and feels like the product of one wily artist.

	1728 London cast	1750 New York cast
Macheath	Mr. Walker	
Polly Peachum	Lavinia Fenton	
Mr. Peachum	Mr. Hippisley	
Mrs. Peachum	Mrs. Martin	
Lucy Lockit	Mrs. Egleton	
Mr. Lockit	Mr. Hall	
Jenny Diver	Mrs. Clark	
Filch	Mr. Clark	
Beggar	Mr. Chapman	
Diana Trapes	Mrs. Martin	
?		Walter Murray
?		Miss Osborn
?		Nancy George
?		Thomas Kean
?		Mrs. Taylor
?		John Tremain
?		Miss Leigh
?		Charles Somerset Woodham
?		Miss Davis
?		Mr. Scott

Gay offered his new ballad opera to actor-manager Colley Cibber for the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, but the producer turned it down. *The Beggar’s Opera* instead found a home at the Lincoln’s Inn Fields Theatre where it was an immediate success and remained on the boards for an astounding two months. Other productions started appearing within a year in London and then regionally. New York City did not see the ballad opera until 1750 when a company run by Walter Murray and Thomas Kean presented it for a week, probably as part of a tour of

the colonies. The names of the company members are known but not which roles they played. It took a while for *The Beggar's Opera* to entrench itself in the New World, but during much of the nineteenth century it was a favorite throughout the States with notable New York productions in 1854, 1855, and 1859, and later Broadway revivals in 1928, 1957, and 1973. The ballad opera is still performed in Great Britain and America, usually by opera companies, music conservatories, and light opera companies. *The Beggar's Opera* was filmed twice: a superb British movie version in 1953 with Laurence Olivier doing his own singing as Macheath and a Czechoslovakian film in 1991. The ballad opera has also been broadcast on British and American television at least five times.

Non-English-speaking versions of *The Beggar's Opera* have held the stage over the centuries but often the British songs were replaced with ones familiar to the local culture. The most famous of these reworked versions of Gay's original is the German music-theatre piece *Der Dreigroschenoper* in 1928, which translates as *The Threepenny Opera*. Playwright Bertolt Brecht retained Gay's story, setting, and characters but his script and lyrics are in the strident "theatre of alienation" style so the tone is very different from *The Beggar's Opera*. Kurt Weill's haunting music is one of the glories of the musical stage and *The Threepenny Opera* is one of the most produced musicals internationally. Although it was a hit when first produced in Berlin, the Brecht-Weill work was not an immediate success in London, where audiences were still enjoying revivals of *The Beggar's Opera*. The first New York production of *The Threepenny Opera* in 1933 was also a failure, quickly closing and being forgotten for twenty years. It was an Off-Broadway version in 1954, adapted by composer-lyricist Marc Blitzstein, that found favor, running 2,611 performances and establishing *The Threepenny Opera* in the English-speaking world. As for *The Beggar's Opera*, it received its own clever reworking on Broadway in 1946. Titled *Beggar's Holiday*, Gay's story was reset by lyricist John La Touche in a contemporary American city and boasted jazz music by Duke Ellington. Because of its nonsegregated casting and its interracial romance, the musical was very controversial and often picketed. Despite this and mixed reviews from the press, *Beggar's Holiday* managed to run three months.

## **THE BELLE OF BRITTANY**

(1908/1909)

A musical play by Leedham Bantock and P. J. Barrow

*Score:* Howard Talbot, Marie Horne, Walter Davidson, William Hargreaves (music), Percy Greenback, P. J. Barrow, Walter Davidson, William Hargreaves (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 24 October 1908; Queen's Theatre; 147 performances

*Original New York production:* 8 November 1909; Daly's Theatre; 72 performances

*Notable songs:* A Little Café; The King of the Kitchen; Little Country Mice; A Bit of the Very Best Brittany; Stepping Stones; I'm Not a Ladies Maid; The Kingdom of a Woman's Heart; Daffodil Time in Brittany; The Dawn of Love; Two Giddy Goats; The Old Chateau; In the Oven; The Girl with the Clocks

A pleasing but not overwhelmingly triumphant musical that walked the thin line between old-fashioned opéra comique and the newfangled musical comedy, *The Belle of Brittany* suffered from being a transitional piece. Its pretty setting of eighteenth-century Brittany, with daffodils aplenty and a cast of colorful marquis and peasants certainly conjured up operettas of the past. Yet the script was intelligently crafted and the songs very much in the new musical comedy style, so the critics were confused and, consequently, audiences were wary. Comic actor George Graves, in a supporting role, was the production's selling point, so his part was padded and he helped *The Belle of Brittany* run five months in London and then a few more on the road. In New York, comic Frank Daniels in the same role was not nearly as successful in keeping the musical on the boards, and the Shubert Brothers' production struggled to run nine weeks. Although *The Belle of Brittany* could not be labeled a hit in either the West End or on Broadway, it is a noteworthy musical because it contains some of the finer elements of the old and the new.

The libretto by Leedham Bantock and P. J. Barrow was definitely cut from old cloth. The daffodils might be blooming in Brittany but the impoverished Marquis de St. Gautier is about to lose his chateau and the lace shirt off his back. His only hope is for his son Raymond to marry the marquis's wealthy ward, Mlle. Denise de la Vire, but Raymond is in love with Babette, the lovely but lowly daughter of the miller Poquelin. Ironically, Poquelin holds the mortgage on the St. Gautier estate, and he wants his daughter Babette, the titular belle of Brittany, to wed the celebrated chef Baptiste Boubillion. The chef, on the other hand, has his heart set on the sassy maid Toinette, who likes him as much as his cooking. This multi-angled stalemate is prolonged with the help of some colorful supporting characters and enjoyable songs until a rather strained happy ending is reached: the aged clarinet player Old Jacques finds an old deed that saves the St. Gautier family and allows Babette and Raymond to wed. While such a tale offered few surprises, the script is filled with lively characters and some playful dialogue and many of the critics found it pleasing enough.

	<i>1908 London cast</i>	<i>1909 New York cast</i>
Babette	Ruth Vincent	Winnie O'Connor
Marquis de St. Gautier	George Graves	Frank Daniels
Toinette	Maudi Darrell	Elsa Ryan
Raymond de St. Gautier	Lawrence Rea	Frank Rushworth
Baptiste Boubillion	Walter Passmore	Martin Brown
M. Poquelin	M. R. Morand	Edward Garvie
Madame Poquelin	Maud Boyd	Frances Kennedy
Mlle. Denise de la Vire	Lily Iris	Daisy Dumont
Comte Victoire de Casserole	Davy Birnaby	George M. Graham
Old Jacques	E. W. Royce	J. Arthur O'Brien

Even more satisfying was the score, which rarely lagged, whether it was providing comedy or romance. Most of the songs were by composer Howard Talbot and lyricist Percy Greenbank, established songwriters with past (and future) hits to

their names. There were some interpolations by others in London and then a few more in New York but, for the most part, the Talbot-Greenbank numbers were the best and held the show together. Babette sang the charm songs, such as the idyllic "Daffodil Time in Brittany" and the gushing "The Dawn of Love," as well as the quaint duet "Stepping Stones" with Raymond. But *The Belle of Brittany* came alive musically in the numbers sung by the less romantic characters. The zesty maid Toinette stopped the show with her sly "I'm Not a Ladies Maid," in which she boasts it is the marquis she waits on. She also delivered the very modern-sounding ditty "A Bit of the Very Best Brittany." Toinette joined the chef Boubillion in the silly duet "Two Giddy Goats" and they dreamed about one day owning "A Little Café." The chef also got two of the funniest numbers in the score: the boastful "The King of the Kitchen," where he claims to be the "prince of the pots and pans," and the macabre "In the Oven," the place where obnoxious children should be put. The ward Denise got her moment to shine with a charming number titled "Little Country Mice." All in all, an accomplished score even though it produced no hit songs and, like *The Belle of Brittany* itself, is pretty much lost in the shuffle of better musicals of the period.

### **THE BELLE OF MAYFAIR**

(1906)

A musical comedy by Basil Hood, Charles H. E. Brookfield, and Cosmo Hamilton

*Score:* Leslie Stuart (music), Basil Hood, George Arthurs, Charles H. E. Brookfield, Cosmo Hamilton, and others (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 11 April 1906; Vaudeville Theatre; 416 performances

*Original New York production:* 3 December 1906; Daly's Theatre; 140 performances

*Notable songs:* What the World Will Say; Come to St. George's; In Montezuma; The Weeping Willow Wept; Said I to Myself; Hello, Come Along, Girls; My Little Girl Is a Shy Little Girl; In Gay Mayfair; I'm a Military Man; What Makes a Woman; The Little Girl at the Sweet Shop; Why Do They Call Me a Gibson Girl?; Bells in the Morning; Play the Game

Not only a hit musical with a bouquet of memorable songs, this Edwardian piece was also frequently in the news during its long run because of its many backstage squabbles and artistic altercations. *The Belle of Mayfair* probably would have enjoyed a long run in London without the added publicity but the demand for tickets increased as each new piece of scuttlebutt appeared in the newspapers. Add to this the popularity of some of the songs from the musical and *The Belle of Mayfair* was quite the most talked about attraction of the season.

It was librettist-lyricist Basil Hood who suggested to American producer Charles Frohman the idea for the musical: a contemporary version of *Romeo and Juliet* with the British class system serving as the wall keeping the two lovers apart. Planned as a musical comedy, *The Belle of Mayfair* would dispense with Shakespeare's tragic ending but retain many of the characters, now thoroughly

British. The young Julia is the daughter of Lord and Lady Chaldicott who reside in London's posh Mayfair district. The parents plan to marry Julia to the French aristocrat Comte de Perrier but she falls in love with Raymond Finchley, the son of the new-money Lord and Countess Mount Highgates, who are looked down upon by the established Mayfair society. Raymond disguises himself as a musician and crashes a Mayfair ball where he and Julia make plans to elope. The libretto had its version of Mercutio in Raymond's pal Hugh Meredith, the nurse with the crafty cockney maid Pincott, and Friar Lawrence became the bishop Dr. Marmaduke Lawrence. The lovers eventually gained acceptance from the two families through the efforts of Princess Carl of Ehrenbreitstein, a fairy godmother-like character with no equivalent in *Romeo and Juliet*. Hood's libretto was a solid piece of musical comedy, but Frohman brought in other writers to make changes when he decided to highlight certain performers who had minor roles in the story. Courtice Pounds was cast as the Mercutio/Meredith character and was given a show-stopping soliloquy which was inspired by Shakespeare's Queen Mab speech and related how the Fairy Queen traveled about the countryside in a bus. Although Pounds was not much of a singer and his role supposedly a supporting one, he was given two top-notch songs, which threw off the balance of the plot. The godmother-Princess was played by Louie Pounds and she too was featured with some winning numbers, thereby reducing the effectiveness of star Edna May, who was playing Julia. During rehearsals Hood's script was cut to make room for more dance, and by the time *The Belle of Mayfair* opened, it was a light piece of musical froth with a few parallels to *Romeo and Juliet*. Hood was furious (after opening night he insisted his name be removed from the musical), but the critics and the audiences were delighted.

The music by Leslie Stuart was his best since his triumphant *Florodora* eight years earlier and the lyrics, mostly by Hood, were more than just competent. The Pounds siblings had the best numbers. The princess explained how she refuted her class and married for love in "Said I to Myself" and described a lost romance with "The Weeping Willow Wept." Meredith sang the knowing waltz number about bachelorhood "What Will the World Say" and provided an up-tempo highlight with the spirited "Hello, Come Along, Girls." The nominal star of the musical, Edna May, got to sing the romantic ballad "Where You Go, Will I Go" as Julia/Juliet, but was more effective with the more vigorous "Play the Game" and the inexplicable "In Montezuma," a bizarre number that was a cross between a minstrel ditty and a Native American pow-wow pastiche. Julia sang it with a chorus of "Red Indians" during the ball scene, an indication of how far *The Belle of Mayfair* had strayed from *Romeo and Juliet*. Raymond/Romeo sang "What Makes a Woman" to a dress dummy and the cockney maid joined a footman in the comic duet "My Girl Is a Shy Little Girl." Ironically, the songs from the score that were heard across London were the catchy chorus numbers. The resounding hit of the musical was the contagious "Come to St. George's," but also noticed and remembered were the concerted numbers "I Know a Girl" and "We've Come from Court." As scintillating as the score for *The Belle of Mayfair* was, few of the songs had much to do with the plot and the evening was often a series of splendid musical numbers rather than the cohesive book musical Hood had envisioned.



	1906 London cast	1906 New York cast
Julia Chaldicott	Edna May	Bessie Clayton
Raymond Finchley	Farren Souter	Van Rensselaer Wheeler
Princess Carl	Louie Pounds	Irene Bentley
Hugh Meredith	Courtice Pounds	Jack Gardner
Sir John Chaldicott	Arthur Williams	Richard F. Carroll
Lady Chaldicott	Maud Boyd	Jennie Opie
Lord Mount Highgate	Sam Walsh	Harry B. Burcher
Countess of Mount Highgate	Irene Desmond	Honore French
Pincott	Lillian Diggs	Bessie Clayton
Dr. Marmaduke Lawrence	Charles Troode	
Duchess of Dunmow	Camille Clifford	Valeska Suratt
Comte de Perrier	Charles Angelo	Ignacio Martinelli

The reviews for *The Belle of Mayfair* were valentines, and Frohman's production ran over a year in two separate engagements. Much to the irritation of Edna May, Courtice and Louie Pounds received the most praise. Before the opening, Frohman had ballyhooed the musical as the "Return of Edna May." Soon the billing was featuring the Pounds siblings and the press picked up on the friction backstage. There was more gossip when Hood's name was removed from the bill and replaced by Cosmo Hamilton, whose name appeared nowhere on opening night. *The Belle of Mayfair* was in the news again when actress Camille Clifford, playing a supporting role as a duchess, accepted a proposal of marriage by Henry Lyndhurst Bruce, the future Lord Aberdare. Clifford remained in the production for a time and was given her own song to sing, "Why Do They Call Me a Gibson Girl?," to capitalize on the publicity. With Clifford now billed as the star, Edna May resigned. When her understudy Ethel Newman was soon replaced by fifteen-year-old Phyllis Dare, Newman sued Frohman and won one hundred pounds in damages, a substantial amount in its day. (A new song was written for Dare and, when she was later replaced by Billie Burke, a new song was written for her as well.)

The news-making antics of *The Belle of Mayfair* carried over to America when producer Thomas Ryley prepared to open it on Broadway at the end of 1906. When Ryley attended a performance of the Shubert Brothers' musical *Lady Madcap*, he immediately recognized that one song had the same melody as the now-popular "Come to St. George's." He issued an injunction to stop the production but *Lady Madcap* was not a success and closed before *The Belle of Mayfair* opened on Broadway to rapturous reviews. The score, the cast, and even the lopsided book were all praised, many critics comparing the musical favorably to Stuart's *Florodora*. Operetta favorite Christie MacDonald played Julia/Juliet and was the undisputed star of the production and the New York version was probably somewhat more balanced than the London original in terms of plot focus. Most of the London score was retained, including numbers that were added after opening. Legend has it that "Why Do They Call Me a Gibson Girl?," sung by Valeska Suratt



in the minor role of the Duchess of Dunmow, was encored six times. Although the chorus numbers in *The Belle of Mayfair* were not picked up and sung in the streets and pubs as in London, New Yorkers heartily embraced the musical and allowed it to run four months before it set out on a successful tour.

## **BILLY ELLIOT**

(2005/2008)

A musical play by Lee Hall, based on his 2000 screenplay

*Score:* Elton John (music), Lee Hall (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 11 May 2005; Victoria Palace Theatre; 4,600 performances

*Original New York production:* 13 November 2008; Imperial Theatre; 1,312 performances

*Notable songs:* Electricity; Shine; Once We Were Kings; Expressing Yourself; Grandma's Song (We'd Go Dancing); Born to Boogie; Merry Christmas, Maggie Thatcher; Solidarity; The Stars Look Down; Deep into the Ground; He Could Be a Star

A politically charged musical that was particularly British, *Billy Elliot* managed to become a mega-hit on both sides of the Atlantic even though it had neither love story nor happy-ever-after ending, brought up issues of homophobia and nontraditional gender roles, and dealt with the working class and a sixteen-year-old labor dispute. Yet the musical had some things that pointed to success. It was based on a small British film that found an international audience, and its composer, pop-rock singer-songwriter Elton John, had a very good track record with stage musicals, both *The Lion King* and *Aida* being long-running hits on Broadway. All the same, *Billy Elliot* was a risky venture and probably surprised even its creators with how popular it became.

In 1984 in the northeastern Britain county of Durham, the coal miners suffering under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's conservative economic changes are about to go on strike. Eleven-year-old Billy Elliot, the son of a widower miner, is taking boxing lessons at the community center but gets interested in the ballet class run by the sour but knowing Mrs. Wilkinson. Although the class is all girls, she lets Billy join, and, without telling his father, he uses his boxing money for ballet lessons. The miners go on strike and there are violent clashes with the police, resulting in Billy's elder brother Tony getting injured. Mrs. Wilkinson sees great potential in Billy and even arranges for him to get an audition for the Royal Ballet School in London. When Billy's father and brother hear about the ballet lessons and the audition, they are furious and forbid him to have anything to do with dance. Six months later, the strike drags on and Christmas is celebrated with an amateur show mocking "Maggie" Thatcher. Billy's friend Michael, who is not inhibited about his sexuality and secretly likes to dress up in women's clothes, encourages Billy to return to dancing and to audition for the famous London school. Even Billy's dad relents when he realizes that his son's talent may be the boy's ticket out of a grim future in the mines. He returns to work in the mines, much

to the disgust of the still-striking miners, to raise money to bring Billy to London for the audition. When asked at the audition what dancing feels like to him, Billy bursts into a song and dance that reveals he has the soul of a dancer. The strike fails in Durham County, the beaten miners go back to work, and Billy receives a letter saying he has been accepted in the Royal Ballet School. The miners descend into the ground as they always have, and, after bidding farewell to Michael, Billy sets off for London.

The libretto for *Billy Elliot* follows the 2000 film faithfully, both written by Lee Hall. The inspiration for the movie was A. J. Cronin's 1935 novel *The Stars Look Down* about mining strikes in the 1920s and a boy who escapes the working class by going into politics and eventually becoming a member of Parliament who urges for the nationalization of the mines. The film *Billy Elliot* has no songs but a lot of dance, most of it set to music by Stephen Warbeck. It was a low-budget feature that was a surprise hit, winning acclaim and big box office internationally. When Elton John saw the film, he immediately contacted Hall and offered to collaborate on a stage musical version with Hall writing the libretto and lyrics and retaining the services of the film's director, Stephen Daldry, and choreographer, Peter Darling. With dance being central to the story, a musical theatre version of *Billy Elliot* seemed like a natural. Yet Hall, John, Daldry, and Darling did not set out to replicate the movie and just add songs. The film is realistic and a social drama filled with grit and anger. The creators approached the stage version unrealistically, using techniques from Bertolt Brecht's music-drama and from sociopolitical British musicals of the past, most memorably *Oh, What a Lovely War!* (1963). British theatre historian Robert Gordon points out that "*Billy Elliot* cleverly refunctions the strategies of socialist theatre of that epoch in conjunction with the variety entertainment of the time, thereby initiating a complex play of intertextuality." The story remains the same, but its presentation is dreamlike, sometimes surreal, and balances agitprop drama with music hall panache. This contrast is illustrated by the way each act opens. The musical begins with a newsreel about the nationalization of coal mines after World War Two, a very Brechtian touch. Act Two opens with a broad amateur show with oversized puppets, bawdy humor, and a slaphappy singalong. Few musicals explore as many theatrical styles as *Billy Elliot*.

Not to slight the book and songs, it is in the staging and choreography that *Billy Elliot* soars. Daldry and Darling avoided realistic scenery for the most part and created spaces where anything was possible. Oversized dresses on hangers came to life in Billy and Michael's imagination; Billy flew through the air in a *pas de deux* with his older self; policemen, miners, and girls from the ballet class clashed together, forming absurd chorus lines; when Grandma recalled the local dances of her youth, miners cascaded through her kitchen in slow motion; and Billy's bitter disappointment in his father's refusal to let him audition was expressed in not just an "Angry Dance" but a number in which he literally banged up against police riot shields. While many musicals limit the choreography to one or two of the three basic styles—ballet, tap, and jazz dance—Darling's work in *Billy Elliot* included all three, sometimes in the same number. So many popular movies have been musicalized for the West End and Broadway over the past three decades, and in most the result is a screenplay with songs and dances sandwiched in. Very few have rethought and revitalized the film as *Billy Elliot* did.

The score for *Billy Elliot* is not easy to label. It encompasses so many kinds of popular music (as well as Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*) that the John/Hall songs seem to come at you from every direction. A rhythm number like "Born to Boogie" is in a nostalgic discotheque vein while "Shine" is flashy in a Las Vegas way. "Merry Christmas, Maggie Thatcher" is a simple yet nasty sing-along number for the community, quickly followed by the heartbreaking folk dirge "Deep in the Ground." The childlike song "Electricity" aches to express an idea but only through dance can Billy fully explain what he feels. "Expressing Yourself" is a variety hall tap number exuberant in theme and execution. The song is so joyous that its dismissal of working-class masculinity overrides any opportunity for homophobia. "Grandma's Song" about going dancing in the old days is both lusty and pathetic. Cronin's book provides the title for the moving anthem "The Stars Look Down," which begins the musical; the final number, "Once We Were Kings," is equally gripping, sung by the miners as they disappear deep into the ground. Perhaps the most complicated song in the score is "Solidarity" which is used as a march, a rhythmic working ditty, a fight song, a kick line, and even a ballet frolic. Like the musical itself, the song continually surprises.

	2005 London cast	2008 New York cast
Billy Elliot	Liam Mower	Kirik Kulish
James Lomas	David Álvarez	
George Maguire	Trent Kowalik	
Mrs. Wilkinson	Haydn Gwynne	Haydn Gwynne
Dad	Tim Healy	Gregory Jbara
Tony	Joe Caffrey	Santino Fontana
Michael	Ryan Longbottom	David Bologna
Ashley Luke Lloyd	Frank Dolce	
Brad Kavanagh		
Grandma	Ann Emery	Carole Shelley
Mum	Stephanie Putson	Leah Hocking
Older Billy	Isaac James	Stephen Hanna

Casting the title role in *Billy Elliot* first in London then later for the Broadway production was a unique challenge. No previous musical centered on a child had ever been so demanding. *Oliver Twist*, *Little Orphan Annie*, *Matilda*, *Charlie Bucket*, and other young heroes and heroines were never asked to carry a musical as Billy must keep *Billy Elliot* afloat. The character sings, dances, and is in more book scenes than any juvenile in any extant musical. No one actor could perform such a role eight times a week, so three youths were cast as Billy. Because the character is eleven years old, no actor could play Billy very long before he physically and vocally outgrew the part. So, during the long runs in London, New York, and on tour, there was a constant search for and training of new Billy Elliots. The same was true for the other children in the cast, in particular the boys playing Michael. The extraordinary talent of the young performers in *Billy Elliot* soon became the stuff of legend. The original adult cast in London was also roundly applauded,

in particular Haydn Gwynne's surly, funny Mrs. Wilkinson. She was the only member of the company to reprise her performance in the Broadway production. The reviews on both sides of the Atlantic were mostly raves. New York critics had never found much favor with Elton John's stage scores and some rejected the *Billy Elliot* songs as well. All the same, the Broadway production was a critical as well as a popular hit. The musical won several awards in both London and New York. The question of American audiences getting caught up in British politics and economics was a tricky one, and bringing *Billy Elliot* to Broadway was not a sure thing. Would theatregoers even understand the North Country British dialects and expressions? Would the anti-Thatcher sentiments, still so strong throughout much of Britain, resonate with Americans? Such concerns were lost in the vibrant theatricality of *Billy Elliot*, and it was a hit. Yet it must be pointed out that the musical ran eleven years in London and just under four years in New York. So perhaps it was a musical that struck the hearts of Britons more than Americans after all.

## ***BITTER SWEET***

(1929)

An operetta by Noel Coward

*Score:* Noel Coward (music and lyrics)

*Original London production:* 12 July 1929; Her Majesty's Theatre; 697 performances

*Original New York production:* 5 November 1929; Ziegfeld Theatre; 159 performances

*Notable songs:* If Love Were All; I'll See You Again; Dear Little Café; The Call of Life; Zigeuner; Green Carnations; Kiss Me; Tokay; Ladies of the Town; Alas the Time Is Past; The Last Dance; Bonne Nuit, Merci

Noel Coward's first and most successful book musical was a far cry from his witty and urbane comedies or his smart and clever musical revues. *Bitter Sweet* is a decidedly old-fashioned operetta in the European style and is unabashedly sentimental, even melodramatic. Yet the music throughout is so entrancing that theatregoers in 1929 embraced this retro entertainment, and even today *Bitter Sweet* still holds the stage for those who enjoy such quaint musical theatre. Coward stated that he was inspired to write the piece after listening again to Johann Strauss's 1874 comic operetta *Die Fledermaus*. The Strauss classic is lightweight, but Coward's plot for *Bitter Sweet* is dramatic, even tragic. Yet musically one can hear how Coward's music is an homage to the older operetta. As atypical as it is popular, *Bitter Sweet* reveals Coward at his most heartfelt.

The story begins in contemporary 1929 at a party in the posh Grosvenor Square residence of the Marchioness of Shayne, where the young people dance to the rhythms of the Jazz Age. The Marchioness's young niece Dolly is engaged to be married, yet she is drawn to the pianist in the jazz band and is considering eloping with him. The wise aunt understands well the situation and tells Dolly her own

story in flashback. Back in 1875 when she was Sarah Millick, she was engaged to the Marquis of Shayne but was in love with her music teacher, Carl Linden. The two elope to Vienna and are happy even though they can only find work in a seedy café where Carl conducts the band and Sari, as she is billed, sings and dances with the customers. When the uncouth Captain Lutte tries to take liberties with Sari, Carl challenges the military man to a duel. He is no match for Lutte and is killed. Sari goes on the stage to support herself and becomes a famous prima donna. Returning to London, she is reunited with the patient Marquis of Shayne, who still loves her, and they are wed. Back in the present, the Marchioness confesses that she never stopped loving Carl and leaves Dolly to decide what her fate will be. The libretto is a well-crafted piece of writing, its dramatics enlivened by some animated supporting characters, most memorably the spitfire Manon who performs at the cabaret and unsuccessfully pursues Carl. It is Manon who sings the sterling ballad "If Love Were All," a song that seems to echo with Coward's own vulnerability. In the lyric he wonders if all of his efforts can be reduced to just "a talent to amuse." The other enduring song from *Bitter Sweet* is the recurring "I'll See You Again," a beguiling waltz with a subtext that is truly bittersweet. Also in the first-rate score is the charming "Dear Little Café," in which Sari and Carl dream of an idyllic little establishment of their own; the operatic air "The Call of Life"; the zesty drinking song "Tokay"; the lusty "Ladies of the Town," sung by a quartet of streetwalkers; the rhapsodic farewell song "Kiss Me"; Manon's very French-sounding ditty "Bonne Nuit, Merci"; and the waltzing ballad "Zigeuner." The one number that recalls Coward's musical revue numbers is the sly "Green Carnations" sung by a group of would-be Oscar Wildes. With its declaration "we are the reason for the Nineties being gay," it is perhaps Coward's most undisguised expression of effete homosexuality.

	<i>1929 London cast</i>	<i>1929 New York cast</i>
Sarah Millick	Peggy Wood	Evelyn Laye
Carl Linden	Georges Metaxa	Gerald Nodin
Manon	Ivy St. Helier	Mireille
Vincent Howard	Billy Milton	Max Kirby
Hugh Devon	Robert Newton	Tracy Holmes
Gussi	Norah Howard	Sylvia Leslie
Marquis of Shayne	Alan Napier	John Evelyn
Captain Lutte	Austin Trevor	Desmond Jeans

When Coward approached producer Charles Cochran with the idea of presenting an old-fashioned operetta in the Roaring Twenties, the producer did not hesitate, and *Bitter Sweet* was on the boards by July of 1929, before the official season began. Coward had written Sari with his frequent costar Gertrude Lawrence in mind, but it was soon evident that the vocal demands of the role were far beyond the comic actress's abilities. Soprano Evelyn Laye was Coward's next choice, but American leading lady Peggy Wood ended up playing Sari in London; Laye

premiered the role in New York. Critics and theatregoers did not seem to mind a bit of operetta nostalgia, and *Bitter Sweet* ran nearly two years.

Arch Selwyn and Florenz Ziegfeld produced the Broadway version, which was directed by Coward and much of the score was retained. Unfortunately, the New York production opened a week after the Stock Market crash. Yet with favorable notices and strong word of mouth, the musical still managed to run nearly five months. There have been two screen versions of *Bitter Sweet*. A British film in 1933, starring Anna Neagle as Sari, concentrated on the heavy melodramatics and included only two of Coward's songs, the popular "I'll See You Again" and "If Love Were All." Hollywood made a version in 1940 for screen sweethearts Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy. There was much tampering with the plot (Carl writes an operetta that makes a star of Sari after he is dead) but eight songs from the stage score were heard as well as a few new numbers. *Bitter Sweet* was revived on Broadway in 1934 and the musical remained a favorite with operetta companies for decades. It is still presented on occasion by light opera troupes and, while the book has not held up as well as the score, *Bitter Sweet* still has its particular charms.

## **BLOOD BROTHERS**

(1983/1993)

A musical play by Willy Russell

*Score:* Willy Russell (music and lyrics)

*Original London production:* 11 April 1983; Lyric Theatre; 224 performances

*Original New York production:* 25 April 1993; Music Box Theatre; 839 performances

*Notable songs:* Marilyn Monroe; Tell Me It's Not True; Shoes Upon the Table; Bright New Day; I'm Not Saying a Word; Take a Letter Miss Jones; Easy Terms; That Guy; Kids' Game; My Child; Long Sunday Afternoon; My Friend

A musical melodrama about working-class and out-of-work characters, *Blood Brothers* took a while to become a hit, but it eventually did so both in London and New York. Willy Russell, an established playwright whose work often dealt with Liverpool blue-collar workers, wrote *Blood Brothers* as a one-hour drama for the Merseyside Young People's Theatre in 1981. Encouraged by the reaction it received, Russell expanded the piece into a full-length musical, writing the music and lyrics himself, and it premiered at the Liverpool Playhouse in 1983. Again, the response was enthusiastic and the eleven-week run was very popular. Producer Bob Swash thought *Blood Brothers* belonged in London and a West End production with the same cast opened later in 1983. The reviews were not encouraging, and the musical struggled to run six months. Ironically, although *Blood Brothers* was classified as a critical and box office failure, it won the Olivier Award for Best New Musical. That might have been the end of *Blood Brothers* but for enterprising producer Bill Kenwright, who thought it deserved another chance to be seen. In



Producer Bill Kenwright cast a series of well-known singers in his 1993 Broadway production to keep it running, but in the end it failed to become the hit musical he had created in London. Pictured are the popular singers Petula Clark and David Cassidy as mother and son during the forced Broadway run. *Photofest*

1987 he put together a first-class tour headed by pop singer Kiki Dee and brought *Blood Brothers* to various cities across Britain, where it was an unqualified hit. Encouraged by this success, Kenwright brought the production to the West End where it again met with skeptical notices but was an immediate favorite with audiences. This time, *Blood Brothers* ran twenty-five years, chalking up over ten thousand performances.

The story Russell concocted was inspired by an 1844 novella by Alexandre Dumas titled *The Corsican Brothers*. Twin boys are born on the island of Corsica and separated in infancy, one becoming a powerful high-class lawyer in Paris and the other remaining a low-class brute set on revenging his family for a wrong done by a rival Corsican family. The tale had been successfully dramatized on the stage in the nineteenth century, and to date there have been over a dozen film adaptations. Russell's version emphasizes the class division in Great Britain in the 1960s. When the Liverpool divorcee Mrs. Johnstone, the mother of seven children and deep in debt, learns that she is pregnant with twin boys, she arranges for one of the boys, Eddie, to be raised by the affluent Mrs. Lyons and keeps the other, Mickey, with her in the slums. The superstitious Mrs. Lyons agrees to the arrangement but believes that if the boys ever learn the truth about their kinship, they will both die. Growing up, the two brothers cross paths several times (without knowing they're related) and get acquainted with each other. Eddie goes to good schools and succeeds in life. Mickey struggles with life, getting a job in a factory, but when many of the workers are laid off, he turns to crime and spends time in jail. Released back into society, Mickey cannot find work and suffers from chronic depression. Linking the two brothers is Linda, who falls in love with and marries Mickey but finds herself turning to Eddie when she cannot deal with Mickey's unstable moods. When Mickey finds Eddie and Linda together, he pulls out a gun and blames Eddie for his rotten life. Mrs. Johnstone and the police arrive, and she tells Mickey he cannot kill Eddie because he is his own brother. Confused and bitter, Mickey accidentally lets the gun fire, killing Eddie, and the police shoot Mickey dead.

This tragic tale is related by a Narrator who speaks in rhymed verse while the rest of the dialogue is realistic. The songs are extensions of the characters' thoughts, in particular Mrs. Johnstone, who is the central figure in the story, rather than the twins themselves. The tone of *Blood Brothers* is hopelessness caused by a social system that allows some to thrive and forces others to remain trapped. If it is all a bit preachy, it struck right to the hearts of many Britons during the economic woes of the Margaret Thatcher administration. The musical may sometimes be clumsy in its writing but it was unique in its determination not to settle for mainstream entertainment. It is clear from the start that this urban folk tale is not going to have a happy ending. The audience may not have believed in Mrs. Lyons's superstition but they certainly recognize a tragic story, when the headlines were filled with the failures of the system. Just as the writing is uneven, Russell's songs also waver in effectiveness. They are written in the pop style of the 1960s and, as such, are often accurate and pleasing. The musical's most memorable song, "Tell Me It's Not True," is a heartfelt ballad that comes closest to expressing the frustration of the working class. There is a much-needed lift of spirits in the up-tempo "Bright New Day," and an ironic glee in "Kids' Game," in which child's play foretells adult misfortunes. The love song "I'm Not Saying a Word" has the



sound of a sixties hit ballad and there is a touch of rhythm and blues as Eddie and Mickey each sing about the other in "That Guy."

The social commentary numbers are sometimes quite sardonic, such as down-sizing in "Take a Letter Miss Jones" and going into debt in "Easy Terms." The narrative song "Marilyn Monroe" is used throughout the musical to somehow bring each new episode in the story back to the tragic movie star. Some theatregoers find it an effective leitmotif, others consider it annoying and forced. Yet that can be said about *Blood Brothers* itself. It is not a musical for the critical minded; it is a piece that resonates with emotion and bitterness.

	<i>1983 London cast</i>	<i>1993 New York cast</i>
Narrator	Andrew Schofield	Warwick Evans
Mrs. Johnstone	Barbara Dickson	Stephanie Lawrence
Eddie Lyons	Andrew C. Wadsworth	Mark Michael Hutchinson
Mickey Johnstone	George Costigan	Con O'Neill
Mrs. Lyons	Wendy Murray	Barbara Walsh
Sammy Johnstone	Peter Christian	James Clow
Linda	Amanda York	Jan Graveson
Mr. Lyons	Alan Leith	Ivar Brogger

When *Blood Brothers* failed in its first London run in 1983, there was no consideration of a Broadway production. The musical was deemed too British, too dire, and too much of a long shot. Even after the British tour turned into a West End hit, New York was not interested. So Kenwright decided to produce *Blood Brothers* on Broadway himself in 1993. He assembled a top-notch, mostly American cast and didn't worry about the lack of a star, hoping the musical itself and its phenomenal success in London would carry the production. It was a miscalculation. The New York critics, as expected, were disdainful of the musical and the public was slow to respond. Word of mouth and some award nominations helped *Blood Brothers* survive but it was clear its days were numbered. So, four months after opening, Kenwright convinced British singing and movie star Petula Clark to take over the role of Mrs. Johnstone and the box office picked up. During its run, the role was also played by American singer-composer Carole King and Australian singer Helen Reddy. The popular brothers Shaun and David Cassidy from American television and records played Eddie and Mickey for a time during the run and later joined Clark on a very profitable tour of *Blood Brothers*. Kenwright managed to keep his production on Broadway for two years, a paltry run compared to the London's twenty-five-year triumph. Yet for *Blood Brothers* to survive on Broadway was a considerable feat. One must recall that this was a dozen years before *Billy Elliot* arrived in New York, and a working-class British musical was far from what was wanted on Broadway. *Blood Brothers* is revived today more frequently in Great Britain than in the States because it is a thoroughly British work. Yet it served as a kind of trailblazer in 1993 and helped broaden the musical theatre fare on Broadway.

**THE BOHEMIAN GIRL**

(1843/1844)

An operetta by Alfred Bunn

*Score:* Michael William Balfe (music), Alfred Bunn (lyrics)*Original London production:* 27 November 1843; Drury Lane Theatre; c. 100 performances*Original New York production:* 25 November 1844; Park Theatre; 17 performances (in repertory)*Notable songs:* I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls; The Heart Bowed Down; When Other Lips; This Is Thy Deed; The Wound Upon Thy Arm; 'Tis Sad to Leave Our Fatherland; Through the World Thou Wilt Fly, Love; Up with the Banner; Then You'll Remember Me; Follow with Heart and with Arm

An early English ballad opera that still holds the stage, *The Bohemian Girl* was one of the most produced musical works of the nineteenth century and introduced the song "I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls," a delicate and unforgettable aria that is still a favorite in concerts and recordings. The Irish-born composer Michael William Balfe wrote over two dozen operettas during his long career, but none approached the popularity of *The Bohemian Girl*. Alfred Bunn wrote the libretto, which was taken from a French ballet-pantomime *La Gypsy*, which, in turn, was based on a story by the Spanish writer Miguel Cervantes titled *La Gitanella*. The use of gypsies in operettas eventually became a recurring cliché, but when *The Bohemian Girl* premiered in London in 1843 it was a novel and exotic idea. The gypsy in question is Thaddeus, who, having been forced to leave his native Poland, arrives in Austria, where he joins a band of Bohemian gypsies led by one Devilshoof, camped near the castle of Count Arnheim. During a hunt organized by the Count and his witless nephew Florestein, things go wrong and a stag attacks the Count's six-year-old daughter Arline. Thaddeus rescues the girl and returns her to the castle. The grateful Count welcomes all the gypsies to a feast, but when Devilshoof refuses to drink to the health of the emperor, the Count throws him in jail. In revenge, Thaddeus and the gypsies kidnap the young Arline and raise her as one of them. Twelve years later, the adult Arline has fallen in love with Thaddeus, which makes the Gypsy Queen jealous. When Thaddeus announces his marriage to Arline, the Gypsy Queen arranges for Arline to be returned to the Count and become betrothed to Florestein. When Thaddeus goes to claim Arline, the Gypsy Queen attempts to shoot her, but Devilshoof interferes and she ends up dead herself. Thaddeus wins back Arline and the Count and gypsies celebrate.

Bunn's libretto is action packed and filled with intrigues and incidents not included in the above synopsis. *The Bohemian Girl* is also filled with music: solos, duets, trios, quartets, quintets, concerted pieces, and chorus numbers, as well as music for dancing, a gypsy march, and for the stag hunt. Balfe composed a variety of musical genres for the score, yet it all seems of one piece, vibrant and sparkling. While there is nothing that approaches authentic Bohemian or gypsy music, the score often explodes with a vitality that suggests a colorful, even primitive, folk

tradition. This is most evident in the chorus numbers such as “In the Gypsy’s Life” and “Follow with Heart and with Arm.” There is a rousing soldiers’ chorale “Up with the Banner” for the Count and his men; a farewell lament for Thaddeus titled “’Tis Sad to Leave Our Fatherland”; a sublime trio “Through the World Thou Wilt Fly, Love”; the revealing duet “A Wound upon Thy Arm” for Thaddeus and Arline about her past; and “Then You’ll Remember Me,” a lilting ballad for Thaddeus with an Irish flavor to it. Of the non-singing numbers, perhaps the most memorable instrumental is the sprightly “Galop,” which is as exciting as Offenbach in his prime. But musically, *The Bohemian Girl* is immortalized by the celebrated ballad “I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls,” which the adult Arline sings about her love for Thaddeus. Bunn’s lyric is radiant: Arline dreams that she lives in a palace and is treated like a princess, yet the best part of the dream is that “you loved me still the same.” The music floats up and down the scale in such a delicate manner that one wrong note would cause it to collapse. It is no wonder that the song is still frequently performed. Also still heard in concert halls is Balfe’s overture for *The Bohemian Girl*, nine minutes of unbridled musical vivacity. Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra’s recording of the overture in 1958 is particularly noteworthy.

	<i>1843 London cast</i>	<i>1844 New York cast</i>
Arline (young)	Miss Payne	Miss Dyott
Arline (adult)	Elizabeth Rainforth	Mrs. Anne Sequin
Thaddeus	William Harrison	Mr. Frazer
Count Arnheim	Conrado Rorrani	A. Andrews
Queen of the Gypsies	Abigail Elizabeth Betts	Mrs. Knight
Devilshoof	George Stretton	Edward Sequin
Florestein	James Hudson	S. Pearson
Captain of the Guard	Mr. Howell	Mr. Kneass

The premiere of *The Bohemian Girl* was a sensation in London in 1843 and the production was retained for an unheard of run of four months. The piece was quickly picked up by opera companies in Britain and throughout Europe. It was such a company that included *The Bohemian Girl* in its touring repertory and brought it to New York the next year, performing it seventeen times during its Manhattan stay. Broadway saw twenty-six separate revivals of the musical by 1933 and the next year it appeared again, greatly altered, as *The Gypsy Blonde*. There are also two movie versions of *The Bohemian Girl*, a British silent film in 1922 with Ivor Novello and Gladys Cooper as Thaddeus and Arline, and a Hollywood talkie in 1936 starring Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. The two comics played bubbling gypsies in a plot which took many liberties with the stage libretto. Four of Balfe’s songs were sung, including “I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls.” Musical theatre historian Kurt Gänzl estimates that *The Bohemian Girl* was given “tens of thousands of performances around the world in a multiplicity of languages (but mostly in the original English)” up until World War Two. Since then, the musical is infrequently revived by light opera and operetta companies that are still entranced by Balfe’s exhilarating music.

**THE BOY.** See *Good Morning, Judge*

### **THE BOY FRIEND**

(1954)

A musical comedy by Sandy Wilson

*Score:* Sandy Wilson (music and lyrics)

*Original London production:* 14 January 1954; Wyndham's Theatre; 2,084 performances

*Original New York production:* 30 September 1954; Royale Theatre; 485 performances

*Notable songs:* I Could Be Happy with You; Won't You Charleston with Me?; A Room in Bloomsbury; The Boy Friend; It's Never Too Late to Fall in Love; Safety in Numbers; You Don't Want to Play with Me Blues; Fancy Forgetting; Poor Little Pierette; Perfect Young Ladies

One of the few British musicals to transfer to Broadway in the 1950s and, even rarer, one of only two to show a profit, *The Boy Friend* was a pastiche musical when they were not doing pastiche musicals on either side of the Atlantic. In fact, nostalgia for the 1920s was practically unheard of in both Great Britain and America at the time. On Broadway, a taste for the Roaring Twenties would not surface until the successful revival of *No No Nanette* in 1971. So, when Sandy Wilson wrote a one-hour spoof of 1920s British musical comedy in 1953, it was not for the West End or even the general public but for an entertainment at the Players Theatre Club, a private venue that usually put on old-style music hall entertainment. The Players commissioned *The Boy Friend* as a Christmas attraction and it was an immediate success, getting laudatory notices by the press and sold-out houses for its short run. The Players encouraged Wilson to expand the piece into a full-length musical and they presented it four months later, again to rave reviews and full houses. London theatrical producers were skeptical about moving *The Boy Friend* to the West End, so the Players booked a theatre themselves for six weeks. Another set of propitious notices greeted the little musical and it became a mainstream hit, running five years.

The American musicals *No No Nanette* (1925) and *The Girl Friend* (1926) have been cited as the works being pastiched in *The Boy Friend*, but Wilson draws from several British musicals as well and even uses some clichés from early film musicals. While everything in the plot seems familiar, it is refreshingly told with a naive kind of simplicity. All the young ladies at the finishing school Villa Caprice on the French Riviera dream about having a boyfriend, and the monied Polly Browne is no different. When the impoverished delivery boy Tony comes to the school to bring Polly her Pierette costume for the carnival ball, the two are immediately smitten with each other. Polly's widower father, Percival Browne, surprises Polly with a visit to the school and is in turn surprised to find that it is run by Madame Dubonnet, a French lady with whom he was once in love. A third couple in the plot is the sassy, man-hungry Maisie and the dancing Bobby, who tries to get her to pay attention only to him. Tony's parents, Lord and Lady Brockhurst, arrive,



Julie Andrews (far left) secured her theatre career as the naive heroine Polly in this pastiche of 1920s British musicals. Andrews made her Broadway debut in 1954. She is pictured here with her fellow “perfect young ladies” played by Millicent Martin, Ann Wakefield, Stella Claire, and Dilys Lay. *Photofest*

and we find out Tony is far from poor and has left the family manor to see if he can make his way in the world. Afraid that Polly will discover his true identity, he runs off and everyone suspects he is a thief of some kind. Polly is heartbroken, but during the carnival ball, Tony returns wearing a Pierrot costume. He takes off his mask and reveals the truth about himself, and the couple dance together to the joy of everyone. Although *The Boy Friend* is a spoof, it was played straight without the slightest bit of camp. Wilson pastiched the bubble-headed jazz-age musical comedies of the 1920s, but it was clear that he held an affection for the old shows. The cast also treated the material with absolute sincerity, newcomer Anne Rogers displaying charm in her innocence even as Denise Hirst was a decidedly convincing flapper as Maisie. The dialogue is purposely stilted, with no attempt to be anachronistic. In fact, it echoes the “modern” sound of those 1920s musicals that thought they were quite up to date. Although set in France, most of the musical’s characters are British, allowing the plot’s thin conflict of class difference to work effortlessly. Likewise, the predictable ending, with the hero turning out to be socially “suitable,” is also very British.

Wilson’s songs are accurate pastiches of the period, some numbers being specifically aimed at particular standards. *No No Nanette*’s “I Want to Be Happy” becomes the entrancing foxtrot “I Could Be Happy with You,” *The Girl Friend*’s title number becomes *The Boy Friend*’s up-tempo title song, the era’s iconic anthem

“Charleston” is turned into the vivacious “Won’t You Charleston with Me?,” and so on. But it is not Wilson’s talent for pastiche that makes the score for *The Boy Friend* so superb. These songs are surprisingly entertaining in their own right and over the years, theatregoers unfamiliar with the old musicals find them deliciously captivating. Wilson creates melodic lines that recall the Jazz Age theatre music without actually copying familiar tunes. Similarly, his lyrics are sassy when needed, hopelessly naive when appropriate, and clever if required. For example, the nimble wordplay in “It’s Never Too Late to Fall in Love” and “You Don’t Want to Play with Me Blues” recalls Ira Gershwin’s finest work. “A Room in Bloomsbury” is the requisite duet in which the lovers dream about happiness in a simple getaway. No musical comedy or operetta of the time was complete without such a number. Wilson’s version is an agile soft-shoe piece that is surprising in its musical shifts and unexpected word emphasis. Quite the opposite is Maisie’s raucous “Safety in Numbers” which has the feel of a victory march. The two operatic songs in *The Boy Friend*, “Fancy Forgetting” and “Poor Little Pierette,” conjure up the more high-brow sound of 1920s operettas. Both are rhapsodic with long flowing musical lines and manage to compete successfully with the jazz sound of the rest of the score. All in all, Wilson’s songs in *The Boy Friend* are a marvel. They may be inspired by the past, but they have proven to be timeless and are the reason the musical is still produced today.

	1954 London cast	1954 New York cast
Polly Browne	Anne Rogers	Julie Andrews
Tony	Anthony Hayes	John Hewer
Percival Browne	Hugh Paddick	Eric Berry
Mme. Dubonnet	Joan Sterndale Bennett	Ruth Altman
Bobby Van Husen	Larry Drew	Bob Scheerer
Maisie	Denise Hirst	Ann Wakefield
Lord Brockhurst	John Rutland	Geoffrey Hibbert
Lady Brockhurst	Beryl Cooke	Moyna MacGill
Hortense	Violetta	Paulette Girard
Dulcie	Maria Charles	Dilys Lay

As successful as *The Boy Friend* was in the West End and touring the British Isles, there was little interest by New York producers, who thought the musical too British and doubted a pastiche piece would find an audience on Broadway. Wilson’s insistence that an American production replicate the small-scale London musical and that it be directed and performed without camp made it even more difficult to find a berth on Broadway. American producers Cy Feuer and Ernest Martin, whose first Broadway success was the very-British (though American-written) musical *Where’s Charley?* (1948), agreed to present *The Boy Friend* in New York, but they weren’t very true to Wilson’s terms. They added to the cast size and the scenery, and Feuer took over the staging from the London director, Vida Hope.



The comedy became broader and much of the British players originally cast were replaced by Americans. There was even talk of sending British newcomer Julie Andrews back to England because she was so inexperienced. In short, the preparation of the New York production was filled with problems and ill-feelings. (Wilson and Hope were actually barred from the theatre during the final rehearsals.) What finally opened on Broadway was not the clever little pastiche that charmed London, but American theatregoers had no grounds for comparison and applauded the musical, as did the critics. Much of the praise was for newcomer Andrews, whose Broadway career was launched with her beguiling Polly. In truth, Andrews had next to no acting experience and was as naive and overwhelmed as Polly herself. A professional singer since childhood, she had been in musicals, most memorably as Cinderella in a Christmas pantomime. In *The Boy Friend* she shone as a refreshing new talent and was a major reason for the musical's success. It was not until Andrews was cast as Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* two years later that it became clear to that musical's creators, and herself, that she was in over her head. It was through the efforts of director Moss Hart and Andrews's own pluck that she eventually triumphed in the role of Eliza.

*The Boy Friend* ran a healthy sixty weeks on Broadway, a far cry from the London run of five years. Andrews headed an American tour and the whole enterprise was deemed a success, especially for a British musical during the 1950s. Yet New Yorkers did not see *The Boy Friend* that Wilson envisioned until 1958 when it was revived Off-Broadway in the smaller Cherry Lane Theatre. This production was much closer to the original West End one in its look and sound, and critics were quick to point out how much more effective it was than the earlier Broadway version. New Yorkers liked this more "British" *The Boy Friend*, and it ran two years. While the musical has returned to London on several occasions over the decades, Broadway has seen only one revival, a misguided 1970 production headed by television actress Judy Carne as Polly. The reviews were not favorable (except for Sandy Duncan's bubbly Maisie), and the revival closed in fourteen weeks. The next year saw a British film version concocted by *auteur* director Ken Russell. Presented as a show-within-a-show, *The Boy Friend* was seen on the stage of a dreary regional theatre and was indeed campy and involved some surreal dream sequences. The backstage story was cliché-ridden, spoofing *42nd Street* and other show business movies. To many fans of the stage musical, the screen version was a travesty, as it was meant to be. Yet the movie has its charms (such as ex-model Twiggy as a surprisingly likable Polly), much of the score is retained (plus some song standards from the 1920s), and Russell seems to have a kind of oddball affection for the musical. Maybe the movie proves how indestructible Wilson's original is. He returned to the same characters in the musical sequel *Divorce Me, Darling!* in 1965. The setting again is the French Riviera, but Polly, Tony, Maisie, Bobby, and company are ten years older and marital troubles are afoot. The score this time pastiches 1930s songs, most noticeably Cole Porter numbers. Again, the music and lyrics are as accurate as they are enjoyable, but the musical is strangely unsatisfying. Its West End production was short-lived but *Divorce Me, Darling!* has its advocates and there have been productions in both Britain and America.

## **BUDDY: THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY**

(1989/1990)

A musical biography by Alan Janes, based on the life of Buddy Holly

*Score:* Buddy Holly and others (music and lyrics)

*Original London production:* 12 October 1989; Palace Theatre; 5,140 performances

*Original New York production:* 4 November 1990; Shubert Theatre; 225 performances

*Notable songs:* Peggy Sue; That'll Be the Day; (I'm) Looking for Someone to Love; Maybe Baby; It's So Easy to Fall in Love; Think It Over; True Love Ways; Why Do Fools Fall in Love; Oh Boy!; Johnny B. Goode; La Bamba; Words of Love; Chantilly Lace; Changing All Those Changes; Not Fade Away

The Britons are great fans of America's early rock and roll, so it is not surprising that a musical bio about pioneer rocker Buddy Holly should show up on the stage in London. What is surprising is that an American stage version had not previously surfaced, especially after the success of the 1978 movie *The Buddy Holly Story*. This early jukebox musical was the idea of theatrical agent Laurie Mansfield, producer Greg Smith, and writer-producer Alan Janes. They approached Paul McCartney, who owned the rights to Holly's songs, and he paved the way for the musical. Janes's script covers Holly's life from his days in Lubbock, Texas, where, with the help of D. J. Hipockets Duncan, he forms the rock and roll group called the Crickets in 1956; his first records made in Nashville; his rise to fame with the song "That'll Be the Day"; the Crickets' performance at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem (they were booked there because the management thought they were an African American band); his courtship and marriage to Puerto Rican receptionist Maria Elena Santiago; the breakup of the group and the beginning of Holly's solo career touring the States; and his final concert in Clear Lake, Iowa, with Ritchie Valens and J. P. Richardson ("the Big Bopper") before their doomed flight, in which they were killed in 1959. The libretto is more a sketch than a fully developed script, leaving time for thirty songs by Holly and others. The re-creation of the final concert in Iowa takes up a major portion of the second act. In fact, the musical often felt more like a concert than a theatre piece, and the audience liked it that way.

The American actor-songwriter Paul Hipp, while touring Great Britain with Carole King promoting their record "I Can't Stop Thinking about You," was spotted by the producers of *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* and were impressed with how much he looked and sounded like Holly. He was cast as the famous singer-songwriter and the production was given a tryout in Plymouth. Opening night was a technical disaster, with glitches and mechanical failures that caused the musical to drag on for hours. Yet the audience was thrilled and demanded encores of the Holly songs. By the time *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* opened in the West End in 1989, it was a polished production but still more a concert than a traditional musical. Some critics carped about this, but there was high praise



for Hipp and how accurately the 1950s songs were presented. The musical was quickly embraced by the British public and a long run was assured. No one knew then that *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* would entertain audiences for twelve and a half years. The musical was also a major hit on the road, tours bringing the songs of Buddy Holly not only to the British Isles but Australia, Canada, and over a dozen non-English-speaking countries. This was clearly an international phenomenon and proof that Holly's music had much wider appeal than anyone imagined.

	<i>1989 London cast</i>	<i>1990 New York cast</i>
Buddy Holly	Paul Hipp	Paul Hipp
Maria Elena Santiago	Laurence Bouvard	Jill Hennessy
The Big Bopper	Gareth Marks	David Mucci
Ritchie Valens	Enzo Squillino Jr.	Philip Anthony
4th Cricket	Billy Geraghty	Ken Triwush
Joe B. Maudlin	David Howarth	Bobby Prochaska
Jerry Allison	David Bardsley	Russ Jolly
Hipockets Duncan	Vincent Marzello	Fred Sanders
Norman Petty	Ron Emslie	Kurt Zislie
Vi Petty	Lorna Lee	Lo Lynn Burks
Peggy Sue	Claudia Morris	Melanie Doane

A Broadway production seemed like a sure thing, and thirteen months after the London premiere the New York production opened with Hipp reprising his performance as Holly. Once again, he was roundly lauded for his performance, but the Broadway critics were generally disdainful of the musical. The sketchy book and lack of fully developed characters came under attack, and few reviewers recommended the musical bio. With so many Buddy Holly fans in America, however, the producers thought the opinions of critics surely would not matter. Yet the die-hard fans of early rock and roll were not your usual Broadway theatregoers. One has to remember that *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* was arguably the first jukebox musical to play on Broadway, and the concept of popular music from the past being heard in a Broadway book musical was not a familiar one. Some years later, songs that were originally sung by such diverse performers as Elvis Presley, Carole King, Frankie Valli, and ABBA would eventually be used in highly successful jukebox musicals, but in 1990 it was still an odd idea. Consequently, the New York production of *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* struggled to run seven months. It would take a few years for America to discover the musical bio, but it would eventually become an extremely popular piece in theatres across the country, chalking up thousands of performances in hundreds of venues. And it shows no signs of letting up. *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* is finally a hit in America.

**BY JEEVES**

(1996/2001)

A musical comedy by Alan Ayckbourn,  
based on the characters created by P. G. Wodehouse

*Score:* Andrew Lloyd Webber (music), Alan Ayckbourn (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 2 July 1996; Duke of York's Theatre; c. 256 performances

*Original New York production:* 28 October 2001; Helen Hayes Theatre; 73 performances

*Notable songs:* By Jeeves; That Was Nearly Us; Banjo Boy; Half a Moment; Love's Maze; When Love Arrives; The Code of the Woosters/Wooster Will Entertain You; The Hallo Song; Travel Hopefully; It's a Pig!

Surprisingly small and simple for an Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, the unpretentious little piece was best enjoyed by fans of comic writer P. G. Wodehouse and his two most famous characters, the silly ass Englishman Bertie Wooster and his stolid but ingenious manservant Jeeves. These two hilarious characters were featured in dozens of novels and short stories, and their misadventures have transferred to television successfully. The duo were less fortunate on the stage. In 1975 a young Lloyd Webber, one of the legion of Wodehouse fans, approached his lyricist partner Tim Rice with the idea of musicalizing Bertie and Jeeves. The two had already found celebrity with *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and the new project would let them stretch their songwriting skills by writing numbers in the style of 1920s and 1930s songs. Rice didn't think he could capture the unique Wodehouse kind of humor in either the book or the lyrics and bowed out. Lloyd Webber then turned to Alan Ayckbourn, the most popular author of British stage comedies of the era. Ayckbourn agreed and concocted a complicated plot drawn from several Wodehouse stories and filled with many of his farcical characters. Ayckbourn also wrote the clever lyrics, which were sung to Lloyd Webber's tuneful and catchy music. Film star David Hemmings was cast as Bertie Wooster and Michael Aldridge played the unflappable Jeeves. Produced by Robert Stigwood and Michael White and titled *Jeeves*, the musical had a tryout run in Bristol, where the production ran three and a half hours. There were too many stories, too many characters, and too many songs, leaving the audience confused and numb. Songs, characters, and large hunks of the libretto were cut before *Jeeves* opened in London in 1975, but the musical was still not working. The reviews were dismissive and *Jeeves* struggled to run thirty-eight performances. It was a crushing blow for the up-and-coming composer and the established playwright.

Lloyd Webber and Ayckbourn amicably parted ways, but both still believed that the Wodehouse stories and characters would make a splendid musical comedy. They returned to the idea twenty years later and, learning from their earlier effort, came up with a musical, now titled *By Jeeves*, with a less multi-storied plot and a cast of ten. The concept for the new version guaranteed that the production be on a small scale. A musical about Bertie and Jeeves is being performed in a

church hall by members of the parish, the vicar himself playing one of the roles. There was very little scenery or props (Bertie's automobile consisted of a cardboard box) and the actors sometimes broke the fourth wall when something in the production went awry. The story takes place over one weekend at the country house of Sir Watkyn Bassett where Bertie and Jeeves are invited to help Gussie Fink-Nottle win the hand of Madeline Bassett. The plan involves taking on the identity of Gussie because Gussie has taken Bertie's name, acting as matchmaker for pal Bingo Little. Bertie spends the weekend being chased by Honoria Glossop and avoiding the matrimonial intentions of Stiffy Byng. The farce climaxes with shenanigans in the middle of the night, Bertie pretending to be a burglar wearing a pig mask and finding himself in the wrong bedroom. It was all delicious nonsense and true to Wodehouse. Over the years Lloyd Webber had recycled some of the music from *Jeeves* for other musicals but three of the original songs survived and new ones were written for *By Jeeves*, Ayckbourn again providing the lyrics. The score is pure musical comedy and, in the mind of many, contains some of Lloyd Webber's most playful and spirited songs. Ayckbourn's lyrics are equally zesty, often capturing the Wodehouse wit and silliness. The title number is a merry list song that never runs out of jocular items and waggish rhymes. Even the music is funny as the notes bounce back and forth like a rhythmic tennis match. "The Hallo Song" is a nonsense number that reminds one of the kind of tomfoolery Groucho Marx might have sung. "Banjo Boy" is a vigorous rhythm number with a march tempo while "Travel Hopefully" is a giddy travel song with a goofy sense of adventure. Even the love songs, such as the flowing "Half a Moment" and the tango-flavored "That Was Nearly Us," have tongue-in-cheek lyrics and up-tempo music. The whole score for *By Jeeves* is a pointed contrast to the operatic sound of Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) and one suspects it was a joy for him to return to the kind of musical comedy songs he had not written since *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat* (1972).

	1996 London cast	2001 New York cast
Jeeves	Malcolm Sinclair	Martin Jarvis
Bertie Wooster	Steven Pacey	John Scherer
Sir Watkyn Bassett	Robert Austin	Heath Lamberts
Madeline Bassett	Diana Morrison	Becky Watson
Gussie Fink-Nottle	Simon Day	James Kall
Bingo Little	Nicholas Haverson	Don Stephenson
Honoria Glossop	Lucy Tregear	Donna Lynne Champlin
Stiffy Byng	Cathy Sara	Emily Loesser
Cyrus Budge III	Nicolas Colicos	Steve Wilson
Stinker Pinker	Richard Long	Ian Knauer

Wary of another flop in London, Lloyd Webber and Ayckbourn premiered *By Jeeves* in 1996 at a theatre in Scarborough in Yorkshire, where the playwright presented most of his comedies before sending them on to London. Pleased that they got it right this time and encouraged by the audience response, Lloyd Webber and

Ayckbourn brought the Scarborough production of *By Jeeves* to the West End for a twelve-week limited engagement. The critical and public approval was so positive that the musical moved to another theatre and remained for eight months.

Although Broadway producers in the 1990s did not usually hesitate to bring the latest Lloyd Webber musical to New York, *By Jeeves* wasn't a giant hit with a spectacle-driven production, and there were no takers. Instead the musical had its American premiere at the Goodspeed Opera House in Connecticut later in 1996. The intimate historic theatre was ideal for the small musical, and *By Jeeves* was well received. There were other productions elsewhere, but the musical did not arrive in New York until 2001 when it played at the Helen Hayes Theatre, one of the smallest playhouses on Broadway. Much of the Goodspeed cast was reunited, and Ayckbourn himself directed the production. The reviews were not auspicious. Some critics applauded the way *By Jeeves* brought the Wodehouse characters to life, but most thought the story slight and inconsequential. Even the songs got mixed notices, though some reviewers thought Lloyd Webber's music refreshingly unpretentious. The cast was also criticized; John Scherer (Bertie) and Martin Jarvis (Jeeves) were complimented but the rest of the acting was considered uneven. Audiences were divided in their reactions to the little musical. Some (mostly Wodehouse admirers) thought *By Jeeves* a nimble-witted romp; others found the comedy foreign and unfunny. Also, the barebones production looked rather amateurish on Broadway. Even in such a small house, *By Jeeves* could only find an audience for two months. Yet the musical remains a vivacious and melodic piece for many theatregoers, and regional productions have had success with it.

# C

## ***CANTERBURY TALES***

(1968/1969)

A musical comedy by Martin Starkie and Nevill Coghill,  
based on the stories by Geoffrey Chaucer

*Score:* Richard Hill, John Hawkins (music), Nevill Coghill (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 21 March 1968; Phoenix Theatre; 2,082 performances

*Original New York production:* 3 February 1969; Eugene O'Neill Theatre; 121 performances

*Notable songs:* Love Will Conquer All; I Have a Noble Cock; What Do Women Want?; There's the Moon; I Am All-Ablaze; If She Has Never Loved Before; Come On and Marry Me, Honey; I'll Give My Love a Ring; Darling, Let Me Teach You How to Kiss; Canterbury Day; Where Are the Girls of Yesterday; Beer Is Best; It Depends on What You're At

Geoffrey Chaucer's Middle English narrative poem *The Canterbury Tales*, which he began writing in 1387, was incomplete when he died in 1400 but its twenty-four stories have provided writers from William Shakespeare to Garrison Keillor with plots. The British musical *Canterbury Tales* told four of the tales within the framework of the pilgrims' journey from the Tabard Inn in Southwark, outside of London, to St. Thomas Becket's shrine in Canterbury Cathedral. Chaucer is one of the pilgrims and proposes that each of them tell a story to pass the time. Four of the poem's bawdier tales are acted out. In the Miller's Tale, the pretty young wife Alison cheats on her older carpenter husband with the handsome clerk Nicholas, who is, in turn, punished by the jealous suitor Absolon, who sticks a hot poker in Nicholas's ass. Another old husband with a young unfaithful wife is the subject of the Merchant's Tale. The lusty May finds it easy to cheat on her blind husband Januarie with the equally lusty youth Damyon. When the two are fornicating in a pear tree, Januarie's sight is suddenly restored and he is shocked with what he sees. With the help of the goddess Proserpina, May explains that she knew that having intercourse with Damyon was the only way to restore Januarie's sight. The Steward's Tale involved the crude miller Symkyn, who is also bit of a thief. The Cambridge University student John, who has been cheated by the miller, gets his revenge when he is boarding in Symkyn's house. One night, he tricks the

miller’s wife into accidentally getting into his bed and has his way with her. One of Chaucer’s most famous stories, the Wife of Bath’s Tale takes a feminine point of view. A Knight of King Arthur’s court is condemned to death for rape but Queen Guenevere postpones the sentence and tells the Knight he has one year to find out “what every woman most wants.” The Knight scours the countryside and gets various answers from different women. But it is an ugly old hag who promises to give him the correct answer if he agrees to grant any favor she asks. The Knight agrees and the answer the old woman gives—that all women wish to rein power over their husbands—is the correct one. The Knight is pardoned by the court but the old woman demands her favor: that he marry her. He is repulsed by the idea but, convinced by her that an ugly faithful wife is better than a beautiful unfaithful one, he agrees. When he kisses the old hag, she is instantly transformed into a beautiful lady.

Despite Chaucer’s high rank in English literature, such ribald stories could not be enacted on the British stage in the past because of the censorship powers of the Lord Chamberlain’s office. But that three-century-old tradition was losing its weight (it was officially dissolved in September of 1968) and *Canterbury Tales* not only played in the West End but found considerable success there. The musical had an unusual birth. Oxford professor Nevill Coghill, an expert on Chaucer and the author of a superb translation of his work from Middle English into contemporary language, wrote a stage version of some of the stories with Martin Starkie and it was presented at Oxford University in 1964. About the same time, songwriters John Hawkins and Richard Hill were working on a musical version titled *Canterbury Pilgrims*. When Hawkins and Hill approached Coghill about using his translation, the musical *Canterbury Tales* was created with Starkie and Coghill writing the libretto and Coghill turning his modern version into lyrics. Hawkins and Hill’s music was a mixture of pseudo-Medieval tunes, pop music, light rock and roll, and music hall numbers. The Wife of Bath’s “Come On and Marry Me, Honey” was a raucous example of the last, Absolon’s “Darling, Let Me Teach You How to Kiss” really rocked, there was a pop ballad feel to “What Do Women Want?,” and Nicholas’s “I Have a Noble Cock” had a merry march melody and a lyric taken from the Middle Ages. The madrigal flavor in the duet “There’s the Moon” was quite intriguing, being both modern and antiquated at the same time. The Nun pilgrim sang the musical’s hymn-like anthem “Love Will Conquer All” which was reprised up by all the pilgrims when they reached Canterbury.

	<i>1968 London cast</i>	<i>1969 New York cast</i>
Chaucer, etc.	James Ottaway	Martyn Green
Wife of Bath, etc.	Jessie Evans	Hermione Baddeley
Steward, etc.	Wilfred Brambell	George Rose
Alisoun, etc.	Gay Soper	Sandy Duncan
Squire, etc.	Nicky Henson	Ed Evanko
Prioress, etc.	Pamela Charles	Ann Gardner
Miller, etc.	Kenneth J. Warren	Roy Cooper
Clerk of Oxford	Billy Boyle	Bruce Hyde

During the preparation of *Canterbury Tales* and later during the run and on tour, the number of stories changed. Regardless, the idea of a modern look at a fourteenth-century literary masterpiece worked. The musical opened in the West End in 1968 and the London critics were quite free with their approval and recommendation. The bawdiness of the musical was also the talk of the town, helping *Canterbury Tales* to remain on the boards for five years.

Although Chaucer's classic poem was something Americans could only recall (often with dread) from cleaned-up versions in school, it was felt that the musical version with its accessible score and unexpurgated storytelling would succeed on Broadway. Martin Starkie, who had directed the London production, supervised the New York version and was able to secure the services of three outstanding British character actors: the versatile George Rose, the Gilbert and Sullivan master Martyn Green, and the raffish comedienne Hermione Baddeley. Most of the rest of the cast were American, and newcomer Sandy Duncan was singled out as the ingenue in the four stories. The 1969 Broadway version of *Canterbury Tales* toned down some of the British dialects but not the bawdiness in the piece. The production retained the London designers and was deemed visually stunning by the press. The New York critics were mixed about the musical itself. Some found it in poor taste, others applauded its uninhibited nature. As for the public, the musical's naughtiness was overshadowed by *Hair*, which had opened a year earlier and was still getting all the attention when it came to shock value. A medieval musical was a tough sell on Broadway, and *Canterbury Tales* managed to run fifteen weeks. That was longer than a 1980 revival that began Off-Broadway and decided to transfer to Broadway, only to be decimated by the press and closing in two weeks.

### ***THE CATCH OF THE SEASON***

(1904/1905)

A musical comedy by Seymour Hicks and Cosmo Hamilton,  
based on the Cinderella tale

*Score:* Herbert Haines, Evelyn Baker, Jerome Kern (music), Charles H. Taylor, Frank Compton, and others (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 9 September 1904; Vaudeville Theatre; 621 performances

*Original New York production:* 28 August 1905; Daly's Theatre; 93 performances

*Notable songs:* Molly O'Halloran (From County Clare); The Church Parade; Charms on My Chain; I'll Be a Good Little Girl; Cigarette; Won't You Kiss Me Once Before I Go?; Raining; Edna May's Irish Song; The Gibson Girls

One of countless musical versions of the Cinderella tale, *The Catch of the Season* is noteworthy because it included some songs by the young American composer Jerome Kern. In this contemporary take on the Charles Perrault classic, the Cinderella heroine is named Angela Crystal and she and the prince, in this version the Duke of St. Jermyns, meet and fall in love long before the ball, allowing for



more duets and love scenes for the couple. Instead of ugly stepsisters, Angela has two beautiful but vain sisters, Sophia and Honoria, but still a stepmother, Lady Crystal, who tries to keep the lovers apart. There is no fairy godmother, but Angela has a wealthy aunt, Lady Caterham, who arrives from Paris with a group of dressmakers to quickly create Angela's gown in time for the ball and allow her to attend disguised as Molly O'Halloran from Ireland. Added for comic support is the page boy Bucket, who has been hopelessly in love with Angela for years, and the Duke's pal Lord Dundreary, a character from the American comedy *Our American Cousin* (1858), and played by Sam Sothern, the son of E. A. Sothern who introduced the foppish character forty-three years earlier. It turned out that the most effective addition to the modern Cinderella tale was the character of pint-sized William Gibson, who shows up with his nine daughters, all tall and elegant beauties resembling the popular Gibson girls that artist Charles Dana had made the height of beauty and fashion at the time. Plot-wise the bevy of Gibson girls were awkwardly tacked on, but they became quite an attraction, much as the *Flo-rodora* girls had five years earlier.

*The Catch of the Season* was produced by Charles Frohman as a vehicle for playwright-actor Seymour Hicks and his wife Ellaline Terriss as the Duke and Angela. When Terriss discovered right before rehearsals began that she was pregnant, Frohman brought in the little-known eighteen-year-old Zena Dare who triumphed as Angela opposite Hicks's Duke. Hicks wrote the libretto with Cosmo Hamilton, and Charles T. Taylor provided the lyrics for music by Herbert Haines and Evelyn Baker. It was the West End premiere for the two composers and they each came up with some commendable music. The Duke sang the score's most catchy number, "The Church Parade," a brisk march. Two comic songs were delivered by the stepsister Honoria: a wry testimonial to her "Cigarette" and the sly "Charms on My Chain" in which she recounted her past flings. Angela convinced the court of her Hiberian ancestry with the Irish ditty "Molly O'Halloran from County Clare." Among the chorus numbers, "The Gibson Girls" got the most attention because of the fashionable ladies who sang it. Those same beauties were used to publicize *The Catch of the Season* even before it opened. The musical's costume designer Lady Duff Gordon had dressed the Gibson girls in various shades of color to denote different aspects of love. (She called them "emotionalized costumes.") Gordon wisely had the gowns on display in her showroom as a preview of what was in store for theatregoers. Instead of stagnant mannequins to show off the clothes, the Gibson girls paraded about the salon, a very unusual practice at the time.

	1904 London cast	1905 New York cast
Angela Crystal	Zena Dare	Edna May
Duke of St. Jermyns	Seymour Hicks	Farren Soutar
William Gibson	Compton Coutts	Fred Wright Jr.
Sophia Crystal	Olive Morrell	Jane May
Honoria Crystal	Hilda Jacobson	Margaret Fraser
Lady Crystal	Mollie Lowell	Annie Esmond



With all the fuss over the Gibson girls and the critics approval of the musical, *The Catch of the Season* was a hit when it opened in London in 1904. There were many cast and song changes during the year and a half that the musical ran. It is believed that Jerome Kern, who was providing songs for producer Charles Cochran at the time, contributed some of those new songs but there is no exact record. What is known is that three Kern songs were part of the score when Cochran brought *The Catch of the Season* to New York in 1905.

Most of the libretto and, of course, a bevy of Gibson girls were retained for the Broadway production, but little of the London score remained and a handful of interpolations by various songwriters were used. One song, the ballad "My Little Buttercup" for Angela (Edna May), was much admired by the critics. Yet the most significant musical additions are the three numbers by Kern. He rewrote "Molly O'Halloran" as the jaunty "Edna May's Irish Song," providing both music and lyric. "Won't You Kiss Me Once before I Go?" is a lovely, lingering ballad with a lyric by English lyricist Charles T. Taylor. It is possible it was written during the London run and added or discarded, but it was definitely in the Broadway version. Also notable is Kern's "Raining" which uses syncopation and pizzicato to suggest the pitter patter of rain drops. Theatre legend has it that Kern and lyricist Edward Laska wrote "How'd You Like to Spoon with Me?," Kern's first hit song, for *The Catch of the Season* but couldn't get Cochran interested in it. The famous ditty turned up later in the year in another British import, *The Earl and the Girl*. The Broadway version of *The Catch of the Season* was a modest success, running three months. In Britain it was a favorite on tour for years and returned to London in 1917 for a healthy run of ten weeks.

## CATS

(1981/1982)

A sung-through musical, based on T. S. Eliot's poetry collection  
*Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*

*Score:* Andrew Lloyd Webber (music), T. S. Eliot, Trevor Nunn, Richard Stilgoe (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 11 May 1981; New London Theatre; 8,949 performances

*Original New York production:* 7 October 1982; Winter Garden Theatre; 7,485 performances

*Notable songs:* Memory; Grizabella, the Glamour Cat; Bustopher Jones; The Moments of Happiness; The Journey to the Heaviside Layer; Jellicle Songs for Jellicle Cats; Old Deuteronomy; Macavity; The Old Gumbie Cat; Mungojerrie and Rumple-tazer; Mr. Mistoffolees; Rum Tum Tugger; Skimbleshanks; Gus, the Theatre Cat; The Ad-dressing of Cats; The Ballad of Billy M'Caw

A musical that some love to hate and others hate to love, *Cats* was nothing less than a theatre phenomenon. It is also a somewhat inexplicable megahit. The musical has no plot, no character relationships of any kind, and (of course) no humans in sight. What it did have is some beloved poetry turned into lyrics, vibrant music by



Not until *The Lion King* (1997) would a musical featuring only animal characters find such success on the musical stage. Shown here are members of the original cast of the 1982 record-breaking Broadway production. *Photofest*

Andrew Lloyd Webber filled with variety and vivacity, a runaway hit song, and a spectacular production with outstanding dance and design elements. It was a surprise hit in London, but one can argue that the source material, T. S. Eliot's 1939 clever collection of poems titled *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, was a particular favorite in the British Isles, never out of print and over the years published in several editions with illustrations by various artists. Yet Eliot's feline poetry was not nearly as popular in the States and *Cats* was a giant hit on Broadway and on tour. In fact, it became an international success and revivals have been presented both in London and New York, so one cannot dismiss *Cats* as just a phenomenon of its day. Yet the question remains: why is *Cats* such a sensation? One cannot attribute its triumph to mankind's affection for pet cats. The feline characters on stage suggest cat-like moves and attitudes, but each is very human in its speech and personality. The musical is not using cats as a symbol; the whole enterprise is not a statement about life or something universal. (Theatre legend has it that when American producer-director Harold Prince was in London to meet with Lloyd Webber about directing *The Phantom of the Opera*, the composer took Prince to see *Cats*. The American was puzzled afterward and asked Lloyd Webber what it all meant. The composer told him it was just about cats, nothing more.) Yet director Trevor Nunn, who helped fashion the poems into a theatrical piece, called it a "dance musical" at

first, then, as he developed *Cats*, saw it as a musical about redemption. Audiences didn't ask what *Cats* was about. They just bought tickets and enjoyed themselves.

Like many British children, Lloyd Webber first fell in love with Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* when his mother read the poems to him at bedtime. Also like many others, he committed some to memory and his affection for the poems never faded away. In 1977 Lloyd Webber started putting a few of his favorite poems to music for his own enjoyment. Three years later, a handful were performed at the summer Sydmonton Festival on Lloyd Webber's country estate. In attendance was Valerie Eliot, the great poet's widow, who was so pleased with the result that she agreed to a full-length musical based on *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* as long as the poems were not altered and were not fashioned into a story with dialogue. A musical without a story posed a problem, but Lloyd Webber and director Trevor Nunn and choreographer Gillian Lynne agreed that dance would be the unifying factor, the unsung ten-minute Jellicle Ball being the climax of the production. While looking through some unpublished material Mrs. Eliot had given the creative team, Nunn found a fragment that referred to the "Heaviside Layer" and another, titled "Rhapsody on a Windy Night," which Nunn rewrote as the lyric for "Memory," the musical's runaway hit. It was also Nunn who discovered the fragment about the faded "glamour" cat Grizabella, who was not in the published collection, and used her as the thread to hold the musical together. Unlike the other cats, who were introduced and then seem to disappear, Grizabella would return and, with the help of the other recurring character, Old Deuteronomy, she would ascend to the Heaviside Layer, a symbolic heaven of sorts. (Also, a section of Eliot's *Four Quartets* were used for the short song "The Moments of Happiness.") *Cats* was still thought of as a dance piece and all the characters would be cast with dancers. Rehearsals did not go smoothly, as the dancers/actors were confused about being in a musical that was so much a series of character specialties, and Judi Dench, who was playing Grizabella, injured a tendon in her heel late in the rehearsal process and was out of the show. There was also difficulty in raising the required 500,000 pounds for the elaborate show that involved a large cast, a complex setting (a junk-filled alley) with oversized props, and intricate costumes and makeup. Thirty-four-year-old producer Cameron Mackintosh, with only a few London credits to his name, joined with Lloyd Webber's Really Useful Group to present *Cats* in the unpopular New London Theatre, which had an auditorium that swept around the stage on three sides. Scenic and costume designer John Napier used the odd space effectively, letting the set and the props spill out into the auditorium. Because there was so much dance in the musical, Lynne was made associate director. Dench was replaced by Elaine Paige, London's original *Evita* (1978), as Grizabella, and *Cats* opened in 1982 to a very dubious future. Lloyd Webber had mortgaged his Sydmonton estate to finance the production, and Mackintosh had to take out ads in newspapers to find 250 investors willing to gamble on such an unlikely enterprise.

The London critics were not bothered by the lack of plot. On the contrary, for the most part the reviews were exemplary. The fondness for the Eliot poems was not diminished by putting them to music, and several critics pointed out the diversity of Lloyd Webber's music. But most of the praise was for the dazzling production, from the ingenious design and the sprightly choreography to the adroit performances and Nunn's directorial precision. At the same time, the London

	<i>1981 London cast</i>	<i>1982 New York cast</i>
Grizabella	Elaine Paige	Betty Buckley
Old Deuteronomy	Brian Blessed	Ken Page
Mr. Mistoffelees	Wayne Sleep	Timothy Scott
Gus the Theatre Cat	Stephen Tate	Stephen Hanan
Macavity	John Thornton	Kenneth Ard
Jennyanddots	Myra Sands	Anna McNeeley
Rum Tum Tugger	Paul Nicholas	Terrence Mann
Munkustrap	Jeff Shankley	Harry Groener
Bombalurina	Geraldine Gardner	Donna King
Bustopher Jones	Brian Blessed	Stephen Hanan
Mungojerrie	John Thornton	Kenneth Ard
Rumpleteazer	Bonnie Langford	Christine Langner
Skimbleshanks	Kenn Wells	Reed Jones
Jemina	Sarah Brightman	Carol Richards
Growltiger	Stephen Tate	Stephen Hanan

notices did point out that *Cats* was more entertainment than substance. As the *London Observer* commentator put it, “*Cats* isn’t perfect. Don’t miss it.” When the musical opened in New York a year and a half later, the Broadway critics were, for the most part, vicious. It was not the production itself that was the target of their disapproval, but the concept of a plotless musical about cats and Lloyd Webber’s music. Frank Rich, in the still-powerful position of critic for the *New York Times*, provided one of the few complimentary notices, noting that *Cats* “transports the audience into a complete fantasy world that could only exist in the theatre.” The Broadway production differed slightly from the London original. The interior of the Winter Garden Theatre, a traditional proscenium playhouse, was painted black and Napier redesigned his set so that it still extended out into the auditorium. There were a few changes in the musical numbers (the very-English “Ballad of Billy M’Caw” was replaced by an Italianate opera duet spoof and the music for “Mungojerrie and Rumpleteazer” was rewritten) but there were no attempts to Americanize the musical for audiences less familiar with Eliot’s original poems. None were needed, and *Cats* was as popular in New York as it was in London. Betty Buckley and Ken Page were the first of many Grizabellas and Old Deuteronomys, and some other members of the original cast went on to notable careers. One member of the chorus, Marlene Danielle, remained in the Broadway production throughout its entire eighteen years. *Cats* broke the record in both London and New York for the longest-running musical and held that position until Lloyd Webber’s *The Phantom of the Opera* came along.

The haunting ballad “Memory” was not only the hit song of the musical, it went on to become the most successful theatre song of its era, with hundreds of different recordings internationally. Lloyd Webber had written the basic melody some years before, and it was considered for his musical *Evita* in 1978. While some music critics have taken Lloyd Webber to task because the music in “Memory” echoes Ravel’s *Bolero* in spots and there are supposedly snippets of music by

others (including the flute solo in the Mamas & the Papas' recording of "California Dreamin'"), the full composition is a wondrous piece of melody and harmony and very much in the Lloyd Webber style at his best. Nunn's lyric, adapted from some phrases in Eliot's work, is equally responsible for the success of the song. The imagery is simple but unforgettable. The way "Memory" is introduced in bits and pieces in *Cats* then finally sung in its entirety near the end of the show is not only theatrically potent but also helps unify the very scattered musical. No other song from *Cats* became popular on its own (though the cast recordings were bestsellers) because they are very specific character numbers. Poems do not always transfer to commendable song lyrics but Eliot's feline verses are whimsical and playful in such a way that they often soar when set to music. Some poems suggested a certain kind of music, such as Old Deuteronomy's hymn-like "Ad-dressing of Cats" and the rock star panache of "Rum Tum Tugger." The minor-key "Grizabella, the Glamour Cat" has a funeral march tone while the fat gentlemanly "Bustopher Jones" has a lazy, debonair flavor. Many times Lloyd Webber was free to exercise his musical prowess with such varied musical styles as a languid waltz for "Old Deuteronomy," a bluesy sound for "Mccavity the Mystery Cat," 1940s jitterbug in "The Old Gumbie Cat," 1960s pop music in "Jellicle Songs for Jellicle Cats," a merry sing-along style for "Mr. Mistoffelees," and rhythmic traveling music for "Skimbleshanks the Railway Cat." Such a varied score opened possibilities for choreographer Lynne, so *Cats* was as thrilling physically as it was musically.

Talk of a film version of *Cats*, both animated and live action, has circulated for decades. In 1998 a video version was filmed in a London theatre with British and American cast members headed by Elaine Paige as Grizabella and Ken Page as Old Deuteronomy. Also featured was renowned English actor John Mills as the aged Gus the Theatre Cat. The video was a restaging of the London original and is a valuable record of that celebrated production. A 2019 screen version of *Cats*, directed by Tom Hooper, offered a starry cast that included Jennifer Hudson (Grizabella), Judi Dench (Old Deuteronomy), Ian McKellen (Gus the Theatre Cat), Taylor Swift (Bombalurina), James Corden (Bustopher Jones), and Idris Elba (Macavity).

## **CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY**

(2013/2017)

A musical comedy by David Greig, based on the Roald Dahl novel

*Score:* Marc Shaiman, Leslie Bricusse, Anthony Newley (music), Scott Wittman, Marc Shaiman, Leslie Bricusse, Anthony Newley (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 25 June 2013; Drury Lane Theatre; 1,293 performances

*Original New York production:* 23 April 2017; Lunt-Fontanne Theatre; 305 performances

*Notable songs:* Pure Imagination; The Amazing Fantastical History of Mr. Willy Wonka; The Candy Man; I've Got a Golden Ticket; The Oompa Loompas Song; It Must Be Believed to Be Seen; Don'cha Pinch Me Charlie; Charlie, You and I; The View from Here; If Your Father/Mother Were Here; Strike That, Reverse It; Vidiots; Almost Nearly Perfect; More of Him to Love; A Little Me; Simply Second Nature





Noah Weisberg (center) played the mysterious and magical Willy Wonka in the 2019 American national tour of the Roald Dahl musical fantasy. The musical lost money on Broadway but later became a favorite regionally. ZUMA Press, Inc. / Alamy Stock Photo

The first of Roald Dahl's many books to reach the screen, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* took fifty years to become a stage musical. When it did, it had to compete with the special effects of the two film versions and ended up being so spectacular (and expensive) that the musical was never a financial hit in London or New York. The 1964 novel about eleven-year-old Charlie Bucket who wins the opportunity to tour Willy Wonka's mysterious chocolate factory, was made into the very successful Hollywood movie *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* in 1971. The film was a musical with a score by British songwriters Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley that included two hits, "The Candy Man" and "Pure Imagination." Gene Wilder gave a memorable, quirky performance as Willy Wonka, and the film was filled with dazzling special effects, quite impressive in those pre-CGI days. *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* took many liberties with the book (Dahl was very unhappy with the movie) but was a modest success when first released. Yet over the years it became a favorite on television, video, and DVD, and is now considered a classic family movie. In 2005, Warner Brothers remade the Dahl tale, using the original title of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, with Tim Burton directing and Johnny Depp playing Willy Wonka. Dahl had died in 1990 but his widow oversaw the new screen version, and it is closer to the original novel. Again there was a musical score, this time by Danny Elfman, who sang most of the songs on the soundtrack, but the new film does not feel like a musical. It was a box office success but never developed a fervent following as the 1971 version had.

	<i>2013 London cast</i>	<i>2017 New York cast</i>
Willy Wonka	Douglas Hodge	Christian Borle
Charlie Bucket	Jack Costello	Jake Ryan Flynn
	Tom Klenerman	Ryan Sell
	Isaac Rouse	Ryan Fopust
	Louis Suc	
Grandpa Joe	Nigel Planer	John Rubenstein
Augustus Gloop	Harrison Slater	F. Michael Haynie
	Jenson Steele	
	Regan Stokes	
Mrs. Gloop	Jasna Ivir	Cathy Fitzgerald
Veruca Salt	Polly Allen	Emma Pfaeffle
	Tia Noakes	
	Ellie Simons	
Mr. Salt	Clive Carter	Ben Crawford
Violet Beauregarde	India Ria Amarteifo	Trista Dollison
	Adrianna Bertola	
	Jade Johnson	
	Mya Olaye	
Mr. Beauregarde	Paul J. Medford	Alan H. Green
Mike Teavee	Jay Heyman	Michael Wartella
	Adam Mitchell	
	Luca Toomey	
Mrs. Teavee	Iris Roberts	Jackie Hoffman

Plans for a musical stage version of Dahl's book began with a reading in New York in 2012 but *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* was intended to be a spectacular production in the huge Palladium Theatre in London. A new score was written by American songwriters Marc Shaiman (music) and Scott Wittman (lyrics), most known for their 2002 hit *Hairspray*. Only the lovely ballad "Pure Imagination" from the 1971 movie was retained. Scottish playwright-director David Greig wrote the libretto, which attempted to remain faithful to the book but was problematic. The first act of the musical tells how five children from around the world find a Golden Ticket inside a Wonka candy bar that allows them to tour the chocolate factory. The impoverished Charlie Bucket is joined by the fat Bavarian Augustus Gloop, the African American diva Violet Beauregarde, the spoiled British Veruca Salt, and the American TV and video game addict Mike Teavee. The first act ends as each of the winners and an adult companion arrive at the factory where Willy Wonka makes a splashy entrance and welcomes them in song. Inside the factory, the tour becomes a test in which Willy Wonka states rules and places temptations before the children. Only Charlie, accompanied by his grandfather, obeys Willy Wonka's rules and each of the greedy kids meets with a horrible end. As a reward, Charlie gets to ride in a glass elevator to view the entire factory, which now belongs to him. The script was somewhat lopsided, the first act

consisting mostly of introducing characters and all the action in the second act in the factory. Sam Mendes directed the large and complex production, which ended up opening at the Drury Lane Theatre after a few delays due to technical complications. The London reviews were mixed, most finding the first act and its songs less than engaging but applauding the second act with its resplendent sets and special effects. Douglas Hodge was cheered for his playful yet slightly sinister Willy Wonka, and the child actors were also praised. The appeal of Dahl's tale and word of mouth about the family-friendly musical allowed *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* to run three and a half years. Yet because the production was so costly and it did not regularly sell out the large playhouse, the musical's profits were not outstanding.

Shaiman and Wittman's score attempted to reflect the different nationalities of the characters. There was a nimble British music hall flavor in the narrative number "The Amazing Fantastical History of Mr. Willy Wonka" and in the spry march "Don'cha Pinch Me Charlie," a German beer hall oom-pah-pah for Mrs. Gloop titled "More of Him to Love," and a hip-hop spoof "The Double Bubble Duchess" for the Californian Beauregarde family. The score also included the touching if sentimental lullaby "If Your Mother/Father Was Here" and an enjoyable rapid-fire patter piece "Strike That, Reverse It" for Willy Wonka. But when he sang the indelible "Pure Imagination" late in the second act, one realized how uninspired all the other songs were.

Perhaps even Shaiman and Wittman were not totally happy with their songs, because most of the London score was cut when *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* transferred to Broadway in 2017. Not only were new numbers written, but three memorable songs from the 1971 film—"I've Got a Golden Ticket," "The Oompa Loompas Song," and "The Candy Man"—were added. The script was also altered and, as it turned out, not for the better. The first act opened with Willy Wonka telling the audience he is looking for some deserving youth to take over the factory. Disguised as a candy store owner, he befriends Charlie and creates the Golden Ticket scheme to get Charlie inside the factory. This took away any mysterious aspects of the character of Willy Wonka as well as any doubt as to the ending of the story. The libretto was also Americanized, with contemporary name dropping and a heavy moral tone added. The new songs, except for the entrancing "The View from Here," were as ineffective as the script changes, but the major problem with the Broadway version was the production itself. Mendes handed the direction over to the usually proficient Jack O'Brien who fumbled badly. The worst decision, in the opinion of many, was to have all the children except Charlie played by adults. This supposedly made their awful fates less upsetting. The Oompa Loompas were part human, part puppet. The scenery was reworked and looked rather shabby compared to the West End production. Only Christian Borle's performance as Willy Wonka found favor with the critics, who castigated *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* with comments like "joyless, shapeless and grating" and "it left me with something of a toothache." A healthy advance helped the musical run at capacity for a few months, but it then struggled and had to close after an unprofitable nine months.



**CHARLOT'S REVUE  
(AKA ANDRE CHARLOT'S REVUE OF 1924)**

(1924/1925)

A musical revue by Jack Hurlbut and Dion Titheradge

*Score:* Noel Coward, Ivor Novello, Eubie Blake, Philip Braham, and others (music),  
Noel Coward, Douglas Furber, Noble Sissle, Ronald Jeans, and others (lyrics)

*Original New York production:* 9 January 1924; Times Square Theatre; 298 performances

*Original London production:* 30 March 1925; Prince of Wales Theatre; 513 performances

*Notable songs:* Parisian Pierrot; Limehouse Blues; You Were Meant for Me; March with Me!; Night May Have Its Sadness; There's Life in the Old Girl Yet; Ready to Work; There Are Times; Little Go Getter; I Don't Know; It's a Far, Far Better Thing; I Might

Andre Charlot is considered the father of the intimate, sophisticated musical revue in London, a refreshing alternative to the large, spectaculars that paralleled the lavish *Ziegfeld Follies* in the United States. He was born in Paris and began his career as an assistant on such flashy entertainments as the *Folies Bergere*. At the age of thirty, Charlot went to London, where he presented small but elegant revues at the Alhambra Theatre, at which he was comanager. His production of *Kill That Fly!* in 1912 garnered some attention, and it was followed by a series of revues and some book musicals that retained his intimate approach and introduced writers and performers who went on to stellar careers. In Charlot's *Tails Up!* (1918), Noel Coward's music and lyrics were first heard, and that same year both Gertrude Lawrence and Beatrice Lillie made their debuts in Charlot's *Cheer*. By 1924, Charlot was the undisputed king of the musical revue, although producer Charles Cochran gave him a run for his money, even as he also presented many book musicals. After such hit revues as *A to Z* (1921) and *London Calling!* (1923), Charlot decided to try New York. He gathered some of his finest performers, who were now London stars, and songs and sketches from his past revues and convinced American producers Arch and Edgar Selwyn to present *Charlot's Revue* on Broadway for six weeks. Sometimes billed as *André Charlot's Revue of 1924*, the production was an instant hit and the run was extended to nine months. Although the production was distinctly English in tone, Americans seemed to enjoy this kind of small-scale but witty entertainment as much as the British.

*Charlot's Revue of 1924* is most remembered today for introducing performers Gertrude Lawrence, Beatrice Lillie, and Jack Buchanan to American audiences and for premiering some beloved song standards. Lawrence was not a powerful singer but a superb interpreter of a song and an actress who could play everything from daffy comedy to heartbreaking drama. She would return to Broadway several times during her career, which ended with her performance in *The King and I* (1951). Beatrice Lillie was a unique comedienne who was able

1924 New York cast	1925 London cast
Beatrice Lillie	Beatrice Lillie
Gertrude Lawrence	Gertrude Lawrence
Jack Buchanan	Peter Haddon
Marjorie Brooks	Jessie Matthews
Herbert Mundin	Herbert Mundin
Robert Hobbs	Robert Hobbs
Fred Leslie	Patrick Adair
Douglas Furber	Hazel Wynne

to maintain a lady-like demeanor even as she did farcical things on stage. Over the next four decades, Lillie was also a frequent favorite on Broadway. Jack Buchanan, a debonair song-and-dance man with a wry sense of humor, was so popular in the West End that he returned to New York on only three occasions. From the score for *Charlot's Revue of 1924*, Noel Coward's enticing waltz "Parisian Pierrot" was exceptional, but it was the insistent, haunting "Limehouse Blues" by Philip Braham (music) and Ronald Jeans (lyric) that became the most famous number. African American songwriters Eubie Blake (music) and Noble Sissle (lyric) provided the up-tempo love song "You Were Meant for Me" and composer Ivor Novello, who would become one of London's most popular songwriters and performers but never saw any of his musicals on Broadway, wrote the vigorous "March with Me!" (lyric by Douglas Furber) with which Beatrice Lillie brought down the house as she went haywire during some military maneuvers.

After New York, Charlot took his revue on a six-month American tour then returned to London where it opened in 1925 under the management of Arch and Edgar Selwyn. Although the performers, songs, and sketches had all been seen in his earlier revues, *Andre Charlot's Revue of 1925* (as it was retitled) was still a major hit, running even longer than in New York. Buchanan had other commitments and was replaced by Peter Haddon, and Jessie Matthews, who had been in the chorus, moved into a principal position in the cast. The recognition launched Matthews's career which included many stage and film musicals. Charlot brought Lawrence, Buchanan, and Lillie back to Broadway at the end of 1925 with *Charlot's Revue of 1926*, again produced by the Selwyns. A few favorite numbers and sketches were reprised but most of the material was new. The highlight of the score was Coward's jaunty "Poor Little Rich Girl," and he provided two other numbers. The American songwriters Al Dubin, Billy Rose, Irving Caesar, and Joseph Meyer also had a winner with "A Cup of Coffee, a Sandwich and You." While the new edition did not sparkle as much as the first one, New Yorkers were so enamored of the three British stars that the revue managed a run of 138 performances. Charlot never brought another musical to Broadway, but he continued to produce revues and book musicals in London up through 1937.

## **CHESSE**

(1986/1988)

A sung-through musical play by Tim Rice and Richard Nelson

*Score:* Benny Andersson, Bjorn Ulvaeus (music), Tim Rice (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 14 May 1986; Prince Edward Theatre; 1,209 performances

*Original New York production:* 28 April 1988; Imperial Theatre; 68 performances

*Notable songs:* I Know Him So Well; One Night in Bangkok; Heaven Help My Heart; Someone Else's Story; Terrace Duet; You and I; Anthem (My Land); Pity the Child; The Soviet Machine; Where I Want to Be; So You Got What You Want; The Deal (No Deal); Nobody's Side; Endgame; Embassy Lament; Who Needs a Dream?; Lullaby; Hungarian Folk Song

A powerful Cold War musical that is perhaps somewhat dated today, *Chess*, in its various versions, still possesses an outstanding score. British theatre critic Olaf Jubin calls *Chess* "probably the most bitter musical of the 1980s, [which] takes one step further the theme of life leading inevitably to dissatisfaction, with protagonists who have achieved most of what they ever dreamed of, only to realize that success doesn't bring contentment." This may be a familiar theme, but in *Chess* it is given a global spin, with international politics and the merchandising of celebrities represented by the metaphor of the game of chess. Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice had considered making a musical inspired by the famous 1972 chess match between American Bobby Fischer and Russian Boris Spassky. When Lloyd Webber got involved with the musical *Cats*, which, based on poems by T. S. Eliot, needed no lyricist, Rice took the idea to composers Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus, members of the Swedish pop group ABBA. In 1984, as he had done with *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita*, Rice created a concept album first, and like those previous recordings, *Chess* became a best-seller with two hit songs: the pounding "One Night in Bangkok" and the female duet "I Know Him So Well." Music videos of five of the songs were also made, and a 1984 concert version of *Chess* toured Europe with success.

The 1986 London production was plagued with misfortune. Being sung-through, *Chess* was more a series of songs than a well-plotted stage musical, and Rice struggled to bring the story and characters to life. Songs from the concept album were dropped and new ones were written, but what was needed was a director to put it all together and make it work as a theatrical piece. *Evita* had been similarly disjointed until Harold Prince was brought in as director and turned an album into a musical. Prince was not available this time, but the producers were able to secure the services of one of Broadway's most in-demand director-choreographers, Michael Bennett. Based on Bennett's very specific ideas, *Chess* was cast and a very elaborate set was designed and built, but it became evident that Bennett was slowly dying of complications from AIDS (to which he finally succumbed in 1987). He excused himself from the project and Trevor Nunn was then hired to direct using the existing cast and designs. Rice's libretto at this point focused on three characters: the overbearing, difficult American chess champion



International chess rivals American Freddie Trumper (Philip Casnoff, seated on the left) and Russian Anatoly Sergievsky (David Carroll, seated on the right) face off in the 1988 Broadway production of the political musical. Standing (left to right) are the Americans Florence (Judy Kuhn) and Walter (Dennis Parlato), and the Russians Molokov (Harry Goz) and Svetlana (Marcia Mitzman). *Photofest*  
© Martha Swope

Freddy Trumper; his longtime girlfriend and manager Florence Vassey, who escaped from Communist Hungary in 1965; and the Russian chess champion Anatoly Sergievsky, who has left his wife, Svetlana, in Russia to compete in an international tournament in the Tyrolean Alps. Anatoly is guarded and watched over by the crafty Molokov, and the event is overseen by the Arbiter, who has his hand in the prodigious merchandising connected to the widely publicized tournament. Freddy becomes more impossible than ever, losing the match and driving Florence into a tentative relationship with Anatoly. Despite his deep love for his country, Anatoly defects, and he and Florence become lovers. A year later Anatoly finds himself defending his title in Bangkok where he must face a new champion from Russia. Also in Thailand are Freddy, now a journalist out to embarrass Anatoly, and Svetlana, hoping to win back Anatoly's love. Molokov tries to make a deal with Florence that her father will be released from prison if she convinces Anatoly to throw the match. He refuses, wins the match, but then returns to Russia with his wife, thereby securing the freedom of Florence's father. She discovers, however, that it is doubtful he is still alive.

The complex interplay of human and political relationships are expressed in Rice's stinging lyrics. Yet it is Andersson and Ulvaeus's music that gives *Chess* its emotional drive. Rice provides the uncompromising ideas, but without such vibrant music *Chess* would be more an acid commentary than a musical. The

opening number, “Merano,” is a mocking pseudo-Tyrolian folk song sung by the chorus, a kind of spoof of the traditional operetta opener. Anatoly’s “Where I Want to Be” is a propulsive number that musically bounces back and forth, revealing the character’s internal confusion from the start. Similarly, Florence’s “Nobody’s Side” is equally forceful as she looks at the practical side of the situation. The two characters have two poignant duets, the tentative “Mountain Duet” and the expansive “You and I.” “The Deal (No Deal)” is a driving rock number in which the principals tell each other the truth. Perhaps the most moving song is Anatoly’s fervent “Anthem,” in which he expresses his devotion for “My Land.” One of the score’s few moments of levity is “Embassy Lament,” a duet for two stuffy British officials processing Anatoly’s defection papers. As for the two chart-climbing hits, “One Night in Bangkok” is a catchy disco number that has little to do with the plot or the characters and, consequently, stands on its own very well. “I Know Him So Well,” sung by Florence and Svetlana about Anatoly, is a skillful duet in which the two women echo each other, becoming friends and enemies at the same time.

	<i>1986 London cast</i>	<i>1988 New York cast</i>
Anatoly Sergievsky	Tommy Körberg	David Carroll
Florence Vassy	Elaine Paige	Judy Kuhn
Frederick Trumper	Murray Head	Philip Casnoff
Molokov	John Turner	Harry Gov
Walter	Kevin Colson	Dennis Parlato
The Arbiter	Tom Jobe	Paul Harman
Svetlana Sergievsky	Siobhán McCarthy	Marcia Mitzman

The 1986 West End production of *Chess* featured Tommy Körberg, Elaine Paige, and Murray Head as Anatoly, Florence, and Freddy; all three had sung the roles on the concept album. Bennett’s visual ideas were carried out and the scenic and lighting designs were state-of-the-art and impressive in a very flashy manner. The London critics were all over the map when it came to assessing *Chess*. Some thought the book weak, the characters undefined, and all the spectacle empty. Others praised the potency of the tale, the compelling ideas expressed, and the eye-catching visuals. The performers were roundly applauded, particularly Körberg’s Anatoly, and most reviews viewed the score with favor. Audience members, already familiar with the score from the concept album, the music videos, and the concerts, walked into the theatre knowing and admiring the songs. *Chess* ran three years, but Rice was never totally pleased with the musical. He felt that he did not accomplish what he set out to do: make a bold statement about Cold War politics. Also unhappy with the production was director Nunn who refused to stage the Broadway version unless major changes were made. Rice agreed and American playwright Richard Nelson was hired to write an actual libretto. While in London the musical was sung-through, the new *Chess* had dialogue scenes. After a prologue set in Hungary in 1956 in which young Florence is separated from her father during the Budapest rebellion, the action goes directly to Bangkok for the first chess tournament. The second tournament takes place in Budapest where

Anatoly faces Freddie again and Florence is reunited with an old man she is told is her father. Freddie wins the match, Anatoly returns to Russia with his wife, and Florence finds out that her real father is dead and that she has been a pawn in a Cold War plot to release an American spy.

There were as many changes to the score as there were to the story. Several songs were dropped, some were reassigned to different characters, and a handful of new ones were written by Rice, Andersson, and Ulvaeus. The best of these was the first-rate ballad "Somebody Else's Story," in which Florence compared her past and present self. The Broadway version of *Chess* had new scenic designs by Robin Wagner which were less complicated than in London but still involved several pieces of scenery that seemed to be in continual motion. David Carroll (Anatoly), Judy Kuhn (Florence), and Philip Casnoff (Freddie) headed the New York production, which suffered from technical difficulties in rehearsals and previews. With the added book scenes, the musical was also overlong, running over three hours when it opened in 1988. The New York reviews were mostly negative, some even vicious. "The evening has the theatrical consistency of quicksand," the *New York Times* opined. Most critics faulted the book, some the overamplified music, others the messy technical aspects of the production. Despite a healthy advance with reduced-price group sales, *Chess* struggled to run and had to close after two months. Further changes were made for a national tour in 1990 and an Off-Broadway production that same year set the action in 1972 because the end of the Cold War had weakened the power of the story. Even more changes were made for the Australian production later that year, and yet more alterations were made for a 2018 London revival. All of these rewrites were made by Rice himself, who considers *Chess* to be his favorite and finest work and one he is determined to get right. Yet *Chess* is a success with concert and fully staged productions all over the world. Even in America it is now regularly performed by all kinds of theatre groups. Perhaps no version of *Chess* is perfect, but the musical is still high-powered musical theatre.

## **A CHINESE HONEYMOON**

(1901/1902)

A musical comedy by George Dance

*Score:* Howard Talbot (music), George Dance (lyrics)

*Original London production:* October 5 1901; Strand Theatre; 1,075 performances

*Original New York production:* June 2 1902; Casino Theatre; 376 performances

*Notable songs:* The à la Girl; I Want to Be a Lidy; Martha Spanks the Grand Pianner;

The Twiddley Bits; Roses Red and White; I Dreamed a Dream the Other Night; A Paper Fan; A Chinese Honeymoon; Dolly with a Dimple on Her Chin; It's Roly Poly, Roly Poly

The first London musical to chalk up over one thousand performances, *A Chinese Honeymoon* was a silly but charming musical comedy that ranks as the longest-running West End musical of the Victorian and Edwardian era. Oddly, *A Chinese*



*Honeymoon* began as a touring production that played the provinces for two years, its creators not believing it would have much of a chance for success in London. But the musical was not only a hit in the West End in 1901 but in New York, Australia, continental Europe, and South America. A production was even seen in China. Revivals of *A Chinese Honeymoon* were frequent up through World War One, making it one of the most lucrative theatrical enterprises of the early twentieth century.

Like several musicals of the era that used Asian settings, *A Chinese Honeymoon* is set in contemporary China, where the Emperor Hang Chow has ordered Hi Lung, the Lord High Admiral, to go to Europe to find him a wife without telling her of his royal position. Armed with a not very impressive photograph of the Emperor, Hi Lung searches in vain for a maiden who is interested. At the same time, the Emperor's daughter, Soo Soo, has fallen in love with the British commoner Tom Hatherton, but marriage is out of the question, so he turns to the flirtatious waitress Fi-Fi. Meanwhile, the Englishman Samuel Pineapple and his jealous wife arrive in China for their honeymoon. Pineapple is taken with the pretty Soo Soo and manages to steal a kiss from her. Caught in the act, he finds out that such an outrageous action means he must marry the girl even if he is already married. Adding to the complicated situation, Hi Lung pegs Mrs. Pineapple as the Emperor's bride, and Mrs. Brown, an old flame of Samuel's, arrives in China, hired by the Emperor to oversee his daughter and any prospective husband. Soo Soo, unable to wed Tom, takes a drug that gives the illusion that she has died. The British Ambassador arrives and sets everything right. The Pineapples are reunited, Tom is declared a suitable husband for Soo Soo, and the Emperor marries Mrs. Brown. George Dance wrote the skillful and often clever libretto as well as the lyrics for Howard Talbot's music, although songs by others were interpolated into the score during the long journey *A Chinese Honeymoon* took on its way to fame. The production was put together by producer H. Cecil Beryl for an eight-week tour that began in Hanley in 1899 and was a hit everywhere it went. The next year, librettist-lyricist Dance took over the rights and set up a thirty-two-week tour in which the musical was even more successful. A producer was interested in bringing *A Chinese Honeymoon* to London, but Dance wisely decided to produce the West End version himself, first making some changes in the script and score and hiring the popular comic singer Louie Freear for the expanded role of Fi-Fi. The script, score, and the production itself had been fine-tuned during its many months on the road, so when *A Chinese Honeymoon* opened in London in 1901 it was a polished, sparkling musical comedy.

	1901 London cast	1902 New York cast
Princess Soo-Soo	Lily Elsie	Amelia Stone
Fi-Fi	Louie Freear	Katie Barry
Samuel Pineapple	Lionel Rignold	Thomas Q. Seabrooke
Mrs. Pineapple	Marie Dainton	Adele Ritchie
Tom Hatherton	Leslie Stiles	Van Rensselaer
Adm. Hi Lung	Percy Clifton	William Bruette
Mrs. Brown	M. A. Victor	Annie Yeamans

The London critics cheered the witty dialogue, the strong comic performances, and the splendid score. Freear as Fi-Fi sang three of the musical's many hits, all in the music hall style. In "The Twiddley Bits" she expressed her swooning for her piano teacher and the way he tickled the keys; her ambitions to rise in the world were outlined in "I Want to Be a Lidy"; and in "Martha Spanks the Grand Pianner," Fi-Fi recalled her cockeyed musical family. The Pineapple couple also had some zippy comic numbers. Mrs. Pineapple sang about English girls who put on French affectations in "The à la Girl" which became the biggest hit of the musical. Samuel stopped the show with the patter song "I Dreamed a Dream the Other Night" and with his wife extolled the joys of "A Chinese Honeymoon." Tom and Soo Soo's felicitous duet was titled "Roses Red and White," and her ballad "A Paper Fan" was a quixotic piece comparing the face to the image on the fan that hides it. Even the choral numbers in the musical were playful and witty, such as the court welcoming Hi Lung back home singing "It's Roly Poly, Roly Poly (O'er the Sea Once More)" and a sextet number titled "Penelope" that slyly lamented the plight of Odysseus's wife.

The 1902 New York production of *A Chinese Honeymoon* was the first Broadway venture by the young Shubert Brothers, and it was a hit, running ten months. The Broadway version added some songs by musical director Gustav Kerker, but it was essentially the same piece of musical comedy froth that had delighted the British. The Shuberts sent *A Chinese Honeymoon* on a long and very lucrative tour, even stopping in New York again in 1904 for a month. While *A Chinese Honeymoon* is very rarely revived today, it is a landmark musical and a forerunner of the long-run London musicals to come in the new century.

## CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG

(2002/2005)

A musical fantasy by Jeremy Sams, based on the 1968 screenplay by Ken Hughes, Roald Dahl, and Richard Mailbaum and the novel by Ian Fleming

Score: Richard M. and Robert B. Sherman (music and lyrics)

Original London production: 16 April 2002; London Palladium; c. 1,340 performances

Original New York production: 28 April 2005; Hilton Theatre; 285 performances

Notable songs: Chitty Chitty Bang Bang; Hushabye Mountain; Toot Sweets; Doll on a Music Box/Truly Scrumptious; Me Ol' Bamboo; You Two/Them Three; Teamwork; The Bombie Samba; The Roses of Success; Posh; Chu-Chi Face; Vulgarian National Anthem; Come to the Fun Fair; Kiddie-Widdy-Winkies; Act English

Just as the film version of Ian Fleming's children's book was more popular in Great Britain than in America, the stage adaptation was a hit in London but failed to make a profit in New York. Being a very expensive production (the title "flying" car alone cost close to \$1 million), *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* was housed in the largest theatres in both London and New York and needed to fill those venues in order to become a hit. The three-and-a-half-year run in the West End made money; the nine-month Broadway run did not. The movie was first released in 1968 and



did not earn back its mammoth budget of \$10 million but over the years it became a favorite on television, video, and DVD. Yet, as well-known as the tale may have become in the States, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* on Broadway was an expensive proposition and might not have been able to compete with the other family-friendly musicals such as *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) and *The Lion King* (1997). One might say *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* was a victim of economics, yet it was often superior family entertainment and American playgoers who saw it quite enjoyed it. Scaled-down versions of the musical have since toured or been produced regionally, and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* still plays effectively on stage.

Fleming, the famous author of the James Bond spy novels, wrote the 1964 book *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang: The Magical Car* to amuse his son Caspar. The story has to do with an Englishman, former Royal Navy commander Caractacus Potts, and a set of spies. But this James Bond is a family man who restores an old Paragon Panther auto, which turns out to have magical powers. It sprouts wings and flies over the other cars when Potts and his wife and children are stuck in traffic going to the beach for a picnic, and later it flies over the English Channel for a holiday in France. But some spies have stored explosives in a cave in Calais and, turning into a hovercraft, the car takes to the water and allows Potts to detonate the explosives. When the spies kidnap the children and take them to Paris to help steal the Bon-Bon Chocolate Factory's famous recipe, the car flies Mr. and Mrs. Potts to Paris where they alert the police, save their children, and are given the recipe as a grateful gift from Madame Bon-Bon. The book ends with the Potts family flying off in the car for new adventures. It is obvious Fleming had sequels in mind, but he died in 1964 and this was his last completed book. In fact, he did not live to see it published. Fleming got the name for the car from some actual racing cars from the 1920s that were named "Chitty Bang Bang" after the sound that they made.

British movie producer Albert R. Broccoli, who had made three very successful Bond films, bought the film rights and hired popular children's book author Roald Dahl to adapt the book into a screen musical. The project was an obvious attempt to re-create the appeal (and box office triumph) of Walt Disney's *Mary Poppins* (1964). Broccoli not only hired Dick Van Dyke from that movie musical (he tried to get Julie Andrews as well but failed) but also songwriters Richard M. and Robert B. Sherman and choreographers Marc Breau and Dee Dee Wood. Director Ken Hughes and writer Richard Mailbaum contributed to Dahl's screenplay which was no longer a spy tale. Caractacus, a widower with two children, is a crackpot inventor whose ideas always seem to backfire. He invents a whistle made of candy which impresses manufacturer Lord Scrumptious until the sound produced by the whistle brings every dog within hearing into the factory. But the lord's daughter, Truly Scrumptious, is quite taken with Caractacus and his two children. She joins them when Caractacus turns a rusted old motor car into Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (named by the children because of the sound it makes) and they all go on a picnic with Grandpa. Caractacus then tells a story about a magical car that is sought after by the Baron and Baroness of Vulgaria and the lengths they go to to steal it. The Vulgarians kidnap Grandpa thinking he is the inventor of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. Caractacus and the others fly in the car to Vulgaria, where children are despised by the Baron and Baroness and are sought after by the Child Catcher who imprisons them in dungeons below the city. Working with a sympathetic Toymaker, Caractacus and Truly free Grandpa

and then all the imprisoned children and they fly back to England. His story ended, Caractacus learns that Lord Scrumptious will buy his candy whistle after all, and the money he is given allows Caractacus and Truly to marry.

	2002 London cast	2005 New York cast
Caractacus Potts	Michael Ball	Raul Esparza
Truly Scrumptious	Emma Williams	Erin Dilly
Jeremy Potts	Luke Newberry	Henry Hodges
	Georges Gillies	
	Harry Smith	
Jemima Potts	Carrie Hope Fletcher	Ellen Marlow
	Lauren Morgan	
	Kimberley Fletcher	
Grandpa Potts	Anton Rodgers	Philip Bosco
Childcatcher	Richard O'Brien	Kevin Cahoon
Baron Bomburst	Brian Blessed	Marc Kudisch
Baroness Bomburst	Nichola McAuliffe	Jan Maxwell
Toymaker	Edward Petherbridge	Frank Raiter

Roald Dahl's sinister way of putting children in diabolical situations is perhaps the main difference between Fleming's book and the 1968 movie. This was picked up by Jeremy Sams, who wrote the script for the stage musical *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. In fact, parallels between the Vulgarians and the Nazi Party were quite obvious, and the musical was indeed dark at times. Sams dispensed with the movie's story-within-a-story and made the whole musical a fantasy from start to finish. Happily, the sparkling score by the Sherman Brothers was not discarded. Retained from the film were such highlights as the slaphappy "Me Ol' Bamboo," the tender lullaby "Hushabye Mountain," the jaunty "Toot Sweets," the delicate "Doll on a Music Box," the merry march "Posh," the gushing "Truly Scrumptious," the silly "Chu-Chi Face," and the contagiously rhythmic title song. The Shermans wrote several new numbers for the stage version, such as a mocking "Vulgarian National Anthem," the Latin spoof "The Bombie Samba," the spirited "The Roses of Success," and the repetitive but catchy "Teamwork," none of which were as memorable as the screen songs. Adrian Noble directed the large and talented cast, who were sometimes dwarfed by the huge production designed by Anthony Ward, and Gillian Lynne did the choreography, but they all took a back seat to the car, a mechanical wonder that was not only technically impressive but in a cockeyed way very poetic. The London reviews, which were mixed, also focused on Chitty. It was the one thing in the production that the critics agreed on. Dismissed as something more appealing to children than adults, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* found its audience, and the giant London Palladium was a major family destination for over three years.

For the Broadway production, an oversized venue (called the Hilton Theatre at the time) was chosen to handle the expected masses. A first-rate American cast was selected, and the London production staff, designs, and (of course) Chitty

were brought to Broadway. The New York critics were even more harsh than the West End reviewers. Only the spectacle aspects of the musical were commended, particularly the car, and commentators even questioned *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* as recommended family entertainment. The Child Catcher rounding up children and carting them away to a dismal fate was perhaps too close to the Holocaust for some, and there were critics and playgoers who thought the musical too frightening for young children. But it is unlikely that such an attitude was the reason for the failure of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* in New York. Running a behemoth of a musical on Broadway was (and is) so much more expensive than presenting the same production in London that the numbers made it very difficult to stay afloat. It is estimated that the musical's \$15 million investment did not recoup and only subsequent smaller productions will bring in any profit.

### CHU CHIN CHOW

(1916/1917)

A musical comedy by Oscar Ashe, based on the tale *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*

*Score:* Frederic Norton (music), Oscar Ashe (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 1 August 1916; His Majesty's Theatre; 2,238 performances

*Original New York production:* 22 October 1917; Manhattan Opera House; 208 performances

*Notable songs:* The Cobbler's Song; Any Time's Kissing Time; I Long for the Sun; The Robbers' March (We Are the Robbers of the Woods); I Am Chu Chin Chow; All My Days Till End of Life; I Love Thee So; How Dear Is Our Day; When a Pullet Is Plump (She's Tender); Corraline; (Sweet) Olive Oil; We Bring Ye Fruits; The Song of the Simitar; At Siesta Time

The first mega-hit of the British musical theatre was *Chu Chin Chow*, an exotic yet humorous Arabian Nights musical that raised spirits in London during World War One and continued on to run for five years, a record it held in the West End for forty years. While *Chu Chin Chow* was a modest success in New York as well, no Broadway musical would run as long as that London production until *Oklahoma!* twenty-six years later. What was so appealing about this musical version of the ancient tale of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*? A sumptuous production, tuneful songs, a slick script, and nimble performances certainly helped, but it is likely it was the escapism of the musical that was so winning. *Chu Chin Chow* allowed Londoners to leave the real world behind and dwell in a fantastical world of make believe for a few hours. Of course, musicals set in exotic locales were certainly nothing new to the British stage, but there was a playfulness in Oscar Ashe's libretto that crossed the line from operetta to musical comedy and audiences liked it.

Ashe embellished the tale of Ali Baba, adding villains, lovers, and clowns. The robber thief Abu Hasan has cheated and stolen from the merchants of Baghdad and has amassed a treasure trove, which he stores in a cave that can only be entered by using the secret code "Open Sesame." Greedy for the property and

goods of the merchant Kasim Baba, Abu Hasan disguises himself as the Chinese businessman Chu Chin Chow in order to get into Kasim Baba's house. He forces his slave, the lovely Zahrat, to spy for him by threatening to kill her lover, Omar, if she does not. Kasim Baba has an impoverished brother, Ali Baba, who learns how to enter the cave from the slave girl Marjanah and her sweetheart Nur Al-Huda, who is Ali Baba's son. When Kasim Baba learns about the cave and goes inside, he is killed by Abu Hasan. He has forty of his thieves hide in the forty empty oil jars in the cave in order to capture Ali Baba and anyone else who knows about his hidden treasure. But Zahrat gets her revenge by pouring boiling oil into each jar and then stabbing Abu Hasan to death. Add to all this Kasim's plump wife, Alcolom, who loves Ali Baba even though he is married to Mahbubah, who pops in for a memorable comic turn; the wedding of Marjanah and Nur Al-Huda, which Abu Hasan crashes disguised as an olive oil salesman; and plenty of behind-the-scenes plotting and death sentences and *Chu Chin Chow* has an agreeable hodgepodge of a story. Often resembling a British pantomime, the musical was presented with a series of lavish scenic designs that were changed while smaller scenes were presented in front of the curtain, thus allowing the musical to keep moving ahead. This practice of "in-one," very common later in the century, was little known in 1916 and was one of the ways the fantasy unfolded uninterrupted.

Ashe, inspired by the success of the 1911 play *Kismet*, wrote *Chu Chin Chow* as a vehicle for himself as the basso villain, Abu Hasan, and his wife, Lily Brayton, as Zahrat. Ashe also produced the production with his wife, wrote the lyrics for Frederic Norton's music, and directed the musical. Needless to say, *Chu Chin Chow* made Ashe a very rich man. Some critics had reservations about the mixture of comedy, murder, and romance in a musical, but audiences were entranced from the start and repeat business was not uncommon. Complaints from the Lord Chamberlain about the bevy of scantily clad slave girls increased public interest in the production. *Chu Chin Chow* was the musical entertainment every British soldier wanted to see before setting off for France or when on leave in London. Yet the musical outran the war and continued to play to full houses even as the cast and some of the songs changed. It certainly helped that a few numbers from the score became very popular and were heard everywhere from concert halls to pubs. Oddly, the most-sung number from the musical was introduced by a very minor character. The cobbler Baba Mustafa describes his weary life in the plodding number "The Cobbler's Song" and soon everyone was singing it. The hit love song was "Any Time's Kissing Time," a plaintive duet sung by Ali Baba and his wife Alcolom which foreshadows a foxtrot beat. When the villain Abu Hasan took on the identity of the Chinese merchant he murdered, he sang the bombastic introductory number "I Am Chu Chin Chow" with heavenly voices as backup. When disguised as an olive oil peddler, he sang "(Sweet) Olive Oil," a basso tribute with the tone of a love song. "Corraline" is a rhapsodic love duet sung by Marjanah and Nur Al-Huda in the strictly European style, and she also sang the waltzing aria "I Love Thee So," which has a touch of the modern. Ali Baba's ditty "When a Pullet Is Plump (She's Tender)" is about marriage and keeping his plump wife happy. Among the most memorable chorus numbers were the jaunty and boastful "The Robbers' March (We Are the Robbers of the Woods)" and the slave girls' "We Bring Ye Fruits," a list song with a very seductive subtext. Of the musical numbers Ashe and Norton

added to the score during the run, the most famous was Alcolom's operatic lament "I Long for the Sun." Norton also composed some vibrant pseudo-Arabian music for the scintillating dance numbers in the musical.

	<i>1916 London cast</i>	<i>1917 New York cast</i>
Abu Hasan	Oscar Ashe	Tyrone Power
Zahrat Al-Kulub	Lily Brayton	Florence Reed
Marjanah	Violet Essex	Tessa Kosta
Ali Baba	Courtice Pounds	Henry E. Dixey
Nur Al-Huda	J. V. Bryant	George Rasely
Kasim Baba	Frank Cochrane	Albert Howson
Alcolom	Aileen d'Orme	Kate Condon
Baba Mustafa	James Herbert	Felice DeGregorio
Mahbubah	Sydney Fairbrother	Lucy Beaumont

American producers E. Ray Comstock and Morris Gest secured the rights to present *Chu Chin Chow* on Broadway and booked the largest venue they could find, the Manhattan Opera House. It was not a wise move. Although the New York reviews were favorable and the public responded with enthusiasm, it was difficult to fill the large playhouse. So *Chu Chin Chow* was moved to the smaller Century Theatre after three months and ran another three months, long enough to turn a profit. The Broadway version dropped some songs from the original and interpolated a few others by American songwriters. The production was not as sumptuous, but the cast was outstanding. Tyrone Power (grandfather of the later movie star of the same name) was a fearsome Abu Hasan, and matinee idol Henry E. Dixey was a wily Ali Baba. While the songs were applauded and some published, they never caught on in America the way they did in England. *Chu Chin Chow* not only toured Great Britain, America, and internationally, it was revived in London on several occasions, including a production on an ice rink in 1958, which was reprised in New York. A silent film version of *Chu Chin Chow* was made in Britain in 1923. An excellent 1934 sound adaptation of the musical retained much of the score and featured Fritz Kortner (Abu Hasan), Anna May Wong (Zahrat), George Robey (Ali Baba), and Thelma Tuson (Alcolom).

## ***THE CIRCUS GIRL***

(1896/1897)

A musical play by James T. Tanner and Walter Pallant

*Score:* Ivan Caryll, Harry Monckton (music), Harry Greenbank, Adrian Ross (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 5 December 1896; Gaiety Theatre; 497 performances

*Original New York production:* 23 April 1897; Daly's Theatre; 172 performances

*Notable songs:* A Simple Little String; The Way to Treat a Lady; In the Ring; Clowns; Now That You Know Your Way; Professions; Wine, Women and Waltz; A Wet Day; The Barman's Song

George Edwardes presented a series of musical comedies at his Gaiety Theatre at the turn of the century that became known as the Gaiety shows. One of the finest and most popular was *The Circus Girl*, which entertained audiences on three continents. Edwardes got the idea for *The Circus Girl* when he was in Vienna and saw the operetta *Eine tolle Nacht*, which included a scene backstage at a circus with the audience viewing the circus ring from the performers' point of view. He liked the visual image so much that he bought the rights to the operetta then threw out the entire plot, hiring James T. Tanner to write a musical comedy that included that backstage view. With Gaiety Theatre board member Walter Pallant (using the pen name Walter Palings), Tanner wrote a libretto that is more a series of episodes involving different British, French, and American characters in Paris.

The circus's "Cannon King," Dick Capel, is engaged to be married but falls in love with the visiting Dora Wemyss, who is engaged to wed the Hon. Reginald Gower. But Reginald is smitten with the bareback rider La Favorita, known as the Circus Girl. The pint-sized American bartender Biggs loves tightrope walker Lucille, the daughter of the ringmaster Drivelli, but has to contend with a rival, the circus strongman Toothpick Pasha. Dora's father Sir Titus is tempted by all the pretty girls in the circus, much to the displeasure of his overbearing wife. At one point he hides from her in a cannon and is shot into the air. Eventually all of the pairings are worked out and everyone ends up at the Artists' Ball.

While the circus was the one thread that attempted to hold the disjointed plot together, it was the vivacious characters and the catchy songs that they sang that turned *The Circus Girl* into a hit. Two hit songs came from the score. Dora sang the beguiling "A Little Bit of String," in which she listed the many uses she has for a ball of string, including keeping a man from roaming too far. The hefty Madame Drivelli, left on her own at the Artists' Ball, sang "The Way to Treat a Lady" about how she is mistreated in life because she is so oversized. Dick and Dora sang a playful romp called "In the Ring," and the French ladies' man Gaston sang the praises of "Wine, Women and Waltzes." In another standout number, "Now That You Know Your Way," Gaston describes his amorous adventures using "tra la la la la la" for words he cannot say in public. Biggs delivered "The Barman's Song," which listed the many kinds of cocktails that will cure your ills, and Dick and a chorus of girls with umbrellas sang of "A Wet Day." The jealous Biggs and his sweetheart, Lucille, imagined all of the "Professions" they might take up after they are married, but in each one, he foresaw her catching the eye of various men. As enjoyable as the songs were, the dance numbers in *The Circus Girl* were also impressive. A joyous romp at the Artists' Ball was deemed by the critics to be one of the most resplendent scenes of the season. The reviews also applauded the score and the cast, many of whom got specialty numbers in which to shine.

*The Circus Girl* opened in 1896 and ran a year and a half in the West End then was a hit touring Great Britain, Canada, and Australia. Broadway producer Augustin Daly, who had his own theatre and repertory company of actors, secured the rights for *The Circus Girl* and brought in some noted musical stars to head the cast. Some songs, particularly those written with specific English performers in mind, were cut. But the best numbers remained, and Daly gave the musical a lavish staging. *The Circus Girl* opened on Broadway in 1897 and again the critical reaction was exceptionally positive. The playhouse was packed for each performance but, unfortunately, Daly opened his version in April and by June a heat

	1896 London cast	1897 New York cast
La Favorita	Ethel Haydon	Nancy McIntosh
Dora Wemyss	Ellaline Terriss	Virginia Earle
Dick Capel	Seymour Hicks	Cyril Scott
Sir Titus Wemyss	Harry Monkhouse	Herbert Gresham
Drivelli	Arthur Williams	Samuel Edwards
Madame Drivelli	Connie Ediss	Marie Sanger
Toothpick Pasha	Arthur Hope	Hobart Bosworth
Lucille	Katie Seymour	Blanche Astley
Biggs	Edmund Payne	James T. Powers
Hon. Reginald Gower	Lionel Mackinder	Eric Scott
Viscomte Gaston	Maurice Farkoa	Neil McKay
Albertoni	Colin Coop	Douglas Flint

wave in New York forced him to temporarily close the production. Yet when *The Circus Girl* reopened in the middle of August it soon was playing to full houses and was able to run into November. Daly then sent out a touring production that did very well, returning to Broadway in 1898, where it ran another month.

## CONVERSATION PIECE

(1934)

A romantic comedy with songs by Noel Coward

Score: Noel Coward (music and lyrics)

Original London production: 16 February 1934; His Majesty's Theatre; 177 performances

Original New York production: 23 October 1934; 44th Street Theatre; 55 performances

Notable songs: I'll Follow My Secret Heart; Nevermore; Regency Rakes; There Was Once a Little Village by the Sea; Charming, Charming; English Lesson; Dear Little Soldiers; There's Always Something Fishy about the French

Noel Coward, the multitalented actor, composer, lyricist, director, and playwright, wrote both musicals and plays; *Conversation Piece* seemed to fall between the two categories. It was a romantic comedy, but it had a dozen songs, so the piece is usually included with British musicals. In an atypical move for Coward, *Conversation Piece* was based on another work, in this case Dormer Creston's romantic period novel *The Regent and His Daughter*. In 1811, the French aristocrat Paul, the Duc de Chaucigny-Varennes, escapes the reign of terror in Paris and flees to England with the pretty Melanie, whom he found singing in a music hall. Having had to leave all his riches behind in France, Paul goes to Brighton where he passes Melanie off as his ward and gets Lady Julia Charteris to introduce them into Regency England's high society. Paul hopes to find Melanie a rich husband and thereby secure his own future. She attracts the attentions of Edward, Marquis of Sheere,

but Melanie has always loved Paul. Lady Julia is also in love with Paul. When she throws a lavish party to launch the two French refugees into the upper crust, Melanie sabotages the plan by inviting the mistresses and prostitutes of the male guests. The party is a fiasco, and Melanie tells Paul she is returning to France. Paul is about to accept Lady Julia's marital intentions when he finally realizes he loves Melanie and the two end up in each other's arms.

There was a familiar ring to Coward's libretto, similar tales having appeared in some previous French and British musicals, but *Conversation Piece* had the advantage of Coward's gift for sparkling dialogue. It did not measure up to his finest works but was better than what was heard in most musicals in the 1930s. The same could be said for the songs, many of which had waltz tempos and most were sung by Melanie. The Coward wit could be found in the male chorale number "Regency Rakes" and the courtesans' "There's Always Something Fishy about the French." Melanie and the ladies sang about how "Charming, Charming" life was, and how impressive the "Dear Little Soldiers" were. "English Lesson" is a piquant number in which elementary English phrases are set to music. Melanie sang the torchy "Nevermore" to great effect, but the runaway hit of the score was the flowing ballad "I'll Follow My Secret Heart," considered one of Coward's best songs with many recordings over the years. Melanie has the lion's share of the singing in *Conversation Piece* because Coward wrote the musical with French singer Yvonne Printemps in mind. She did not speak English but learned all her dialogue and lyrics by rote and was more than proficient in the role. Coward hired American Romney Brent as Paul but was so dissatisfied with his performance during rehearsals that Coward ended up playing the part himself. Producer Charles Cochran was more than happy with the substitution because Coward the actor was an even bigger draw in London than Coward the writer. Gladys Calthrop, Coward's favorite designer, did the many scenic locations, and there was a large cast, turning this "comedy with songs" into a major (and expensive) opera-scaled production. So, Cochran was worried when the reviews were mixed to negative, stating *Conversation Piece* was second-rate Coward and unsuccessful as a romantic comedy or a musical. There were plenty of plaudits for Printemps, and Coward's Frenchman was deemed enjoyable. The box office was healthy for the first three months but flagged considerably when Coward left the cast to pursue other projects and was replaced by Printemps's husband, Pierre Fresnay, who was very popular in Paris. Cochran kept *Conversation Piece*

	1934 London cast	1934 New York cast
Melanie	Yvonne Printemps	Yvonne Printemps
Paul, duc de Chaucigny-Vareennes	Noel Coward	Pierre Fresnay
Lady Julia Charteris	Irene Browne	Irene Browne
Duke of Beneden	Athole Stewart	Athole Stewart
Marquis of Sheere	Louis Hayward	Carl Harbord
Sophie Otford	Heather Thatcher	Sylvia Leslie
Martha James	Moya Nugent	Moya Nugent
Earl of Harringford	George Sanders	George Sanders



on the boards, hoping to get Coward back, but when he was finally available, Coward fell ill, so Cochran closed the production. Its five-month run did not turn the expensive production into a hit.

American producer Arch Selwyn felt *Conversation Piece* would fare well on Broadway if Printemps and Coward were in it, and they made an agreement with Cochran and Harold B. Franklin. Coward was very popular in New York and most of his plays and musicals had done well there. As he had in London, Coward directed the Broadway production but did not appear in it, Fresnay again playing opposite Printemps. The producers billed *Conversation Piece* as “the new Noel Coward musical,” but the public soon learned that the beloved performer was not in it and ticket sales were sluggish. The lavish London production was re-created for Broadway, so the overhead was high. The New York critics were even less enthusiastic than the West End reviewers, only endorsing Printemps’s performance and the song “I’ll Follow My Secret Heart.” Losing money from the start, the producers closed *Conversation Piece* inside of seven weeks. Had Coward been in the cast, the weak reviews would not have mattered as much, and the musical would have enjoyed a longer run.

## **A COUNTRY GIRL**

(1902)

A musical play by James T. Tanner

*Score:* Lionel Monckton, Paul Rubens (music), Adrian Ross, Percy Greenbank (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 18 January 1902; Daly’s Theatre; 729 performances

*Original New York production:* 22 September 1902; Daly’s Theatre; 115 performances

*Notable songs:* Try Again, Johnnie; Yo Ho, Little Girls, Yo Ho; Molly the Marchioness; Under the Deodar; Rajah of Bhong; Two Little Chicks; Coo; Boy and Girl; Me and Mrs. Brown; In the King’s Name—Stand!; Peace! Peace!; My Own Little Girl; Mrs. Brown of Notting Hill

A contemporary musical comedy that was not only popular the first time around, *A Country Girl* remained a favorite on the road for years and returned to both London and New York with success. Instead of an exotic or romanticized foreign setting taking place long ago, this story is set in modern Britain, a village in Devonshire to be precise, where a series of characters get embroiled in politics, romance, disguises, and plenty of nonsense. On the scene is the ambitious Sir Joseph Verity who is determined to get his son Douglas into Parliament even though the youth is more interested in the sassy village girl Nan. Geoffrey Challoner, who has been abroad with his trusty servant Barry, returns with a fake rajah and a real Indian princess, Mehelaneh. The rajah is actually the Englishman Quinton Raikes who supposedly fell off one of the Alps years ago and whose long-forgotten wife is now living in the village. Mehelaneh is in love with Geoffrey but he still has affections for Marjorie Joy, the simple village girl he left behind. Marjorie has become a famous singer in London but returns to the village, where she pretends

to be an unspoiled rural maiden in order to keep Geoffrey's affections. The crafty servant Barry contrives to get Geoffrey to run for Parliament in order to con Sir Joseph into buying a worthless tin mine. Everyone's deceptions and schemes lead to various comic complications, and by the end of the musical, all truths are revealed at a ball in the London mansion of Lord Anchester, where all the villagers have inexplicably shown up.

James T. Tanner wrote the libretto, which often sacrificed logic for farcical situations, such as having Barry disguise himself as an old lady so he could sing a song about a fortune-teller friend, "Mrs. Brown of Notting Hill." *A Country Girl* was not so much a story as a series of predicaments nicely punctuated by star turns and pleasing songs and dances. Because it was a modern dress musical, spectacle took a back seat to performance, which was deemed refreshing by the critics and the public. Producer George Edwardes had done very well with exotic costume musicals such as *The Geisha* (1896), *A Greek Slave* (1898), and *San Toy* (1899), so it was surprising that he turned to a modern setting for *A Country Girl*. Yet there was also something very old fashioned about the scattershot structure of the musical and the familiar comic characters. Tanner's joke-filled dialogue was above the average, and the songs by Lionel Monckton, Paul Rubens (music), Adrian Ross, and Percy Greenbank (lyrics) were certainly first-rate. The audience favorite was "Two Little Chicks," a silly but affectionate ditty sung by Barry and his sweetheart Sophie, the village seamstress. Nan sang the flirtatious "Try Again, Johnny," in which she proposed that rural girls were much more fun than city ladies. Nan also delivered the narrative number "Molly, the Marchioness" about a village girl who married a lord and lived to regret it. The love song "Coo" for Marjorie and Geoffrey was perhaps embarrassingly childish, as they recalled their growing up together. Deeper emotion could be found in Mehelaneh's tender ballad "Under the Deodar." She and the phony rajah were introduced with the satiric "Rajah of Bhong" and he was given the funny patter song "Peace! Peace!" which poked fun at everyone from lawyers to Rudyard Kipling. Barry had two sportive solos, the sly "Yo Ho, Little Girls, Yo Ho" in which he tried to tell the truth about a sailor's life, and the already mentioned "Mrs. Brown of Notting Hill," about the neighborhood fortune teller who knew too much about everybody.

	<i>1902 London cast</i>	<i>1902 New York cast</i>
Marjorie Joy	Lilian Eldeé	Grace Freeman
Geoffrey Challoner	C. Hayden Coffin	Melville Stewart
Nan	Evie Greene	Helen Marvin
Sir Joseph Verity	Frederick Kaye	Harold Vizard
Douglas Verity	Leedham Bantock	Paul Nicholson
Mrs. Quinton Raikes	Beryl Faber	Adine Bouvier
Madame Sophie	Ethyl Irving	Minnie Ashley
Barry	Huntley Wright	William Norris
Rajah of Bhong	Rutland Barrington	Hallen Mostyn
Princess Mehelaneh	Maggie May	Genevieve Finlay

*A Country Girl* had a difficult birth and was far from ready by opening night. Painters finished the London set while the curtain was held for half an hour, musical numbers in the second act were so under-rehearsed that they were cut at the last minute, and the musical ran far too long when it opened in 1902. Yet the audience was so enthusiastic that the cumbersome production was stopped a few times by the vigorous applause. The reviews pointed out the slap-shot nature of the libretto yet admitted that *A Country Girl* was enjoyable even when it wasn't singing or dancing. Comic Huntley Wright was the most lauded for his hilarious Barry, but there were compliments for all the cast as well as the score. With strong word of mouth, the musical was quickly selling out, and it ran two years. But that was just the beginning. The musical was just as successful on tour, with four different companies handling the demand for tickets across Britain. *A Country Girl* found itself back in London in 1914, where it ran 173 performances, and yet again in 1931 for 56 performances.

The musical was not nearly as popular in America, but it was still a durable hit. The 1902 Broadway version was produced by J. C. Duff and retained the best songs from the London original. The critics were receptive, and theatregoers enjoyed the very British piece of nonsense for a profitable three months. It was even more successful on tour and then was revived in New York in 1911, where it played one month. In both countries, some of the songs from *A Country Girl* lingered on for years and for the many thousands who saw it, the musical remained a happy memory for decades.

### ***COX AND BOX; OR, THE LONG-LOST BROTHERS***

(1867/1879)

A one-act comic operetta by Francis C. Burnand,  
based on the comedy by J. Maddison Morton

*Score:* Arthur Sullivan (music), Francis C. Burnand (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 11 May 1867; Adelphi Theatre; 1 benefit performance

*Original New York production:* 14 April 1879; Standard Theatre; 48 performances

*Songs:* Bouncer's Song (Rataplan); My Master Is Punctual; The Buttercup; Not Long Ago; Hush-a-Bye, Bacon; Stay, Bouncer, Stay!; Sixes!; My Hand Upon It; Who Are You, Sir?

One of the most performed short musicals in the English language, this resplendent little farce is often presented as a "curtain raiser" or "fore-piece" before longer comic operettas, usually works by Gilbert and Sullivan. This is because Arthur Sullivan composed the sprightly music for *Cox and Box* before he began his collaboration with W. S. Gilbert. Encouraged by the popularity of the short musical pieces by Jacques Offenbach in France, Englishman Francis C. Burnand adapted J. Maddison Morton's 1847 one-act farce *Cox and Box* into a libretto, turning much of the dialogue into lyrics. The plot is simple but clever. The crafty ex-sergeant Bouncer has rented the same room to hatter James John Cox, who labors by day,

and the printer John James Box, who works at night, the two not aware that they are unwittingly sharing the same lodging. When the two men accidentally meet one day, they are belligerent toward each other but then discover that they are both acquainted with Penelope Ann. Box was once engaged to her but feigned suicide in order to get out of marrying her. Cox is currently engaged to Penelope Ann but wants out of the arrangement and offers her back to Box. The two consider fighting a duel or tossing dice over who gets stuck with the girl when Bouncer enters with a letter saying Penelope Ann has been lost at sea and her fortune is left to her "intended husband." Cox and Box then begin fighting over who is her true "intended" until another letter arrives saying Penelope Ann has survived and is engaged to one Mr. Knox. The two men celebrate their freedom and, noting that one has a strawberry mark on his left arm, realize they are long-lost brothers.

	1867 London cast	1879 New York cast
John Cox	Quinton Twist	Hart Conway
John James Box	George du Maurier	Thomas Whiffen
Sgt. Bouncer	Arthur Cecil	Charles Makin

*Cox and Box* was first performed as an entertainment at the Moray Minstrels, an all-male private club for artists, actors, and writers that met at the Moray Lodge in the Kensington neighborhood of London. It is believed other performances followed in private gatherings before the short musical was given its first public viewing for one benefit performance in the West End in 1867. (The rest of the evening consisted of music and a play.) *Cox and Box* was included in other benefits and eventually became widely known because of enthusiastic reviews in the press and strong word of mouth. By the 1870s, the little musical was performed frequently in London and regionally. In America, *Cox and Box* was produced privately and publicly before it made its Broadway premiere as a curtain raiser for a pirated production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore* in 1879. Richard D'Oyly Carte added the short piece to his company's repertory, and it was revived in New York five times when his opera troupe returned to Broadway. Yet the number of productions of *Cox and Box* in English-speaking nations over the past century and a half must be measured in the thousands.

What is so appealing about this little three-character piece of nonsense? The plot is so far-fetched that one enjoys it as one does a classic comedy routine: well structured, predictable, and always satisfying. In a short space of time, the three characters are not only well-established but quickly engaging. The dialogue and lyrics, while not nearly as witty as what Gilbert would later provide for Sullivan's music, are nonetheless sparkling and to the point. But it is Sullivan's glorious music that allows *Cox and Box* to triumph. The twenty-four-year-old composer had already mastered a talent for vivacious musical lines and contagious melodies. The overture alone is a masterwork of comic operetta joy. The nine individual songs in the short piece are as varied as they are spirited. Bouncer recalls his days in the military with "Rataplan," an unusual march, robust but flowing. Cox's "My Master Is

Punctual (Always in Business)" is a brief and rapid patter song that foreshadows later ones with Gilbert. "The Buttercup" is a delicate ballad sung by both Cox and Box in counterpoint to pleasing effect, and "Not Long Ago" is a jaunty narrative number in which the two find out that both have connections to Penelope Ann. "Hush-a-Bye, Bacon" is a surprisingly tender lullaby sung by Box to his breakfast. "Who Are You, Sir?," a vigorous duet, is sung when the two lodgers finally meet, and just as lively is "Sixes!," sung when the two are throwing dice over who gets stuck with Penelope Ann. Song and dialogue are interwoven so expertly in *Cox and Box* that it is no wonder it is often mistaken for one of Gilbert and Sullivan's better works. But the charming little musical farce stands on its own and can be revived today without apology or camp.

# D

## *A DAY IN HOLLYWOOD—A NIGHT IN THE UKRAINE*

(1979/1980)

A musical double feature by Dick Vosburgh

*Score:* Frank Lazarus, Jerry Herman (music), Dick Vosburgh, Jerry Herman (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 28 March 1979; Mayfair Theatre; 168 performances

*Original New York production:* 1 May 1980; John Golden Theatre; 588 performances

*Notable new songs:* Just Go to the Movies; I Love a Film Cliché; Samovar the Lawyer; Nelson; The Best in the World; Natasha; It All Comes Out of the Piano; Doin' the Production Code; All God's Chillun Got Movie Shows; A Night in the Ukraine; Just Like That; Goldwyn and Warner and Mayer and Zanuck and Zukor and Cohn; Famous Feet; Again; A Duel! A Duel!

Starting out as a small fringe production in London, this unpretentious little musical went through some major changes and ended up a Broadway hit. As the title suggests, the entertainment consists of two musicals. *A Day in Hollywood* is a revue saluting Tinsel Town using new songs and old favorites. *A Night in the Ukraine* is a short book musical farce loosely based on Anton Chekhov's play *The Bear* as performed by the Marx Brothers. This second half of the musical featured original songs that made little attempt to sound Russian. The "double feature" musical was the idea of American-born writer Dick Vosburgh, who wrote the libretto and the lyrics for the new songs, and South African-born performer-composer Frank Lazarus, who wrote the new music and played the Chico Marx character Carlo. The whole musical was tied together with an unabashed affection for old Hollywood. In the first act, six movie palace ushers in uniform saluted old movies with enthusiasm and satire. While the new songs commented on Hollywood, the song standards from the movies were performed straight and with great nostalgia. The Marx Brothers spoof was delightfully accurate, with the thin plot often set aside for ad-libs, comic bits, and silly songs. Groucho is the shyster lawyer Serge B. Samovar who tries to woo and con the Margaret Dumont-like wealthy Ukrainian widow Mrs. Pavlenko, while his stooges, the Chico-like Carlo and the Harpo-like Gino, keep interrupting his plans. The story goes nowhere, but it doesn't matter because the dialogue and the songs are incongruously funny. For many, this was the more satisfying half of the evening.



The Marx Brothers—Harpo (Priscilla Lopez), Groucho (David Garrison), and Chico (Frank Lazarus)—create havoc in Russia during the second part of this 1980 musical “double feature” which underwent a drastic sea change when it traveled from London to New York. *Photofest*

Vosburgh and Lazarus convinced producer Buddy Dalton to present *A Day in Hollywood—A Night in the Ukraine* at her New End Theatre in Hampstead, a fringe venue housed in a former morgue. The revue portion featured the expected movie standards, including “Over the Rainbow,” “Remember My Forgotten Man,” and “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” The new songs saluting Hollywood were a mixed bag. The best was “I Love a Film Cliché” which listed several familiar lines heard in films over the years. “Movie Fan’s Love Song” was sweet, “All God’s Chillum Got Movie Shows” was a mash-up of a gospel song and a minstrel number, and the comic ditty “Goldwyn and Warner and Mayer and Zanuck and Zukor and Cohn” had fun with the studio system. The songs for the Marx Brothers pastiche were much better. Samovar’s self-introductory number “Samovar the Lawyer” was reminiscent of and nearly as funny as the songs Groucho had sung about himself in the old comedies. He also praised the charms of “Natasha” but with insults inserted throughout. The two young lovers had two sappy and satirical love songs, “Just Like That” and “Again,” and Samovar and Mrs. Pavlenko exclaimed “A Duel! A Duel!” with Russian panache. Of course, any Marx Brothers parody depends on the impersonation talents of the cast, and the players at the New End Theatre were outstanding. The critics applauded John Bay’s spot-on Groucho and Lazarus’s roguish Chico but the highest praise when to Sheila Steafel’s mute and prankish Harpo. A highlight of the musical was not a song or a comic bit but Steafel using the spokes of a bicycle as a harp and turning



out beautiful music in the midst of all the chaos. The West End critics who saw *A Day in Hollywood—A Night in the Ukraine* were generally approving, though most agreed that the first half of the musical was unsatisfying. Yet Dalton, Lazarus, and Vosburgh were encouraged enough to get some major producers interested in moving the production to a small West End theatre where it happily ran for nearly six months.

	1979 London cast	1980 New York cast
Serge B. Samovar	John Bay	David Garrison
Gino	Sheila Steafel	Priscilla Lopez
Carlo	Frank Lazarus	Frank Lazarus
Mrs. Pavlenko	Paddie O'Neil	Peggy Hewett
Nina	Maureen Scott	Kate Draper
Constantine	Jon Glover	Stephen James
Masha	Alexandra Sebastian	Niki Harris
Sascha		Albert Stephenson

American producer Alexander Cohen, who had brought several London productions to New York, saw the West End version and thought the musical might work on Broadway if major changes were made. He bought the rights, cut most of the songs in the first act, and hired Vosburgh and Lazarus to write new ones. To protect his investment, Cohen also hired Broadway legend Jerry Herman to write three new songs for the revue portion of the musical. Cohen even tossed out “Over the Rainbow” and other standards and in their place added a medley of songs composed by Richard A. Whiting. Perhaps the biggest transformation came when Tommy Tune was hired to direct and choreograph (with Thommie Walsh), turning *A Day in Hollywood* into a dance musical. The scale was still small—one set for each act, a cast of eight, few costume changes—and Cohen booked the 800-seat John Golden Theatre in order to maintain the intimate nature of the piece. Every change Cohen made was for the best. Herman’s tuneful “Just Go to the Movies” now opened the show and set the right tone. He also wrote a mock aria “Nelson” which Jeanette MacDonald sang to a cardboard Nelson Eddy, and the ardent “The Best in the World,” sung by a determined movie star wanna-be. Vosburgh and Lazarus came up with the jaunty “It All Comes Out of the Piano”; the rhythmic “Doin’ the Production Code,” which Tune and Walsh turned into a clever tap dance; and “Famous Feet,” an ingenious number in which the audience only saw the actors’ feet but were able to identify the movie stars all the same. Tune was largely responsible for the radiant Broadway version of *A Day in Hollywood—A Night in the Ukraine*, and he was justly praised and awarded, but he was helped by a superior cast. Lazarus was the only holdover from London and his Carlo was as jocular as ever. David Garrison was a nimble-witted Samovar, and Peggy Hewett was a skillfully obtuse Mrs. Pavlenko. But once again Gino stole the show. Priscilla Lopez was both hilarious and heartbreaking as the silent Gino, and once again the performance on the bicycle/harp was unforgettable. The New York critics were more supportive of *A Day in Hollywood—A Night in the Ukraine* than the



London press had been, but they had not seen the same musical. With the first half of the production as enjoyable as the Marx Brothers piece, the musical was highly recommended by the Broadway reviewers. Demand for tickets was so great that after six weeks, Cohen moved the production to the larger Royale Theatre, where it played for nearly a year and a half. Oddly, no major British production of the revised *A Day in Hollywood—A Night in the Ukraine* has yet been produced.

## **DOROTHY**

(1886/1887)

A comic operetta by B. C. Stephenson

*Score:* Alfred Cellier (music), B. C. Stephenson (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 25 September 1886; Gaiety Theatre; 931 performances

*Original New York production:* 5 November 1887; Standard Theatre; c. 43 performances

*Notable songs:* Queen of My Heart; The Time Has Come; With Such a Dainty Dame; Be Wise in Time; I Am the Sheriff's Faithful Man; With a Welcome to All; Hark Fo'ard!; Lads and Lasses; What Joy Untold; A Father's Pride and Joy; Dancing Is Not What It Used to Be; Now Take Your Seats; Under the Pump

Although it was the longest-running London musical of the nineteenth century, *Dorothy* had difficulty in establishing itself in London and America. Once it did, however, it became a comic operetta favorite, with hundreds of productions on three continents for several decades. Its composer, Alfred Cellier, who had served as musical director for various companies and conducted some of Gilbert and Sullivan's works, had written a full score for a musical about Nell Gwynne that never got further than Manchester. Ten years later, Cellier recycled the music when librettist B. C. Stephenson came up with *Dorothy*, a story of mistaken identity whose roots could be traced back to Shakespeare, Oliver Goldsmith, Richard B. Sheridan, and a dozen others. Yet, as hackneyed and familiar as the libretto was, *Dorothy* lent itself to numerous romantic and comic complications, plenty of song and dance opportunities, and roles in which stars and future stars could shine. *Dorothy* also had something significant that secured its popularity: the song "Queen of My Heart," which became one of the most sung ballads of the era, both on stage and around the parlor piano.

Stephenson set the action in a small town in Kent where they are celebrating the end of harvesting the hops with the festival of the Hop Pole. Sir John Bantam's daughter Dorothy and her cousin Lydia, bored with being prim and proper while awaiting arranged marriages, dress as milkmaids and join in the festivities. Geoffrey Wilder, who is Bantam's nephew, and Harry Sherwood are two young dandies from London, on the run from the sheriff's officer William Lurcher for unpaid debts and other mischief. They stay at the local inn and join the celebration, where Geoffrey is smitten with Dorothy (who says her name is Dorcas) and Harry with Lydia (who claims to be called Abigail). It is Geoffrey whom Squire Bantam has arranged to marry Dorothy, whom Geoffrey imagines is a dull spinster. He

doesn't recognize her, since Dorothy and Lydia are dressed up in their finery, powdered wigs and all, so the deception continues. Lurcher arrives from London and Geoffrey and Harry convince him to pretend to be a servant, get him drunk, and the three of them stage a robbery of Squire Bantam. Dorothy and Abigail test the sincerity of their new suitors by disguising themselves as men and challenging Geoffrey and Harry to a duel. But when the young men accept and loaded pistols are brought out, the two girls panic. Lurcher stops the duel, the Squire reveals that Dorcas and Dorothy are one and the same, and there is a happy ending for all. Even in 1886 such a plot was a bit worn, yet it served its purpose and Stephenson's dialogue and characterizations were novel enough that the libretto moved along in a carefree, facile fashion.

As for Cellier's music, it went beyond the competent. At times vivacious and bubbly, other times felicitous and tender, the songs were delightful interruptions in the silly plot. The already-mentioned ballad "Queen of My Heart" was not heard on opening night but added early in the run. It starts as a routine love song, but as the refrain builds the music makes some unexpected turns as it leads up to the title phrase "why should we wait till tomorrow? / You are queen of my heart tonight." Like the rest of the score, the melody had been set to other words previously but Stephenson's new lyric is simple, direct, and sits on the music beautifully. It is easy to understand why "Queen of My Heart" was so often sung live and, later, recorded. While no other number in the score approached such fame, there were plenty of memorable songs. Dorothy and the girls cautioned each other about the inconstancy of men with "Be Wise in Time," Geoffrey wooed "Dorcas" with the graceful "With Such a Dainty Dame," Lurcher boasted "I Am the Sheriff's Faithful Man," and the villager Phyllis, a minor role, sang a major ballad titled "The Time Has Come." The score for *Dorothy* included several catchy chorus numbers. The villagers celebrated the holiday with "Lads and Lasses (Round about the Hop Pole Trip)," Lurcher led the chorus in the ditty "Under the Pump," the old women of the town lamented "Dancing Is Not What It Used to Be," and the banquet that ended the first act began with "Now Take Your Seats (at Table Spread)." The musical also included a number of ballets and dance numbers. All in all, *Dorothy* overflowed with music even as it managed to tell a complicated plot.

	<i>1886 London cast</i>	<i>1887 New York cast</i>
Dorothy Bantam	Marion Hood/Marie Tempest	Lillian Russell
Geoffrey Wilder	Redfern Hollins/Ben Davies	Eugene Oudin
Harry Sherwood	C. Hayden Coffin	John E. Brand
William Lurcher	Arthur Williams	Harry Paulton
Lydia Hawthorne	Florence Dysart	Agnes Stone
Tom Strutt	John Le Hay	J. E. Nash
Sir John Bantam	Furneaux Cook	William Hamilton
Phyllis Tuppitt	F. Lambeth/Florence Perry	Marie Halton
John Tuppitt	Edward Griffin	F. Boudinot
Mrs. Privett	Harriet Coveney	Rose Leighton
Lady Betty	Jennie McNulty	

Cellier and Stephenson approached several producers about presenting *Dorothy* in London. Producer George Edwardes had a gap of time at his Gaiety Theatre until he brought in a musical burlesque for the 1886 holidays, so he agreed to present *Dorothy* in September. Marion Hood and C. Hayden Coffin were starred as Dorothy and Harry, and comic Arthur Williams was featured as Lurcher. The London critics were lukewarm about the musical, disapproving of the old-fashioned and contrived plot but commending the cast and some of the songs. The production was also too long so Edwardes demanded cuts in both the libretto and the score and gave Williams permission to pad his part, the audiences having obviously taken to him as Lurcher. It was at this point that "Queen of My Heart" was added, and soon *Dorothy* was a tighter and more polished musical. It eventually caught on with the public and the box office was quite healthy as the holidays approached. Edwardes had little faith in the production and, foolishly, decided to close it to make room for his comic burlesque. Henry Leslie, the accountant at the Gaiety Theatre, was shrewd enough to secure the rights to *Dorothy* and, after making some casting changes, moved it to another theatre. He managed to get the rising favorite Marie Tempest to play Dorothy and popular tenor Ben Davies as Geoffrey. Without losing momentum, *Dorothy* continued to do brisk business, and it later had to change theatres again to accommodate the demand for tickets. To everyone's surprise, the musical continued to run for nearly three years, breaking all records for the London theatre. *Dorothy* was just as successful on the road. At one point in 1887, there were five separate touring companies of the musical filling playhouses across Great Britain. Later, *Dorothy* played in Australia, South Africa, Canada, continental Europe, and even some Asian nations.

American producer James C. Duff bought the rights for a Broadway version of *Dorothy* and he featured the popular Lillian Russell as the title heroine and the comic Harry Paulton as Lurcher. The musical opened in 1887 and, as in London, the New York reviews were tepid. Again, it was the dated libretto that was faulted, but the critics endorsed Russell and the rest of the cast and pointed out "Queen of My Heart" even as they dismissed the rest of the score as pleasant but forgettable. The production ran less than six weeks. Undeterred, Duff then brought the musical to Boston, where it was a critical and popular success. The same was true in San Francisco before *Dorothy* was picked up by operetta companies across America and frequently produced over the next three decades. Both London and New York saw revivals of *Dorothy* in later years. The musical returned to London in 1892, 1897, and 1908. It was revived on Broadway in 1895. Except for "Queen of My Heart," *Dorothy* is long forgotten now except by the most ardent operetta companies. Yet the musical was a phenomenon in its day and tallied up more performances and more money than was ever imaginable.

# E

## ***THE EARL AND THE GIRL***

(1903/1905)

A musical comedy by Seymour Hicks

*Score:* Ivan Caryll and others (music), Percy Greenbank and others (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 10 December 1903; Adelphi Theatre; 371 performances

*Original New York production:* 4 November 1905; Casino Theatre; 147 performances

*Notable songs:* How'd You Like to Spoon with Me?; If It's Good Enough for Vanderbilt

It's Good Enough for Me; Nicolini; Thou Art My Rose; The Grenadiers; My Cosy Corner Girl; Sammy; In Zanzibar; I Would Like to Marry You; One Night Only; When the Right Little Girl Comes Along; Mediterranean Blue; Little Ladies in Distress; I Want a Man Made to Order for Me; He Was a Sailor

When *The Earl and the Girl* opened in London late in 1903, it meant composer Ivan Caryll had five musicals running in the West End, a feat not accomplished again until 1990 when Andrew Lloyd Webber had a quintet of productions all running simultaneously. Ironically, there were so many song interpolations in both the British and American versions of *The Earl and the Girl* that the songs barely constitute an Ivan Caryll score. In fact, the musical is most remembered today for introducing American composer Jerome Kern's first hit song, "How'd You Like to Spoon with Me?" That coy, flirtatious number was not heard until the New York production. It was one of many trans-Atlantic changes in the score. Perhaps no other musical of the period had such distinctly different songs in London and New York than did *The Earl and the Girl*.

The featherweight libretto by Seymour Hicks, on the other hand, remained pretty much the same: steadfastly British. In the West End and on Broadway, *The Earl and the Girl* was billed as a "Merry English Musical Whirl." The circus dog trainer Jim Cheese is in such debt he cannot pay his bill at the country inn Fal-lowfield Arms. Dick Wargrave, the heir to the earldom of Hole, arrives at the inn with the American Elphin Hays with whom he has just run off. Creditors are after Jim, and Elphin's uncle, A. Bunker Bliss, is after Dick, so Jim and Dick decide to exchange identities. The plan does not solve their problems but only adds to the complications, particularly when Jim's sweetheart Liza Shoddam has to pretend to be Dick's girl and Elphin has to introduce Jim to her Aunt Virginia as her fiancé.

Also on the scene are the Hon. Crewe Boodel, who thinks he is the heir to the earldom; the American and British lawyers Mr. Downham and Mr. Talk, looking for a missing heir; and Mrs. Shimmering Black, who thinks Dick has jilted her daughter. A ball in the second act brought all the parties together and, when the deceptions ran out of steam, the right couples were matched up. It was all agreeable nonsense that was more silly than witty but the personalities of the performers smoothed over the rough spots and the agreeable songs and dances turned *The Earl and the Girl* into a hit.

Caryll composed most of the songs for the London production with Percy Greenbank providing the sometimes-commendable lyrics. "The Grenadiers" was the expected military march, "Thou Art My Rose" the requisite ballad, and "Little Ladies in Distress" the much-appreciated number for a bevy of pretty maidens. The most popular song from the musical was not by Caryll and Greenbank but an interpolation by Charles Noel Douglas and John Bratton called "My Cosy Corner Girl," a catchy ditty about snuggling up with one's sweetie in a shadowy corner of the room. Also finding favor was the roguish "He Was a Sailor." Previously heard on Broadway but original to London theatregoers were two snappy songs that pleased audiences and enjoyed some popularity: the declarative "Sammy" and the monkey love song "In Zanzibar." When the Shubert Brothers presented *The Earl and the Girl* on Broadway, they tossed out most of the London numbers and added songs from various songwriters. There was a sassy "I Want a Man Made to Order for Me," the cocky "If It's Good Enough for Vanderbilt It's Good Enough for Me," and the flavorful Italianate number "Nicolini." But it was Kern's "How'd You Like to Spoon with Me?," with its saucy lyric by Edward Laska, that was the hit of the Broadway score. It was sung by Elphin, played by Georgia Caine, and Dick (Victor Morley) as six girls on flower-covered swings sang along as they swung out over the orchestra pit. The music is simple, with the slightest touch of syncopation, and may not have the sophistication of Kern's later work but both melody and lyric are contagious. The song not only stopped the show but was soon heard all over New York and sheet music sales turned it into Kern's first song hit.

	<i>1903 London cast</i>	<i>1905 New York cast</i>
Jim Cheese	Walter Passmore	Eddie Foy
Dick Wargrave	Henry A. Lytton	Victor Morley
Elphin Haye	Agnes Fraser	Georgia Caine
Liza Shoddam	Florence Lloyd	Zelma Rawlston
A. Bunker Bliss	John C. Dixon	J. Bernard Dyllyn
Hon. Crewe Boodle	Robert Evertt	Templar Saxe
Daisy Fallowfield	Louie Pounds	Nellie McCoy
Virginia Bliss	Phyllis Broughton	Violet Holls
Mr. Hazell	Reginald Crompton	W. H. Denny

*The Earl and the Girl* began as *The Dog Tamer* and then *The Only Girl* before London producer William Greet chose the rhyming title for his lavish production to

open the season at the Adelphi Theatre. He cast members of the Savoy Opera Company, which was known for period operettas, but they all seemed to adapt to modern musical comedy very well. The critics thought *The Earl and the Girl* a step down for the operatic players and found fault with the “anything goes” libretto. Yet there was enough praise for the performers, the diverting musical numbers, and the production’s impressive spectacle that most reviewers recommended the musical as harmless entertainment. The public responded accordingly, and *The Earl and the Girl* ran nine months, then moved on to the Lyric Theatre where it played another three months. The American version opened first in Chicago in March of 1905 and was heading for the Casino Theatre in New York when that playhouse suffered a fire and required five months of rebuilding. The producing Shuberts used those months to send *The Earl and the Girl* to Philadelphia before opening on Broadway in November. Again, the critics carped about the ridiculous libretto, but with such strong performers as Caine, Morley, Eddie Foy (Jim), and Zelma Rawlston (Liza), a pleasing score, and a flashy production, *The Earl and the Girl* ran a profitable four months before setting out on a long and very lucrative tour.

## **ERMINIE**

(1885/1886)

A comic opera by Harry Paulton and Claxton Bellamy, based on the melodrama  
*L’Auberge des Adrets* by Benjamin Antier

*Score:* Edward Jacobowski (music), Harry Paulton, Claxton Bellamy (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 9 November 1885; Comedy Theatre; 154 performances

*Original New York production:* 10 May 1886; Casino Theatre; 512 performances

*Notable songs:* Lullaby (Dear Mother, In Dreams I See Her); What the Dickey Birds Say; Dream Song (At Midnight on My Pillow Lying); When Love Is Young; Darkest the Hour; A Soldier’s Life; Downy Jailbirds of a Feather; Past and Future; Woman’s Dress; The Sighing Swain

One of the most popular comic musicals of its era, *Erminie* offered romance and farce in equal dosages and served as a model for many later shows featuring comic rogues in leading roles in the plot. (A well-known example: Victor Herbert’s 1906 *The Red Mill*.) The 1823 French melodrama *L’Auberge des Adrets* was written as a serious effort but the two actors playing the murderers went for laughs, and the play became a popular farce. In *Erminie*, the cutthroats Ravennes and Cadeaux were turned into comic vagabonds with no violent ambitions. The two escape from prison and rob the Vicomte de Brissac on the road, taking his money and identification papers. The Vicomte is engaged to the lovely Erminie de Pontvert but she is in love with her father’s secretary, Eugene Marcel. Ravennes and Cadeaux arrive at Erminie’s chateau with the idea of stealing what jewels they can from the moneyed guests gathering there for a ball. When the Vicomte arrives later, no one believes that he is the real Vicomte, and he is arrested. After the ball, Ravennes and Cadeaux go to work robbing the guests’ rooms but in the middle

of the night the aging Princess de Gramponeur screams when she hears someone in her room. In the chaos that follows, Ravennes and Cadeaux are found out, the bedroom intruder turns out to be the harmless old Chevalier de Brabazon, the Vicomte is reunited with his childhood sweetheart Cérise, and Eugene gets to wed Erminie.

In various forms and under different titles, the farce had been popular in France and England throughout the nineteenth century before the tale was musicalized as *Erminie*. The score by Edward Jakobowski (music) and Harry Paulton (lyrics) boasted a handful of songs that were soon to become parlor piano favorites and instrumental standards in restaurants and at dance halls. The most famous song was titled "Lullaby" but became better known as "Dear Mother, In Dreams I See Her." Erminie sang the enticing ballad as she recalled her deceased mother. Erminie also sang the heartfelt "Dream Song," also known as "At Midnight on My Pillow Lying." Eugene's dramatic number was the song of desperation named "Darkest the Hour." The catchy military march "A Soldier's Life" enjoyed some notoriety but the comic numbers for Ravennes and Cadeaux, "What the Dickey Birds Say" and "Downy Jailbirds of a Feather," garnered the most applause in the theater. A medley of tunes from the score was titled "Erminie Quadrille" and it became a dance favorite.

	<i>1885 London cast</i>	<i>1886 New York cast</i>
Erminie de Pontvert	Florence St. John	Pauline Hall
Ravennes	Frank Wyatt	W. S. DaBoll
Cadeaux	Harry Paulton	Francis Wilson
Vicomte de Brissac	Horace Bolini	C. L. Weeks
Eugene Marcel	Henry Bracy	Harry Pepper
Cérise Marcel	Violet Melnotte	Marion Manola
Chevalier de Brabazon	Percy Compton	Max Freeman
Princess de Gramponeur	M. A. Victor	Jennie Weathersby
Marquis de Pontvert	Fred Mervin	Carl Irving
Captain Delaunay	Kate Everleigh	Rose Beaudet

*Erminie* opened in London in 1885, ran twenty weeks, and then toured Great Britain for over a year. Revivals were frequent and the musical remained a mon-eymaker on the road for decades. Within a year of the original opening, *Erminie* was in America and proved to be even more successful. Coauthor Paulton directed the Broadway production, replacement Pauline Hall re-created her Erminie from London, and the two vagabonds were played by comics Francis Wilson and W. S. Daboll. The New York run was interrupted by an engagement in Boston, and then, after playing a year and a half in New York, *Erminie* was also a major hit on the road. It returned to Broadway eight times during the next forty years, during which time there were productions across Europe, Australia, Canada, and South Africa. Because of the loose copyright laws, there were also many pirated editions of the musical, usually under such titles as *The Baron*, *The Two Thieves*, or *The Two Vagabonds*. "Lullaby," which had been modestly applauded in London, became a



major hit in the States and sheet music sales soared, although again many copies were pirated versions. Not until years later was it revealed that Claxton Bellamy, credited as coauthor of the book and lyrics, did not write either. Bellamy wrote the original set of lyrics, but they were not used. Paulton honored the original contract and listed Bellamy on the posters, even though Paulton wrote everything himself. It was a financial miscalculation but not nearly as disastrous as the one Paulton made in 1887 when he sold his interests in *Erminie* to British comedian Willie Edouin for one thousand pounds. Over the years, Edouin made many times that amount from the show.

One can argue that *Erminie* was so popular in America because it is essentially a French farce set to romantic music and not a purely British musical. Yet there is something very English in some of the lyrics, particularly in the comic songs, and Paulton must have been influenced by the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas that were flourishing at the time. Jakobowski's music is often more Continental than British music hall, one of the reasons some songs enjoyed so much popularity in different countries. Perhaps part of the appeal of *Erminie* for Americans is the nature of the comic leads Ravennes and Cadeaux. They are scoundrels, but likable ones, and they fly in the face of convention and authority. There is even a touch of the American character type known as the Stage Yankee in their uncouth ways, though they lack the upstanding qualities of someone like Jonathan the Yankee, the originator of the type. Yet the way these two vagabonds live by their wits and scoff at class distinctions makes them American in spirit. Theatregoers in New York and on the road must have recognized this spirit, and it might have helped *Erminie* become a blockbuster.

## EVITA

(1978/1979)

A sung-through biographical musical by Tim Rice,  
based on the life of Eva Duarte Peron

*Score:* Andrew Lloyd Webber (music), Tim Rice (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 21 June 1978; Prince Edward Theatre; 2,900 performances

*Original New York production:* 25 September 1979; Broadway Theatre; 1,568 performances

*Notable songs:* Don't Cry for Me, Argentina; On This Night of a Thousand Stars; Another Suitcase in Another Hall; I'd Be Surprisingly Good for You; A New Argentina; High Flying Adored; And the Money Kept Rolling In (and Out); Rainbow High; Dice Are Rolling; Rainbow Tour; Oh, What a Circus; The Art of the Possible; Buenos Aires; Goodnight and Thank You

In the opinion of many, *Evita* is the finest Andrew Lloyd Webber–Tim Rice musical. It was also the last time the two collaborated on a full score before going their separate ways. *Evita* is the culmination of their theatrical relationship, using a variety of musical styles and boasting some of the most stinging lyrics of any of





At the end of act 1 of this politically minded musical, Juan Peron comes to power in Argentina. Pictured center are Peron (Bob Gunton) and his ambitious wife, Eva (Patti LuPone), in the 1979 Broadway production of the Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice musical masterfully directed by Harold Prince. *Photofest*

their musicals together or separately. Eva Peron was a well-known international political figure and a musical about her would end up being political. Yet musical historian Kurt Gänzl has noted that “*Evita* was not a show about politics. . . . It was about personalities, but unlike [biographical musicals from the past] it did not use those personalities to produce humor but, for the large part, to produce musical drama.” The character of Eva, or Evita as she was lovingly called by many of her countrymen, is ambiguous; she is both a saint and a whore, a beacon of hope and an opportunist, an inspiration and a crook. There was no such ambiguity in the team’s hero in their earlier bio-musical *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Che, who narrates *Evita*, consistently castigates Eva. Lloyd Webber and Rice, either consciously or not, are mesmerized by her. In one musical they sought to humanize Jesus, in the next they mystified a mortal.

Although *Evita* started out as a concept album, the intention from the very beginning was for it to be a theatre piece. It was Rice who was first intrigued with the idea of musicalizing the life of Eva Duarte (as she was born) but he did not use any of the existing biographies of the woman. Instead he chose another controversial figure, the revolutionary Che Guevara who was a student in Argentina at the time, and used him as the narrator. Che was far from impartial in his commentary, so there was a dynamic not only in the story itself but in the telling of it. Lloyd Webber immediately liked the idea of writing a sung-through opera about Eva Peron because the story suggested many different musical styles. Unlike *Jesus*

*Christ Superstar*, Lloyd Webber saw the project not as a rock opera but closer to a traditional opera. The structure of how the story would be told was solidified early on and the concept album and the stage version differed little. The plot begins in 1952 with the death of Eva from cancer at the age of thirty-three. The whole country of Argentina mourns her passing, but Che mocks all the weeping and the lavish funeral, arguing that Eva did nothing during her lifetime that wasn't for her own selfish goals. The action shifts to the ambitious sixteen-year-old Eva, who uses the touring tango singer August Migaldi to escape from her dead-end town. She becomes his mistress then insists that he take her with him back to Buenos Aires. Once in the capital city, Eva works as a model, a radio performer, and then an actress, sleeping with various men to further her career. She is something of a celebrity when Eva first meets Colonel Juan Peron at a charity concert that he has arranged to raise money for the victims of an earthquake. She sees that Peron is politically ambitious and just the person to serve her needs. As she explains to him, she is also the right person to help him in his political ascent. Kicking out Peron's current mistress, Eva marries him, and the two scheme and plot together until he becomes president of Argentina in 1946 and she is his First Lady. Although Eva is not accepted by the upper classes, she endears herself to the common people with her Foundation, which distributes money and goods to the poor. As Che points out, these programs were rigged to make the Perons richer than ever. Eva then embarks on an international tour to secure friendly relations between Argentina and various countries in Europe. While Eva's glamorous personality wins over the people in some countries, the tour is not a total success and she returns to Argentina weak and sick. Even after Eva finds out she has cervical cancer, she makes plans to become vice president of the country. But before she can make that happen, she dies and the musical ends with her funeral and Che's disparaging comments.

Julie Covington (Eva), Colm Wilkinson (Che), and Paul Jones (Juan) were featured in the 1976 concept album of *Evita* which was an immediate hit. Even though most of the songs were extensions of dialogue, two chart singles came from the score: Eva's "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" and "Another Suitcase in Another Hall," which was sung by Peron's former mistress (Barbara Dickson). *Evita* seemed like it was all ready for the stage but, as Lloyd Webber and Rice had learned with *Jesus Christ Superstar*, there was a big difference between hearing a story sung and seeing it materialize on a stage. A major director was essential, and they found one in Harold Prince, the American producer-director who had staged such memorable Broadway productions as *She Loves Me* (1963), *Cabaret* (1966), *Company* (1970), *Follies* (1971), *A Little Night Music* (1973), and the 1974 revival of *Candide*. For his first London assignment, Prince was most intrigued by the socio-political aspects of the musical. Drawing on theatrical techniques introduced by Bertolt Brecht, Prince and set designer Timothy O'Brien used multimedia, banners, loudspeakers, and suggested scenery to tell the story. From the Russian director Vsevolod Meyerhold's concept of biomechanics, in which human bodies become part of the scenery, Prince and choreographer Larry Fuller sometimes moved the chorus in groups and patterns, and to dramatize the distribution of the funds from Eva's Foundation, arms and hands rose out of the shadows and grasped in the air for invisible money. Peron's rise from just another military general to president

was dramatized by a game of musical rocking chairs that ended with Peron the lone man on stage. Prince's direction of *Evita* was one of the most brilliant pieces of staging of its era, and it turned the concept album into a stunning theatrical piece. A few changes were made in the score, such as placing "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" during Eva's funeral, but much of the transition was visual.

The score for *Evita* is significantly diverse, considering the Latin American setting for the musical. There is an obvious Spanish flavor to the rambunctious "Buenos Aires," the march "A New Argentina," the folk ballad "On This Night of a Thousand Stars," and the tango duet "I'd Be Surprisingly Good for You." Rice's lyric in this last is unique, a romantic duet for two self-serving people that is more about power than love. Another wry lyric can be found in "The Art of the Possible," the musical chairs number mentioned above. "High Flying Adored" has one of Lloyd Webber's most felicitous melodies and Rice's lyric is equally graceful even as it is sung by Che as a cautionary ballad. "Rainbow High" is a delectable list song for Eva in which nouns are turned into verbs ("Lauren Bacall me!"), and "Goodnight and Thank You" is a wickedly cheerful number sung to the many men Eva used on her way to the top. The "Requiem for Evita" is surprisingly moving, then it is punctured by Che's cynical "Oh, What a Circus." Even more vilifying is Che's rapid-fire "And the Money Kept Rolling In (and Out)," which Lloyd Webber gives a flamenco touch. "The Rainbow Tour" has festive, even carnival-like, music, but Rice's lyrics have a sour subtext. As for the score's two mainstream hit songs, they both possess a haunting melody. "Another Suitcase in Another Hall" is a minor-key lament, yet the lyric is strangely impersonal; one accepts rejection because it has happened so many times before. "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" is also a lament. The lyrics suggest victory and no regrets, while the music is in the torch song mode. Because the musical is sung through, there are a lot of songs in *Evita*, but, unlike some of Lloyd Webber's other operatic works, the piece feels more like a musical than an opera. Whatever it is, the *Evita* score is a glorious thing, and a high point in the careers of both songwriters.

	<i>1978 London cast</i>	<i>1979 New York cast</i>
Eva Peron	Elaine Paige	Patti LuPone
Che	David Essex	Mandy Patinkin
Juan Peron	Joss Ackland	Bob Gunton
Augustine Magaldi	Mark Ryan	Mark Syers
Peron's Mistress	Siobhán McCarthy	Jane Ohringer

Record producer Robert Stigwood presented *Evita* in the West End in 1978 with a relatively unknown actress, Elaine Paige, in the starring role. (Paige would go on to premiere several other Lloyd Webber roles.) Better known to the public were David Essex (Che) and Joss Ackland (Juan), but in many ways, the star of the show was Prince whose staging was roundly adulated. The critics were also very complimentary about the score, even as some reviews felt that the musical condoned and even glorified Eva Peron. The Perons were not approved of in

Great Britain in the 1950s, and some of this prejudice still existed. Yet *Evita*, as already mentioned, sought to portray the ambiguous nature of the woman and was rather successful in doing so. The public was not so concerned. Stigwood built on the popularity of the concept album and the two chart singles and created a lot of excitement about *Evita* before it opened. The advance was record breaking and the demand for tickets increased considerably once the musical opened. *Evita* ran almost eight years in the West End, during which time there were national tours across Britain and productions in Australia, Spain, Mexico, Japan, South Africa, Brazil, and other nations. However, *Evita* was not seen in Argentina, where it was considered a slur on a national heroine and was banned.

The 1979 Broadway production was also produced by Stigwood and was a duplicate of the London original in its artistic staff but not its players. An American cast was hired, led by Patti LuPone whose Eva was more harsh and powerful than Paige's rendition had been in the West End. Mandy Patinkin found more humor in Che yet was still acid in his interpretation, and Bob Gunton was a crafty Juan. The New York critics were mixed in their opinions, some berating the score as they condoned the production. With its huge advance and strong word of mouth, *Evita* was a success from the start and, after winning plenty of awards, ran for nearly four years. The musical toured the States for years and was revived years later in both the West End (2006) and on Broadway (2012). A film version of *Evita* was in and out of discussion for decades, the stumbling block being the casting of Eva with a bankable movie star. Many singer-actresses were approached and rumors were bantered about until a film version was finally made in 1996 with pop star Madonna in the title role. Alan Parker cowrote, coproduced, and directed the movie, which was also sung-through, and, though it cost a whopping \$55 million, it was popular enough internationally to turn a profit.

# F

## ***FIVE GUYS NAMED MOE***

(1990/1992)

A musical revue by Clarke Peters

*Score:* Louis Jordan and others (music and lyrics)

*Original London production:* 14 December 1990; Lyric Theatre; c. 1,660 performances

*Original New York production:* 8 April 1992; Eugene O'Neill Theatre; 445 performances

*Notable songs:* Let the Good Times Roll; Caldonia; Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens; Choo, Choo, Ch'boogie; Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby; I Like 'em Fat Like That; Pettin' and Pokin'; Life Is So Peculiar; I Know What I've Got; Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying; Five Guys Named Moe; Safe, Sane and Single; Saturday Night Fish Fry

Great Britain's great affection for early American rock and roll artists can be illustrated by the success of *Five Guys Named Moe*, a musical revue with the thinnest of plots and an early version of a jukebox musical. Louis Jordan was an African American bandleader, songwriter, singer, and saxophone player who straddled the Big Band era and the beginnings of rock and roll. Some of his songs fall under the category of swing, others more in the style of boogie-woogie, jump blues, jazz, and rhythm and blues. Whatever the label, he and his Tympany Five presented a series of hit songs from the late 1930s to the early 1950s that were very influential to later rocker pioneers like Buddy Holly and Elvis Presley. Jordan was also innovative in using electric organ, syncopated vocals, and African American jive lyrics. While most of Jordan's songs were classified as "race" music when he started his career, the record industry later created the label "rhythm and blues" for the kind of songs Jordan and others were producing. Several of Jordan's songs crossed over to other charts as well. "Caldonia," "Choo Choo Ch'Boogie," "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Cryin'," "Let the Good Times Roll," and others were recorded by folk singers, Big Bands, jazz artists, and even crooners like Bing Crosby. Music historians have pointed out early forms of classic rock and roll in "Saturday Night Fish Fry" and other Jordan works.

American actor-singer Clarke Peters, who had relocated to Britain in 1973, appeared in African American roles in several London musicals and wrote the patter for some musical revues with Ned Sherrin. Peters conceived of a revue using Jordan's songs but came up with a simple premise to hold the musical together. The African American young man Nomax suffers from an unsatisfactory love life, having just broken up with his girlfriend, and finds himself alone, broke, and depressed. Out of his old-fashioned radio leap five high-energy singers named Big Moe, Four-Eyed Moe, No Moe, Eat Moe, and Little Moe, who console and cheer up Nomax with songs by Jordan and others that were recorded by Jordan. It was a slight but effective device in which to present the many songs, some of which involved audience participation. Titled after one of Jordan's songs, *Five Guys Named Moe* was first given a limited run in a small venue at the National Theatre, then at London's East End playhouse Theatre Royal Stratford East. Producer Cameron Mackintosh saw the production and transferred it to the West End in 1990 but maintained the intimacy of the piece by booking the small Lyric Theatre and emphasized the informality of the East End environment by knocking an entrance through the wall to the pub next door, which he renamed Moe's Bar. *Five Guys Named Moe* was greeted with propitious reviews, some major awards, and high public approval, even though many of its fans were too young to be familiar with the Jordan songs. With consistently strong word of mouth, the musical ran over four years.

	1990 London cast	1992 New York cast
Nomax	Dig Wayne	Jerry Dixon
Big Moe	Kenny Andrews	Doug Eskew
Four-Eyed Moe	Clarke Peters	Milton Craig Nealy
No Moe	Peter Alex Newton	Kevin Ramsey
Eat Moe	Omar Okai	Jeffrey D. Sams
Little Moe	Paul J. Medford	Glenn Turner

The earlier success of *Ain't Misbehavin'* (1978), another revue of old songs popularized by an African American songwriter-singer, must have encouraged Mackintosh to produce the Broadway version of *Five Guys Named Moe* in 1992. Surely Americans would be even more likely to embrace the Jordan songs than the Britons. He booked the production into the mid-sized Eugene O'Neill Theatre and the musical opened to approving if not wholly enthusiastic notices. Mackintosh pushed the musical in the media and it managed a respectable run of thirteen months. Since then, *Five Guys Named Moe* has found a home in regional theatres in both Great Britain and the States. Some productions have altered the setting (the musical has often been set in jazz nightclubs) and the musical arrangements, but at the core of *Five Guys Named Moe* is the legendary Jordan and his musical innovations that foreshadowed a whole new kind of music.

## **FLORODORA**

(1899/1900)

A musical comedy by Owen Hall and Frank Pixley

*Score:* Leslie Stuart (music), Ernest Boyd-Jones, Paul Rubens, Leslie Stuart, Frank Clement (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 11 November 1899; Lyric Theatre; 455 performances

*Original New York production:* 12 November 1900; Casino Theatre; 549 performances

*Notable songs:* (Tell Me, Pretty Maiden) Are There Any More at Home Like You?; The Shade of the Palm; The Silver Star of Love; Tact; I've an Inkling; The Fellow Who Might Be; I Want to Be a Military Man; Come and See Our Island; Phrenology; I Want to Marry a Man, I Do"

Many Americans who never went to the theatre early in the twentieth century knew about the musical *Florodora* because of the expression "Florodora Girls." Originally this referred to the six beautiful chorus girls in the production's "sextet," several of whom went on to marry millionaires. Later the term referred to any gorgeous Broadway chorine who marries well—or is trying to. One of the most famous (or infamous) of the later Florodora girls was Evelyn Nesbit, the mistress of architect Stanford White and the wife of Pittsburgh tycoon Harry Thaw, who shot White because of Nesbit. (Nesbit was the center of the 1955 film *The Girl in the Red Velvet Swing* and in the novel, film, and musical *Ragtime*.) But the British musical *Florodora* was a very innocent affair with a ridiculous plot and some tuneful songs. Still, the big draw was those Florodora Girls.

Florodora is the name of an island in the Philippines as well as the name of the perfume that is manufactured there by mogul Cyrus W. Gilfain. He is courting the working girl Dolores, but she loves the plantation manager Frank Abercoed. Gilfain has chosen Abercoed for his daughter Angela, but she is smitten with Captain Arthur Donegal. It turns out Gilfain's interest in Dolores is not romantic but financial: only Gilfain knows that she is the rightful heir to the land and the perfume factory. Gilfain uses the itinerant charlatan Tweedlepunch to carry out his marriage plans, but Abercoed refuses to wed Angela and returns to his family castle in Wales. Most of the characters follow him there, only to learn that Gilfain has bought up the Abercoed home and plans to live there. Tweedlepunch and the young lovers plot together with society matron Lady Holyrood. They make it seem like the Abercoed castle is haunted and drive Gilfain away. The plot was full of holes and defied logic, but it offered some lovely Pacific island settings in the first act and some ghostly situations in Wales in the second act.

The score by Leslie Stuart (music and lyrics), Ernest Boyd-Jones, and Paul Rubens (lyrics) was equally scattershot but was so delightful that audiences ranked *Florodora* on the same level with the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. It was far from that, but Stuart's music was very ingratiating even when the lyrics were flat. Abercoed had a fervent ballad titled "(Under) The Shade of the Palm" which was one of the musical's very few references to the island setting. Dolores's air "The Silver Star of Love" and Angela's "The Fellow Who Might Be" were lovely, while

the Captain's "I Want to Be a Military Man" provided the requisite march number. Lady Holyrood sang *Florodora's* comic ditties "Tact" and "I've an Inkling." The score's principal duet was titled "Are There Any More at Home Like You?," a waltzing piece written for one of the many couples in the show. Legend has it that the director-choreographer Sidney Ellison thought the number might better be served as a chorus number. He selected six of the prettiest chorus girls, dressed them in frills and parasols, and had six top-hatted gents sing the song to them. The sextet (actually a double sextet) stopped the show with its gentle charm and coquettish innocence. The song became famous as "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden," the first line of the lyric, and was the rage throughout the British Isles. The musical itself was a solid hit, opening in London in 1899 and running seventeen months, during which cast members and songs were added and deleted. The producers also pulled off a merchandising first: bottles of *Florodora* perfume were for sale in the lobby.

	1899 London cast	1900 New York cast
Lady Holyrood	Ada Reeve	Edna Wallace Hooper
Dolores	Evie Greene	Fannie Johnston
Frank Abercoed	Melville Stewart	Sydney Deane
Anthony Tweedlepunch	Willie Edouin	Willie Edouin
Cyrus Gilfain	Charles E. Stevens	R. E. Graham
Angela Gilfain	Kate Cutler	May Edouin
Arthur Donegal	Edgar Stevens	Cyril Scott
Sextet Maidens	Nancy Girling	Daisy Greene
	Lily McIntyre	Agnes Wayburn
	Lydia West	Marjorie Relyea
	Blanche Carlow	Vaughn Texsmith
	Beatrice Grenville	Margaret Walker
	Fanny Dango	Marie L. Wilson

The 1900 New York production brought some of the London cast to Broadway, and there were some alterations in the script (by Frank Pixley) and score. Once again, it was the sextet number that was the talk of the town, and the six chorus girls were treated like celebrities. As each one left the show to marry a man of money and social position, becoming a *Florodora* Girl was the dream of every girl in New York. *Florodora* ran longer on Broadway than in the West End and in both countries the musical toured for years. New York saw revivals of the musical in 1902, 1905, and 1920, although some of these were tours that stopped on Broadway as they crisscrossed the country. Sheet music sales of "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden" continued to sell briskly until the Roaring Twenties when jazz made such music obsolete. The same could be said about *Florodora* itself. For older theatregoers, the musical was a fond memory of an innocent time erased by World War One. It was also a British show with which American audiences felt very comfortable. The Welsh countryside was as foreign and as exotic as the tropical island of *Florodora*. Both were magical places where music and pretty girls were everything.



## ***THE FRENCH MAID***

(1897)

A musical comedy by Basil Hood

*Score:* Walter Slaughter (music), Basil Hood (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 24 April 1897; Terry's Theatre; 480 performances

*Original New York production:* 27 September 1897; Herald Square Theatre; 175 performances

*Notable songs:* The Twin Duet; The Jolly British Sailor; I'm an Admiral (of the Fleet); I've 'er Portrait Next My 'eart; I'll Lead You Such a Dance; The Femme de Chambre; Do Not Jump at Your Conclusions; Britannia's Sons; A Bit Too Far; Pretty Suzette; That Is a Curious Way; You Can Read It in My Eyes

A lighthearted piece of musical fluff with a plot that was both complicated and slight, *The French Maid* was first a hit on the touring circuit, then a success in London and New York, then again on the road in both countries. Basil Hood's libretti were usually more substantial than the goings-on that provided the plot for *The French Maid*. The title heroine is Suzette, a maid at the Hotel Anglais in Boulogne, who is unofficially engaged to the gendarme Paul Lecuire. He is the jealous type and has every reason to be, since Suzette is being wooed by the hotel waiter Charles Brown. Suzette is trying to decide whether to go to the upcoming masqued ball with Paul or Charles when the Maharajah of Punkapore arrives at the hotel with his English attaché who happens to be Charles's twin brother, Jack. Also arriving on the scene are Admiral Sir Hercules Hawser and his wife, along with his niece Dorothy, who is pursued by her sweetheart, Harry Fife. As more men are attracted to Suzette, Paul's jealousy increases, disguises are employed, lies are told, and everything comes to a head at the ball at the casino where Suzette finally ends up in the arms of Paul. What made all this nonsense enjoyable was Hood's quicksilver dialogue, his broad character types, and the sparkling set of songs he wrote with Slaughter.

The standout number of the evening was "The Twin Duet," sung by Charles and Jack. It was not only musically catchy but the wordplay in the lyric was nimble and silly. Suzette's "The Femme de Chambre" was a lively polka that was flirtatious enough to explain why all these men were after her. Her duet with Jack, "I'll Lead You Such a Dance," was one of the score's most zesty numbers, and Jack got to sing two notable comic ditties, the boastful "The Jolly British Sailor" and "I've 'er Portrait Next My 'eart" in which he related how his life was saved in battle when a bullet hit the locket bearing the image of his latest sweetheart. Reminiscent of Gilbert and Sullivan's "I am" patter songs was Sir Hercules Hawser's "I'm an Admiral (of the Fleet)" in which he proudly explains that he has made a career of doing nothing. Harry and Dorothy sang the attractive love duet "You Can Read It in My Eyes," and Paul was given the romantic proclamation "Pretty Suzette" to justify her ending up with him rather than any of her other many suitors. One of those suitors, the waiter Charles, had two clever solos: the philosophical "Do Not Jump at Your Conclusions" and the comic lament "A Bit Too Far" about the way

women today want to (literally) wear the trousers. Despite so many things French in the musical, the score included the requisite English anthem, in this case Harry leading all in the rousing “Britannia’s Sons.” One might say *The French Maid* had a little bit of everything for the Victorian theatregoer. It certainly delivered plenty of entertainment within the confines of a trivial musical comedy.

	1897 London cast	1897 New York cast
Suzette	Kate Cutler	Marguerita Sylva
Paul Lecuire	Herbert Standing	Henry Norman
Charles Brown	Murray King	Charles A. Bigelow
Dorothy Travers	Louie Pounds	Anna Robinson
Lt. Harry Fife	Richard Green	William Armstrong
Admiral Hawser	H. O. Clarey	John Gourlay
Lady Hawser	Kate Talby	Eva Davenport
Maharajah of Puncapore	Percy Percival	Henry Leoni
Jack Brown	Joseph Wilson	Hallen Mostyn
Gen. Drummond Fife	Windham Guise	Edward S. Wentworth
Violet Travers	Hilda Jeffries	
Monsieur Camembert	Eric Lewis	George Honey
Madame Camembert	Lillie Pounds	Yolande Wallace
Alphonse	J. W. MacDonald	Charles E. Sturgis

*The French Maid* was first produced by Milton Bode who specialized in touring productions, most recently having great success with *Gentleman Jim* by Basil Hood (libretto and lyrics) and Walter Slaughter (music). When the same songwriters offered Bode *The French Maid*, he cast it with players who had worked for him in the past and opened the musical in Bath in 1896 as part of a nine-week tour. *The French Maid* went over so well in the provinces that he scheduled another nineteen weeks and had no difficulty in filling playhouses across Britain. The musical was still touring when London producer W. H. Griffiths opened his production in the West End in 1897, and it was received with auspicious notices and packed houses.

After a very profitable sixteen-month run, *The French Maid* again set off on tour and remained a favorite on the road for some time after. American producer E. E. Rice presented the musical on Broadway later in 1897, and this production was also welcomed by the press and the public. Although its run of five months couldn’t compare with the London run, the American version of *The French Maid* turned a profit on Broadway and then made much more money touring the states for several months, stopping for three weeks in New York again in 1898.

# G

## *A GAIETY GIRL*

(1893/1894)

A musical comedy by Owen Hall

*Score:* Sidney Jones and others (music), Harry Greenbank and others (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 14 October 1893; Prince of Wales Theatre; 413 performances

*Original New York production:* 17 September 1894; Daly's Theatre; 81 performances

*Notable songs:* (Private) Tommy Atkins; Sunshine Above; Beneath the Skies; I'm a High Class Chaperone; It Seems to Me; When Your Pride Has Had a Tumble; I'm a Judge of the Modern Society Sort; Jimmy on the Chute; When in Town; Boys of the Household Brigade; When Once I Get Hold of a Good-Looking He; Here on Sunlit Sands

For a few decades at the turn of the twentieth century, London producer George Edwardes presented a series of "modern" musical comedies that became known as the "Gaiety musicals," not only because most were housed at the Gaiety Theatre but also because they usually featured fashionable chorines who were dubbed "gaiety girls." *A Gaiety Girl* was not the first in the series; Edwardes had previously presented two successful musicals along these lines. But there was something different about *A Gaiety Girl*. It was indeed modern, very satirical, and surprisingly coherent. As American theatre historian Gerald Bordman states, "*A Gaiety Girl* combined the vernacular appeal of farce-comedy with the integrity of comic opera. Interpolated specialties were limited, songs bore a more discernible relationship to the story, and the audience could identify more easily with the characters and the situations than with the royalty and absurdities of the comic opera." Much of the innovative nature of the musical could be attributed to librettist Owen Hall, the pen name of solicitor Jimmie Davis, who had been writing wickedly satirical pieces for newspapers and magazines. Since his witty observations came from his dealings in the courtroom and high society, Davis found it necessary to disguise his identity because the victims of his satire would immediately recognize themselves. Theatrical legend has it that Davis/Hall met Edwardes on a train journey and complained to the producer about the weak and illogical libretto of his latest musical offering and claimed

he could do better himself. Edwardes took him up on the challenge and the result was a well-made play that mixed comedy and satire with pathos. The script was also viciously and hilariously critical of the military, the legal system, the upper classes, and even the church. Edwardes was concerned about the censors but proceeded with *A Gaiety Girl* by hiring Sidney Jones to write the music and Harry Greenbank the lyrics. He then submitted it all to the Lord Chamberlain's office for approval and began casting the musical with some of the finest talents in London.

Today one would not consider *A Gaiety Girl* modern, but coming at the end of the Victorian era it was uncomfortably current. Unlike the clever but usually harmless satire in the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, the sting in *A Gaiety Girl* was more pointed, as the plot took place in contemporary England and the characters were not far removed from those in the audience. The fun-loving Life Guards at the Windsor barracks invite some show girls from the theatre to a party that is also attended by a bevy of high-society young ladies, their chaperone the young widow Lady Virginia Forrest, the revered judge Sir Lewis Gray, and the venerated Rev. Montague Brierly. The result is a clash of manners, instant jealousy, and some revelations about past indiscretions, particularly those of the judge and the clergyman. Captain Charles Goldfield is in love with the actress Alma Somerset, but the French maid Mina is infatuated with Charles and jealous of Alma. She steals Lady Forrest's diamond comb and plants it in Alma's handbag. Accused of theft and scorned by all, Alma proclaims her innocence, but it is not until the end of act 2, set on a beach on the French Riviera, that the truth comes out and Alma and Charles are reunited. The Lord Chamberlain objected to several things in the script and songs, such as the reverend's outrageous flirting with the Gaiety girls, the judge's attempts to seduce the widow Lady Forrest, and the very unmilitary-like behavior of the soldiers. It was also too obvious to the censor that specific individuals were being targeted. Cuts and changes were made, the script was resubmitted, and Edwardes got permission to produce *A Gaiety Girl* less than twenty-four hours before opening night. Hall's libretto, even in its expurgated form, was still a mischievous delight, and most of the critics and audiences had little difficulty in condoning and enjoying the satiric piece.

The same could be said for the *Gaiety Girl* score, which was sometimes as sarcastic as the dialogue. In "I'm a Judge of the Modern Society Sort," the judge bragged about using his position to move in high social circles and flirt with the ladies. The widow Virginia slyly noted the advantages of being unattached in "I'm a High Class Chaperone." The current London attraction known as Captain Boyton's Water Show Chute was celebrated for its amorous possibilities in "Jimmy on the Chute" and the French maid Mina reflected on her own romantic pursuits with "When Your Pride Has Had a Tumble." Charles sang the musical's two major ballads, "Sunshine Above" and "Beneath the Skies" to Alma who, oddly, never sang a note. There were a few interpolations into the Jones-Greenbank score. In fact, the biggest hit song from the production was the S. Potter (music) and Henry Hamilton (lyric) march "(Private) Tommy Atkins," a patriotic number that resurfaced over the decades, particularly during wartime. Adding to the tuneful score was the dancing, which showed the Gaiety girls off

to good advantage. On the Riviera beach in the second act, the girls sang and frolicked to “Here on Sunlit Sands” wearing the most modern and revealing bathing suits allowed by the censor. It was one of many dazzling scenes that Edwardes provided in his efforts to make a “modern” musical as spectacular as a period costume piece.

	<i>1893 London cast</i>	<i>1894 New York cast</i>
Rev. Montague Brierly	Harry Monkhouse	Harry Monkhouse
Lady Virginia Forrest	Lottie Venne	Maud Hobson
Capt. Charles Goldfield	C. Hayden Coffin	W. Louis Bradfield
Alma Somerset	Maud Hobson	Blanche Massey
Mina	Juliette Nesville	Juliette Nesville
Sir Lewis Grey	Eric Lewis	Leedham Bantock
Daisy Ormsbury	Louie Pounds	Ethel Selwyn
Gladys Stourton	Marie Studholme	Sophie Elliott
Harry Fitzwarren	Leedham Bantock	E. G. Woodhouse
Lady Edytha Aldwyn	Kate Cutler	Marie Yorke
Maj. Barclay	Fred Kaye	Fred Kaye
Bobbie Rivers	W. Louis Bradfield	Cecil Hope

*A Gaiety Girl* opened in London in 1893 with a powerhouse cast led by comic Harry Monkhouse (Rev. Brierly), baritone C. Hayden Coffin (Charles), and comedienne Lottie Venne (Lady Forrest). Except for a few reviewers who thought the satire went a bit too far, the critical response was commendatory and the public kept the musical on the boards for fourteen months followed by an extended tour. American producer Augustin Daly presented the New York version at his Broadway theatre the next year and the British satire played well with American playgoers. Monkhouse and Juliette Nesville (Mina) reprised their London performances, full-voiced W. Louis Bradfield moved from playing second leading man to Charles, and Leedham Bantock graduated from a supporting role to that of the judge. They were joined by comedienne Maud Hobson as the widow Virginia. Edwardes, who had staged the original production, re-created it on Broadway, and, with very few song changes, the Broadway version was an accurate copy of what Londoners saw. *A Gaiety Girl* was well received by the press and the public and ran three months on Broadway, went on tour to several cities, and returned to New York in 1895 for another month. When Edwardes revived the musical in London in 1899, it was not nearly as effective. By then, musical comedies were not such a rarity, and *A Gaiety Girl* suffered in comparison to later Gaiety musicals. While it can be argued that “musical comedy” was first introduced in the Harrigan and Hart shows in New York in the 1880s, it can also be said that it was George Edwardes’s Gaiety musicals that gave the newfangled musical comedy genre a foothold in the British Isles a decade later.

**THE GEISHA; OR,  
THE STORY OF A TEA HOUSE**

(1896)

A musical comedy by Owen Hall

*Score:* Sidney Jones, Lionel Monckton (music), Harry Greenbank (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 25 April 1896; Daly's Theatre; 760 performances

*Original New York production:* 9 September 1896; Daly's Theatre; 161 performances

*Notable songs:* Chin-Chin-Chinaman; The Amorous Goldfish; I'll Wish Him a Polite Good-Day; The Toy Monkey; A Geisha's Life; Love, Love; Star of My Soul; Chon-Kina; The Interfering Parrot; The Jewel of Asia; Jack's the Boy; The Kissing Duet (Teach Me How to Kiss); If That's Not Love; What Will the Marquis Do?; Chivalry; Here They Come

Among the many musicals to employ an exotic Asian setting after the phenomenal success of *The Mikado* (1885), *The Geisha* was perhaps the most accomplished; it was certainly the most popular. Its plot has some similarities to the later play *Madame Butterfly* (1900) and no doubt playwrights John Luther Long and David Belasco borrowed heavily from *The Geisha* for their tragic drama. But *The Geisha*, which enjoyed a very long run in London and also appealed to New Yorkers and to audiences around the world, is more romantic than tragic, and the score is pure musical comedy rather than operatic. The title character is O Mimosa San, who works in the Japanese tea house of Ten Thousand Joys run by the comic Chinaman Wun-Hi. She and the other geishas do not provide sexual favors but instead sing and dance and serve tea. Although Mimosa is engaged to the Japanese Captain Katana, she is beloved by both the British sailor Reginald Fairfax and the Japanese potentate Marquis Imari. Reginald's fiancée Molly Seamore disguises herself as a geisha to get inside the tea house and see what Reginald finds so attractive. The powerful Imari buys the teahouse, and each of the geishas is auctioned off. He bids highly to secure Mimosa for himself but accidentally ends up with Molly. It takes Molly's friend, Lady Constance Wynne, to concoct a plan in which Mimosa disguises herself as a fortune teller and relates to Imari that his planned marriage is doomed unless she can cast a spell on his fiancée. Imari agrees, and Mimosa uses the opportunity to substitute the French interpreter Juliette Diamant with Molly. Imari ends up marrying Juliette, Reginald and Molly are reunited, and Mimosa gets her beloved Captain Katana. The libretto by Owen Hall, the pen name for former solicitor Jimmie Davis, was indeed convoluted, yet amusingly so, and the romantic characters were balanced by the comic ones.

Producer George Edwardes, known for his "Gaiety musicals" and the comely Gaiety girls that appeared in his productions, spared no expense and made sure *The Geisha* outdid his previous musicals in spectacle, stars, and songs. The Japanese settings and costumes were indeed impressive, both the teahouse and the palace gardens bringing the Japanese prints and watercolors (which were very

popular in the Victorian Age) to life. Edwardes's Gaiety girls played the fashionable English ladies visiting Japan and were, as always, garbed in the most stunning up-to-date fashion. The costumes in *The Geisha*, both Asian and European, were featured in magazines and newspapers, creating a demand not only for tickets but for replicas of the clothes. The cast consisted of many Edwardes regulars and audience favorites, led by Marie Tempest as Mimosa. Comic virtuoso Harry Monkhouse played the villain Imari, baritone C. Hayden Coffin was Reginald, comedienne Maud Hobson played Lady Constance, the lively mezzo-soprano Letty Lind portrayed Molly, and comic Huntley Wright got his share of the laughs as Wun-Hi.

For the score, Edwardes commissioned Sidney Jones (music) and Harry Greenbank (lyrics), who had provided superb songs for some of the other Gaiety musicals. To keep *The Geisha* from becoming too operatic, Edwardes insisted that no song run longer than three minutes and that act finales be under five minutes. This restriction did not seem to limit the songwriters' creativity, because they came up with one of the finest musical comedy scores of the period. The role of Mimosa was the most complex, moving from a coyly flirtatious servant to a deeply distressed woman. Knowing Tempest's considerable acting and singing range, Jones and Greenbank wrote a variety of songs that illustrated her diverse talents. In the narrative fable "The Amorous Goldfish," Mimosa told the tale of a goldfish bowl resident who loved the officer who fed her dutifully each day until he fell in love with a woman and neglected the goldfish, whose bowl was one day accidentally knocked to the floor, and the overlooked creature died. On a lighter note, Mimosa sang the playful love duet "Teach Me How to Kiss" with Reginald and got to portray a hypnotic fortune teller with the bewitching waltz "Love, Love." Perhaps Mimosa's most heartfelt number was "A Geisha's Life" in which she describes the true feelings hidden behind the beautiful painted face of a geisha. For the zesty actress-singer Letty Lind, who played Molly, Jones and Greenbank wrote the facile auction song "Chon Kina" in which Molly unabashedly promotes her talents as the best of all geishas. Molly also had a hilarious comic ditty about "The Interfering Parrot" and an interpolated song titled "I'll Wish Him a Polite Good-Day" in which she is determined not to marry the dreadful Imari. This last was reprised with different lyrics and, retitled "The Toy Monkey," went on to sell thousands of copies of sheet music. The Chinaman Wun-Hi sang the musical's other most popular song, "Chin Chin Chinaman." Filled with pidgin English and silly malaprops, the number is far from politically correct today, but audiences at the turn of the twentieth century found Wun-Hi's lament of "muchee sad" and his business "welle wellee bad" very funny. Also not appealing to modern audiences is Juliette's determined song "If That's Not Love" in which she lists the humiliating things she would do to win the man she loves.

Perhaps it is already obvious that *The Geisha* is not a musical that could be revived today without causing offense on several points. But in 1896 it was amazingly successful and even beloved. The original London production ran over two years then toured the provinces for decades. *The Geisha* returned to the West End several times and fringe theatre productions could be found up into the 1950s. American producer Augustin Daly presented the first New York production of *The Geisha* later in 1896 but booked it into his own theatre, which was only

	1896 London cast	1896 New York cast
O Mimosa San	Marie Tempest	Dorothy Morton
Reginald Fairfax	C. Hayden Coffin	Van Rensselaer Wheeler
Wun-Hi	Huntley Wright	William Sampson
Molly Seamore	Letty Lind	Violet Lloyd
Marquis Imari	Harry Monkhouse	Edwin Stevens
Juliette Diamant	Juliette Nesville	Helma Nelson
Lady Constance Wynne	Maud Hobson	Marie St. John
Dick Cunningham	Louis Bradfield	Herbert Gresham
Lt. Arthur Cuddy	Leedham Bancroft	George Lesoir
Capt. Katana	William Philip	Neil McCay

available for six weeks and in repertory with his company's *As You Like It*. It was a financial miscalculation because the musical quickly sold out. When the venue was no longer available, Daly took *The Geisha* and *As You Like It* on tour until his theatre was again vacant. Twice he brought *The Geisha* back to Broadway but both times in repertory with other plays, so the musical ended up totaling only 161 performances. It was during later tours that *The Geisha* chalked up hundreds of performances and became known across the land, returning to New York in 1897, 1898, 1913, and 1931. The musical was not only a hit in English-speaking nations such as Australia and Canada, it also broke records in Germany, France, Hungary, Holland, India, and Spain. Not since the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and not until the British Invasion of the 1970s and 1980s would a British musical enjoy such international acclaim.

## ***THE GIRL BEHIND THE COUNTER***

(1906/1907)

A musical farce by Leedham Bantock, Arthur Anderson, and Edgar Smith

*Score:* Howard Talbot, Augustus Barratt, J. St. A. Johnson (music), Arthur Anderson, Percy Greenbank (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 21 April 1906; Wyndham Theatre; 141 performances

*Original New York production:* 1 October 1907; Herald Square Theatre; 232 performances

*Notable songs:* In the Land Where the Best Man Wins; I Mean to Marry a Man; The Bandbox Girl; (Any Time You're) Passing By; Flirting; The Cherry in the Glass (The Glow-Worm Song); Now I've Married a Millionaire; Eh? Ah? Oh!; Much Obligated to You; Won't You Buy?; Someday; In Good Queen Bess's Time; Ze Enterpraising Frenchman; The Greenaway Girl; It's Jolly Nice to Be as Deuced Popular as I Am

A modest hit in London, this musical farce had to be Americanized, and a favorite Broadway comic and renowned dancer had to be added to make it a bigger



hit in New York. As the title suggests, the heroine worked at a department store, a premise that proved useful for the earlier *The Girl from Kays* (1903). Producer Frank Curzon commissioned a by-the-numbers libretto that allowed for two singing stars to shine, roles for a handful of comics, tuneful and hummable songs, and a fancy-dress ball in the second act for spectacle. It took a handful of writers, composers, and lyricists to fulfill all these requirements, but fulfill it they did and with such panache that *The Girl behind the Counter* was met with rapturous notices in the press. While its run in the West End was a healthy four and a half months, one expected more from a musical that was so well received. Nonetheless, *The Girl behind the Counter* did very well on tour throughout Britain and Australia and then even better in New York.

The title girl is the monied Winnie Willoughby, whose mother wants her to wed the unappealing Viscount Gushington. She convinces Millie Mostyn to give her a job as a flower salesgirl at the Maison Duval, where Winnie enjoys her new identity, particularly when it brings her into contact with the dashing Charlie Chetwynd. He has just returned from Africa and, unknown to Winnie, is rich with gold. When the cash register at the Maison Duval is found to be ten pounds short, Winnie is accused of theft and fired. The money was actually taken by the shop boy Adolphus Dudd, who wanted cash so he could buy the fancy duds needed to take his girlfriend Susie to the ball. It is at the said ball that Winnie tries to prove her innocence to Charles and get permission from her father, General Wilke Willoughby, to wed the seemingly impoverished Charles. Being caught flirting with the French milliner Ninette, the General is in no position to refuse his daughter's request. True identities are revealed, Winnie is exonerated from stealing, and she and Charles are engaged. There were few surprises with such a plot, but it was thankfully interrupted by some sparkling songs and comic bits by top-drawer comedians. The popular baritone C. Hayden Coffin, as Charles, sang the most famous song in the score, the rousing "In the Land Where the Best Man Wins," which praised Britain as the place founded on hard work. Charles also sang the musical's major ballad, the dreamy "Someday." Isabel Jay as Winnie revealed her disgust with spineless gentlemen of high society and sang "I Mean to Marry a Man," a number that stopped the show each night. The comic characters had their share of notable songs as well. Adolphus and Susie sang "The Greenaway Girl" dressed as aristocrats at the costume ball, the saucy Ninette extolled the qualities of "Ze Enterprising Frenchman," General Willoughby, dressed as Sir Walter Raleigh, sang "In Good Queen Bess's Time," and the foppish Viscount "Gussie" Gushington, played by the beloved comedian Lawrence Grossmith, gushed that "It's Jolly Nice to Be as Deuced Popular as I Am." There were several chorus numbers and plenty of dance, making *The Girl behind the Counter* very musical and not so dependent on the book scenes.

*The Girl behind the Counter* did not seem a likely candidate for Broadway, but producer-comedian Lew Fields saw the musical as a vehicle for himself if rewritten and Americanized in spots. Fields and his partner Joe Weber had pretty much invented farcical musical comedy in America, and their "burlesques" of current musicals were Broadway favorites. After ten years of hits together, Weber and Fields temporarily parted ways and worked on their own projects until they reunited in 1916. In 1907 Fields was looking for vehicles for himself as a producer

	1906 London cast	1907 New York cast
Winnie Willoughby	Isabel Jay	May Naudain
Charlie Chetwynd	C. Hayden Coffin	Joseph Ratliff
Henry Schniff		Lew Fields
Mrs. Schniff		Connie Ediss
Gen. Wilkie		
Willoughby	J. F. McArdle	
Viscount Gushington	Lawrence Grossmith	Denman Maley
M. Duval	Fred Allandale	George Beban
Millie Mostyn	Violet Englefield	Louise Dresser
Ninette	Marie Dainton	Lotta Faust
Susie	Coralie Blythe	Topsy Siegrist
Adolphus Dudd	Horace Mills	
Hon. Aubrey Battersea		Vernon Castle
Dudley Cheatham		Ignacio Martinelli

and as an actor and *The Girl behind the Counter* fit the bill. He hired the veteran Broadway librettist Edgar Smith to turn the British musical into a musical farce emphasizing gauche Americans in London. Fields played the down-and-out American Henry Schniff, who owes his landlady, the widow Mrs. Willoughby, so much back rent that he marries her to cancel his debt. Mr. and Mrs. Schniff and Henry's step-daughter Winnie travel to London, where Mrs. Schniff tries to marry her daughter off to a man with a title. The uncouth Henry finds out that he has inherited a fortune and needn't have married his bossy landlady. With this new-found wealth, Mrs. Schniff wants to move in high society and is more determined than ever to get Winnie an aristocratic husband. From this point on, Smith's libretto follows the London script fairly closely, with Winnie getting a job in the Universal, an American department store in London, in order to escape from Viscount Gushington. Her meeting Charles in the flower stall, the supposed theft, and the ending at a costume ball played out the same, but the characters of Winnie's parents were enlarged and, as played by Fields and British comedienne Connie Ediss, that was the way Broadway audiences liked it. Winnie's father undermined his wife's plans by donning several disguises in order to help his step-daughter win the hand of Charles. Fields also added a comic scene in which he mixed cocktails at the ball, insisting on making drinks that matched the colors of his customers' clothes. There were several song changes, most notably the interpolation of the already famous "The Cherry in the Glass," better known as "The Glow-Worm Song." As in London, there was a good deal of dancing, and the featured hooper was Vernon Castle. Although he had not yet teamed up with Irene Foote to form the celebrated dance duo of Vernon and Irene Castle, he was already a superb dancer and was noticed in musicals such as *The Girl behind the Counter*. With Fields, Castle, and the popular "Glow-Worm Song," the musical was a sure thing, and it turned out to be the hit of the season. *The Girl behind the Counter* ran eight months on Broadway and then toured extensively. Under the title *Step This Way*, it was revived on Broadway in 1916. Lew Fields again starred, and the musical ran ten weeks.

**THE GIRL FROM KAYS**

(1902/1903)

A musical play by Owen Hall

*Score:* Ivan Caryll, Cecil Cook, and others (music), Adrian Ross, Claude Aveling, and others (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 15 November 1902; Apollo Theatre; 432 performances

*Original New York production:* 2 November 1903; Herald Square Theatre; 223 performances

*Notable songs:* Papa!; Smiling Sambo; I Don't Care; Semi-Detached; The Glass Song; Mrs. Hoggenheimer of Park Lane; My Little Love Bird; Sufficiency; A High Old Time

A series of lawsuits threatened the success of this Edwardian musical comedy but *The Girl from Kays* turned out to be a hit in Great Britain and in the States and introduced a lovable comic character who later showed up in three other musicals. Jay's Ltd. was a respectable Bond Street millinery in London and was not at all pleased when producer George Edwardes announced that his upcoming production was titled *The Girl from Jay's*. Instead of exploiting the free publicity, the store protested and threatened to sue for defamation of character. Librettist Owen Hall simply changed the musical's title to *The Girl from Kays*, but everyone knew what store was being put on the stage. During rehearsals, word got out that each of the chorus girls was named after a different English bishop jurisdiction (e.g., Miss Ely, Miss Sarum, etc.) and the church also threatened legal action. Edwardes changed the chorines' names slightly, and again no one was fooled about the sly references. Once the musical opened, the French playwright Leon Gandillot brought suit against Edwardes claiming *The Girl from Kays* was very close to his 1897 comedy *La mariée recalcitrante*. The producer acknowledged the similarities, gave Gandillot program credit, and paid him a one-time fee of fifty pounds, a puny figure considering the fortune the musical eventually made. How familiar Hall was with the French play is debatable, but his libretto is clearly an improvement on Gandillot's comedy.

Like many of Edwardes's productions, *The Girl from Kays* was an up-to-date modern musical comedy and Hall's script enjoyed poking fun at contemporary targets such as high society, revered institutions, and gauche self-made millionaires. The whole plot is based on a kiss and a misunderstanding. Newlyweds Harry and Norah Gordon are about to depart on their honeymoon when Winnie Harborough, a shop girl from Kays, arrives with a hat that Harry has bought for his bride. Harry and Winnie had once been intimate with each other, so naturally she gives him a kiss to congratulate him on his wedding. Unfortunately, Norah and her parents enter just in time to witness the kiss, and it takes three acts before Harry can satisfactorily explain things to Norah. Hall fills the time cleverly with subplots, colorful characters, and satirical commentary. Harry and Norah honeymoon in separate rooms at the seaside Grand Hotel, where they are joined by the bridesmaids, Norah's family, Winnie and other shop girls, the foppish Hon. Percy Fitzthistle, and, most memorably, Max "Piggy" Hoggenheimer, who is quite taken

with Winnie. Piggy is an uncouth but lovable American Jewish millionaire who has bought a mansion on Park Lane and wishes to hobnob with the English upper crust. Such pretentious types were to be found in several musicals of the era, but there was something uniquely likable about Piggy. As played by comic Willie Edouin, Piggy stole every scene he was in, and even though he was tangential to the main plotline, he managed to hold the musical together. Like many aspects of *The Girl from Kays*, Piggy was a thinly disguised version of a real person: Sir Alfred Rothschild, another self-made Jewish millionaire who lived in a grand home on Park Lane. Perhaps the fact that Piggy was thoroughly American kept Sir Alfred from joining the others who tried to sue Edwardes.

Although Ivan Caryll (music) and Adrian Ross (lyrics) were top-billed as the musical's songwriters, the actual score came from a variety of writers. Most songs were solo turns for the jocular characters. Harry expressed his frustration with the ever-changing wiles of women with "I Don't Care," some of the shop girls sang the "coon song" "Smiling Sambo," the prissy Percy Fitzthistle admired himself in the mirror in "The Glass Song," and Winnie sang about her triumph at becoming "Mrs. Hoggenheimer of Park Lane." The disappointed bride Norah wept through her solo "Papa!" early in the musical but later sang a sweet duet titled "Semi-Detached" with her husband. Surprisingly, Piggy sang no solos until the musical opened in New York, where he was given the comic number "Sufficiency."

	1902 London cast	1903 New York cast
Winnie Harborough	Ethel Irving	Hattie Williams
Harry Gordon	W. Louis Bradfield	Harry Davenport
Norah Chalmers	Kate Cutler	Grace Freeman
Max Hoggenheimer	Willie Edouin	Sam Bernard
Hon. Percy Fitzthistle	Aubrey Fitzgerald	Ernest Lambart
Mr. Chalmers	E. W. Garden	George R. Sprague
Mrs. Chalmers	Marie Illington	Maude Granger
Mary Methuen	Kitty Gordon	Leonore Harris
Nancy Lowley	Ella Snyder	Marie Doro
Theodore Quench	W. Cheeseman	Homer Granville

*The Girl from Kays* opened in London in 1902 to mostly appreciative reviews but some critics thought the story too thin and the satiric references too thick. There were plenty of compliments for the witty dialogue, playful characters, expert performances, and bubbly score. The musical was an immediate hit with the public and *The Girl from Kays* ran over a year. Yet the production was so costly and the finances of theatre producing in London rising so much that Edwardes lost some 20,000 pounds on the London run and the musical did not realize a profit until its lucrative tour of Great Britain and Australia. American producer Charles Frohman joined forces with Edwardes to bring *The Girl from Kays* to Broadway in 1903. There was some concern that American audiences would take offense at the character of Piggy, a foolish American with more money than class. The problem

was solved by casting Sam Bernard in the role. The British-born Bernard was a Broadway favorite in comedies and musicals and Piggy Hoggenheimer turned out to be the plum role of his career. The rest of the New York cast was first-rate and, although there were changes in the script and score, they did not greatly affect the result; *The Girl from Kays* was a critical and popular hit. After running seven months on Broadway, the musical toured the States for several months. When Bernard revived the musical on Broadway in 1906, it was retitled *The Rich Mr. Hoggenheimer*. He returned to the character in 1914 in an altered version of the musical called *The Belle of Bond Street*, playing Piggy on Broadway and in London but without much success. Bernard's final appearance as Hoggenheimer was in the 1927 musical *Piggy*, a modernization of *The Girl from Kays*, which he played for eleven weeks before illness forced him to retire and he died later that same year.

### ***THE GIRL FROM UTAH***

(1913/1914)

A musical play by James T. Tanner

*Score:* Paul A. Rubens, Sidney Jones, Jerome Kern, and others (music), Percy Greenbank, Adrian Ross, Herbert Reynolds (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 18 October 1913; Adelphi Theatre; 195 performances

*Original New York production:* 24 August 1914; Knickerbocker Theatre; 120 performances

*Notable songs:* They Didn't Believe Me; Land of Let's Pretend; Why Don't They Dance the Polka Anymore?; Same Sort of Girl; We're Getting on Very Well; You Never Can Tell; Alice in Wonderland; Gilbert and Filbert; The Bottom of Brixton Hill; Out of It!; Florrie the Flapper; Nothin', Nothin' at All; Only to You

*The Girl from Utah* is an example of one of those rare instances in which a mediocre British musical was saved from obscurity by the addition of one song in the New York production. That song, Jerome Kern's "They Didn't Believe Me," was not just a hit; it turned out to be one of the most influential songs in the history of the American musical theatre. Like much of the Broadway score, the ballad was interpolated into the New York production. Surprisingly, "They Didn't Believe Me" was given scant attention by the New York critics. Yet the ballad quietly started a revolution in the way theatre songs were written. Kern departed from the European tradition of the dominance of the waltz, or 3/4 time, and introduced unusual harmonic surprises in the melody, utilized a key change when least expected, and added a haunting quality that was still romantic. Even Herbert Reynolds's lyric was unique, using conversational phrases in a love song, such as "and when I tell them—and I cert'n'ly am goin' to tell them." The song eventually caught on with the public, and influenced the next three generations of theatre songwriters.

James Tanner's libretto for *The Girl from Utah* was one in a line of musicals that disparaged or made fun of the Mormons, particularly the comic possibilities of a husband with multiple wives. When her father insists she marry a wealthy but bigamous Mormon, Una Trance flees Utah and arrives in London, where she is

pitied and taken in by Lord Amesham and his fiancée, Dora; the actor Sandy Blair; the scrappy meat-shop keeper Trimmit and his sweetheart, Clancy; and the girls from the Folly Theatre. Despite such friendships and protection, the wealthy Mormon arrives in England and kidnaps Una, taking her to a hideout in Brixton in South London. An amateur detective joins Una’s friends in finding her, which turns out to be rather easy since she left a trail of confetti to mark the path to Brixton. In the convoluted third act, the Mormon returns to Utah, Sandy proposes marriage to Una, and everyone attends a ball that, in fact, is a musical revue tacked on to the end of the book musical. *The Girl from Utah* may have been logically and structurally a mess, but the colorful characters and the tuneful songs convinced most critics to recommend it. The cast was filled with familiar favorites, but the surprise of the evening was American newcomer Ina Claire as Una. She had appeared on Broadway as *The Quaker Girl* (1911) with great success, and producer George Edwardes provided her London debut as *The Girl from Utah*. Although much of Claire’s career would be as a stylish comedienne in modern comedy-of-manners roles, at this time she was a fetching nineteen-year-old ingenue who could be as heartbreaking as she could be funny.

The score for the London production of *The Girl from Utah* was written by several hands, most of the music by Paul A. Rubens and Sidney Jones and the lyrics by Percy Greenbank and Adrian Ross. Some numbers were obviously written with the performers in mind. For the comic Edmund Payne, who played Trimmit, there was his boastful number about his shop “At the Bottom of Brixton Hill,” a slaphappy duet with Clancy (Gracie Leigh) titled “Out of It!,” and a sly ditty called “We’re Getting on Very Well.” The comedienne Leigh had fun with the Irish ditty “Nothin’, Nothin’ at All.” Leading man Joseph Coyne, as the actor Sandy, had a number of solo ballads and duets with Una, but it was the secondary romantic couple, Dora and Lord Amersham, who sang the musical’s loveliest number, the enticing waltz “Only to You.” Claire’s best musical moment was when she sang the plaintive but affecting title song. Ten of the score’s twenty-four songs were crammed into the ball scene in act 2, including a Russian dance, a tango, and a French chorus line number. There was plenty of music in *The Girl from Utah*, so much so that the musical felt like a hit.

Opening in London in 1913, *The Girl from Utah* ran nearly seven months and was a hit, albeit a modest one. The musical also enjoyed a healthy run on the road and was picked up by some foreign countries, most successfully in Budapest, Hungary. The

	1913 London cast	1914 New York cast
Una Trance	Ina Claire	Julia Sanderson
Sandy Blair	Joseph Coyne	Donald Brian
Trimmit/Trimpel	Edmund Payne	Joseph Cawthorn
Dora Manners	Phyllis Dare	Venita Fitzhugh
Clancy	Gracie Leigh	Renee Reel
Lord Amersham	Alfred De Manby	George Bishop
Lady Amersham	Bella Graves	Queenie Vassar
Detective Shooter	F. W. Russell	Walter S. Wills

advent of World War One shuttered planned productions in Paris and elsewhere. American producer Charles Frohman liked the American aspects of *The Girl from Utah* (not to mention the title) and bought the Broadway rights to the musical even though he was cognizant of the flaws in the libretto and the lack of hits in the score. Also, with war imminent in Europe, Frohman feared that such a frivolous musical might seem suddenly dated. So, the evening started with the three stars—Julia Sanderson (Una), Donald Brian (Sandy) and Joseph Cawthorn (Trimmit who was renamed Trimpel)—asking the audience to recall frivolous times past with the song “To the Land of ‘Let’s Pretend’.” The song was by Jerome Kern and it was one of seven new numbers that he wrote for the Broadway version of *The Girl from Utah*. He had been providing the odd song here and there for Frohman’s British imports for ten years, but this was the closest that Kern had yet come to a full Broadway score. The musical launched his career, not because of “They Didn’t Believe Me” (that fame would come later), but because of the other six numbers in the score. Most applauded by the audience was “Same Sort of Girl,” an up-tempo foxtrot that foreshadows swing in the way it moves. Harry B. Smith wrote the lyric, in which Sandy dances with Una and states she is not at all like the girls he has known in the past. Another foxtrot, “You Never Can Tell,” was even more vivacious. The catchy “Why Don’t They Dance the Polka Anymore?” can only be described as foot-stomping, as opposed to the tender “Alice in Wonderland,” which is effectively wistful. “To the Land of ‘Let’s Pretend’,” sung in the prologue and reprised in the epilogue, has one of Kern’s most infectious melodies from his early period. Only a handful of the London songs were retained for the New York production, and Frohman interpolated non-Kern numbers as well, including some English ditties not yet heard on Broadway. Once again, *The Girl from Utah* was packed with music but, like the West End production, the American version was a modest success with a run of five months. Frohman made more money from the extended tour, which became more and more attractive as the song “They Didn’t Believe Me” caught on. He even brought *The Girl from Utah* back to Broadway in 1915 for three weeks. As for “They Didn’t Believe Me,” it sold millions of copies of sheet music, was heard in over a dozen movies, and has been recorded nearly one hundred times.

## ***THE GONDOLIERS; OR, THE KING OF BARATARIA***

(1889/1890)

A comic operetta by W. S. Gilbert

*Score:* Arthur Sullivan (music), W. S. Gilbert (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 7 December 1889; Savoy Theatre; 554 performances

*Original New York production:* 7 January 1890; Park/Palmer’s Theatre; 103 performances

*Notable songs:* When a Merry Maiden Marries; Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes; O Rapture, When Alone Together; From the Sunny Spanish Shore; There Was a Time; In a Contemplative Fashion; In Enterprise of Marital Kind; I Am a Courtier Grave and Serious; On the Day That I Was Wedded; Kind Sir, You Cannot Have the Heart; Small Titles and Orders; I Stole the Prince; There Lived a King, as I’ve Been Told; Ah, Well Beloved; Thy Wintry Scorn I Dearly Prize





Don Alhambra, the Grand Inquisitor, is one of the funniest villains in the Gilbert and Sullivan canon. He is played here by George Gaynes in the City Center Gilbert and Sullivan Company's 1964 production in New York City. The Duke of Plaza-Toro's daughter Casilda (Janet Pavek) doesn't seem to take the Inquisitor very seriously. *Photofest*

This sunny spoof of Italian opera is one of Gilbert and Sullivan's most lyrical pieces and was, unfortunately, their last success. Its far-fetched tale was probably as predictable to audiences in 1889 as it appears today, but the satire on government and monarchy is still fresh, and the score is filled with luscious musical numbers. *The Gondoliers* was the twelfth collaboration between composer Arthur



Sullivan and librettist-lyricist W. S. Gilbert and followed their most serious effort, *The Yeoman of the Guard* (1888). But there is not a touch of tragedy or even pathos in *The Gondoliers* and, while it does not have the most fully developed characters, everyone is likable and fun with nary a true villain in sight. While Sullivan wanted to explore more serious musical works, even tragic opera, Gilbert argued that their forte lay in comic operetta. A compromise was reached. They would first write a comic piece in the Italianate style, and Sullivan would then pursue his dream of a grand opera of Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. (In 1891 Sullivan collaborated with librettist Julian Sturgis on *Ivanhoe*, which was a major success in its day.) The relationship between the two men was, to say the least, very strained by this point, and they communicated with each other by stiff and formal letters rather than face-to-face conversation. Gilbert had once suggested a plot about a troupe of strolling players in Venice. Sullivan disliked the concept of performers as characters but was intrigued by a Venetian setting and the kind of music it suggested. Gilbert then created a new plot with the first act set in Venice, the second in the fictional island republic of Barataria. To please Sullivan, Gilbert's libretto opens with fifteen minutes of music without a line of dialogue. Such an extended orchestral and choral sequence was not only to soothe the composer's ego but also to set up the musical style of the operetta. Of the forty-seven pages in the original libretto, only fourteen are dialogue. *The Gondoliers* may be a satire, but the music dominates.

The title gondoliers are foster-brothers Marco and Giuseppe Palmieri, the two of them raised together in Venice and both recently married. They are both committed anti-royalists so they and their new wives are not happy when the grand inquisitor, Don Alhambra, informs the two gondoliers that one of them had been hidden in Venice as a baby during a revolution and is actually of royal birth and the future king of Barataria. To complicate the situation, the Duke and Duchess of Plaza-Toro arrive in Venice with their daughter, Casilda, who is betrothed to the next king of Barataria even though she loves the Duke's lowborn attendant, Luiz. Since no one knows which of the two gondoliers is the rightful heir to the throne, both are sent to Barataria, where they try to rule together, introducing liberal ideas to the court to turn Barataria into a republic. This leads to chaos, which is calmed when the old nurse confesses that she switched the babies years ago and the rightful heir is none other than Luiz, who is more than happy to wed Casilda and embrace the monarchy. Such a plot could have been told in one act, but *The Gondoliers* has so much music that the storyline is happily strung along for a full evening of musical charm.

For reasons that have never been made clear, *The Gondoliers* took longer to write than the other Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. Gilbert spent five months on the libretto and lyrics, sending his work to Sullivan in bits and pieces. A series of letters between the two during the writing of the piece illustrates how often there were disagreements on details and how often rewrites were required. The operetta went into rehearsal late, and the announced opening night put pressure on both men as well as the cast. The dress rehearsal lasted seven hours, and the title was not agreed on nor the overture composed until just days before opening. Yet none of this furious strife is evident in the operetta itself. *The Gondoliers* is beautifully balanced, the satire and low humor as harmonious as the music is romantic,

festive, and playful. Despite their differences of opinion during the process, Gilbert and Sullivan each complimented the other (by letter!) on such fine work, and both held *The Gondoliers* in high esteem for years after. Yet one questions Gilbert's script, if not his delicious lyrics. The two gondoliers, Marco and Giuseppe, are pretty much indistinguishable in character, as are their wives, Gianetta and Tessa. The comic characters—the Duke and Duchess of Plaza-Toro and Don Alhambra—are funny without being very distinctive. And, as might be expected, there is little depth to the lovers Casilda and Luiz. The ideas in *The Gondoliers* are more interesting (and satiric) than the characters. That is perhaps why one does not think of *The Gondoliers* when recalling outstanding Gilbert and Sullivan characters.

Such is not the case with the songs. The score for *The Gondoliers* is filled with memorable numbers, arguably led by Marco's serenade "Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes" and Casilda and Luiz's gushing duet "O Rapture! When Alone Together." Each of the new wives gets to shine with superior solos: Tessa sings the spirited "When a Merry Maiden Marries," and Gianetta charms with "Kind Sir, You Cannot Have the Heart." The Duke and Duchess introduce themselves with the unforgettable ditty "From the Sunny Spanish Shore," and the Duke explains his rise to power in the comic narrative "In Enterprise of Martial Kind." When the two inexperienced kings are floundering in Barataria, the Duke tries to set them straight with "I am a Courtier Brave and Serious." The Duchess has her say about finding an aristocratic mate in "On the Day That I Was Wedded." Don Alhambra, the basso inquisitor, gets his laughs with two narrative numbers: "I Stole the Prince" and "There Lived a King, as I've Been Told." The choral and concerted numbers in the score are also excellent, and there is more dance music in *The Gondoliers* than in other Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. The Spanish-flavored "Dance a Cachucha" is one of the most infectious instrumental pieces to come from the Sullivan canon.

	<i>1889 London cast</i>	<i>1890 New York cast</i>
Marco Palmieri	Courtice Pounds	Richard Clarke
Giuseppe Palmieri	Rutland Barrington	Duncan Barrington
Duke of Plaza-Toro	Frank Wyatt	George Temple
Duchess of Plaza-Toro	Rosina Brandram	Kate Talby
Casilda	Decima Moore	Agnes McFarland
Luiz	Wallace Brownlow	Arthur Marcel
Don Alhambra	W. H. Denny	John A. Muir
Tessa	Jessie Bond	Mary Duggan
Gianetta	Geraldine Ulmar	Esther Palliser

The opening night of *The Gondoliers* in 1889 was an unqualified triumph. The audience reaction was overwhelming and the reviews almost unanimous raves. Several critics ranked *The Gondoliers* among the team's best works; some thought it the very best. The operetta ran twenty months, toured for several years, and remains among the top four most-produced Gilbert and Sullivan works today. Before a pirated version could appear on the New York stage, producer Richard

D'Oyly Carte sent *The Gondoliers* to Broadway one month after the London opening. In his haste, Carte did not carefully oversee the production, and it had many faults, particularly in the casting. The reviews were tepid and business was poor. (Pundits wryly dubbed the operetta "The Gone Dollars.") Carte came to New York, recast the production and made other changes, including a new venue, which helped *The Gondoliers* to hold on for a total of three months. But the operetta's future in America would be much sunnier. *The Gondoliers* returned to Broadway in 1893, 1898, 1931, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1939, 1940, 1942, 1944, 1948, 1951, 1962, and 1964. Add to that hundreds of Off-Broadway, regional, touring, festival, summer theatre, and educational theatre productions and *The Gondoliers* was and remains a perennial favorite.

### **GOOD MORNING, JUDGE**

(1917/1919)

A musical comedy by Fred Thompson,  
based on Arthur Wing Pinero's farce *The Magistrate*

*Score:* Lionel Monckton, Howard Talbot, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, and others (music), Adrian Ross, Percy Greenbank, Irving Caesar, and others (lyrics)

*Original London production [The Boy]:* 14 September 1917; Adelphi Theatre; 801 performances

*Original New York production:* 6 February 1919; Shubert Theatre; 140 performances

*Notable songs:* I Want to Go Bye-Bye; Have a Heart; There's More to a Kiss than XXX; I Was So Young and You Were So Beautiful; I'm the Boy; A Game that Ends with a Kiss; Real Romance; Little Miss Melody; I Put This Question to the Witness; When the Heart Is Young; I'm Feeling Quite a Wreck

A giant hit in London with a respectable run in New York, this twice-named musical had so many song interpolations that the Broadway score ended up being nearly half American born. Yet the musical's roots were strictly British. Arthur Wing Pinero's 1885 farce *The Magistrate* was still being revived on occasion, so Pinero, alive and still writing at the age of sixty-four, approved of a musical version if it was titled *The Boy*, so as to not be confused with the original play. Pinero's comedy centered on an inept judge, Mr. Posket, who married a widow who has lied to him about her age. Posket thinks his stepson Cis is only fourteen years old, but he is instead nineteen, causing the youth to act childish even as he drinks and flirts his way through life. When Mrs. Posket; Cis; and an old friend, Colonel Lukyn (who knows Mrs. Posket's true age), are caught in a police raid in an inn, they are brought before the judge and the truth gets out. It seems Mr. Posket was also at the inn and escaped capture but is just as guilty as his wife. Cis happily gets to act his age, marry the girl he loves, and move to Canada, while the Poskets forgive each other and make up. It was a solid farce that still holds the boards well; it was most recently revived by the National Theatre in London in 2013. Fred Thompson's libretto for *The Boy* sticks so closely to Pinero's farce that

whole sections of dialogue and some favorite scenes were retained in the musical version. For some reason, Thompson changed all the names. The magistrate was now Mr. Meebles, the widow's son was named Hughie, Colonel Bagot was the old acquaintance, and the supporting cast also sported new names. While the songs did not always integrate smoothly with the story, the score did not slow down the action, and *The Boy* was a fast-paced musical farce that pleased audiences, the press, and even Pinero.

The score was filled with interpolations, but most of the songs in the London production were by Lionel Monckton, Howard Talbot (music), Adrian Ross, and Percy Greenbank (lyrics). The most popular number was the simple little ditty "I Want to Go Bye-Bye" that the world-weary judge sang after his night of chaos. The song caught on and was heard about town for several years. The frantic pace of *The Boy* did not allow for much in the line of quiet love songs, but there was a pleasing waltz titled "Little Miss Melody." The judge boasted about how "I Put This Question to the Witness" and lamented his night on the town with "When the Heart Is Young." Mrs. Meebles and her sister Diana sang of the power of makeup with "I'm Feeling Quite a Wreck" and the flapper Joy (Billie Carleton) stopped the show with her rambunctious "A Game That Ends with a Kiss." During the long run, songs were dropped and others added, most memorably Jerome Kern's sprightly "Have a Heart," which was introduced on Broadway earlier that year. When *The Boy* arrived on Broadway in 1919 as *Good Morning, Judge*, the score was altered considerably. Two songs by the young composer George Gershwin were added: the jaunty "There's More to a Kiss Than XXX" (lyric by Irving Caesar) and the gushing "I Am/Was So Young and You Are/Were So Beautiful" (lyric by Caesar and Alfred Bryan). They didn't bring Gershwin much attention, but that summer his song "Swanee" (lyric by Caesar) was recorded by Al Jolson and Gershwin became famous.

	1917 London cast	1919 New York cast
Hughie Cavanagh	Donald Calthrop	Charles King
Millicent Meebles	Maisie Gay	Margaret Dale
Horatio Meebles	W. H. Berry	George Hassell
Diana Fairlie	Nellie Taylor	Grace Daniels
Katie Muirhead	Heather Thatcher	Betty Pierce
Joy Chatterton	Billie Carleton	Mollie King
Albany Pope	Peter Gawthorne	Harold Crane
Mr. Burridge	W. H. Rawlins	Shep Camp
Colonel Bagot	C. M. Lowne	Edward Martindel

*The Boy* was ideal entertainment for war-weary Londoners in 1917 and a favorite with troops passing through the city. The Alfred Butt production also boasted some of the British theatre's favorite comics, in particular Donald Calthrop as the two-faced Hughie and W. H. Berry as the buffoonish judge. The musical ran nearly two years in the West End and did very well on tour as well. The Shuberts presented the 1919 Broadway version which they retitled *Good Morning, Judge*.

This was probably done to avoid confusion with the hit musical *Oh Boy!* that was dominating Broadway in 1917. Versatile leading man Charles King played Hughie, and comedy favorite George Hassell was Judge Meebles. The script remained thoroughly British and the farce elements all in place, but the times were different. With the war ending, audiences were looking for something new. *Good Morning, Judge* was far from current, but it was still very funny and tuneful and managed a profitable run of four months. It was even more profitable on the road. Under either title, the musical has pretty much disappeared, while Pinero's *The Magistrate* pops up once in a while.

**GYPSY BLONDE.** See *The Bohemian Girl*

# H

## ***H.M.S. PINAFORE; OR, THE LASS THAT LOVED A SAILOR***

(1878/1879)

A comic operetta by W. S. Gilbert

*Score:* Arthur Sullivan (music), W. S. Gilbert (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 25 May 1878; Opéra Comique; 571 performances

*Original New York production:* 15 January 1879; Standard Theatre; 175 performances

*Notable songs:* We Sail the Ocean Blue; When I Was a Lad I Served a Term; Sorry Her Lot Who Loves Too Well; I Am the Monarch of the Sea; Never Mind the Why or Wherefore; I Am the Captain of the Pinafore; I'm Called Little Buttercup; Fair Moon, of Thee I Sing; A British Tar Is a Soaring Soul; Things Are Seldom What They Seem; The Hours Creep on Apace; A Maiden Fair to See; Refrain, Audacious Tar; Farewell, My Own.

It is impossible to accurately tabulate such things, but either *H.M.S. Pinafore* or *The Mikado* is the English-language musical that has been seen by more people than any other. Both have been popular for nearly 150 years, so the number of spectators in question is a daunting figure indeed. *H.M.S. Pinafore* was Gilbert and Sullivan's first significant success together. More than significant, the comic operetta became a craze, if you will, like no musical entertainment before it. England, the United States, Canada, Australia, and even several non-English-speaking nations were swept up in the *Pinafore* mania, which included not only productions (including all-children and "all-Negro" presentations) and sheet music but merchandise and product endorsements that would make the Disney corporation blush. With its simple plot and unpretentious but tuneful songs, *H.M.S. Pinafore* became mass entertainment on an international scale. It was the fourth collaboration between Arthur Sullivan (music) and W. S. Gilbert (libretto and lyrics), but it set the pattern and solidified the satiric tone of the great operettas to come. The idea of a nautical piece came from Gilbert, who was much interested in the sea, some of his ancestors serving in the British navy as far back as Elizabethan times. Also, Gilbert had spoofed nautical types in his verses known as the *Bab Ballads*, and a handful of the characters in *H.M.S. Pinafore* are based on some of these cartoonish figures. Two of the characters in the operetta are based on real people. Sir Joseph Porter



The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company brought Gilbert and Sullivan comic operettas to Broadway on a regular basis up into the 1980s. This 1962 production of the company's *H.M.S. Pinafore* featured John Reed (left center) as the aristocratic Sir Joseph Porter and Thomas Round (right center) as the lowly tar Ralph Rackstraw. *Photofest*

is an obvious spoof of W. H. Smith, the heir to the bookshop empire, who was made First Lord of the Admiralty without any naval experience. Little Buttercup was inspired by a much-loved “bumboat” woman who not only sold supplies to sailors but was renowned for recruiting young lads for the Royal Navy. When Gilbert adapted them to the stage, his intention was not to attack any individual but to expose the system in which ability was less important than one’s connections. Thus, *H.M.S. Pinafore* is not a vicious satire but rather a merry commentary on British ways. Even the title is silly—a pinafore is a young girl’s apron-like garment. To name one of Her Majesty’s naval vessels after such a frivolous piece of clothing says it all.

The plot of the operetta is simplicity itself. Captain Corcoran of HMS *Pinafore* has arranged for his lovely daughter Josephine to marry the elderly Sir Joseph Porter, the First Lord of the Admiralty, but she loves the common seaman Ralph Rackstraw. When the lovers try to elope, they are foiled by the ugly sailor Dick Deadeye, and a happy ending is only achieved when the bumboat woman Little Buttercup reveals that Ralph is of highborn blood and the Captain of common ancestry. There are no subplots or secondary couples, and the two acts are concise and efficiently written. *H.M.S. Pinafore* is also very short and is often done with

a short curtain raiser, such as Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury* or Sullivan and Francis C. Burnand's *Cox and Box*. Yet the operetta is completely satisfying by itself, and one does not long for anything more. The characters are swiftly established, the complications come quickly, the foreshadowing is firmly in place, and the contrived happy ending is totally acceptable. More importantly, all the characters are fun. Captain Corcoran attempts to be stern, but it's just not in him. Sir Joseph is self-important yet has no illusions about his inabilities. Deadeye Dick is the comic villain who is easy to laugh at, practically proud of his ugliness because it gives him an excuse to behave badly. Little Buttercup is sly yet motherly, knowing more than she lets on and never reducing herself to crudity as she subtly pines for Captain Corcoran. Even the lovers Josephine and Ralph are full of spunk, spending as much time on stage arguing as they do wooing. The chorus of sailors and the bevy of Sir Joseph's "sisters and cousins and aunts" do more than echo the musical phrases of the principals. The British tars have a sly sense of humor, and the ladies have an adventurous spirit that makes them amusing and more than a little bit incongruous.

The score for *H.M.S. Pinafore* set a pattern for most of the subsequent Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. The evening starts with a series of "I am" songs. The sailors proudly boast "We Sail the Ocean Blue" in the opening chorale. The bumboat woman explains what she does and why "I'm Called Little Buttercup," a gentle waltz that contrasts nicely with the men's preceding number. Corcoran tries to assert his authority with the march-like "I Am the Captain of the Pinafore" but doesn't convince. Sir Joseph proclaims "I Am the Monarch of the Sea," but keeps getting interrupted by Cousin Hebe and other sisters and cousins and aunts. Sir Joseph's "When I Was a Lad I Served a Term" is the first in a line of many brilliant Gilbert and Sullivan comic narratives, this one explaining how he rose to the top of naval command without knowing a thing about seafaring. The lovers, Ralph and Josephine, each pine over the other in song; she sings "The Hours Creep on Apace" and he dotes on "A Maiden Fair to See." Yet in their duet "Refrain, Audacious Tar," Josephine tries to maintain her social position, which is far above his. The two are more in harmony in the bittersweet duet "Farewell, My Own." Most Gilbert and Sullivan operettas have a sparkling trio in the second act. In this case it is the zesty "Never Mind the Why or Wherefore" for Sir Joseph, Captain Corcoran, and his daughter. Other highlights in the score include the devious duet "The Merry Maiden and the Tar" in which Dick Deadeye informs Corcoran of the planned elopement, Josephine's torchy "Sorry Her Lot," Corcoran's solo "Fair Moon, to Thee I Sing," and a quixotic duet between Buttercup and Corcoran titled "Things Are Seldom What They Seem," which foreshadows the bumboat woman's secret. The chorus numbers, highly important in these comic operettas, are first rate in *H.M.S. Pinafore*. The anthem-like "A British Tar Is a Soaring Soul," "Carefully on Tiptoe Stealing," and the finale "Oh Joy, Oh Rapture Unforeseen!" are the standouts. Gilbert's lyrics throughout are delectable and Sullivan's mastery of melody, harmony, and sheer ingenuity make this one of the finest scores in the British musical theatre.

Having found some success with their previous *The Sorcerer* (1877), Gilbert and Sullivan decided to write their next operetta without a contract with any producer or company, although it was clear Richard D'Oyly Carte and his Comedy Opera



	<i>1878 London cast</i>	<i>1879 New York cast</i>
Sir Joseph Porter	George Grossmith	Thomas Whiffen
Captain Corcoran	Rutland Barrington	Eugene Clarke
Josephine	Emma Howson	Eva Mills
Ralph Rackstraw	George Power	Henri Laurent
Little Buttercup	Harriett Everard	Blanche Galton
Deadeye Dick	Richard Temple	David Davidge
Cousin Hebe	Jessie Bond	Verona Jarbeau

Company were the ideal people for *H.M.S. Pinafore*. The two artists wanted to maintain control of their work, particularly the casting, and only after the libretto and music were completed did they work out a contract with Carte. The actual composing was difficult because Sullivan was in much pain, suffering from a kidney stone. Once rehearsals began, Gilbert insisted on absolute accuracy regarding the nautical details of the set and costumes. *H.M.S. Pinafore* did not come together until the last few days, Sullivan writing the overture barely in time for the musical director to orchestrate it by opening night. As was often the case, Gilbert directed the production and Sullivan conducted the orchestra in rehearsals and on opening night. The reaction of the audience and the critics when the operetta opened in May 1878 was overwhelming. Carte, Gilbert, and Sullivan clearly had a hit on their hands. But after a rush at the box office, ticket sales decreased, most likely because of a summer heat wave that affected all of the theatres in London. To drum up business, Sullivan put together a concert version of the music and performed it at the Crystal Palace and at Covent Garden, both engagements generating a great deal of interest and prompting the sale of over ten thousand copies of the sheet music. With September came the cooler weather and *H.M.S. Pinafore* was again a sell-out and remained at Carte's theatre for twenty months.

With such success came a problem that would plague Carte, Gilbert, and Sullivan for years: pirated productions of their operettas. Unauthorized productions of *H.M.S. Pinafore* were soon playing in London, Boston, Baltimore, and elsewhere. In fact, the first production in New York in 1879 was not authorized by Carte or the authors and it managed a successful run of five months. Soon there were five different versions of the operetta in New York, and it is estimated over one hundred unauthorized productions were playing across America. With no international copyright laws in existence, Carte and his authors were losing thousands of dollars in royalties each week. Worse, many of these were poorly staged and weakly sung rip-offs using the published score and libretto. In 1879 Carte brought his production of *H.M.S. Pinafore* to Broadway to show the public what the original London production looked and sounded like. The critics commended it heartily but the public, with so many versions to choose from, didn't care, and the production folded in three weeks. The piracy continued internationally with *H.M.S. Pinafore* productions not only in Australia, Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand, but also in France, Hungary, Germany, India, Cuba, China, and places where no production records exist. The operetta was the first international musical sensation.

Over the years, *H.M.S. Pinafore* has never gone out of favor as some Gilbert and Sullivan works have. As previously mentioned, it vies with *The Mikado* as the most produced musical of all time. It has been presented in all kinds of venues over the decades and, while *H.M.S. Pinafore* is most frequently seen in Great Britain, the number of American productions is impressive. On Broadway alone, the operetta has been seen in fifty-eight different productions. This does not include dozens of productions Off-Broadway by theatre companies such as the Light Opera of Manhattan and the Gilbert and Sullivan Players. But the number of productions does not address the important point. *H.M.S. Pinafore* not only established Gilbert and Sullivan and the new kind of English comic operetta, it influenced musical theatre on two continents. That is its significant legacy.

### HALF A SIXPENCE

(1963/1965)

A musical comedy by Beverly Cross, based on H. G. Wells's novel *Kipps*

Score: David Heneker (music and lyrics)

Original London production: 21 March 1963; Cambridge Theatre; 677 performances

Original New York production: 25 April 1965; Broadhurst Theatre; 512 performances

Notable songs: Half a Sixpence; Money to Burn; If the Rain's Got to Fall; She's Too Far above Me; Flash Bang Wallop!; I Know What I Am; The Party's on the House; The Old Military Canal; The One That Got Away; I'm Talking to You!; I'll Build a Palace for My Girl/I Only Want a Little House

An unusual case in the 1960s in which the star came first and then a musical was written to showcase him, *Half a Sixpence* was, after *Oliver!* (1960), the decade's most successful British import on Broadway. The star was the boyish twenty-six-year-old pop-rock idol Tommy Steele, whose records climbed to the top of the British charts in the late 1950s. Oddly, the vehicle chosen for this very contemporary singer-musician was very old fashioned: a musical version of H. G. Wells's 1905 novel *Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul*. Just as surprising, the score by David Heneker was similarly old-fashioned with music hall tunes, catchy sing-alongs, sentimental ballads, and playful novelty songs. *Kipps* had already been adapted for the stage, movies, and television, so the simple plot was more than a little familiar. Young Arthur Kipps, a struggling draper's apprentice in Folkstone, loves Anne, the sister of one of his coworkers. The two pledge eternal love and, unable to afford an engagement ring, break a sixpence coin in two as a token for each of them to treasure. An article in the local newspaper is brought to Kipps by the cheerful but impoverished actor-playwright Harry Chitterlow. It turns out Kipps has inherited the princely sum of twelve-hundred pounds a year. He quits his job and is soon embraced by the upper crust, in particular the elegant Helen Walsingham. Soon Kipps has neglected Ann for Helen and allows Helen's sinister brother to invest his money for him. Just as Kipps realizes that he doesn't quite fit in with the aristocracy, he learns that his fortune has been lost in bad investments. Ann



The hyperactive Tommy Steele (center) played the jubilant draper's assistant-turned-millionaire Arthur Kipps both in London and in New York. Here he is flying high with the chorus in the 1965 Broadway production, which was choreographed by Onna White. *Photofest*

forgives Kipps and takes him back, and they live humbly and happily, running a small bookshop bought with an investment in one of Chitterlow's plays, which became a hit.

Beverley Cross's adaptation of Wells's novel is tighter and less an episodic chronicle than the novel. But it often sounds and works like a 1905 story, a rags-to-riches-to-comeuppance tale that was as enjoyable as it was predictable. So, one asks the question: what is a pop star in the swinging London of the 1960s doing in such a nostalgic piece of musical antiquity? Theatre historian Ben Francis notes one of the reasons *Half a Sixpence* was so appealing to British audiences. "With post-war Britain experiencing a prosperous economy and providing increased educational opportunities for the younger generation, there were many people in the audience who were caught between staying in their working-class environment and choosing a more affluent lifestyle. Getting on in the world, with its emphasis on ambition and competitiveness, meant leaving behind a proletarian tradition and its communal values. . . . [*Half a Sixpence*] reflects the audience's dilemma: the main character, like the audience, wanted the best of both worlds, to be well-off without being la-di-da." Add to that a score that seemed like an evening of old favorites and the musical's wide appeal comes into focus. Heneker's songs pastiche a variety of musical styles, all very British and all tuneful. Since the centerpiece of *Half of Sixpence* was Steele, Heneker gave him the lion's share of the songs. Of the fifteen musical numbers in *Half a Sixpence*, Kipps sings twelve of them, dancing in many of them, and giving a vigorous performance on the banjo in one. Happily, Steele was up to the task, and the pop star became a West End star.

Although *Half a Sixpence* had no single hit that climbed the charts, many of the songs caught on with the public and the score itself became a hit, the original cast album selling very well. The catchy title song is a romantic duet for Kipps and Ann that is more jaunty than solemn. The two also have fun with a double song, he singing "I'll Build a Palace for My Girl" and she countering with "I Only Want a Little House." Kipps is more serious when he sings "She's Too Far above Me" about the socially prominent Helen, and he turns giddy with "If the Rain's Got to Fall" in which Kipps asks bystanders (and the audience) to join him in wishing wet weather on any day but Sunday, "coz that's when I'm meeting my girl." Ann, on the other hand, has more backbone throughout the musical, defiantly proclaiming "I Know What I Am." *Half a Sixpence* is filled with rowdy numbers, starting with the drapers' satiric "All in the Cause of Economy," in which they make fun of their boss. They join Kipps and his banjo for the rousing "Money to Burn," and the whole company contributes to the contagious march "The Old Military Canal" and the zesty "The Party's on the House." But the most memorable showstopper in the musical is the slaphappy novelty number "Flash Bang Wallop!" The music hall number is sung as the photographer tries to capture the couple on film on their wedding day, but Kipps keeps imagining historic personages caught in a photo to "stick it in the family album." Heneker's score for *Half a Sixpence* could have been written in 1937, the year *Me and My Girl*, a musical with a similar plot, opened. That is not a criticism but a tribute to his talent for capturing the past without spoofing it.

	1963 London cast	1965 New York cast
Arthur Kipps	Tommy Steele	Tommy Steele
Ann Pornick	Marti Webb	Polly James
Harry Chitterlow	James Grout	James Grout
Helen Walsingham	Anna Barry	Carrie Nye
Mrs. Walsingham	Jessica James	Ann Shoemaker
Pearce	Anthony Valentine	Grover Dale
Sid Pornick	John Bull	Will Mackenzie
Buggins	Colin Farrell	Norman Allen
Young Walsingham	Ian White	John Cleese

Producer Harold Fielding's London production of *Half of Sixpence* opened in 1963 and was praised by the press, the public, and even the H. G. Wells estate. While the attraction was Steele, there were plaudits for all aspects of the production, especially the songs. The musical ran a merry twenty-one months and might have continued on but Steele and David Grout (Chitterlow) left the cast to take a breather before reprising their performances on Broadway. Without Steele, box office dropped, but *Half a Sixpence* found success in Australia and other dominions where a local stage favorite was cast as Kipps.

Fielding coproduced the 1965 New York production, but the transfer was not a smooth one. The American staff wanted changes in the book and the score and there were many "artistic differences" (and staff replacements) before *Half a*

*Sixpence* opened pretty much in the same form as it had in London. The Broadway critics were mixed in their appraisal of the musical, not having grown up with the British music hall tradition. Most reviews applauded Steele, while some found him more energetic than captivating. Audiences were not so particular, and *Half a Sixpence* ran a very profitable fifteen months. Because the musical is so obviously a star vehicle, regional and amateur productions, as well as professional revivals, are infrequent. Not so in Great Britain, where *Half a Sixpence* has returned to various stages over the years, including a hit revival in the West End in 2016 that made both script and score alterations. A 1967 film version, starring Steele, was an overproduced, overlong, over-budget movie that found little favor with the critics. It did not earn back its \$6 million cost but did better business in Britain than in the States.

## HAVANA

(1908/1909)

A musical comedy by George Grossmith Jr. and Graham Hill

*Score:* Leslie Stuart (music), Adrian Ross, George Arthurs (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 25 April 1908; Gaiety Theatre; 221 performances

*Original New York production:* 11 February 1909; Casino Theatre; 236 performances

*Notable songs:* Little Miquette; Hello, People!; How Did the Bird Know That?; I'm a Cuban Girl; Zara; It's a Bomb!; My Little Deutscher Girl; Cupid's Telephone; (Way Down in) Pensacola; The Girl with the Yellow Roses; Would You Like to Motor with Mater?; And Then That Cigar Went Out; Filibuster Brown

An Edwardian musical that fared slightly better in New York than in London, *Havana* underwent a sea change but found success in both the West End and on Broadway. For the previous ten years, producer George Edwardes had been presenting a series of featherlight musical comedies at the Gaiety Theatre with scores usually by Ivan Caryll and Lionel Monckton and often starring Gertie Millar (Mrs. Monckton). Thinking perhaps he (and his audiences?) wanted something new, he commissioned George Grossmith Jr. and Graham Hill to come up with a more solid plot set in Cuba and hired composer Leslie Stuart and lyricists Adrian Ross and George Arthurs. This was far from new blood (Stuart had scored the 1899 sensation *Florodora*) but Edwardes hoped a different artistic staff might provide some fresh ideas. He also switched stars, featuring the popular soprano Evie Greene as the central character, a Cuban beauty named Consuelo. She is engaged to wed Don Adolfo, the son of the mayor of Havana, who also owns the local cigar factory, but her heart is set on the English yachtsman Jackson Villiers. When his steam yacht *Jaunty Jane* is suspected of pirating and Jackson accused of gunrunning, the romance becomes riddled with difficulties. The crew of the *Jaunty Jane* kidnaps Don Adolfo, adding to the lovers' complications until Don Adolfo falls in love with the pretty local girl Pepita. In the comic subplot, the sailor Nix had married a Havana native seven years earlier and then abandoned her. A fearsome

woman named Isabelita now comes forward and claims Nix as her own, much to the crusty tar's distress. By the final curtain, it is learned that it was not Isabelita he wed but the more attractive and pleasing Anita. While the libretto for *Havana* could hardly be called a well-made play, it was better structured and slightly more substantial than Edwardes's previous Gaiety musicals.

Much of the success of *Havana* can be attributed to the strong cast and the fine score, rather than the book. The soprano Evie Greene was ideal as Consuelo and more than qualified to sing the challenging music Stuart wrote for her. The baritone Leonard Mackay was in fine voice as Jackson, and Gaiety stage favorite Lawrence Grossmith did not disappoint as Don Adolfo. Yet it was the comic actors who often stole the show: Alfred Lester's slapstick Nix, W. H. Berry as the sly ship's boy Reginald, and Gladys Homfreye as the gorgon-like Isabelita. Stuart's music ranged from Consuelo's difficult air "I Am a Cuban Girl" and the waltzing "Waiting for Me" to Reginald's pirate ditty "Filibuster Brown" and his silly duet "How Did the Bird Know That?" with Anita. A comic quartet titled "It's a Bomb!" warned of picking up stray objects, and a line of chorines sang the cheery "Cupid's Telephone." Jackson's big solo was "And Then That Cigar Went Out," a ballad more engaging musically than lyrically. There were several concerted numbers that offered clever commentary on the action, but the undoubted hit of the score was the simple narrative ballad "Little Miquette," which Consuelo sang about a French girl who refused to marry her cousin. Despite its context in *Havana*, the song became very popular outside of the theatre and was a favorite parlor song for years. One aspect of Stuart's score that did not seem to bother either theatregoers or critics at the time was its scarcity of Latin-flavored music. Like his songs for *Florodora*, Stuart didn't let the setting of his musicals get in the way of his musical ideas.

	<i>1908 London cast</i>	<i>1909 New York cast</i>
Consuelo	Evie Greene	Edith Decker
Reginald Brown	W. H. Berry	Percy Ames
Jackson Villiers	Leonard Mackay	Joseph Phillips
Don Adolfo	Lawrence Grossmith	Ernest Lambart
Pepita	Mabel Russell	Daisy Green
Bombito del Campo	Arthur Hatherton	Harold Vizard
Antonio	Barry Lupino	
Nix	Alfred Lester	James T. Powers
Isabelita	Gladys Homfreye	Eva Davenport
Anita	Jean Aylwin	Clara Palmer
Tita	Olive May	Mabel Weeks
Lolita	Adelina Balfe	Viola Kellogg
Hon. Frank Charteris	Robert Hale	
Diego de la Concha	Edward O'Neill	William Pruette
Senora Donna Junenez		Viola Kellogg
Roderigo		Bertram Grassby
Frank Van Dusen		William Phillips

If playgoers missed the old gang at the Gaiety Theatre, they didn't show it at the box office. *Havana* received a round of commendatory reviews, and the public filled the house for seven and a half months. Two touring companies took to the road and soon there were productions in Australia and South Africa.

Edwardes sold the Broadway rights to the Shubert Brothers assuming that they liked *Havana* as it was. The American comic James T. Powers was hired to play the sailor Nix, and he ended up rewriting the libretto, turning the Nix subplot into the major story and the Consuelo–Jackson–Don Adolfo triangle into the secondary story. Characters were added and dropped, but much of the two plots remained the same. Powers was a beloved and popular comedian, and American audiences did not object to a musical in which he was the central focus. Much to Stuart's displeasure, the Shuberts added songs to the score, most memorably the German pastiche "My Little Deutscher Girl" sung by Nix and the chorus. Yet the two songs that Americans liked the most and bought the most sheet music of were "Hello People!" and "How Did the Bird Know That?" *Havana* on Broadway ran nine months in two engagements. Edith Decker was the heroine, and she was given able support by Joseph Phillips (Jackson) and Ernest Lambart (Don Adolfo), but once again the comics were the special feature, particularly Powers's dandy Nix, Percy Ames's sportive Reginald and Eva Davenport's ghastly Isabelita. Because only a handful of Edwardes's earlier, lighter Gaiety musicals had crossed the Atlantic, Broadway playgoers did not compare *Havana* to the series of musicals that preceded it in London. Instead, they enjoyed the musical as a top-flight piece of entertainment that, although very British, featured an American comedy star.

# I

## ***IN TOWN***

(1892/1897)

A musical farce by James Leader [James T. Tanner]

*Score:* F. Osmond Carr (music), Adrian Ross (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 15 October 1892; Prince of Wales Theatre; 292 performances

*Original New York production:* 6 September 1897; Knickerbocker Theatre; 40 performances

*Notable songs:* Dreamless Rest; Drinks of the Day; The Man about Town; Friar Larry; My Propensities Are All the Other Way; The House of Lords; Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me a Bow-Wow; A Heart That Is Still the Same; I Do Not Mind; The Maid with a Wink in Her Eye; Dear Mama (The Golden Mean); Tarradiddle

A contemporary musical comedy that helped establish the “Gaiety style” offered by producer George Edwardes at the turn of the twentieth century, the nearly plotless yet highly entertaining *In Town* was a hit in London but failed to find an audience on Broadway. Sometimes inaccurately labeled the first modern British musical, *In Town* may not hold that distinction, but it certainly was important in the development away from period-piece operettas toward more coherent musical comedies. Producer Edwardes sensed that audiences were getting weary of musical parodies or burlesques set in the past and/or in foreign lands so that exotic scenery and costumes could bolster weak scripts. He insisted that *In Town* be set in contemporary London, that it look and sound like the day, and that it not be a spoof of anything. He hired former actor/director James T. Tanner who, using the name James Leader, wrote a libretto that fulfilled these requirements, including Edwardes’s instructions that the piece feature comic Arthur Roberts and soprano Florence St. John, as well as the expected bevy of pretty chorus girls. Edwardes asked composer F. Osmond Carr and lyricist Adrian Ross to come up with a score that was filled with variety and allowed for specialty numbers for selected performers. The idea for *In Town* was not to make history but to offer something different.

Leader’s libretto for *In Town*, his first West End effort, centers on the happy-go-lucky scamp Captain Arthur Coddington, who is always short of funds but



nevertheless a lively participant in London's nightlife. The naive young Lord Clanside, ever under the thumb of his domineering mother, the Duchess of Duffshire, is taken out by Coddington for a night on the town and even gets him backstage of the Ambiguity Theatre to meet all the pretty chorines. The star of the Ambiguity show is Kitty Heatherton who, under her real name, once worked as a governess for the Duchess's daughter Gwendoline until the Duke became a little too interested in the attractive teacher. On the flimsiest of pretexts, all the characters show up at the Ambiguity Theatre, some in disguise, others mistaken for the wrong person, and several performing in the show which included (surprisingly, considering Edwardes's original instructions) a parody of *Romeo and Juliet*. By the finale, Coddington and Kitty end up in each other's arms. The script was more a framework than a solid libretto but Leader/Tanner did his job well, providing the performers with plenty of opportunities to demonstrate their particular talents. Yet audiences were not so bedazzled by the characters as the clothes they wore. Instead of theatrical costumes, the specific characters and even the chorus members wore the latest fashions from the top London couturiers. Both male and female playgoers not only craved such modern wear but those of substantial means were able to seek out and buy them. This modeling of alluring fashion became a signature item of Edwardes's other Gaiety musicals.

Just as the clothes were made to show off the performer, the songwriters provided tailor-made songs for the stars and specialty players. Arthur Roberts, as Coddington, proudly sang of his standing as "The Man about Town," described the improving qualities of alcohol in "Drinks of the Day," and was a hilarious Scottish Friar Lawrence singing "Friar Larry" in the Shakespeare spoof. Florence St. John, as Kitty, used her fine soprano voice in a handful of ballads, most memorably the lilting "Dreamless Rest." The oversexed Duke sang "My Propensities Are All the Other Way" about his yen for servant girls and offered his opinions on "The House of Lords." The Duchess and her daughter Gwendoline had a battling duet titled "Dear Mama (The Golden Mean)" that was only outdone in speed by a rapid patter trio "Tarradiddle." (This last included Lord Clanside, who was played as a "trouser role" by Phyllis Broughton, a tradition still hanging on at this date.) Some of the score consisted of songs not by Carr and Ross that were interpolated into the musical by performers. The most famous of these was the Victorian music hall favorite "Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me a Bow-Wow," which comic Roberts sang with some original lyrics of his own. During the run, Roberts embellished the number until it was a mini-musical of its own. Roberts, who had a drinking problem, was also prone to ad lib considerably on stage. The cast was furious, but the audience cheered the comic and his "Bow-Wow" song every night.

The audience reception to *In Town* when it opened in 1892 was so overwhelming that it was surprising that the reviews ranged from mixed to negative. Evidently the newfangled modern musical had little appeal for the critics, who thought the plot so weak that *In Town* was little more than a musical revue. And while playgoers reveled in the shenanigans of comedian Roberts as Coddington, more than one member of the press took the actor to task for his shameful lack of discipline and breaking of character. Such notices seemed to have little or no effect, because *In Town* was a sellout from the start and ran eleven months. It might have continued on, but Roberts left to pursue another project. Yet, with various

	1892 London cast	1897 New York cast
Capt. Arthur Coddington	Arthur Roberts	W. Louis Bradfield
Lord Clanside	Phyllis Broughton	Florence Lloyd
Kitty Heatherton	Florence St. John	Minnie Hunt
Flo Fanshawe	Sylvia Grey	Rosie Boote
Duke of Duffshire	Eric Lewis	Lawrence Caird
Duchess of Duffshire	Maria Davis	Mrs. Edmund Phelps
Bloggins	Frederick Vaughan	E. G. Woodhouse
Lady Gwendoline	Belle Harcourt	Marie Studholme
Shrimp	Jenny Rogers	Claire Romaine
Rev. Samuel Hopkins	Ernest Bantock	Leedham Bantock
Benoli	Harry Grattan	Arthur Hope

comics playing Coddington, *In Town* did very well on tour with two companies crisscrossing Britain.

Despite such success, Edwardes hesitated in bringing *In Town* to Broadway. When he finally did in 1897, later Gaiety musicals had already crossed the Atlantic and *In Town* already seemed a bit primitive and ill-defined. W. Louis Bradfield, an English comic actor who was among those who had replaced Roberts as Coddington, led the New York cast. The show opened to tepid reviews, and this time the public did not disagree; the musical closed after five weeks. Although not stage-worthy today, *In Town* served a very important purpose in 1892 when it moved the British musical away from operetta and closer to musical comedy. The next year, Edwardes and his artists would build on *In Town* and come up with not only a bigger hit but a more resilient and substantial musical, *A Gaiety Girl*, signaling that the old-school operetta was definitely on its way out.

## ***IOLANTHE; OR, THE PEER AND THE PERI***

(1882)

A comic operetta by W. S. Gilbert

*Score:* Arthur Sullivan (music), W. S. Gilbert (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 25 November 1882; Savoy Theatre; 398 performances

*Original New York production:* 25 November 1882; Standard Theatre; 105 performances

*Notable songs:* When You're Lying Awake with a Dismal Headache (The Nightmare Song); Iolanthe! From Thy Dark Exile; Loudly Let the Trumpet Bray; When I Went to the Bar as a Very Young Man; Oh, Foolish Fay; The Law Is the True Embodiment; If You Go in You're to Win; Nay, Tempt Me Not; When Darkly Looms the Day; My Lord, a Suppliant at Your Feet I Kneel; When Britain Really Ruled the Waves; None Shall Part Us from Each Other; My Well Beloved Lord; Tripping Hither, Tripping Thither

*Iolanthe*, literally a fairy-tale operetta, was created in the very middle of the collaboration between Arthur Sullivan (music) and W. S. Gilbert (libretto and lyrics); it was the seventh of their fourteen operettas. It was also the first Gilbert and Sullivan musical to make its premiere at the Savoy Theatre, the London venue built by Richard D'Oyly Carte for the team's operettas. Even more unique, it was the first British musical to open in London and in New York on the same day. This was an effort to stop the pirated productions of Gilbert and Sullivan's works from opening before the authorized versions premiered. The basic idea for *Iolanthe* can easily be traced back to a Gilbert poem "The Fairy Curate," one of a series of *Bab Ballads* written years before. That satiric verse concerned the difficult marriage between a mortal and a fairy. Sullivan liked the premise and thought it could be expanded into a full-length libretto. Gilbert wrote several variations of the premise that did not please him, until he was inspired by the current situation in Parliament. British columnists, poets, essayists, and pundits were having a field day with the uproar over the House of Lords being stuffed with men who claimed membership by birth but were far from intelligent or even capable politicians. So Gilbert decided the mortals in his script would be the conservative House of Lords, which would be contrasted by the more liberal fairy world. This duality would best be illustrated by one character who was half mortal and half fairy, causing him to be both conservative and liberal, much to his frustration.

The plot for *Iolanthe* is perhaps Gilbert's most stinging look at the current government. The elderly Lord Chancellor wishes to marry his young ward Phyllis but fears it will not look proper given their age difference. In any case, Phyllis loves the shepherd Strephon, the half-mortal, half-fairy son of the fairy Iolanthe. Because she wed a mortal, Iolanthe was banished by the Fairy Queen years ago. Now that Strephon is grown up, the Fairy Queen takes pity and welcomes Iolanthe (who still looks young because she is immortal) back to fairyland. When Phyllis, who knows nothing of Strephon's strange history, sees her beloved Strephon embracing the attractive Iolanthe, she breaks off the engagement and offers herself to any of the peers of the House of Lords who have been courting her. By this time the Chancellor has endured many sleepless nights deciding what to do, and he announces that he will marry Phyllis. This angers the Fairy Queen, who uses her power to make Strephon a member of Parliament in the House of Commons with a special power to pass any law he wants. Strephon proposes a law that changes the rules so that all members of Parliament must pass an exam, not be chosen by bloodline. This new regulation, of course, causes chaos in the government, as the peers are afraid that men of common birth but high intellect will rule the nation. In order to stop the marriage of the Chancellor and Phyllis, Iolanthe reveals that she is the long-lost wife of the Chancellor and that Strephon is their son. So that the mortal Phyllis can marry the half-fairy Strephon, the Chancellor dictates a new rule that the two species can wed. It turns out that all the fairies have secretly married Lords of Parliament, so the Fairy Queen herself proposes marriage to the night guard Private John Willis, to whom she has taken a fancy.

While historians have seen actual people in the characters (the Fairy Queen is Queen Victoria, John Willis is her Scottish advisor and friend John Brown, the Lord Chancellor is Prime Minister William Gladstone, Strephon is the Tory leader Randolph Churchill, etc.), it is doubtful that Gilbert meant such personal attacks.

His satire is aimed at Britain's two-party system and the number of incompetent politicians who have risen to the top. It is pointed satire but not vicious. (Yet it should be pointed out that some conservative reviewers thought Gilbert went too far, and two songs were cut after opening night.) There are no villains in *Iolanthe*. The Lord Chancellor is more likable than the traditional old geezer lusting after a pretty young wife. He is a delightfully funny fellow and usually the audience's favorite. The lovers Strephon and Phyllis are more than pawns in the hands of fairies and politicians. Both have backbone, and he is particularly amusing with his half-mortal half-fairy dilemma. The Fairy Queen is not the typical aging battle-ax of a matron, but a witty observer of both the real world and the fairy world. Her wooing of Private Willis is not pathetic but rather amusing and touching. The title character is perhaps the least interesting person in the tale; one questions why the operetta is named after her. *Iolanthe* is a typical sentimental heroine often found in operetta; it's just surprising to find her in this one. Even the minor characters are farcical, such as the aristocratic rivals Tolloller and Mountarat as they debate over who should marry Phyllis, carrying politeness to hilarious extremes. Government is not the only target of Gilbert's satire. Wagnerian opera was quite the rage at the time, and the supernatural elements in *Iolanthe* are surely a parody of the fantasy elements in the Ring Cycle. The Fairy Queen can be seen as a spoof of Brunhilde with her majesty and power, but probably little else. *Iolanthe* is Gilbert in his most playful mode, and the operetta still retains its appeal long after the subjects of his satire have become part of distant history.

Sullivan's music offers quite a range in this operetta, moving from bombast (the Lords' overzealous entrance song "Loudly Let the Trumpet Bray") to the quietly poignant (*Iolanthe's* "My Lord, a Suppliant at Your Feet I Kneel"). Musicologists have pointed out a subtlety and a sad subtext in some of the music in *Iolanthe*. Sullivan began work on the operetta during the mourning period for the death of his mother, and elements of such a somber tone may not be a coincidence. On the other hand, some of Sullivan's music is downright funny, matching Gilbert's merry lyrics note for note. This is most evident in the Lord Chancellor's three comic gems. The music bounces giddily in "The Law Is the True Embodiment" in which the Chancellor expresses his frustrating dilemma regarding marrying Phyllis. Sullivan provides a delicate but silly minuet for the narrative number "When I Went to the Bar." In "The Nightmare Song," also known as "When You're Lying Awake," the music begins as a purposeful march but eventually explodes into chaos as Gilbert's lyric moves into a verbal frenzy. It is arguably the most difficult of the team's patter songs and one of the cleverest. Instead of just listing items, the nightmare moves ahead like a psychotic journey that builds to a hilarious climax. Other highlights in the *Iolanthe* score include the Queen's passionate ditty "O Foolish Fay"; Strephon and Phyllis's touching duet "None Shall Part Us"; the fairies' dainty theme song "Tripping Hither, Tripping Thither"; the jolly trio "If You Go in You're to Win"; and the patriotic "When Britain Ruled the Waves." One might best describe the *Iolanthe* score as particularly British. There are no foreign or ethnic influences in the songs and even the mystical music for the fairies, which is at times an homage to Wagner and Mendelssohn, seems solidly Anglo-Saxon. Perhaps that is why the operetta has always been more popular in Great Britain than the United States, though it is still widely produced in America.

	<i>1882 London cast</i>	<i>1882 New York cast</i>
Fairy Queen	Alice Barnett	Augusta Roche
Strephon	Richard Temple	William T. Carleton
Phyllis	Leonora Braham	Sallie Reber
Lord Chancellor	George Grossmith	J. H. Ryley
Iolanthe	Jessie Bond	Marie Jansen
Private Willis	Charles Manners	Lithgow James
Tolloller	Durward Lely	Llewellyn Cadwalader
Mountarat	Rutland Barrington	Arthur Wilkinson

Opening night of *Iolanthe* on 25 November 1882 was quite an occasion in both London and New York. The new Savoy Theatre in London had already housed a return of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience*, but *Iolanthe* was the first premiere at the new playhouse, the first in Britain to be lit with electricity. Carte assembled a superior cast, led by George Grossmith as the Lord Chancellor, and offered stunning costumes and intricate scenery depicting first an Arcadian landscape and then the Palace Yard at Westminster with the Parliament building in the background. Both the audience and the critics (minus the few critics who thought some of Gilbert's satire in poor taste) extolled every aspect of the production and *Iolanthe* ran fourteen months, the fourth Gilbert and Sullivan hit in a row.

As the final curtain came down at the Savoy on opening night, cables were sent to New York where, because of the time difference, the audience was gathering for the Broadway premiere of *Iolanthe* at the Standard Theatre. Carte also produced the New York version and saw to it that it matched the London one in quality. J. H. Ryley, an American comic actor who had shone in the Broadway versions of *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Patience*, played the Lord Chancellor, and again the sets and costumes were first-rate. The New York reviewers saw no problem with Gilbert's satire and, even though the operetta spoofed British government, American audiences welcomed the lyrical piece with enthusiasm. *Iolanthe* ran for a shorter time on Broadway than in London, only 105 performances in two different engagements, but the operetta was a favorite on tour and soon established itself as a Gilbert and Sullivan perennial favorite. In addition to tours across Great Britain, *Iolanthe* found success in all the English-speaking nations and returned to London innumerable times. The operetta has returned to Broadway twenty-five times over the decades, including a 1926 revival that ran a surprising 255 performances. With the indefinite number of Off-Broadway, regional, festival, summer stock, and school productions, *Iolanthe* is in the ranks of the most produced Gilbert and Sullivan works.

# J

## ***JEROME KERN GOES TO HOLLYWOOD***

(1985/1986)

A musical revue by Dick Vosburgh and David Kernan

*Score:* Jerome Kern (music), Oscar Hammerstein, Dorothy Fields, Otto Harbach, Ira Gershwin, Johnny Mercer, and others (lyrics)

*Original London production as Jerome Goes to Hollywood:* 28 May 1985; Donmar Warehouse Theatre; c. 185 performances

*Original New York production:* 23 January 1986; Ritz Theatre; 13 performances

*Notable songs:* Long Ago and Far Away; The Folks Who Live on the Hill; I'm Old Fashioned; The Way You Look Tonight; I Won't Dance; Remind Me; All the Things You Are; They Didn't Believe Me; I've Told Every Little Star; Bill; Till the Clouds Roll By; Look for the Silver Lining; Ol' Man River; Bojangles of Harlem; Smoke Gets in Your Eyes; The Song Is You

What was an intimate musical revue in a small London theatre looked like a formal recital in a mid-sized Broadway house. Despite the talented performers and superlative songs, few critics could recommend the program, and it closed inside of two weeks. The idea of the 1985 revue was to celebrate the centenary of American composer Kern's birth. Actor-singer David Kernan devised and compiled the songs and Dick Vosburgh wrote the informative and sometimes witty narration. It opened with the rather too-familiar title *Jerome Goes to Hollywood* at the Donmar Warehouse in London, coproduced by Kernan and Peter Wilson. During his long career (1903 to 1944), Kern wrote hundreds of songs, so the title suggested that this revue would concentrate on those he wrote for the movies. Yet of the forty musical numbers presented, only sixteen were written for films. The others came from the theatre and were later heard in screen versions of the musicals or interpolated into other movies. Despite the misleading title (which was changed to *Jerome Kern Goes to Hollywood* during the run and for the cast recording), the revue was expertly done, and the London press was enthusiastic about the little production. Kernan was the only male singer, and he was joined by three splendid actress-singers: Liz Robertson, Elaine Delmar, and Elisabeth Welch. The last, a veteran African American performer from New Jersey who spent most of her seven-decade career in Britain, was the standout of the cast, particularly when she sang such torch songs

as “Why Was I Born?” and “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes.” The quartet did several numbers as ensemble pieces, but each of the four had several opportunities to shine individually. *Jerome Kern Goes to Hollywood* caught on with the public and ran in London for nearly six months.

<i>1985 London cast</i>	<i>1986 New York cast</i>
David Kernan	Scott Holmes
Elizabeth Welch	Elizabeth Welch
Liz Robertson	Liz Robertson
Elaine Delmar	Elaine Delmar

The New York production was coproduced by Broadway producer Arthur Cantor with arrangement with Wilson and Kernan, who again directed the revue but did not appear in it. The sole male cast member was now Scott Holmes, but little else was altered. In the larger theatre and presented on Broadway with no stars, the revue seemed puny and out of place. It really belonged in an intimate Off-Broadway venue. The critics were not impressed, and audiences were not interested. *Jerome Kern Goes to Hollywood* has since found a home in regional and summer stock theatres. While the revue does not have a unifying structure or arc to hold it together, it is filled with glorious music and deserves to be performed more frequently than it is.

## ***JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR***

(1971 / 1972)

A sung-through “rock opera” based on the four gospels of the New Testament

*Score:* Andrew Lloyd Webber (music), Tim Rice (lyrics)

*Original New York production:* 12 October 1971; Mark Hellinger Theatre; 711 performances

*Original London production:* 9 August 1972; Palace Theatre; 3,358 performances

*Notable songs:* I Don’t Know How to Love Him; Superstar; Heaven on Their Minds; Everything’s Alright; What’s the Buzz? / Strange Thing Mystifying; Hosanna; King Herod’s Song; The Last Supper; Poor Jerusalem; Pilate’s Dream; Damned for All Time/Blood Money; This Jesus Must Die; Could We Start Again, Please; Gethsemane (I Only Wanted to Say); Peter’s Denial; Judas’ Death

The journey of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, the first hit musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber (music) and Tim Rice (lyrics), from a musical concept to a Broadway and West End hit, was a long and unusual one. But today it is an established musical favorite produced around the world by all kinds of theatre groups and what was once considered daring and edgy is now fully accepted as a musical standard. After Lloyd Webber and Rice had experimented with turning the Old Testament



Jeff Fenholt (center) was the first of many actors to play Jesus in the stage version of the best-selling Andrew Lloyd Webber–Tim Rice rock opera. Fenholt is shown here in the original 1971 Broadway production directed with panache by Tom O’Horgan. *Photofest*

story of Joseph into the pop oratorio *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* in 1968, they turned to the New Testament and envisioned a full-length rock opera about the last days of Jesus Christ. They wrote a rock song titled “Superstar” in 1969 in which Judas asks Jesus a series of questions about his death, his divinity, and if he forgives Judas for betraying him. The song was sung by Murray Head and backed by a full orchestra and the Trinidad Singers, giving it a unique sound for a rock single. “Superstar” immediately climbed the charts in Britain, America, and other countries. Yet despite its popularity, Lloyd Webber and Rice could not get the backing to write a full stage score and present the “rock opera” in a theatre. Instead MCA Records agreed to record the full score as a double album titled *Jesus Christ Superstar*, which was released in 1970. It also was very popular, the album and the song “I Don’t Know How to Love Him” climbing the charts.

Rice’s libretto (all sung) focuses on the human characteristics and frailties of Jesus and Judas. The latter is seen as a devout follower of Jesus, but he begins to have doubts about the direction of the Master’s teachings and the future of Christianity. Mary Magdalene is quietly in love with Jesus and tries to defend him against others in the quarrels that develop among the disciples. The events from the New Testament that are dramatized include Jesus’s triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, Judas’s betraying Jesus to the Pharisees, the Last Supper, the arrest of Jesus, Peter’s denial, the trials before Pontius Pilate and King Herod, the crucifixion, and Judas’s suicide. Although there are anachronisms in the lyrics, and there is a modern tone throughout the libretto, *Jesus Christ Superstar* is a serious and even reverent version of the



gospel events, as opposed to the playful tone they took with the Old Testament in their previous work *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. But because the characters are filled with doubts, faults, tempers, weaknesses, and other human traits, the treatment was upsetting to some. It was alright for mere mortals to have such qualities but for Jesus Christ to display them was irreligious for many. Also, the treatment of the Jewish authorities was severe, leading some to find a thread of anti-Semitism in the piece. Perhaps more disturbing, the musical ends with the death of Jesus and not his resurrection, supporting Judas's doubts about his Master's divinity. Ironically, few of these objections have remained over the years, and today very little controversy surrounds productions of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Although *Jesus Christ Superstar* is labeled a rock opera, only portions of the score are actually in the rock and roll style. Theatre historian Kurt Gänzl describes the score best as "part pop, part rock, and withal, based in many of its parts on classical tenets and styles." The overture, for example, is a fully orchestrated piece that recalls both a science fiction movie score and an early form of disco. "Superstar" does indeed rock but "I Don't Know How to Love Him," Mary Magdalene's torch song, is a pop ballad that borders on a country-western mode. The joyous chant "Hosanna" would not be out of place in any religious pageant if it were not for the sour commentary. The mocking "King Herod's Song" is in an old-time music hall style, "Everything's Alright" is a folk song with a weighty counter melody; "Pilate's Dream" is almost Celtic in its tone; and there is a Baroque quality to the apostles' chorale in "The Last Supper." Among the numbers in the rock genre are Judas's explosive "Heaven on Their Minds," the double song "What's the Buzz?/ Strange Thing Mystifying," Jesus's pleading "I Only Want to Say" in the garden of Gethsemane, and the powerful "Judas' Death." Rice's lyrics are sometimes in the repetitive rock style. But much of the score uses musical theatre lyrics ("prove to me you are no fool—walk across my swimming pool") and foreshadows Rice's more sophisticated work in *Evita* and *Chess*.

Despite the phenomenal success of the double album of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, no one was willing to produce the musical as a stage piece. Concert versions of the score, however, some authorized and others pirated, were presented in America with great success. Eventually both Broadway and West End producers were interested in presenting the rock opera on stage. Lloyd Webber and Rice felt Broadway was more open to the musical, several music critics in England finding the album irreverent, blasphemous, and anti-Semitic. American producers Robert Stigwood and David Land not only produced the Broadway production but marketed the controversy by hiring the notorious director Tom O'Horgan to give the piece a surreal and even bizarre staging. (O'Horgan had staged the Broadway production of *Hair* in 1967, adding the infamous nude scene.) O'Horgan turned the musical into a glittering, dazzling Las Vegas show with Jesus rising out of a chalice wearing a silver sequined gown that covered the entire stage. Judas was surrounded by four purple alter egos in rubber outfits, the Pharisees sported gigantic helmets that recalled a Dr. Seuss illustration, and Jesus was crucified not on a cross but on a massive triangular monolith. Jeff Fenholt and Yvonne Elliman did their best to play Jesus and Mary Magdalene without being upstaged, but it was newcomer Ben Vereen whose performance as Judas shone the most. (Many feel Judas is the major character in *Jesus Christ Superstar*.) The New York reviews were wildly mixed. Some

critics praised the music and abhorred the production. Yet just as many disdained the score and found the spectacle more ingenious than the musical. Because of the popularity of the record album, the presale for the Broadway production was very strong and the musical ran a very profitable twenty-one months.

	1971 New York cast	1972 London cast
Jesus	Jeff Fenholt	Paul Nicholas
Judas	Ben Vereen	Stephen Tate
Mary Magdalene	Yvonne Elliman	Dana Gillespie
Pontius Pilate	Barry Dennen	John Parker
King Herod	Paul Ainsley	Paul Jabara

Robert Stigwood produced the London premiere of *Jesus Christ Superstar* ten months after the Broadway opening, and it was a very different production. Australian director Jim Sharman staged the musical in a less sensational manner, emphasizing the characters and the score. The reviews were much more supportive in Britain, but again the popularity of the album was all that was needed to turn *Jesus Christ Superstar* into a hit. It ran eight years, breaking the record for the longest run for a London musical. Stigwood quickly organized touring productions in both America and Great Britain even as international versions appeared around the globe.

*Jesus Christ Superstar* has returned to Broadway and the West End several times over the years, but it is the hundreds of regional professional tours and community and school productions that have made *Jesus Christ Superstar* one of the most popular musicals ever written. There were film versions in 1973 and 1999, and an American television live broadcast in 2018. Historically, *Jesus Christ Superstar* can be considered the beginning of the “British Invasion,” in which London musicals would have such a huge impact on Broadway in the 1970s and 1980s. How ironic that this invasion did not have to cross an ocean but began on Broadway.

## **JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT**

(1973/1981)

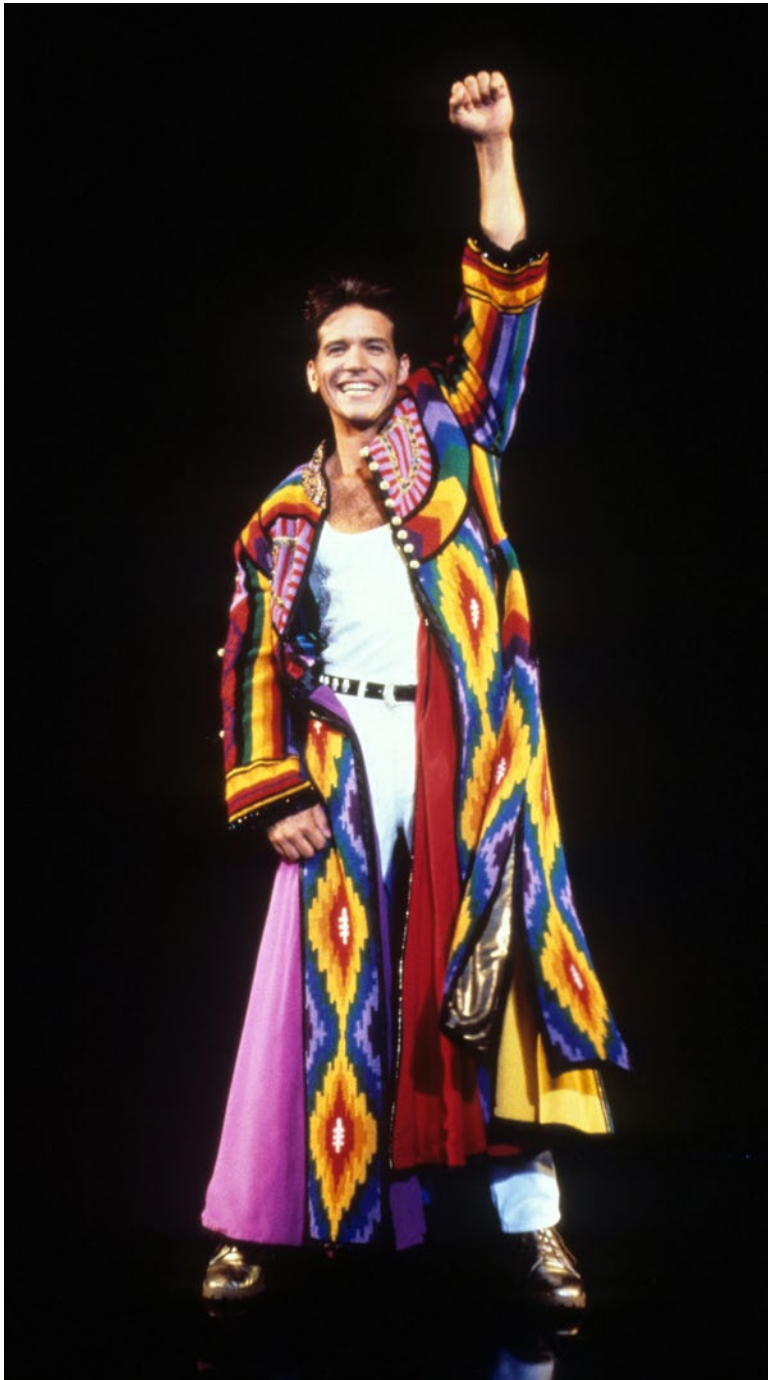
A sung-through musical by Tim Rice, based on Genesis 37–50 in the Old Testament

*Score:* Andrew Lloyd Webber (music), Tim Rice (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 17 February 1973; Albery Theatre; 243 performances

*Original New York production:* 18 November 1981; Entermedia Theatre (Off-Broadway); 747 performances

*Notable songs:* Any Dream Will Do; Close Every Door; Those Canaan Days; Jacob and Sons/Joseph’s Coat; One More Angel in Heaven; Benjamin Calypso; May I Return to the Beginning; Go Go Joseph; Potiphar; Pharaoh’s Story; Joseph’s Dreams; Poor Poor Joseph; Stone the Crows



American singer and soap opera star Michael Damian was featured as Joseph in the 1993 Broadway revival of this popular musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, which took a playful approach to an Old Testament story. Damian is pictured here wearing his biblical "coat of many colors." *Photofest*

The first collaboration of British composer Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyricist Tim Rice started as a small, unassuming musical piece but over the years has become one of their most produced musicals. Lloyd Webber, a precocious seventeen-year-old who had been writing music for ten years, met the twenty-year-old pop songwriter Tim Rice in 1965, and they completed a few theatre scores that were not produced. In 1968 the team wrote a fifteen-minute cantata to be performed by the pupils at the all-boys Colet Court School. It was based on the Old Testament story of Joseph and his jealous brothers and utilized a pop sound with anachronistic lyrics. The parents of one of the boys in the production was impressed enough to encourage Lloyd Webber and Rice to expand the piece to thirty-five minutes and he recorded it under the title *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. It was not until the phenomenal success of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in 1971 that the songwriters returned to the Joseph piece, giving it a professional staging at the Edinburgh Festival in 1972. The next step was obviously a West End production, but the musical was still too short, so Lloyd Webber and Rice added characters and songs until it was closer to ninety minutes. The plot, much of it told by the Narrator rather than acted out, embellished on the Bible story. Joseph, the favorite son of Jacob, is given a vibrant coat of many colors by his father, adding to his brothers' jealousy. Joseph also has a talent for interpreting dreams, and he innocently tells his brothers of a vision he had of his eventual saving and ruling the family. Led by Reuben, the brothers sell Joseph as a slave to a passing caravan of Ishmaelites on their way to Egypt. Staining Joseph's coat with goat's blood, the brothers tell Jacob that Joseph has been killed by some wild beast. In Egypt, Joseph is sold as a slave in the house of Potiphar, a wealthy Egyptian mogul with a beautiful wife who is attracted to Joseph. When she makes sexual advances toward Joseph, Potiphar takes notice and has Joseph thrown in prison. There he interprets the dreams of two fellow prisoners, and word of his ability gets back to Pharaoh, who is plagued by a recurring dream. Joseph explains that the Pharaoh's dream foretells seven years of bountiful harvest then seven years of famine. Joseph is put in charge of a program to store food for the upcoming famine and becomes the Pharaoh's right-hand man. When the famine does come, Jacob and his sons are destitute and travel to Egypt to beg for food. After Joseph tests their loyalty to their youngest brother, Benjamin, Joseph reveals his true identity, is reunited with his father, and saves the family.

Even as Rice expanded the musical into a full-length form, he still relied on the Narrator for much of the storytelling, making that character the primary role of the production. Also, since the original story lacks female characters (which was not a problem at the all-boy Colet Court School), the Narrator is usually played by a female. This helps balance the musical, but *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* is still a short piece padded by a lot of songs. Happily these added songs are playful pastiches of different kinds of music, none of which try to remain faithful to the biblical setting or even the original score. They also keep the musical from taking itself too seriously. Without mocking the biblical story, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* retells it as a joyous romp. For example, after the brothers tearfully tell their father that Joseph is dead and Jacob goes off to grieve, the siblings break into the raucous Western hoe-down number "One More Angel in Heaven." In their efforts to proclaim Benjamin's innocence of stealing a valuable cup, the brothers sing the vigorous Latin number "Benjamin Calypso."

Even when they are starving during the famine, the brothers sing the mock French café lament “Those Canaan Days.” The most serious the score gets are in Joseph’s ballads “Close Every Door to Me” and “Any Dream Will Do,” which are more pop than heartbreaking. As with all the later Lloyd Webber–Rice musicals, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* is sung throughout, but in this first work much of the singing is narrative rather than character development. But that does not keep the songs from shining and the score from remaining one of the team’s most enjoyable.

	1973 London cast	1981 New York cast
Joseph	Gary Bond	Bill Hutton
Narrator	Peter Reeves	Laurie Beechman
Pharaoh	Gordon Waller	Tom Carder
Jacob	Alex McEvoy	Gordon Stanley
Reuben	Paul Brooke	Robert Hyman
Levi	Mason Taylor	Steve McNaughton
Naphtali	Richard Kane	Charlie Serrano
Potiphar	Gavin Reed	David Ardao

*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* made its London debut in 1973 on a bill with another short musical, *Jacob’s Journey*, also by Lloyd Webber and Rice. The critics were not overly enthused, and the production struggled to run two months. The musical was further expanded, the short accompanying piece dropped, and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* opened again in the West End in 1974. Again it failed to run, but the complete score was recorded. The rights to produce the musical were then released, and productions sprang up all over Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and the United States.

A London revival in 1978 was finally a hit, and an Off-Broadway production in 1982 was so well received by the press and the public that it transferred to Broadway and did brisk business for twenty months. By this time, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* was a regular staple in schools, summer stock, and regional theatre in several countries. Although the musical has not yet returned to Broadway, it has returned to the West End with success, particularly a 1991 revival starring the pop singer Donovan as Joseph. There was also a well-received direct-to-video version of the musical released in 1999 with a starry cast that included Donny Osmond (Joseph), Maria Friedman (Narrator), Richard Attenborough (Jacob), and Joan Collins (Potiphar’s Wife). *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* remains a favorite with theatregoers, even those who may not care for other Lloyd Webber musicals. It is unpretentious fun, with music that is lite-rock and pop and lyrics that are nimble and carefree. Some might consider *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* second-rate Lloyd Webber, but it represents part of this composer’s versatility and love of all kinds of music.

# K

## ***THE KING OF CADONIA***

(1908/1910)

A musical play by Frederick Lonsdale

*Score:* Sidney Jones, Jerome Kern (music), Adrian Ross, Arthur Wimperis, M. E. Roarke, and others (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 3 September 1908; Prince of Wales Theatre; 333 performances

*Original New York production:* 10 January 1910; Daly's Theatre; 16 performances

*Notable songs:* The Lady of the Castle in the Air; There's a King in the Land Today; Do Not Hesitate to Shoot; Disguises; The Wind of Love; Situations; The Man I Marry; Catamaran; Love and Duty; Things That I Know I Can Do; Over-Rated; The Woman and the Man; The Portrait; Lena, Lena; Every Girl I Meet; The Blue Bulgarian Band; Come Along Pretty Girl

*The King of Cadonia* was a charming, literate musical that was a hit in Great Britain and Australia but was so botched in New York that it closed in two weeks. The libretto was by the witty British playwright Frederick Lonsdale, whose later plays found success on both sides of the Atlantic. *The King of Cadonia* was the young writer's first work to reach the London stage and the quality of his libretto was noticed for its notch above the usual musical comedy book. The kingdom of Cadonia has a history of its people getting rid of their king in very hostile ways. The young King Alexis is nervous about this situation, as well as the fact that he is betrothed to the heiress from a neighboring kingdom, whom he has never seen. So he escapes from the palace and goes incognito among his people, joining the band of anarchists who are in the habit of deposing their king. Alexis's betrothed, Marie, is not happy about her future and also flees her palace and goes incognito among the streets of Cadonia. Left to run the country is the high-strung Duke of Alasia, who strives to be popular by giving out medals for the silliest of reasons, all to the disapproval of his overbearing wife. Of course Alexis and Marie meet, eventually learn of each other's true identity, and together win over the people, so when it is finally revealed that Alexis is king, the country is behind him. This kind of story had been told many times before but Lonsdale's characters were fleshed-out and enjoyable, and the dialogue often sparkled. The role of the Duke of Alasia

was one of the funniest ones seen in a British musical in some time and comedian Huntley Wright took full advantage of it.

The score by Sidney Jones (music) and Adrian Ross (lyrics) matched Lonsdale's sense of humor and still found room for some delectable ballads, such as the flowing duet "The Lady of the Castle in the Air," in which Alexis describes his ideal queen to Maria before he knows her true identity. The couple also harmonized beautifully in the duets "The Woman and the Man" and "Love and Duty." The Duke, of course, got the best comic numbers, such as the patter song "Do Not Hesitate to Shoot" in which he lists all of the suspicious kinds of people his guards should be on the lookout for. The Duke also counted off activities other than being temporary king in "Things That I Know I Could Do." He teamed up with the saucy maid Militza (played by comedienne Gracie Leigh) for the merry duet "Disguises," in which the two planned how they would disguise themselves if the hoard stormed the castle. Other highlights in the first-class score include Marie's wistful ballad "The Man I Marry"; Alexis's solo on how the job of king was "Over-Rated" and his later stirring up of the people with "There's a King in the Land Today"; and Militza's sly commentary on the various jobs she has held in "Situations."

	<i>1908 London cast</i>	<i>1910 New York cast</i>
King Alexis	Bertram Wallis	Robert Dempster
Princess Marie	Isabel Jay	Marguerite Clark
Duke of Alasia	Huntley Wright	William Norris
Militza	Gracie Leigh	Clara Palmer
Captain Laski	Pope Stamper	Melville Stewart
General Bonski	Robert Cunningham	Albert Gran
Duchess of Alasia	Amy Martin	Bessie Tannerhill
Stephanie	Peggy Bethel	Mabel Weeks
Laborde	Akerman May	St. Clair Bayfield
Panix	Arthur Lacey	D. L. Don

*The King of Cadonia* opened in 1908 and found favor with the London press, launching Lonsdale's theatre career as a writer. The production was an immediate hit at the box office and producer Frank Curzon wasted no time in sending out three companies to tour the British Isles. Within a year an Australian production of *The King of Cadonia* opened in Melbourne and was also a success.

The Shubert Brothers bought the Broadway rights to the musical but did not seem to have much faith in it. They tampered with the book, taking out lines they thought too British and replacing them with unfunny substitutes. No one was credited with the revisions, so the hack work done on Lonsdale's libretto was probably the work of J. J. Shubert who oversaw most of the brothers' musical imports. Much of the Jones-Ross score was tossed out (including most of the hit songs) and eight new songs by young American composer Jerome Kern (music) were added. Working with various American lyricists, Kern provided some noteworthy songs for Broadway's *The King of Cadonia*, but few people heard

them because the musical quickly closed. It was the closest Kern had yet come to writing a full Broadway score, so those eight songs are of historical significance. Luckily, the sheet music survives and one can see the developing musical genius flexing his muscles. The catchiest number Kern wrote for *The King of Cadonia* was "Catamaran," a flowing up-tempo ballad that has a haunting flavor. Too good to be wasted, Kern resurrected the music and used part of it for the title song in *Sally* ten years later. Other Kern songs of interest include the zesty march "The Blue Bulgarian Band," the charm song "Come Along Pretty Girl," a rousing dance number "Lena, Lena," and a ragtime piece titled "Every Girl I Meet." Few of the New York critics even mentioned Kern's songs (or any of the score) in their reviews of *The King of Cadonia*, so dissatisfied were they with the tedious book and the lackluster production. Kern would soon find fame on Broadway, but *The King of Cadonia* was quickly forgotten.



# L

**LADY MADCAP.** See *My Lady's Maid*

## ***THE LILY OF KILLARNEY***

(1862/1868)

An opera by John Oxenford and Dion Boucicault,  
based on Boucicault's play *The Colleen Bawn*

*Score:* Julius Benedict (music), John Oxenford, Dion Boucicault (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 8 February 1862; Theatre Royal, Covent Garden; c. 5 performances in repertory

*Original New York production:* 1 January 1868; Academy of Music; 2 performances in repertory

*Notable songs:* The Moon Has Raised Her Lamp Above; Eily Mavourneen; I'm Alone; The Colleen Bawn; In My Wild Mountain Valley; The Eye of Love Is Keen; Blessings on that Reverend Land; Your Slumbers; Ah, Never May That Faithful Heart; Trust Me

An early musical piece that helped bridge the gap between opera and musical theatre, *The Lily of Killarney* was popular on both sides of the Atlantic, having been based on a play that was also a great success in the United States and Great Britain. The play was Dion Boucicault's Irish melodrama *The Colleen Bawn*, which premiered in New York in 1860 and ran for a month, followed by a London production that ran ten months. The action-packed play is set in the late 1700s and centers on the impoverished Eily O'Connor, known as the "colleen bawn" or the "fair-haired maiden." She is secretly married to the aristocrat Hardress Cregan, whose estate is bankrupt. His mother wants Hardress to wed the wealthy Anne Shute and save the family from the greedy Mr. Corrigan, who holds the mortgage on the Cregan estate. But Anne is in love with Kyrle Daly, Hardress's friend and servant who knows about the secret marriage. When Anne intercepts a letter from Eily to Hardress, she mistakenly believes it is meant for Kyrle and breaks off the relationship. The hunchback servant Danny Mann wrongly thinks that Hardress wants Eily killed so that he can wed Anne and he mistakenly understands that the

signal to carry out the murder is when Danny is given a glove. When Mrs. Cregan innocently gives Danny the glove, he takes Eily to a grotto where he throws her off a rock. A shot rings out and Danny falls mortally wounded. The shot was fired by Myles na Coppaleen, a wily bootlegger who has long loved Eily. Danny's dying words implicate Hardress, and Corrigan comes to arrest him. But Myles rescues Eily, reveals the secret marriage, and wins back the love of Anne who uses her money to save the Cregan family. *The Colleen Bawn* became one of the most popular melodramas of the nineteenth century with productions in major American and British cities and on tour to rural areas.

Musicalizing such a serious tale immediately suggested an opera yet *The Lily of Killarney*, as the musical was retitled, had several theatre elements. The libretto, by Boucicault and John Oxenford, is still very plot heavy, relying on its melodramatics and vivid characters to sustain the suspense. The score by composer Julius Benedict had lyrics by Boucicault and Oxenford who avoided too many concerted pieces and extended chorales and emphasized songs. Three of them became so famous that they were heard in concerts and on parlor pianos for many decades. The stirring male duet "The Moon Has Raised Her Lamp Above," Hardress's lilting serenade "Eily Mavourneen," and Eily's plaintive solo "I'm Alone" were Irish-flavored numbers that would not be out of place in a sentimental moment in an operetta later in the century.

	1862 London cast	1868 New York cast
Eily O'Connor	Louisa Pyne	Caroline Richings
Hardress Cregan	Henry Haigh	William Castle
Ann Shute	Jessie McLean	Mrs. Edwin Seguin
Myles na Coppaleen	William Harrison	Pierre Bernard
Danny Mann	Charles Santley	S. C. Campbell
Mr. Corrigan	Eugene Dussek	J. A. Arnold
Mrs. Cregan	Susan Pyne	Mrs. J. A. Arnold
Father Tom	John George Patey	H. C. Peakes

The original London production of *The Lily of Killarney* was presented in 1862 as part of an opera repertory produced by William Harrison and Louisa Pyne (who also played Myles and Eily) then was quickly added to the repertoire of other opera companies throughout Britain as well as in Canada and Australia. The first New York production was not until 1868 as part of the repertoire of Richings English Opera Company. (Producer-singer Caroline Richings played Eily.) *The Lily of Killarney* caught on in America as well, and productions returned to Broadway in 1895 and 1898. By that time the line between opera and operetta was firmly drawn. Yet one cannot ignore the contribution *The Lily of Killarney* made in developing a kind of musical entertainment that moved closer to musical theatre.

**LITTLE CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS**

(1893/1894)

A burlesque operetta by George R. Sims and Cecil Raleigh

*Score:* Ivan Caryll, Gustave Kerker (music), George R. Sims, Cecil Raleigh (lyrics)  
*Original London production:* 10 October 1893; Lyric Theatre; 421 performances  
*Original New York production:* 15 October 1894; Garden Theatre; 264 performances  
*Notable songs:* Oh, Honey, My Honey; Lazily, Drowsily; Rumpy Tumpty; The India-rubber Shoe; The Land of Love; A Pussy Cat Sat by a Silver Stream; Nummy Num Num; In an Unconventional Way; If in Your Dreams; I Love Her, I Love Her So; Hail to the Bey; For I'm O'Hoolegan

Before the term “musical comedy” was widely used, lighthearted musicals with a spoof element were called “burlesques.” Such was the case with *Little Christopher Columbus*, which was supposedly a travesty of the great explorer but ended up being just a silly but enjoyable musical whose hero was named Christopher and who just happened to be on a ship sailing to a long-ago-discovered America. The libretto by George R. Sims and Cecil Raleigh was “inspired” by the current World’s Fair in Chicago, formally known as the World’s Columbian Exhibition of 1893. Yet the plot they concocted was far from inspired. The London orphan Little Christopher (a trouser role played by a female) meets Guinevere Block, an heiress whose father is the Bacon King of Chicago, and the two fall in love. Block is determined that his daughter marry into British aristocracy. When he and Guinevere board the ocean liner *Choctaw* to return home for the World’s Fair, Christopher gets work as a cabin boy on the ship. But Block has hired the Spanish police chief Don Juan and the Irish detective O’Hoolegan to find Christopher and lock him up. Christopher dons various disguises to elude them, including impersonating the Spanish dancer Pepita, who is to perform at the fair. The musical’s final act is set in Chicago and consists of various specialty acts at the fair until it is discovered that Christopher is the long-lost heir to a British title, so Guinevere ends up marrying into the aristocracy after all. The libretto was cockeyed and disjointed but allowed for song and dance acts, comedy routines, and other music hall-like entertainments. Fortunately, these were pleasing enough and the performers talented enough that *Little Christopher Columbus* turned out to be a satisfactory night of musical comedy. The London critics lambasted the libretto but praised the cast, in particular May Yohé as the clever scamp Christopher and E. J. Lonnen as the comic Irish detective. *Little Christopher Columbus* was not making much money, so, after two months, producer George Edwardes closed the musical, had some major rewriting done, added American comedian John Sheridan to the cast, dropped some acts and replaced them with better ones, and then reopened the new version of *Little Christopher Columbus* in London. It was undoubtedly a much tighter production; even if the plot was little changed, the musical numbers and specialty bits were better, and the revised musical held the boards for a total of fourteen months before going on tour.

*Little Christopher Columbus* marked the first full score by Ivan Caryll, the prolific composer whose career in London and New York stretched into the 1920s. With Sims and Raleigh providing the lyrics, Caryll came up with some memorable songs for the first and the revised version of the musical. Three of the numbers became popular favorites: the slaphappy sing-along number “Rumpty Tumpty,” the catchy Southern pastiche “Oh Honey, My Honey,” and the mocking siesta song “Lazily, Drowsily.” Other notable numbers included the Irish detective’s comic ditty “The Indiarubber Shoe,” Christopher’s affecting “The Land of Love,” Guinevere’s sly narrative “A Pussy Cat Sat by a Silver Stream,” and Christopher and O’Hoolegan’s tongue-in-cheek duet “Nummy Num Num.” Add to these several dances, including a ballet, a tarantella, and a march, and there were enough distractions to keep *Little Christopher Columbus* very lively without depending on the story.

	1893 London cast	1894 New York cast
Little Christopher	May Yohé	Helen Bertram
Guinevere Block	Maud Holland	Yolande Wallace
Silas Block	Furneaux Cook	
Det. O’Hoolegan	E. J. Lonnen	George Walton
Don Juan	George Tate	Edgar Temple
Capt. Joseph Slammer	Harry Parker	Herman Blakemore
Mayor of Cadiz	Henry Wright	Edwin Chapman
Hannah	Maud Leicester	Nettie Lyford
Vigilant Cutter	Maude Vernon	
2nd Mrs. Block	Adelaide Newton	Harry MacDonough
Pepita	Eva Moore	Mabel Bouton

American producer Edward E. Rice secured the rights to present *Little Christopher Columbus* on Broadway and, realizing the importance of the specialty numbers, hired performers with their own tried-and-true acts. The two-act musical was refashioned into three acts to allow for more spectacle, including tableaux vivants, a sizable ballet, and a marionette show. There was even a slide show with images of the Chicago fair projected onto the stage between acts. Rice kept the hit songs by Caryll but discarded some of the London score and replaced it with songs by Gustave Kerker. Among them were the gushing “I Love Her, I Love Her So,” the chorale “Hail to the Bey,” and the character number “For I’m O’Hoolegan.” As in London, *Little Christopher Columbus* was packed with entertainment and, despite the critics’ complaints about the ridiculous plot (in the Broadway version Christopher turns out to be a descendant of the famous explorer Columbus), the musical was a hit with the public. During its profitable run of seven months, the title was simplified to *Little Christopher*. Under that title it toured successfully and was revived over the next two decades.

# M

## ***THE MAID OF THE MOUNTAINS***

(1917/1918)

A musical melodrama by Frederick Lonsdale

*Score:* Harold Fraser-Simson, James W. Tate, and others (music), Harry Graham, F. Clifford Harris, "Valentine," and others (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 10 February 1917; Daly's Theatre; 1,352 performances

*Original New York production:* 11 September 1918; Casino Theatre; 37 performances

*Notable songs:* Live for Today; Love Will Find a Way; A Bachelor Gay (Am I); A Paradise for Two; Husbands and Wives; Farewell; Love Is My Life; I Understood; Friendship and Love; New Moon; Over There and Over Here; Dirty Work

One of the biggest London hits of its era, *The Maid of the Mountains* was a flop on Broadway in 1918 but later became an operetta favorite in all English-speaking nations. Its tale of romantic brigands, passionate lovers, crafty schemes and disguises, and a test of true love made the musical an ideal diversion for war-weary London theatregoers. Frederick Lonsdale, a distinguished playwright who also wrote musical librettos, had his greatest success with *The Maid of the Mountains*. It is one of the most complicated of British operetta plots but the libretto plays beautifully onstage and still thrills audiences in revivals. Set in a fictional mountainous Mediterranean country, the story focuses on Teresa, the maiden of the title, who is in love with Baldassare, the chief of a band of brigands. Baldassare decides to disband his men, giving each his fair share of the booty that they have confiscated. Knowing there is a price on his head, Baldassare sends Teresa away for her safety. But she is captured by General Malona, the current governor, who is determined to capture Baldassare before he is replaced by the new governor, Count Orsino. Baldassare hears that Teresa is in prison and plots to free her by capturing Orsino and his men on their way to the palace and, using their uniforms, present Baldassare as the new governor. Before he can rescue Teresa from prison, Baldassare meets and falls in love with General Malona's daughter, Angela. The jilted Teresa reveals to Malona the true identity of Baldassare and he is arrested. She immediately regrets her action and pleads in vain to Malona on the brigand's behalf. In an island prison, Baldassare realizes that it is the maid of the mountains whom he really loves and forgives her for betraying him. Lieutenant Rugini befriends

Baldassare and agrees to let him escape. Instead, Baldassare tells him to give the prison cell key to Teresa to see if she will free him, even though she thinks he will go to Angela. Teresa proves her love by using the key to release Baldassare, and the two escape in a boat provided by Rugini. Interwoven within this story are two subplots: the comic romance between Malona's fiancée, Vittoria, and the brigand Antonio, and the comic brigand Beppo who has always loved Teresa but, finding his case hopeless, drowns his sorrows by cavorting with all the ladies of the court.

As with Lonsdale's other librettos, the characters are better defined and the dialogue more refined than in the typical operettas of the day. In fact, *The Maid of the Mountains* might well have caught on as a non-musical play. But the score, mostly by Harold Fraser-Simson (music) and Harry Graham (lyrics), is responsible for the operetta's longevity. A handful of the songs quickly captured the public's favor and remained popular for several decades. Teresa's "Farewell" is an intoxicating waltz, as is her rhapsodic "Love Is My Life." The fetching duet "A Paradise for Two" and the rousing "Live for Today" were heard on concert stages and on parlor pianos for years, as were the comic ditties "A Bachelor Gay (Am I)" and "I Understood." Other noteworthy numbers in the score include the ballad "Love Will Find a Way," the droll duet "Husbands and Wives," the romantic duet "Friendship and Love," the pleading "New Moon," and the lament "Over There and Over Here." A curiosity about the score for *The Maid of the Mountains* is that the leading male character, the brigand chief Baldassare, is not a singing role. Also, in Lonsdale's original libretto, Baldassare ends up with Angela, and Teresa is matched with the long-suffering Beppo. But leading lady José Collins was not going to settle with Teresa not getting the dashing hero, so the ending was changed, even though the Teresa-Beppo duets remained.

	1917 London cast	1918 New York cast
Teresa	José Collins	Sidonie Espero
Baldassare	Arthur Wontner	William Courtenay
Beppo	Thorpe Bates	Carl Gantvoort
Antonio	Lauri de Frece	Bert Clark
Vittoria	Mabel Sealby	Miriam Doyle
Gen. Malona	Mark Lester	William Danforth
Lieut. Rugini	Cecil Mannering	John Steel
Angela	Lilian Birtles	Evelyn Egerton

Producer George Edwardes assembled a top-notch cast and provided superb sets and costumes, so *The Maid of the Mountains* looked as splendid as it sounded. Despite many squabbles backstage during rehearsals as both script and score were altered, the musical looked polished and confident by opening night. The London reviews lauded all aspects of the operetta, from the cast and songs to the story and the production values. Demand for tickets was so great that *The Maid of the Mountains* ran over three years and may have continued on had not its star, José Collins, finally left the production from sheer exhaustion. Edwardes wasted no time in getting *The Maid of the Mountains* on tour. In fact, a company opened in

Edinburgh a few days before the London premiere. The operetta was a hit in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, and there have been several West End revivals over the decades.

The one place where *The Maid of the Mountains* failed to run was on Broadway. The 1918 production played loose with the libretto, added songs that were considered inappropriate as well as unimpressive, and failed to provide a leading lady with strong box-office appeal. The critics viewed the operetta with disfavor, the public was not interested, and *The Maid of the Mountains* closed in a month. The operetta would eventually catch on with regional operetta companies and amateur theatre groups across America, just as some of the songs would become popular in the States. In 1932 there was a British film version of *The Maid of the Mountains* with Australian singer Nancy Brown as Teresa.

## **MAMMA MIA!**

(1999/2001)

A musical comedy by Catherine Johnson

*Score:* Benny Andersson, Bjorn Ulvaeus (music and lyrics)

*Original London production:* 6 April 1999; Prince Edward Theatre; 8,000+ performances

*Original New York production:* 18 October 2001; Winter Garden Theatre; 5,758 performances

*Notable songs:* Mamma Mia; Dancing Queen; Chiquitita; The Name of the Game; Knowing Me, Knowing You; S.O.S.; The Winner Takes It All; Money, Money, Money; Lay All Your Love on Me; Our Last Summer; Voulez-Vous; Super Trouper; Thank You for the Music; Slipping through My Fingers; I Have a Dream; Take a Chance on Me

The most popular jukebox musical the world has seen, *Mamma Mia!* was not the first successful example of that genre to come from Great Britain. That distinction goes to *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* (1989). But *Mamma Mia!* has become such an international phenomenon that it has spawned countless jukebox musicals hoping to find a niche in this relatively new kind of musical theatre. As opposed to a jukebox musical revue that features popular non-theatre songs of the past, a true jukebox musical is one in which familiar songs are interpolated into some kind of plot, be it biographical, like *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*, or totally divorced from the original source of the songs, as with *Mamma Mia!* Taking popular songs from the pop group ABBA and putting them into a plot was the idea of English producer Judy Craymer, who commissioned a script from British playwright Catherine Johnson, who had written for the stage, screen, and television. ABBA was a Swedish pop quartet formed in Stockholm in 1972 with Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus writing the songs. Although their heyday was 1974 to 1982, when they broke all records for a non-English-speaking group, the ABBA songs never went out of fashion and continue to sell internationally. Besides being very familiar to millions of people, the ABBA songs are ideal for a jukebox musical



because they are not character or situation specific, make no attempt for any depth or complexity, and are generally upbeat. Pretty much any song can be used for any story or character as long as it is lightweight and carefree. Hearing the famous songs in the context of a book musical does not make them any richer or more meaningful. The audience walks into the theatre knowing and loving the ABBA favorites and welcomes them again like old friends.

Johnson's libretto for *Mamma Mia!* is far from original, its premise having been used in plays and films in the past, but it is flexible enough to allow for twenty-seven ABBA songs, which is what counts. Sophie Sheridan's destination wedding to Sky is taking place on the fictional Greek island of Kalokairi, and she wants her father to walk her down the aisle. But Sophie's mother, Donna, who was a member of a pop trio called the Dynamos in her youth, was rather promiscuous, and there are three possible men who could be Sophie's biological dad. Sophie invites all three men to the wedding, Donna invites the former Dynamos, and there are a series of surprises, recriminations, and second thoughts before the tale ends with Sophie and Sky getting married alongside Donna and Sam, the real father. Such a plot could have been told in one act, but with everyone breaking into song as in a Bollywood movie and the Dynamos reviving their old act, there was plenty of filler to make *Mamma Mia!* a full-scale musical complete with audience sing-alongs and even dancing in the aisles strongly encouraged.

	1999 London cast	2001 New York cast
Donna Sheridan	Siobhán McCarthy	Louise Pitre
Rosie	Jenny Galloway	Judy Kaye
Tanya	Louise Plowright	Karen Mason
Sam Carmichael	Hilton McRae	David W. Keeley
Bill Austin	Nicolas Colicos	Ken Marks
Harry Bright	Paul Clarkson	Dean Nolen
Sophie Sheridan	Lisa Stokke	Tina Maddigan
Sky	Andrew Langtree	Joe Machota
Pepper	Neal Wright	Mark Price
Eddie	Nigel Harman	Michael Benjamin Washington
Ali	Eliza Lumley	Sara Inbar
Lisa	Melissa Gibson	Tonya Doran

As difficult as it is to believe, songwriters Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus were reluctant to give producer Craymer permission to use their songs. They were working on a theatre score for *Chess* with lyricist Tim Rice and wanted to be accepted as theatre composers. Putting their old pop songs on stage in a jukebox musical did not strike them as a very good idea and could possibly be damaging to their new careers. Having no idea that *Mamma Mia!* would become so popular, the two Swedes decided to give Craymer the go ahead, thinking little harm would be done. When the musical opened in London in 1999 it was not the critics' idea of a superior theatre experience, but the public thought otherwise, and, at this writing, it continues to run in the West End. But that was only the beginning.



The Broadway production tried out in Toronto in 2000 and ended up staying there for five years. When another company of *Mamma Mia!* did open in New York in 2001, it ran fifteen years on Broadway. American cities that usually booked New York hits for a few weeks saw *Mamma Mia!* sell out for months. The phenomenon continued into the international market. Over the past twenty years, the jukebox musical has played in over fifty countries, from Slovakia and China to Peru and Russia. A film version was successful enough in 2008 that a sequel was made in 2018. Critics have tried to explain the wide appeal of *Mamma Mia!* Some say it is because the musical is about the empowerment of women, the importance of mother-daughter bonding, a world in which men play a subservient or passive role, and even a sarcastic look at traditional male-female romance. Most likely the musical is a hit around the world because the songs were hits around the world. For a jukebox musical, that is enough.

### **MARY POPPINS**

(2004/2006)

A musical comedy by Julian Fellowes, based on the 1964 screenplay by Bill Walsh and Don DaGradi and the stories of P. L. Travers

*Score:* Richard M. Sherman and Robert B. Sherman, George Stiles, Anthony Drewe (music and lyrics)

*Original London production:* 15 December 2004; Prince Edward Theatre; c. 1,280 performances

*Original New York production:* 16 November 2006; New Amsterdam Theatre; 2,619 performances

*Notable songs:* Chim Chim Cher-ee; Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious; Jolly Holiday; A Spoonful of Sugar; Step in Time; Let's Go Fly a Kite; Feed the Birds; Practically Perfect; Being Mrs. Banks; Cherry Tree Lane; Anything Can Happen; A Man Has His Dreams; Temper, Temper; Brimstone and Treacle; The Perfect Nanny

Of the many Disney film-to-stage musicals since *Beauty and the Beast* in 1994, *Mary Poppins* is the only one to originate in England. This is because British producer Cameron Mackintosh bought the stage rights to P. L. Travers's books in 1993. Travers, who loathed the 1964 screen version of *Mary Poppins*, stipulated in the agreement that no one who worked on the Disney film could work on any stage version. This was her way of making sure that the songwriting brothers Richard M. and Robert B. Sherman, who were still alive, would not write any more songs for her characters. Thus, a stage musical of *Mary Poppins* was at a stalemate: Disney owned the screenplay and songs and Mackintosh owned the book and characters. This was as Travers intended, and she died in 1996 content believing the Disney corporation would never get its hands on her famous nanny again. But Mackintosh, one of the shrewdest and most successful theatrical producers in the world, made a deal with Disney in 2001 to coproduce a stage version of *Mary Poppins*. New musical numbers by British songwriters George Stiles and Anthony Drewe



The very proper and “practically perfect” nanny Mary Poppins was also able to cut loose when the occasion called for it. Scarlett Strallen (center) played the title character during the 2004 London revival. *PA Images / Alamy Stock Photo*

were added to the classic favorites from the Disney film, and the very successful writer Julian Fellowes wrote a libretto that combined sections of the movie with sequences from the books. The result was sometimes bipolar. The Disney film is a wistful fantasy; Fellowes’s script is a psychological study of Edwardian social positions. The score was equally divided. The Sherman brothers’ songs are tuneful and mostly upbeat; the Stiles-Drewe numbers mostly deal with the characters’ neuroses. Yet *Mary Poppins* on stage is such a colorful, impressive, energetic spectacle that audiences don’t seem to mind the musical’s split personality and it has been a hit on two continents.

Fellowes’s libretto puts as much focus on the parents, Mr. and Mrs. Banks, as it does on their children, Michael and Jane; their nanny, Mary Poppins; and the chimney sweep Bert. While Mr. Banks in the film was too busy working and trying to get ahead at the bank to be a real father, on stage he is an adult traumatized by a cruel nanny he had as a child and he has been turned into a cold and unfeeling patriarch. Mrs. Banks on screen was a feather-headed suffragette who was too preoccupied with women’s rights to be a reliable mother and wife. In Fellowes’s version, she is an Edwardian prisoner, unsure of her role as a woman when only called upon to be a wife and mother. Mary Poppins, still as practical as she is mysterious, enters the life of the Banks family and eventually, with the help of Bert, straightens everyone out. This means leaving the family at one point and being replaced by Mr. Banks’s dreaded nanny from the past, an aged but still horrid Miss Andrew. After Miss Andrew manages to terrify everyone from the master to the cook, the two children finally get rid of her, and Mary Poppins returns to

finish the job. Once the family is somewhat better adjusted, she flies off over the audience and a grand finale assures everyone of a happy ending.

Some beloved sequences from the film, such as the animated sections with vivacious buskers, dancing penguins, and cavorting carousel horses, could not be duplicated on stage and were replaced by dancing statues in the park and Bert tap-dancing upside down across the proscenium. Other numbers from the movie were re-created on stage with great success, such as the vigorous rooftop romp "Step in Time" and the contagious "Let's Go Fly a Kite." Other favorites retained from the movie include the tongue-twisting "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious," the mesmerizing "Chim Chim Cher-ee," the playful "A Spoonful of Sugar," and the haunting "Feed the Birds." Most of the new songs are character numbers. Mary Poppins explains herself in the clever "Practically Perfect," Mr. Banks expresses the way he wants life to be run on "Cherry Tree Lane," Mrs. Banks sings of her dilemma in "Being Mrs. Banks," and the monstrous Miss Andrew declares her philosophy of child upbringing in "Brimstone and Treacle." On a more optimistic note, Mary Poppins leads everyone in the cheery "Anything Can Happen." *Mary Poppins* had more than its fair share of huge production numbers with plenty of dancing, often capturing the feel of the traditional British pantomime. The production also boasted more eye-popping scenery than one had seen in several seasons. The Banks's full-sized house included the basement kitchen, the sitting-room level, the children's upstairs nursery, and even the rooftop. Yet this mammoth set seemed to disappear for the production's many other locations. Mackintosh, known for such spectacles as *Les Misérables*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, and *Miss Saigon*, did not stint on *Mary Poppins*, and audiences certainly got their money's worth in showmanship.

	2004 London cast	2006 New York cast
Mary Poppins	Laura Michelle Kelly	Ashley Brown
Bert	Gavin Lee	Gavin Lee
George Banks	David Haig	Daniel H. Jenkins
Winifred Banks	Linzi Hateley	Rebecca Luker
Jane Banks	Nicola Bowman	Katherine Doherty
	Carrie Fletcher	Delaney Moro
	Poppy Lee Friar	Kathryn Faughnan
	Charlotte Spencer	
	Faye Spittlehouse	
Michael Banks	Jake Catterall	Matthew Gumley
	Perry Millward	Henry Hodges
	Jack Montgomery	Alexander Scheitinger
	Harry Scott	
	Ben Watton	
Miss Andrew	Rosemary Ashe	Ruth Gottschall
Mrs. Brill	Jenny Galloway	Jane Carr
Bird Woman	Julia Sutton	Cass Morgan

As befitted a musical of its size, Mackintosh previewed *Mary Poppins* at the huge Bristol Hippodrome before opening in the West End in 2004. The reviews were wildly mixed, but the presale was gigantic and the title of the musical sold itself. Directed with panache by Richard Eyre and Matthew Bourne with sets and costumes by Bob Crowley, *Mary Poppins* boasted a top-notch cast led by Laura Michelle Kelly as Mary Poppins. The production ran just over three years. Mackintosh produced the Broadway version in 2008 and, except for a few minor changes, it resembled the London production. Again the critical reaction varied, but the strong popular appeal allowed the musical to run even longer, over six years. Tours on both sides of the Atlantic performed in all major cities, and today *Mary Poppins* is a favorite of summer theatres and school groups, playing well even without all the spectacle used in the original productions. *Mary Poppins* was revived in the West End in 2019.

## **MATILDA**

(2011/2013)

A musical comedy by Dennis Kelly, based on the 1988 Roald Dahl novel

*Score:* Tim Minchin (music and lyrics)

*Original London production:* 24 November 2011; Cambridge Theatre; 3,000+ performances

*Original New York production:* 11 April 2013; Shubert Theatre; 1,554 performances

*Notable songs:* When I Grow Up; Miracle; This Little Girl; Revolting Children; Telly; Naughty; I'm Here; Quiet; My House; Loud; The Smell of Rebellion

All of Roald Dahl's stories for children and young adults have a dark and sinister side, yet the musical version of *Matilda* is often farcical and funny. The story itself is one of child abuse, but the children's sarcasm and the eccentricity in the portrayal of the awful adults help one to enjoy this broad musical without feeling guilty. Dahl's 1988 book comes from late in his career (he died in 1990) and today outsells all his other books. *Matilda* was made into an American movie in 1996 and was well received by the critics, but its box office take was disappointing and the film lost money. Only on home video did it catch on and become the popular film several generations know today. A stage musical version of *Matilda* toured a few cities in Great Britain in 1990 but was a critical and box-office failure. In 2010 the Royal Shakespeare Company commissioned a musical version to be presented at their theatre in Stratford-on-Avon. The resulting production was so popular that after its twelve-week run in Stratford it transferred to the West End in 2011; this time, *Matilda* was a resounding hit and is still running in London at this writing.

The libretto by British television, film, and stage writer Dennis Kelly manages to include much of the material in the book, even Matilda Wormwood's birth to a mother who grumbles that childbirth caused her to miss a ballroom dance



Rob Howell's ingenious scenic design consisting of books and children's blocks not only brings the young heroine Matilda's love of reading to life but also creates a fantastical atmosphere for this Roald Dahl musical that has touches of magic in it. *PA Images / Alamy Stock Photo*

competition. Her father is a crooked car salesman who was hoping for another son like their dense teenager Michael. Matilda grows up neglected and scorned by her family because she likes to read books while they are obsessed with watching the "telly." At school, Matilda finds a friend in the young teacher Miss Honey who, like the students, is afraid of the gorgon of a headmistress Miss Trunchbull. Matilda possesses some extraordinary powers, such as making objects move on their own and having words appear on the school blackboard. She uses these powers to play tricks on Miss Trunchbull, but it only makes the headmistress crueler. As Matilda and Miss Honey become close friends, Matilda learns that Miss Trunchbull is Miss Honey's aunt and lives in the house that Miss Honey grew up in. Matilda uncovers the information that the house was actually left to Miss Honey but Miss Trunchbull stole it from her. Matilda, using her magical powers, with the other children finally manages to frighten Miss Trunchbull, who runs away, leaving the house to Miss Honey. As for Matilda's dreadful family, they get entangled with the Russian Mafia and flee to Spain, leaving Matilda to live with Miss Honey. What is so refreshing about Dahl's story and Kelly's libretto is that the heroine is not a sweet innocent but a shrewd child with a sense of righteousness. She is not afraid to take revenge when she can, and her mischief is sometimes deliciously nasty. Matilda's family and Miss Trunchbull are exaggerated grotesques, more comic than scary, and the children in the story are not without fault. Kelly introduces them in the opening number as spoiled young things who have been told by their parents that they are special and superior. When they later proudly sing that they are "revolting," they mean it in both senses of the word.



*Matilda* has its tender moments, but for the most part it is a sportive satire on self-centered adults and children.

Tim Minchin, the Australian songwriter who wrote the score for *Matilda*, was originally an actor and stand-up comic and there is a sly sense of humor in his lyrics. The music is pop with some various pastiches of different styles here and there. Most of the songs are very catchy, be they raucous numbers like Mrs. Wormwood's crass "Loud" and Mr. Wormwood's praise of the "Telly," or quiet character songs like Miss Honey's "Pathetic" and "This Little Girl." Among the most memorable songs are those sung by the children, such as the bombastic "Revolting Children" and the gleeful "When I Grow Up." *Matilda* sings the revealing character song "Naughty" early in the musical, setting up her less-than-sweet persona. The monstrous Miss Trunchbull gets to go over the top with such numbers as "The Hammer," about her past sports career, and the vindictive "The Smell of Rebellion." This gross woman was played by a male actor in drag, one of the many clever touches in the dazzling production directed by Matthew War-chus. The ingenious set design by Rob Howell was created out of books and his costumes used vulgar colors for the Wormwoods to contrast with the subdued school uniforms of the children. Peter Darling did the sparkling choreography, which never seemed to run out of fresh ideas. *Matilda* on stage was as big and bold as the ideas Dahl tackled in his book.

	2011 London cast	2013 New York cast
Matilda Wormwood	Cleo Demetriou Eleanor Worthington Cox Sophia Kiely Kerry Ingram	Sophia Gennusa Oona Laurence Bailey Ryon Milly Shapiro
Agatha Trunchbull	Bertie Carvel	Bertie Carvel
Jennifer Honey	Lauren Ward	Lauren Ward
Mr. Wormwood	Paul Kaye	Gabriel Ebert
Mrs. Wormwood	Josie Walker	Lesli Margherita
Michael Wormwood	Peter Howe	Taylor Trenchsch

The West End production of *Matilda* was greeted with nearly unanimous rave reviews and the public responded enthusiastically. Even as it continues to run in London, touring companies have crisscrossed Great Britain and the musical has found success in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Korea, the Philippines, South Africa, and Singapore. The Royal Shakespeare Company coproduced the 2013 Broadway production of *Matilda* with the American theatrical organization called the Dodgers. There was pressure to change the location of the story to the States so that the musical would better appeal to Americans. (The 1996 film version was set in America.) The creators refused but did change some lines and lyrics that might prove unclear to local audiences. The Broadway production, a visual copy of the London one with some of the same cast members, received mostly laudatory reviews in New York and *Matilda* did brisk business, running three and a half years. After some national tours, the musical became available

in 2018 for regional theatre productions, and before long amateur rights will be available. *Matilda* will likely prove to be very popular with all kinds of theatre organizations, in particular school groups and summer camps.

## **ME AND MY GIRL**

(1937/1986)

A musical comedy by L. Arthur Rose, Douglas Furber, and Stephen Fry

*Score:* Noel Gay (music), L. Arthur Rose, Douglas Furber (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 16 December 1937; Victoria Palace Theatre; 1,646 performances

*Original New York production:* 10 August 1986; Marquis Theatre; 1,420 performances

*Notable songs:* (Doin') The Lambeth Walk; Once You Lose Your Heart; Leaning on a Lamppost; You Would If You Could; Love Makes the World Go Round; Hold My Hand; Take It on the Chin; Me and My Girl; The Sun Has Got His Hat On; An English Gentleman; Song of Hareford; The Family Solicitor

It may have taken nearly fifty years, but this London musical finally made it to Broadway in 1986 and proved to be a major hit. The comic actor Lupino Lane had played a saucy Cockney named Bill Snibson in the 1935 musical comedy *Twenty to One* and it made him a West End star. Lane commissioned L. Arthur Rose and Douglas Furber to write a new musical in which he could reprise the character. *Me and My Girl* was not a sequel to the earlier show but the down-to-earth, proud Cockney from the Lambeth neighborhood in London was once again the starring role and Lane made the most of it. The libretto Rose and Furber came up with recalled H. G. Wells's novel and play *Kipps* about a low-life character who comes into wealth. In this case, the rough-and-tumble costermonger Bill Snibson discovers that he is the long-lost heir to the aristocratic Hareford family estate. In order to become the new Earl of Hareford, he must prove to the aged Duchess of Dene and the elderly Sir John Tremayne that he can learn the gentlemanly ways of the upper class. Bill has a sweetheart in Lambeth named Sally, and if he wants to marry her, she'll have to pass as an upper-crust lady. But the beautiful if predatory Lady Jacqueline Carstone, who has a title but is short on actual money, dumps her fiancé Gerald Bolingbroke and pursues Bill without an ounce of subtlety. At a ball given by the Duchess, Bill tries to behave like a proper English gentleman but when Sally crashes the party, his Cockney roots are revealed and soon the couple lead the partygoers in singing and dancing "The Lambeth Walk." In an effort to impress the importance of being the Earl of Hareford, the family portraits in the great hall come to life and sing the praises of the family name. Sally believes she has lost Bill forever, but Sir John, who wants to help the Cockney couple, has a plan. At the next social gathering, Bill decides to chuck the title and return to Lambeth so he arrives in outrageous Cockney attire. Then Sally arrives in a fancy dress, complete with tiara, and is speaking and behaving like a lady, thanks to coaching by Sir John. The Hareford family accepts her, Bill is overjoyed, and the



When Sally Smith (Donna Bullock, center) from Lambeth crashes a posh party, Bill Snibson (Tim Curry, center) is thrilled to see his Cockney girlfriend. Soon they will have everyone dancing "The Lambeth Walk" in the 1986 American national tour of the old-new Broadway hit. *Photofest*

couple are reunited just as Sir John wins the hand of the Duchess and Lady Jacqueline returns to Gerald.

Although *Me and My Girl* was written as a vehicle for Lupino Lane, the libretto is one of the most solid and enjoyable of the 1930s with several fun characters, lively dialogue, and some splendid plot twists. Rose and Furber also wrote the lyrics for Noel Gay's music and they came up with a superb musical comedy score. The runaway hit of the show, of course, was the contagious "(Doin') The Lambeth Walk," which not only caught on as a sing-along favorite but inspired a vivacious dance that was done on two continents. (When a film version of *Me and My Girl* was made in 1939, it was titled *The Lambeth Walk*.) Also popular was the endearing title song, which was both sincere and slangy. Sally's torchy solo "Once You Lose Your Heart" was heartfelt without being maudlin, just as her spirited "Take It in the Chin" was pure Cockney optimism. Other notable musical numbers were Lady Jacqueline and Bill's comic seduction duet "You Would If You Could," the anthem-like "Song of Hareford" sung by the Duchess and all the family ancestors, and Jacqueline's greedy duet with Gerald called "Thinking of No-One but Me."

Despite the popularity of Lupino Lane and a set of laudatory reviews, *Me and My Girl* had trouble finding an audience in Depression-weary 1937. Then a stroke of luck came in the form of bad weather that forced the cancellation of a sporting event and BBC Radio quickly needed something to broadcast. Someone suggested *Me and My Girl*, which happened to have a matinee that day. The entire performance was broadcast live on the radio, and from that point on the theatre was



	<i>1937 London cast</i>	<i>1986 New York cast</i>
Bill Snibson	Lupino Lane	Robert Lindsay
Sally Smith	Teddie St. Dennis	Maryann Plunkett
Herbert Parchester	Wallace Lupino	Timothy Jerome
Sir John Tremayne	George Graves	George S. Irving
Duchess of Dene	Doris Rogers	Jane Connell
Jacqueline Carstone	Betty Frankiss	Jane Summerhays
Gerald Bolingbroke	Martin Gray	Nick Ullett

filled. *Me and My Girl* also has the distinction of being the first West End musical to be aired on television, a live performance broadcast in May of 1937 and again in May of 1939. But so few people had access to television sets that the musical got more publicity by the popularity of "The Lambeth Walk" on radio, in dance halls, and on records. Demand for tickets was so great that at one point the producers scheduled two performances of *Me and My Girl* on certain nights, allowing the musical to chalk up an astounding number of performances. After its initial run of nearly three years, *Me and My Girl* returned to London in 1945, 1949, and 1952. The musical also toured Great Britain extensively, was a hit in Australia, and later played with success in continental Europe.

Why such a popular musical was not picked up by Broadway has never been satisfactorily explained. The musical was deemed too British and the class distinction, indeed the very idea of what a Cockney was, would be difficult for American audiences. Yet the song "The Lambeth Walk," a kind of Cockney anthem of sorts, was sung and danced to in the States. *Me and My Girl* demanded a particular kind of British comedic star, but that had not kept other London hits from transferring to Broadway. Probably the most likely explanation was economic. Broadway was devastated by the Depression and fewer musicals were opening in the 1930s. Even in the postwar years when Broadway was enjoying a golden era, no one was interested in an old British musical about the class system. How ironic, then, that in 1956 a handful of American artists would put together a very British musical that was about the same elements as *Me and My Girl*. *My Fair Lady* is, in many ways, a reversal of the plot of *Me and My Girl*. Instead of the Cockney Bill trying to pass as a gentleman, Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* wants to pass as a lady. And in a delicious piece of foreshadowing, Sally in *Me and My Girl* is coached by the older Sir John in how to dress, talk, and behave like an aristocratic lady. What Broadway didn't want in 1937 became one of the greatest pieces of American musical theatre in 1956.

Broadway would probably never have seen *Me and My Girl* if it were not for an outstanding revival of the musical in Great Britain in 1984. Actor-writer Stephen Fry tastefully revised the original libretto and, with director Mike Ockrent, dropped a few songs and added some others from the period that had been composed by Noel Gay. The up-tempo "Love Makes the World Go Round," the plaintive song of affection titled "Hold My Hand," and the catchy "Leaning on a Lamp-post" were the most noticeable additions. Instead of casting a comic actor as Bill, producer Richard Armitage (the son of Noel Gay) cast the Shakespearean actor

Robert Lindsay, who possessed a piquant talent for clowning. Emma Thompson, also known for her roles in the classics, was cast as Sally, and Gillian Gregory did the choreography, making the most of the old dance favorite “The Lambeth Walk.” The revised revival of *Me and My Girl* played in Leicester, England, in 1984, then the next year moved on to London where it thrilled the critics and the public for over eight years. This time, Broadway could not ignore such an obvious hit. Armitage and the Nederlander theatrical organization coproduced the 1986 New York version which replicated the London production. Lindsay got to reprise his Bill Snibson with an American cast, and they and the old musical were greeted with rave notices and big box office. *Me and My Girl* was still doing brisk business after three years but was forced by the theatre owners to close in 1989 to make way for the more lucrative newcomer *Annie 2*. (Ironically, *Annie 2* closed out of town and the huge Marquis Theatre was left empty.) The new *Me and My Girl* toured Great Britain and America and later was picked up by various theatre groups, making the 1937 musical once again an audience pleaser.

### **THE MESSENGER BOY**

(1900/1901)

A musical comedy by James T. Tanner and Alfred Murray

*Score:* Ivan Caryll, Lionel Monckton (music), Adrian Ross, Percy Greenbank (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 3 February 1900; Gaiety Theatre; 429 performances

*Original New York production:* 16 September 1901; Daly’s Theatre; 129 performances

*Notable songs:* Maisie; The Messenger Boy; Mummies; When the Boys Come Home  
Once More; In the Wash; Has Anybody Seen My Cat?; Off to Cairo; Ask Papa;  
Can’t You Take My Word; The Messenger Boy March

While George Edwardes’s “Gaiety” musicals were known for featuring a “gaiety girl” heroine, *The Messenger Boy* starred a male comic, Edmund Payne, as the central character, and he did not disappoint. The libretto by James T. Tanner and Alfred Murray was a transcontinental chase in which various characters have different reasons to be the first to travel from London and reach Cairo. Young businessman Clive Radnor and the unscrupulous financier Tudor Pyke are both courting the sweet Nora, the daughter of Lord Puchestown who is governor of El Barra in Egypt. Nora accepts Clive’s proposal of marriage, so he sets off from London to get permission from her father in Cairo. The vindictive Pyke learns of her decision and hires the messenger boy Tommy Bang to race to Egypt to deliver a letter that discredits Clive. Once Tommy is on his way, Pyke realizes he gave the messenger boy the wrong letter—a compromising love letter written to Pyke by none other than Lady Puchestown. Pyke sets off to try and stop Tommy at about the same time that Nora learns of Pyke’s plot against Clive so she and her maid Rosa also head for Egypt. The artful Tommy uses various disguises and ruses to avoid being stopped, and in two subplots an archeologist and Tommy’s mother get involved in the chase. In true farce fashion, the various threads of the plot are

brought together in Cairo where Pyke is foiled, Clive and Nora are united, and Tommy gets the spirited Rosa. Few musicals of the era were as well constructed and as much fun as *The Messenger Boy*, and with the added attraction of Edmund Payne's masterful comic turn as Tommy, it is little wonder that the musical ran a year and a half.

Some of the credit for the musical farce's success goes to the fine score by several hands, mostly music by Ivan Caryll and Lionel Monckton and lyrics by Adrian Ross and Percy Greenbank, all veterans of the Gaiety musicals. Tommy sang the title song about his smart attire and quick thinking. His wishful duet with Rosa was titled "Aspirations," while Nora and Clive's duet, "Ask Papa," was more down to earth. Washerwoman Mrs. Bang slyly noted how much you can learn about a person doing their laundry in the comic number "In the Wash," Rosa and Tommy stopped the show with the silly duet "Mummies," and Nora led the cast in the patriotic "When the Boys Come Home Once More," a reference to the current Boer War. Yet the biggest song hit from the score was a simple and direct number about "Maisie." It was sung by Rosie Boote in the minuscule role of the serving girl Isabel Blyth. The fetchingly beautiful Boote had been in the chorus of several Gaiety musicals and in *The Messenger Boy* graduated to a small speaking role. Her straightforward but alluring delivery of the plaintive "Maisie" was a standout and the song quickly caught on, sung everywhere by everyone. One might say that "Maisie" made Boote a star, but in fact *The Messenger Boy* was her last public appearance. She so charmed the Earl of Headfort that he married her and Rosie Boote left the production and became the Marchioness of Headfort. The publicity certainly helped the musical during its long run.

	<i>1900 London cast</i>	<i>1901 New York cast</i>
Tommy Bang	Edmund Payne	James T. Powers
Nora	Violet Lloyd	Georgia Caine
Tudor Pyke	John Tresahar	George Heath
Clive Radnor	L. Mackinder	John B. Park
Rosa	Katie Seymour	Rachel Booth
Lord Punchestown	William Wyes	Harold C. Crane
Lady Punchestown	Maud Hobson	Jobyna Howland
Mrs. Bang	Connie Ediss	May Robson
Cosmos Bey	E. J. Lonnen	Paul Nicholson
Captain Naylor	Harry Grattan	John P. Kennedy
Prof. Phunckwitz	Willie Warde	Tom Hadaway
Hooker Pasha	Harry Nichols	George Honey
Captain Pott	Fred Wright Jr.	Harry Kelly
Daisy Dapple	Grace Palotta	
Mon. Gascoigne	A. Hatherton	
Comte Le Fleury	Robert Nainby	George DeLong
Isabel Blyth	Rosie Boote	Flora Zabelle
Pepita		Miss Fanchonette
Mr. Trotter	F. Standen	Herbert Darley
Lady Winifred	Margaret Fraser	Hattie Waters

Opening in London in 1900, *The Messenger Boy* met with propitious reviews and was an immediate hit with the public. The musical not only toured Great Britain but saw productions in Australia, South Africa, Hungary, and Austria. The 1901 Broadway production, though presented by Americans Sam Nixon and J. F. Zimmerman without Edwardes's participation, did not make many changes to the libretto. There were several alterations in the score, with numbers by American songwriters replacing some from London, but the best songs survived and enjoyed considerable popularity in the States. James T. Powers, a short American comic who had started in vaudeville with James Cagney, was featured as Tommy Bang and won the approval of the critics and the playgoers. In general, *The Messenger Boy* was well received on Broadway and the production ran a profitable four months. While not the sensation it was in London, *The Messenger Boy* was a good example of an Edwardian musical from London finding modest success in New York.

## ***THE MIKADO; OR, THE TOWN OF TITIPU***

(1885)

A comic operetta by W. S. Gilbert

*Score:* Arthur Sullivan (music), W. S. Gilbert (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 14 March 1885; Savoy Theatre; 672 performances

*Original New York production:* 20 August 1885; Fifth Avenue Theatre; 250 performances

*Notable songs:* A Wandering Minstrel, I; Three Little Maids from School Are We; The Sun Whose Rays (The Moon and I); As Some Day It May Happen That a Victim Must Be Found (I've Got a Little List); The Flowers That Bloom in the Spring; On a Tree by a River a Little Tom-Tit (Willow, Tit-Willow); Here's a How-De-Do; Behold the Lord High Executioner; A More Humane Mikado (Make the Punishment Fit the Crime); I Am So Proud; Were You Not to Ko-Ko Plighted (The Kissing Song); Brightly Dawns Our Wedding Day (Madrigal); Braid the Raven Hair; There Is Beauty in the Bellow of the Blast; Alone, and Yet Alive; The Criminal Cried as He Dropped Him Down; See How the Fates Their Gifts Allot; For He's Going to Marry Yum-Yum

It is ironic that *The Mikado*, probably the most frequently produced Gilbert and Sullivan operetta around the world, was created during a low point in the relationship between composer Arthur Sullivan and librettist-lyricist W. S. Gilbert. Having written seven musicals together, Sullivan was growing weary of Gilbert's facile plots based on silly premises. When Gilbert proposed an operetta built around a magic potion, Sullivan not only vetoed the idea but hinted that they should no longer collaborate on such trivial musicals. Gilbert took this as an insult and a criticism of all his past work. The two men were at an impasse and were not on speaking terms in 1885 when a desperate Richard D'Oyly Carte pleaded for a truce, as he was in need of a new Gilbert and Sullivan success to keep his theatre company solvent. Fortunately, Gilbert was taken with the public's fascination with all things Japanese in the 1880s and hit on the idea of an operetta set in



Karen Wood, Marie Baron, and Karen Skidmore as the “three little maids” seem to be overjoyed to be out of the “ladies seminary” in this acclaimed 1984 Stratford (Canada) Festival production, which was so popular it traveled the world and performed on Broadway in 1987. *Photofest*

Japan. Gilbert knew next to nothing about Japan except for the clothes, furniture, and prints for sale in all the London shops, but he personally owned a Japanese executioner’s sword and that was enough to inspire him to write a libretto about a comic executioner. Sullivan immediately was drawn to the idea because it would allow him to dabble with the pentatonic scale found in Asian music. Not surprisingly, little in Gilbert’s script or lyrics is remotely authentic Japanese and only a few measures of Sullivan’s music comes close to Asian forms. All of the team’s operettas, no matter where in the world they be set, would always turn out to be British in tone, attitude, and sound. Such was the case with *The Mikado*.

*The Mikado* is arguably Gilbert’s finest libretto: well structured, tightly plotted, with hilarious dialogue, several nimble-witted characters, and outstanding lyrics. Nanki-Pooh, the son of the Japanese emperor, the Mikado, has disguised himself as a minstrel singer and returns to the fictional town of Titipu to find the school girl Yum-Yum, the two of them having fallen in love without her knowing his true identity. He also explains that he ran away because he was betrothed to an old and formidable spinster named Katisha. To his grief, Nanki-Pooh learns that Yum-Yum is to marry her guardian, Ko-Ko, that very day. Ko-Ko was a simple tailor but, through bureaucratic mishaps, was named the Lord High Executioner of Titipu. He has so far managed to avoid executing anyone and thrives in his

position with the help and schemes of Pooh-Bah, an opportunist who holds most of the official positions in town. Word comes from the Mikado that an execution must be held in Titipu within the month or the town will be downgraded to a village. Ko-Ko is desperate to find someone to execute until he comes upon Nanki-Pooh, who is trying to hang himself over the loss of Yum-Yum. The two come to an agreement: Nanki-Pooh can marry Yum-Yum if at the end of the month Ko-Ko can cut his head off for the crime of flirting. The celebration of Yum-Yum and Nanki-Pooh's upcoming nuptials is interrupted by the arrival of Katisha, who tries to expose Nanki-Pooh's true identity, but she is drowned out by Yum-Yum's sister, Pitti-Sing, and the crowd's rejoicing. Before Yum-Yum and Nanki-Pooh wed, Ko-Ko uncovers a law that says when a man is beheaded for flirting, his wife must be buried alive with him. This new predicament convinces Nanki-Pooh and Yum-Yum to elope, and they leave town just as the Mikado and Katisha arrive. Ko-Ko lies and tells the Mikado that he just missed the required execution and presents the death certificate. Disappointed, the Mikado asks for a detailed description of the beheading and is pleased with Ko-Ko, Pooh-Bah, and Pitti-Sing's vivid description of the execution. Then Katisha notices that the name on the certificate is Nanki-Pooh, the son of the Mikado and her fiancé. The Mikado pleasantly arranges for Ko-Ko, Pooh-Bah, and Pitti-Sing to be boiled in oil after lunch. The threesome realize that the only way to save themselves is to produce Nanki-Pooh alive. But that still leaves Nanki-Pooh's betrothal to Katisha to deal with. Pooh-Bah convinces Ko-Ko to woo and win the hand of the disagreeable spinster, which he does with little enjoyment. Nanki-Pooh and Yum-Yum return and present themselves to the Mikado who is happy to have his son returned to him and to have Katisha married off to Ko-Ko.

As improbable as the plot may be, it is logical by way of the cockeyed rules of Titipu. Gilbert uses the strange and unknown (to Westerners) Japanese culture to contrive ways to keep his story lively. Yet the bureaucracy in the Titipu government is a satire on British politics and Pooh-Bah is a one-man corruption ring. There is a blood-thirsty and macabre sense of humor in *The Mikado* that Gilbert felt free to use because of the clichés of barbarism associated with Asian cultures. Over the years, that aspect of the work has concerned some critics and playgoers, who have seen *The Mikado* as a mockery of the Japanese culture. Few such complaints come from Asian audiences, however, who rightfully see the operetta as a satire on British manners and find nothing Japanese about the musical except the scenery and the costumes. There is certainly nothing very Asian about the characters, some of which are the most ingenious Gilbert ever created. Ko-Ko is the comic coward, of course, but he is also a biased politician with a "little list" of those who offend him. His having to court the fearsome Katisha is one of the great farcical scenes in the Gilbert and Sullivan canon. Katisha herself is more than the unappealing middle-aged foil found in so many of Gilbert's librettos. He paints her as a gorgon, then gives her the heartbreaking lament "Alone, and Yet Alive" that humanizes her to the point of poignancy. Pooh-Bah, as mentioned, is the source of much of the political spoofing in *The Mikado*, and his arrogance is zestfully funny as he continually surprises us with the depths to which he will sink to make an extra yen. The Mikado himself is far from a figure of authority but more a spoiled and masochistic child who has never outgrown his delight in the suffering

of others. Even the lovers Nanki-Pooh and Yum-Yum are far from solemn, given dialogue that ranges from teasing to outright jokes. What other Gilbert lovers spend time drolly insulting each other as these two do?

From such characters come sterling lyrics. Because all the characters are comic, the songs are rarely sentimental or self-pitying. The lovers' "Kissing Song" is practically an anti-romantic love duet. Yum-Yum's lilting "The Moon and I" solo is musically soft and affecting, yet the lyric is that of an egotistical beauty comparing herself to nature and finding herself the winner. Some lyrics thrive on furious wordplay, as with the trios "Here's a How-De-Do" and "I Am so Proud." Others are simple and repetitive, such as the narrative ditty "Willow, Tit-Willow." Of course, the most famous lyric in the score, best known as "I've Got a Little List," is unfortunately dated, with many of its references either obscure or offensive today. Modern productions of *The Mikado* invariably change or update the people on Ko-Ko's list; the results vary greatly and are rarely of the caliber of Gilbert's. Musically, *The Mikado* is as fresh and vibrant as the day it was first heard in 1885. Sullivan has rarely found so much musical variety in one score. He uses a few Asian musical clichés here and there, but this is indeed British music. The pompous fanfare music for Ko-Ko's entrance, "Behold the Lord High Executioner," would not be out of place with a military parade down Pall Mall. "Three Little Maids from School Are We" and "The Flowers that Bloom in the Spring" might be wild country dances. "A Wand'ring Minstrel I" has a Highland folk ballad flavor and "Braid the Raven Hair" a hymn for an English wedding. The Mikado's "A More Humane Mikado," most remembered as "Let the Punishment Fit the Crime," is a sluggish march with a slight drunkenness in its tempo. The delectable "Brightly Dawns Our Wedding Day" is an English madrigal that pastiches the old genre even as it pleases. The vigorous duet "There Is Beauty in the Bellow of the Blast," in which Ko-Ko and Katisha come to a marital agreement, puts one in mind of an American hoe-down number, although it is doubtful if Sullivan had that in mind. The music in *The Mikado* is perhaps Sullivan's operetta masterwork. It overflows with melody, playfulness, and accessibility.

	<i>1885 London cast</i>	<i>1885 New York cast</i>
Ko-Ko	George Grossmith	George Thorne
Nanki-Pooh	Durward Lely	Courtice Pounds
Yum-Yum	Leonora Braham	Geraldine Ulmar
The Mikado	Richard Temple	Frederick Federici
Pooh-Bah	Rutland Barrington	Fred Billington
Katisha	Rosina Brandram	Elsie Cameron
Pish-Tush	Frederick Bovill	Charles Richards
Peep-Bo	Sybil Grey	Geraldine St. Maur
Pitti-Sing	Jessie Bond	Kate Forster

The preparation for the premiere of *The Mikado* in London had its peculiar difficulties, many arising from Gilbert's insistence that every detail of the production be authentically Japanese. This ranged from the foliage on the stage to the



undergarments of the costumes. (The preparation of the London production was captured accurately in the 1999 film *Topsy-Turvy*.) With a cast of D'Oyly Carte's regulars, led by comedian George Grossmith as Ko-Ko, *The Mikado* opened in 1885 to rapturous reviews and ran twenty-two months, the longest initial run of any of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. But that original London run pales in comparison to what followed. Touring companies in Great Britain ran for years, and productions in Australia, South Africa, Canada, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, Denmark, Russia, and so on made *The Mikado* the biggest international hit of the Gilbert and Sullivan canon.

Pirated productions continued to be a major problem, and Chicago and New York saw inferior mountings before D'Oyly Carte's production opened on Broadway six months after the London premiere. As it was everywhere else, the operetta was embraced with rave notices and cheers from the audience. Tours of *The Mikado* crisscrossed the States for years and the operetta has returned to Broadway at least forty times. Add to that the hundreds of productions throughout the English-speaking world over a period of over 130 years and it is estimated that *The Mikado* has been seen by more theatregoers than any other musical. There have been more recordings of the operetta than any other Gilbert and Sullivan work, and it has been presented in films and on television at least five times.

Broadway saw two interesting variations of the musical in 1939: *The Swing Mikado* and *The Hot Mikado* were two jazz and swing versions utilizing an African American cast. In 1975, London saw *The Black Mikado*, another jazz adaptation set in the Caribbean. Like many of Shakespeare's plays, *The Mikado* has been subject to unconventional and even bizarre interpretations over the decades. The operetta has been reset in locations ranging from a British country club to Harlem. And what of Japan itself? *The Mikado* is performed there regularly, just as any entertaining Western musical is. The city of Chichibu offers a professional production of *The Mikado* annually as part of its nationally popular festival. To try and put the popularity of *The Mikado* in a modern perspective, one must imagine a current musical hit like *Mamma Mia!* or *The Phantom of the Opera* and multiply its success by 130 years.

## MISS HOOK OF HOLLAND

(1907)

A musical comedy by Paul Rubens and Austen Hurgon

Score: Paul Rubens (music and lyrics)

Original London production: 31 January 1907; Prince of Wales Theatre; 462 performances

Original New York production: 31 December 1907; Criterion Theatre; 119 performances

Notable songs: Little Miss Wooden Shoes; A Pretty Pink Petty from Peter; Fly Away Kite; The Sleepy Canal; The Flying Dutchman; Soldiers of the Netherlands; From Harwich to Hook; Cream of the Sky; Pop Pop Pop; A Little Bit of Cheese; Bottles; The Cigar He Bought Her; A Bottle of Schnapps; Cheese



Paul Rubens was a talented and prolific songwriter who scored over two dozen musicals during his limited career. (He died of tuberculosis at the age of forty-one.) He also wrote librettos that were often so thin as to be nonexistent. This was not the case with *Miss Hook of Holland*. Rubens's ill health was putting the production behind schedule, so actor-director-writer Austen Hurgon was brought in to complete the script. The result is one of Rubens's best musicals, with a libretto that supports a merry score. The authors gave their piece the unpretentious label "a Dutch musical incident," but the plot was more substantial than that. In the picturesque Holland town of Andyrk on the Zuyder Zee, Sally Hook is being wooed by the handsome bandmaster Van Vuyt and the vainglorious Captain Adrian Papp. Sally's befuddled father owns the local distillery, which is famous for its liqueur called "Cream of the Sky." The recipe is a family secret, but Mr. Hook loses a sheet of paper with the recipe on it and it is found by the local hobo Simon Skinks. Knowing its value, Skinks sells the recipe to Papp, who then uses it to try to force Mr. Hook to make Sally marry him. The clever Sally; her sweetheart, Van Vuyt; and the feisty maid Mina pull off a series of tricks and subterfuges to get back the recipe and push Papp out of the picture.

The libretto emphasized comedy over romance, with much of the humor coming from the daffy Mr. Hook, the sassy Mina, the pompous Papp, and the free-loader Skinks. While Mr. Hook got the best comic routines, Mina got the best comic songs. In "Flying Dutchman" she explains how a harridan of a wife forced the Dutchman to wander the globe, and in "A Pretty Pink Petty from Peter" she wonders why all her boyfriends give her petticoats as presents. Mina also joined in the slaphappy duet "Pop Pop Pop" and the jolly trio "A Little Bit of Cheese." While Rubens's music made no attempt to sound Dutch, the lyrics often conjured up the location. Such was the case in the romantic duet "The Sleepy Canal," the patriotic march "Soldiers of the Netherlands," the lyrical "Little Miss Wooden Shoes," and the wry "The Cigar He Bought Her," which told an oddball Dutch love story. Sally sang the prettiest ballad in the score, "Fly Away Kite," and led the chorus in praise of her family's renowned "Cream of the Sky." Ludwig Schnapps, the foreman at the distillery, sang the most topical number in the score, a wag-gish ditty titled "From Harwich to Hook," and courted Mina with "A Bottle of

	<i>1907 London cast</i>	<i>1907 New York cast</i>
Sally Hook	Isabel Jay	Christie MacDonald
Mr. Hook	G. P. Huntley	Tom Wise
Mina	Gracie Leigh	Georgia Caine
Capt. Adrian Papp	Herbert Clayton	Bertram Wallis
Bandmaster Van Vuyt	F. Pope Stamper	John McCloskey
Simon Slinks	George Barrett	Will West
Ludwig Schnapps	Harry Grattan	Richard L. Lee
Gretchen	Eva Kelly	Florence Nash
Freda Voos	Gwendoline Brogden	Catherine Cooper
Clara Voos	Gladys Ivory	Marion Little
Lieut. de Coop	B. S. Foster	Glen White

Schnapps." The chorus, which consisted of villagers in colorful traditional dress, rather than the glamorous chorines of most musicals of the time, join in for most numbers, singing about everything from "Bottles" to "Cheese." Several of the songs found favor with the public and were heard outside of the theatre for some years after.

Producer Frank Curzon took advantage of the Dutch setting to provide thrilling sets and costumes for *Miss Hook of Holland*, and he hired a first-rate cast led by comic favorites G. P. Huntley as Mr. Hook and Gracie Leigh as Mina. The musical opened in 1907 to exemplary notices from the critics and was soon selling out, going on to run sixteen months. During the Christmas season Curzon assembled a cast of children and at matinees offered the show for families under the title *Little Miss Hook of Holland*. Tours of the adult version were successful in Great Britain, as were productions in Australia, Hungary, Germany, and Austria.

American producer Charles Frohman bought the rights to *Miss Hook of Holland* but had trouble with his cast during rehearsals. The actors playing the comic leads had to be dismissed and were replaced by opening night with Tom Wise (Hook) and Georgia Caine (Mina). Broadway favorite Christie MacDonald played Sally, who provided box-office appeal, and *Miss Hook of Holland* was a modest hit, running four months. More lucrative was a touring production starring comedian Frank Daniels as Hook. Since he was now the box-office attraction, the operetta was titled *Hook of Holland* for the road. By the end of World War One, *Miss Hook of Holland* had been played out in America, but in Britain it remained a favorite with regional, summer, and school theatre groups until the 1960s.

## MISS SAIGON

(1989/1991)

A sung-through musical by Alain Boublil and Richard Maltby Jr., loosely based on the play *Madame Butterfly* and the opera *Madama Butterfly*

Score: Claude-Michel Schonberg (music), Alain Boublil, Richard Maltby Jr. (lyrics)

Original London production: 20 September 1989; Drury Lane Theatre; 4,246 performances

Original New York production: 11 April 1991; Broadway Theatre; 4,092 performances

Notable songs: The Last Night of the World; The Movie in My Mind; Sun and Moon; The American Dream; Bui-Doi; I Still Believe; Why God Why?; Now That I've Seen Her; I Still Believe; If You Want to Die in Bed; The Morning of the Dragon; I'd Give My Life for You; Little God of My Heart; The Heat Is on in Saigon

The musical adaptation of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* was a French creation that was very successful in Paris before the sung-through piece was translated and turned into the internationally famous British production. For *Miss Saigon*, the same composer, Claude-Michel Schonberg, and librettist/lyricist, Alain Boublil, went directly to West End artists for its first production, which opened in London, thereby making it, in essence, a British musical. Producer Cameron Mackintosh,



Eva Noble Zada and Alistair Brammer played the ill-fated lovers, the Vietnamese Kim and the American GI Chris, in the 2014 London revival of this international musical sensation loosely based on the Puccini opera *Madama Butterfly*. Paul Brown / Alamy Stock Photo

scenic designer John Napier, co-costume designer Andreane Neofitou, and lighting designer David Hersey had all worked on *Les Misérables*. The distinguished British director Nicholas Hytner was hired to stage *Miss Saigon*, yet the choreographer, Bob Avian, and lyricist, Richard Maltby Jr., were American. Thus, with the whole concept originating from two French songwriters, one can argue that the musical was as international in its creation as it was in its later popularity.

While the plot for *Miss Saigon* goes all the way back to the 1900 play *Madame Butterfly* by John Luther Long and David Belasco, much of Boubllil's libretto parallels Puccini's 1904 opera *Madama Butterfly*. The tale of a Japanese geisha who weds an American naval officer who then abandons and forgets her, causing her to commit suicide, has always been a more romantic story than a believable one. Setting the musical in Vietnam during the last days of the war and then, a few years later, in Bangkok, made the story more relevant. Also, the characters were altered to be more logical and able to create empathy with a modern audience. In the Boubllil-Maltby libretto, the crafty Eurasian known as the Engineer drums up business at his whorehouse by holding a Miss Saigon contest, a vulgar interpretation of an American beauty contest. Although the contest is won by the ravishing Gigi, the American GI Chris is taken with one of the other contestants, the young Kim, fresh from the countryside and not yet a hardened prostitute. The two fall in love and even go through a traditional marriage ceremony arranged by the other girls before Chris is suddenly called away. The Americans are leaving Saigon to the approaching Viet Cong, and Kim and Chris are separated in the rush of activity and panic. Three years later, Saigon is now Ho Chi Minh City, and Kim's cousin Thuy is a man of importance. When he finds out that Kim has a two-year-old child by Chris, he threatens to expose her to the Communist authorities. In desperation, she shoots Thuy and flees to Bangkok with the Engineer who believes that Kim's half-American child might get them a visa to the United States. Since the end of the war, Chris has married Ellen and has told her nothing about his "marriage" in Vietnam. John, one of his GI buddies, has remained in Asia and started an organization to care for the babies fathered by American soldiers during the war. John recognizes Kim and writes to Chris that he has a son from his relationship with her. Chris and Ellen go to Bangkok where the Engineer is thriving in the prostitution trade but still wants to get to America. Kim is reunited with Chris, but when she meets Ellen it is clear that they intend to care for the child but not her. Kim shoots herself, knowing that her son will be sure to get to America.

While *Miss Saigon* is well structured and events happen in a logical format, the musical is no less melodramatic than Puccini's opera. Aside from the many tension-filled situations, the musical even includes a tearful song about the Bu Doi, the abandoned babies from the war. While the American officer in Puccini's version is callous, to say the least, Chris is portrayed as a sympathetic character caught in a no-win situation. The character of his wife, Ellen, is more fully developed than just a plot complication. Kim is the innocent victim throughout, unwavering in her love for Chris and a ferocious protector of her child. Thuy is a one-dimensional villain from first to last, the clichéd representative of the Communist Vietnamese. The most intriguing person in *Miss Saigon* is the Engineer. He is funny, despicable, and adds a sense of snide commentary to the events, turning an old plot into a modern satire of opportunism and consumerism. Because the

musical is sung through, Maltby's lyrics try to be conversational at times and poetic at other moments. The results are uneven, but often a song captures an idea or depth of character that allows the musical to be quite moving. The thoughts going through contest winner Gigi's mind as she is crowned Miss Saigon are powerfully revealed in "The Movie in My Mind." The cynicism in the Engineer's "The American Dream" and "If You Want to Die in Bed" is cunning and accurate. Chris and Kim's "The Last Night of the World" is a jazzy, modern version of an opera duet. Schonberg's music pays some homage to Asian sounds, but much of the score strives for a very American pop flavor, purposely moving far away from the European operatic music he wrote for *Les Misérables*. Forms of 1960s rock, Broadway brashness, and jazz are heard in contrast to most of Kim's songs, which are closer to modern pop ballads. There is a lot of music in *Miss Saigon*, and it may be all over the map, but the score has memorable and indelible moments.

	1989 London cast	1991 New York cast
Kim	Lea Salonga	Lea Salonga
The Engineer	Jonathan Pryce	Jonathan Pryce
Chris	Simon Bowman	Willy Falk
John	Peter Polycarpou	Hinton Battle
Ellen	Claire Moore	Liz Callaway
Thuy	Keith Burns	Barry K. Bernal
Gigi	Isay Alvarez	Marina Chapa

Mackintosh cast unknown Filipina actress-singer Lea Salonga as Kim and the versatile British actor Jonathan Pryce as the Engineer and both were showered with praise when *Miss Saigon* opened in London in 1989. The production itself was deemed spectacular, in particular the scene when the last helicopter to leave Saigon is surrounded by citizens desperate to get away before the Communists arrive. The critics were less in unison regarding the libretto and the score, some finding it powerful and moving, others melodramatic and overwrought. But the huge advance sale for *Miss Saigon* left no doubt as to its success and, thanks to strong word of mouth, it ran for ten years.

Mackintosh wanted to replicate the same production on Broadway, including Salonga and Pryce reprising their award-winning performances, but met with strong resistance by America's Actor's Equity Association. Although the stars of *The Phantom of the Opera* had been allowed to repeat their London performances on Broadway in 1988, Equity declared that Salonga and Pryce were not stars and that American actors should be cast in the roles of Kim and the Engineer for the Broadway version. The real reason for the difficulty was the feeling on the part of some that the Engineer should not be played by a white actor. Mackintosh argued that the character is Eurasian and could rightly be played by a Caucasian or Asian actor but Equity stubbornly refused to allow Salonga and Pryce to work on Broadway. Mackintosh retaliated by threatening to cancel the Broadway production, despite its \$24 million advance, thereby denying dozens of actors (including many Asians) the opportunity to perform in *Miss Saigon* during its guaranteed



long run. Since Mackintosh was the wealthiest theatrical producer in the world, he could well afford to carry out his threat, and Equity knew it. Salonga and Pryce were allowed to appear on a New York stage.

*Miss Saigon* opened in 1991 and ran ten years. The Broadway critics were not so kind as the London press and found fault with many aspects of the production except the performers. Even the impressive helicopter scene was dismissed by many reviewers as hokum and was mocked just as the falling chandelier had been in *The Phantom of the Opera*. But *Miss Saigon* was critic-proof and immediately was a sellout with American playgoers. Some minor changes had been made to the libretto for Broadway. Some felt the London version was too anti-American, so a few lines and lyrics were altered. Also, Pryce had applied some Asian makeup for his character in London. Because of the controversy over casting a Caucasian in the role, Pryce used no special makeup in the Broadway production. Both Great Britain and America saw several touring productions of *Miss Saigon*, followed by international productions. Interestingly, the first foreign-language production was in Japan in 1992. *Miss Saigon* would eventually follow the path of Mackintosh's *Les Misérables* and be seen around the globe. There were major revivals of the musical in London in 2014 and in New York in 2017.

## **MONSIEUR BEUCAIRE**

(1919)

A romantic operetta by Frederick Lonsdale, based on the play  
by Booth Tarkington and Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland

*Score:* André Messager (music), Adrian Ross (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 19 April 1919; Prince's Theatre; 221 performances

*Original New York production:* 11 December 1919; New Amsterdam Theatre; 143 performances

*Notable songs:* Philomel; Under the Moon; Red Rose; English Maids; Honor and Love; I Do Not Know; We Are Not Speaking Now; Say No More; A Little More (I Love You a Little); When I Was King of Bath; Never Say That I Am Cold; The Beaux and the Belles of Bath; Have You Heard?; Lightly, Lightly; Rose Minuet

An American novel about a notorious Frenchman became a popular British musical in *Monsieur Beaucaire*. Booth Tarkington, who usually wrote about his native Indiana in his fiction and plays, turned to a French legend with his 1900 novel *Monsieur Beaucaire*. The French nobleman Duc d'Orleans disguises himself as a barber and goes to England, where he opens up shop in Bath under the name Monsieur Beaucaire. He then tries to break into high society by having a friend pass him off as a duke. He succeeds for a time but eventually is exposed as a barber. It is then that Beaucaire reveals his true identity, mocking the pretensions of British society by his game. The novel was so popular that Tarkington and Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland adapted it into the play *Beaucaire* for the distinguished actor Richard Mansfield in 1901. Mansfield, who also directed the play, had one of his greatest

triumphs in the role. After eight weeks in New York he took *Beaucaire* on tour and returned to it throughout his career. The highly literate British playwright Frederick Lonsdale wrote the libretto for the romantic musical version, once again titled *Monsieur Beaucaire*, and his plot put a lot of emphasis on Beaucaire's desire to meet and woo the beautiful Lady Mary Carlisle. When he catches the unscrupulous Duke of Winterset cheating at cards, Beaucaire bribes him into getting the barber invited to a high-society ball so he can meet Lady Mary. Winterset begrudgingly agrees, but when Beaucaire and Lady Mary fall in love, the jealous Winterset exposes Beaucaire as a lowly barber. It is then that the French ambassador arrives and addresses Beaucaire as the French Duc d'Orleans. Winterset is thrown out of favor by Bath society and Beaucaire gets Lady Mary. Lonsdale cut whole sections of Tarkington's play to make room for twenty-four songs and a subplot about Beaucaire's friend Molyneux courting and winning the hand of Lady Lucy.

The French composer Andre Messager wrote a ravishingly romantic score for *Monsieur Beaucaire* with Adrian Ross providing the lyrics, both of them capturing the eighteenth-century period of the piece. The most beloved number from the musical is the waltzing ballad "Philomel" which was added at the last moment for American prima donna Maggie Teyte as Lady Mary. She also had two memorable solos: her introductory number "Never Say That I Am Cold" and the ballad "I Do Not Know." Teyte also had some delectable duets with Marion Green (Beaucaire), such as the teasing "Lightly, Lightly," the endearing "Say No More," and the dainty "Rose Minuet." Baritone Green gave full voice to Beaucaire's solos "Red Rose," "English Maids," and "Under the Moon." The secondary couple, Molyneux and Lucy, sang the lighter pieces, such as the playful "A Little More (I Love You a Little)" and the comic duet "We Are Not Speaking Now." The historic figure Beau Nash was not a major character in the musical but he got to sing the wily "When I Was King of Bath." There were also several numbers for the chorus that were noteworthy, such as sprightly "The Beaux and the Belles of Bath" and the gossipy "Have You Heard?" It was a decidedly old-fashioned score written in the old style without apology. The sixty-five-year-old composer Messager had been one of the shining lights of French light opera in the 1880s and 1890s. But because *Monsieur Beaucaire* was a period piece, such music was not only appropriate but welcomed by the press and the public.

	<i>1919 London cast</i>	<i>1919 New York cast</i>
Mon. Beaucaire	Marion Green	Marion Green
Lady Mary Carlisle	Maggie Teyte	Blanche Tomlin
Molyneux	John Clarke	John Clarke
Duke of Winterset	Robert Parker	Robert Parker
Lady Lucy	Alice Moffat	Marjorie Burgess
Captain Badger	Percy Carr	Percy Carr
Countess of Greenbury	Violet Jerome	Barbara Esme
Frederick Baniston	Lennox Pawle	Lennox Pawle
Beau Nash	Robert Cunningham	Robert Cunningham
Marquis de Mirepox	Yvan Servais	Yvan Servais

Producers Gilbert Miller and Frank Curzon took a risk presenting such an operatic piece in London in 1919. With the war ending, the musical rage was for ragtime and jazz. Yet *Monsieur Beaucaire* was well received by the critics, who praised its score, singers, and lavish production values. There were some quibbles about the old and familiar story but not enough to keep *Monsieur Beaucaire* from a successful run of six months.

Coproducer Miller, who was American, presented the operetta on Broadway with Abe Erlanger later in 1919. Just about the whole production, from much of its cast to its sets and costumes, crossed the Atlantic and, with some alterations in the score, it opened to appreciative reviews and solid box office for four months before setting out on a very profitable tour. It took six years before *Monsieur Beaucaire* was produced in Messenger's native France. It was a success in Paris in 1929 and soon was enjoyed across the nation for several years. *Monsieur Beaucaire* eventually entered the French operetta repertory and is still produced on occasion. London saw revivals in 1931 and 1945, but in the United States the story of the clever Beaucaire showed up in films, with stars as varied as Rudolph Valentino in 1924, Jack Buchanan in 1930, and Bob Hope in 1946 taking the lead role.

## **THE MOUNTEBANKS**

(1892/1893)

A comic operetta by W. S. Gilbert

*Score:* Alfred Cellier and others (music), W. S. Gilbert (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 4 January 1892; Lyric Theatre; 228 performances

*Original New York production:* 11 January 1893; Garden Theatre; 47 performances

*Notable songs:* High Jerry, Ho!; Put a Penny in the Slot; All Alone to My Eerie; Where's My Duck-a-Deary?; Bedecked in Fashion Trim; If You Please; I'd Be a Young Girl If I Could; Willow, Willow, Where's My Love?; Fair Maid, Take Pity; If I Can Catch This Jolly Jack-Patch; In Days Gone By; It's My Opinion; Ophelia Was a Dainty Little Maid

During their twenty-five-year collaboration, W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan worked with other composers or librettists on occasion. After the success of *The Gondoliers* (1889), each man went his separate way for a time, and Gilbert teamed up with veteran composer Alfred Cellier for *The Mountebanks*, a comic operetta fantasy set in Sicily. A band of brigands, led by Arrostino, have been leaving their mountain lair to slip into a village and steal women to be their wives. The latest bandit to find a mate this way is Risotto, who is now married to the village girl Minestra. When Arrostino hears that the Duke and Duchess are expected to arrive soon, he plots to rob the wealthy couple. He and his brigands disguise themselves as monks and Minestra takes on the disguise of a sickly old woman. Also in town is the comely maiden Teresa, who is loved by the brigand Alfredo, but she is not interested. It is the innkeeper's niece Ultrice who loves Alfredo and goes along



with his plan for the two of them to impersonate the Duke and Duchess. Also arriving in town are a wagonful of charlatans, or mountebanks, to con the villagers out of their money. Their leader, Pietro, instructs his cohorts Nita and Bartolo to perform as a pair of automaton dolls to impress the Duke and mesmerize the public. At this point in the story, an old alchemist blows himself up and leaves behind a potion that turns what is fake into truth. Mistakenly, everyone in town drinks of the potion and all become what they are pretending to be: monks, a Duke and Duchess, an old lady, dolls, and so on. This leads to comic complications and some odd shenanigans (Teresa had faked madness and now becomes so insane she threatens to jump off a mountain to her death) before the spell is broken, whereupon everyone returns to their true selves, and Ultrice and Alfredo are united.

The use of a magic potion, which Gilbert had employed in *The Sorcerer*, was a device he wished to repeat in other Gilbert and Sullivan works, but Sullivan forbade it. Working with producer Horace Sedger and composer Cellier, Gilbert was free to return to his favorite fantasy premise, and it made for a charming libretto. While there are touches of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas in *The Mountebanks*, the piece is more a throwback to the kind of entertainments Gilbert wrote in his pre-Sullivan days. Also, several of the characters had distinct similarities to those in previous musicals with Sullivan, so *The Mountebanks* is not considered one of Gilbert's more original or imaginative efforts. While the music may not be of the caliber of Sullivan, Cellier's compositions are often sprightly and charming. The two runaway hits of the musical were the rousing "High Jerry, Ho!," sung by Arrostino and the bandits, and the catchy "Put a Penny in the Slot," sung and danced by the mountebanks Bartolo and Nita as performing dolls. Teresa got to sing the felicitous solos "All Alone to My Eerie," "Willow, Willow, Where's My Love?," and "In My Opinion." The duets were handled by Risotto and Minestra, such as the affectionate "If You Please" and the sportive "I'd Be a Young Girl If I Could." Cellier wrote some pseudo-religious chanting for the monks, some sparkling trios, as with "In Days Gone By" and "Ophelia Was a Dainty Little Maid," and a few captivating quartets, most memorably "Fair Maid, Take Pity." Cellier,

	<i>1892 London cast</i>	<i>1893 New York cast</i>
Arrostino	Frank Wyatt	Charles Dungan
Alfredo	J. Robertson	C. Hayden Coffin
Teresa	Geraldine Ulmar	Lillian Russell
Ultrice	Lucille Saunders	Mabella Baker
Risotto	Cecil Burt	Henry Hallam
Minestra	Eva Moore	Ada Dare
Pietro	Lionel Brough	W. T. Carleton
Bartolo	Harry Monkhouse	Louis Harrison
Nita	Aida Jenoure	Laura Clement
Giorgio Raviolo	Arthur Playfair	John Dudley
Luigi Spaghetti	Charles Gilbert	Charles Roux
Elvino di Pasta	Furneaux Cook	George Broderick
Beppo	Gilbert Porteous	Russell Malcolm

who suffered from tuberculosis all his life, died at the age of forty-seven during rehearsals for *The Mountebanks* and the musical director, future composer Ivan Caryll, had to write the overture, the entr'acte, and some incidental music before opening night.

When *The Mountebanks* opened in London in 1892, the operetta was cheered by the audience but the critical reaction was mixed. Some found Gilbert's libretto old hat and too familiar; others thought it among his most clever. Some reviews applauded the late Cellier's splendid music; others sorely missed the Sullivan music they were used to hearing with Gilbert's lyrics. Public opinion prevailed, and the operetta ran a very lucrative eight months.

Producer Sedger sent out three touring companies of *The Mountebanks*, and they were also profitable. He then sold the American rights to T. Henry French, who produced the musical with the Lillian Russell Opera Comique Company. Leading lady Russell was at the peak of her career and guaranteed a successful run on Broadway. But she did not think the role of Teresa was significant enough, so the script was rewritten to feature the star and new songs were added for her to sing. When *The Mountebanks* opened on Broadway in 1893, most of the attention was on Russell, but there were compliments for Gilbert and Cellier's work as well. Russell's company was a touring one, so they were booked in New York for only six weeks. Box office was strong enough that the operetta could have run longer but Russell and her cast continued on the road and *The Mountebanks* was seen across the country. As popular as the operetta was in its day, it did not have the long life in revivals as did many of the Gilbert and Sullivan works. Yet it showed that Gilbert could have a hit without Sullivan, which made their reuniting all the more difficult in the future.

### ***MY LADY'S MAID; OR, LADY MADCAP***

(1904/1906)

A musical comedy by Paul Rubens, N. Newnham Davis, and others

*Score:* Paul Rubens (music), Paul Rubens, Percy Greenbank (lyrics)

*Original London production* [*Lady Madcap*]: 17 December 1904; Prince of Wales Theatre; 354 performances

*Original New York production:* 20 September 1906; Casino Theatre; 44 performances

*Notable songs:* I Like You in Velvet; Pretty Primrose; Who? Who? Who?; My Lady's Maid; I Don't Seem to Want You When You're with Me; Nerves; Her Little Dog; The Beetle and the Boot; Mum's the Word; (I'd Love to Have) A Soldier of My Own; I'd Like to Call You Mine; See Me in a Scarlet Uniform, as I Go Marching Down the Street; Missis

Edwardian musical comedy doesn't get much more lighthearted (and lightheaded) as this sunny piece of nonsense that was just what the audiences wanted in 1904. Producer George Edwardes, who had built a hit out of the flimsiest material with *Three Little Maids* in 1903, rehired the composer-librettist Paul Rubens for

*Lady Madcap* and asked for more of the same. Ex-soldier-journalist N. Newnham Davis helped with the libretto and Percy Greenbank contributed to the lyrics, but the musical had the Rubens stamp all over it. The madcap heroine of the title, Lady Betty Claridge, was one of those mischievous rich girls who likes to play tricks on everyone, much to the amusement of her friends and the London theatre-goers. Living in a grand country manor, Betty gets rid of her father for the weekend by sending a fake telegram urging his presence in the city on business. Betty also takes out an ad in a London newspaper asking for a millionaire husband. She then convinces her friend Gwenny Holden to pretend to be Lady Betty and she'll be Betty's maid. Soon a regiment of invited soldiers come on the scene, as well as two crooks, Stony Stratford and Posh Jenkins, pretending to be millionaires. They case the house while wooing Gwenny, who is also courted by the dapper French aristocrat Comte St. Hubert. Betty, who has no intention of marrying a millionaire, falls for Trooper Smith, whom she persuades to pose as the butler. Chaos rules the weekend as a servants' ball is held and everyone seems to be pretending to be someone else. In the end, the impostors are unveiled and Smith turns out to be a millionaire, so Betty's father forgives all her shenanigans.

The action in *Lady Madcap* was fast and furious and the characters so broad that one hardly noticed how little substance there was in the musical. The score certainly helped gloss over the libretto's shortcomings, and the top-notch cast that Edwardes assembled delivered the songs with panache. Maurice Farkoa as the comic French count stopped the show each evening with his risqué number "I Like You in Velvet," sung to Gwenny as he suggested he'd like her in anything—or nothing at all. Another crowd pleaser was Betty's coy ditty "Her Little Dog," which she sang backed by a chorus of girls pampering their invisible canines. Betty also confessed "(I'd Love to Have) A Soldier of My Own" and led the military march "See Me in a Scarlet Uniform, as I Go Marching Down the Street."

	<i>1904 London cast</i>	<i>1906 New York cast</i>
Lady Betty	Adrienne Augarde	Madge Crichton
Trooper Smith	G. P. Huntley	Joseph Coyne
Gwenny Holden	Delia Mason	Delia Mason
Comte St. Hubert	Maurice Farkoa	
Count Manuëlo Colonna	Henry Bergman	
Stony Stratford	Aubrey Fitzgerald	Robert E. Graham
Posh Jenkins	Fred Emney	Walter E. Perkins
Lord Framlingham	Herbert Sparling	Charles W. Dungan
Palmer	Roy St. George	Nicholas Burnham
Susan	Eva Sandford	Elsa Ryan
Colonel Layton	Leedham Bantock	Joseph Maylon
Mrs. Layton	Blanche Massey	Edith Blair
Maj. Blatherswaite	Dennis Eadie	Claude Flemming
Capt. Harrington	J. Edward Fraser	Frank Rushworth
Lt. Somerset	Spenser Trevor	John Dudley
Corporal Ham	George Carroll	George Carroll

One of the actual maids, Susan, got to complain about her demanding employer in "Missis," while a certain Colonel Layton delivered an odd narrative song, "The Beetle and the Boot," in which a bug falls in love with a military boot only to be literally crushed by it. It was that kind of score.

Yet everything about *Lady Madcap* was such unpretentious fun that few critics complained about how thin the story and characters were, and the public thought the musical a rousing good time. It opened in 1904 and was doing brisk business for nine months. When Edwardes saw that sales were waning, he temporarily closed the production, made some cast changes, and added some already-popular songs from the United States (most notably "Bedalia" and "Sammy"). He then reopened *Lady Madcap*, billing it as a "new edition," and it played to full houses for another three months. Edwardes then sent out two companies to tour the British Isles.

The Shubert Brothers presented the Broadway version in 1906 as *My Lady's Maid*. The new title was not the only change made. The Shuberts hired R. H. Burnside and Edward Paulton to rewrite sections of the script, and they cut songs from London and added some American ones. Although some of the West End cast crossed the Atlantic with the show, the Broadway production was an inferior version of the original and the critics were not at all taken with the "madcap" kind of comedy that had so pleased the British press and public. *My Lady's Maid* struggled to run five weeks. A later production in Australia also failed to run. The musical opened in London at the right time, and that lucky circumstance was never repeated again.

# O

## ***OH, WHAT A LOVELY WAR!***

(1963/1964)

A musical revue by Charles Chilton

*Score:* World War One songs by various songwriters

*Original London production:* 19 March 1963; Theatre Royal East; 501 performances

*Original New York production:* 30 September 1964; Broadhurst Theatre; 125 performances

*Notable songs:* Oh, What a Lovely War!; Good-Bye-ee; Pack Up Your Troubles (In Your Old Kit-Bag); It's a Long Way to Tipperary; Hush, Here Comes a Whizbang; Roses of Picardy; When This Lousy War Is Over; They Were Only Playing Leap-frog; Hitchykoo; We Don't Want to Lose You; There's a Long Long Trail; I Want to Go Home; Wash Me in the Water; Row, Row, Row; Belgium Put the Kibosh on the Kaiser; I'll Make a Man of You; Keep the Home Fires Burning; I Don't Want to Be a Soldier; The Bells of Hell Go Ting-a-ling-a-ling; Sister Susie's Sewing Shirts (for Soldiers)

An antiwar musical revue that wryly used patriotic songs from the World War One era, *Oh, What a Lovely War!* was one of the most innovative, controversial, and potent British musicals of the 1960s. The revue was presented by the renegade producer Joan Littlewood, who was famous (or infamous) for her inventive socialist productions at the Theatre Royal Stratford East, a popular “fringe” theatre in London. Although the outspoken Littlewood claimed to despise commercialization of her art (“theatre is the soul of the people . . . and should be free, like air or water or love,” she often stated), some of her notable productions transferred to the West End. Such was the case with *Oh, What a Lovely War!* in 1963. The concept of the revue was to illustrate the horrors of the Great War (and war in general), but not by realistically presenting the conflict on stage. Instead, the score consisted of actual World War One-era songs, most of which were merry, optimistic, and even downright silly. Moreover, the performers moved about clownishly and wore stylized Pierrot and Pierette costumes with metal helmets rather than military uniforms. All of this was contrasted by John Bury's scenery, which utilized multimedia effectively, projecting images of the war and showing newspaper and ticker tape broadcast information about how many soldiers had died in a particular



An antiwar musical didn't have much of a chance for financial success on Broadway in 1964, but this innovative and theatrical piece was very powerful all the same. Reprising his London performance as the Master of Ceremonies was Victor Spinetti (center). Also in the New York production were (left to right) Valerie Walsh, Myvanwy Jenn, Fanny Carby, and Barbara Windsor. *Photofest / Photographer: Graphic House*

conflict and how little advancement had been achieved with such heavy losses. The cast portrayed the average Tommies and the generals—the former as guileless victims and the latter as incompetent fools. All evening the songs kept coming, painfully cheerful and mockingly optimistic. By the second act, the humor had a bitterness behind it and the revue ended on a devastatingly tragic note with the audience in chills and tears.

The origin of *Oh, What a Lovely War!* came from the radio. Charles Chilton had put together a BBC program for Armistice Day in 1962 using World War One songs and commentary. The broadcast impressed Gerry Raffles, coproducer of the Theatre Royal Stratford East, who convinced Littlewood it would make a potent musical revue. Chilton wrote the revue and selected the songs but it was Littlewood's take-no-prisoners staging that made *Oh, What a Lovely War!* so powerful. Like many productions at that fringe theatre, the revue was created in rehearsals through improvisation. The actors researched aspects of the Great War and improvised personal narratives about it. Much of the revue used the format of a music hall entertainment and each act or "turn" often featured a different member of the ensemble company. The well-known period songs, such as "Pack Up Your

Troubles (In Your Old Kit-Bag)," "Keep the Home Fires Burning," and "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," were already familiar enough to encourage a sing-along. Other songs had been little heard since the Great War, though a few had found favor again during World War Two, such as "Roses of Picardy." Among the gleefully cheery numbers were "Hush, Here Comes a Whizzbang," "Good-Bye-ee," "The Bells of Hell Go Ting-a-ling-a-ling," and the title song. "They Were Only Playing Leapfrog" made fun of the officers, "I'll Make a Man of You" and "We Don't Want to Lose You (But We Feel You Ought to Go)" were seductive recruitment songs performed by chorus girls, and "Sister Susie's Sewing Shirts (for Soldiers)" was a ridiculous, tongue-tying sing-along ditty. The tone of the revue changed with such songs of heartache and loneliness as "When This Lousy War Is Over," "I Want to Go Home," "There's a Long Long Trail," and "I Don't Want to Be a Soldier."

	<i>1963 London cast</i>	<i>1964 New York cast</i>
Master of Ceremonies, etc.	Victor Spinetti Brian Murphy Avis Bunnage Larry Dann Murray Melvin Colin Kemball John Gower Fanny Carby Myvanwy Jenn Mary Preston	Victor Spinetti Brian Murray Ian Patterson Larry Dann Murray Melvin Colin Kemball Bob Stevenson Fanny Carby Myvanwy Jenn George Sewell

The audience reaction to *Oh, What a Lovely War!* when it opened at the Royal Stratford East in 1963 was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. Word quickly spread, and the little theatre was soon packed every night. The critics were divided in their opinion. Some saw the revue as a mockery of the brave men who died in the Great War and a slur on the great leaders of the past. Others recognized *Oh, What a Lovely War!* as one of the most incisive and uncompromising theatrical pieces to be seen in London in many a year. There was talk of transferring the musical to the West End, but Lord Cobbold, the Lord Chamberlain, without seeing the revue, declared that such a disrespectful piece was not to be encouraged. Yet when Princess Margaret brought Cobbold to a performance of *Oh, What a Lovely War!* she said to Littlewood, "What you've said here tonight should have been said long ago. Don't you agree, Lord Cobbold?" The next day permission to transfer the musical to the West End was granted. The only concession made for the move was making the ending of the musical a bit more optimistic. Mixed notices greeted the reopening at a West End playhouse, and the controversy made the revue the talk of London. *Oh, What a Lovely War!* ran fifteen months and, coming full circle, it was later broadcast twice on the radio.

Raffles coproduced the Broadway production with David Merrick in 1964, retaining Littlewood's direction, Bury's scenery and projections, and Victor Spinetti

(the Emcee of sorts) and some of the London cast. The reviews were encouraging, but the public was not very interested. Antiwar sentiments in the United States were not in favor in the early 1960s and a musical filled with British World War One songs had limited appeal. The revue still managed to find an audience for three and a half months. By the end of the decade, when the Vietnam War had polarized the nation, productions of *Oh, What a Lovely War!* appeared across the States but it was never a musical that was embraced by mainstream audiences. A star-studded, overblown film version in 1969 barely resembled the stage work although most of the songs were the same.

## **OLIVER!**

(1960/1963)

A musical play by Lionel Bart, based on Charles Dickens's novel *Oliver Twist*

*Score:* Lionel Bart (music and lyrics)

*Original London production:* 30 June 1960; New Theatre; 2,618 performances

*Original New York production:* 6 January 1963; Imperial Theatre; 744 performances

*Notable songs:* Consider Yourself; Where Is Love?; As Long as He Needs Me; I'd Do Anything; You've Got to Pick a Pocket or Two; Food, Glorious Food; It's a Fine Life; Reviewing the Situation; Who Will Buy?; Be Back Soon; Oliver!; Boy for Sale; I Shall Scream; My Name; That's Your Funeral

While *Oliver!* may not be considered part of the British musical invasion of America of the 1970s and 1980s, it foreshadows that movement in the early 1960s by becoming the longest-running London musical yet seen on Broadway. Lionel Bart, who had shown promise with the London musicals *Lock Up Your Daughters* (1959) and *Fings Ain't Wot They Used t' Be* (1959), hit a triple header with his book, music, and lyrics for *Oliver!* There had been many attempts to musicalize the works of Charles Dickens over the years but none caught on until Bart found a way of condensing the many characters and plot threads of *Oliver Twist* into a coherent, concise libretto. The musical starts with the young orphan Oliver already in the workhouse and upsetting the pompous beadle Mr. Bumble by requesting a second helping of gruel. Sent out to work for the callous funeral director Mr. Sowerberry, Oliver is treated so unfairly that he escapes to London where he is taken under the wing of the Artful Dodger, one of the boys who steals for the greedy but likable Fagin. But Fagin is under the thumb of the cruel Sikes, as is Sikes's abused wife, Nancy. On his first pick-pocketing assignment, Oliver is caught by the police but taken in by the wealthy gentleman Mr. Brownlow. Nancy is forced to kidnap Oliver and return him to Sikes, who needs the boy for a break-in. Having taken a liking to the boy, Nancy regrets her actions and goes to Brownlow and makes arrangements to return Oliver to him. Sikes finds out about the plan and kills Nancy. Hunted by the police, Sikes grabs Oliver and tries to get away but is shot by a policeman while another rescues Oliver. Brownlow learns from Mr. Bumble,





The dangerous Bill Sikes (Danny Sewell, standing) and the pick-pocket master Fagin (Clive Revill, seated at table) convince Nancy (Georgia Brown) to kidnap Oliver Twist while the Artful Dodger (Davy Jones, far left) and the boys look on in the 1963 Broadway production of the Dickens musical. *Photofest*

who comes looking for money, that Oliver is the gentleman's grandson. The two are reunited and Fagin, his pick-pocketing operation exposed, sets off on his own, questioning if his life of crime has been a wise decision.

While many minor characters and incidents from the novel had to be eliminated, Bart managed to retain sixteen speaking characters and most of the story's essential scenes, still leaving room for eighteen songs and some reprises. The capture and hanging of Fagin was cut, but Bart kept in the most disturbing scene in the novel, the brutal murder of Nancy. As with Dickens, the libretto found plenty of humor in a tale that is basically a serious drama. It helped that several songs had a music hall quality that lifted the musical's entertainment value at the right moments. Nancy and her friend Bet sang the sing-alongs "Oom-Pah-Pah" and "It's a Fine Life," Fagin led the merry march "Be Back Soon," Dodger introduced the contagious "Consider Yourself," and Nancy, Dodger, and Oliver charmed with "I'd Do Anything." While none of these were necessary plot-wise, they kept the story from becoming too bleak without breaking character. The simple plaintive songs for Oliver—"Where Is Love?" and "Who Will Buy?"—gave the musical heart, just as Bumble and Widow Corney's farcical duet "I Shall Scream" provided the belly laughs and Nancy's ballad "As Long as He Needs Me" became the take-home hit tune. Bart's most intricate numbers were Fagin's instructive "You've Got to Pick a Pocket or Two" and the stream-of-consciousness character number "Reviewing the Situation." There was plenty of variety in the *Oliver!* score but what all the songs had in common was Bart's remarkable gift for melody and catchy tunes. From the orphans' opening number "Food, Glorious

Food” to the finale reprise of “Consider Yourself,” here was a score that was so accessible that Londoners exiting the theatre were humming the songs as if they were old favorites. They soon became favorites as customers bought the cast album in numbers rarely seen before. With one musical, Lionel Bart became the new voice of the British musical.

	<i>1960 London cast</i>	<i>1963 New York cast</i>
Oliver Twist	Keith Hamshere	Bruce Prochnick
Fagin	Ron Moody	Clive Revill
Nancy	Georgia Brown	Georgia Brown
Artful Dodger	Martin Horsey	David Jones
Bill Sikes	Danny Sewell	Danny Sewell
Bet	Dian Grey	Alice Playten
Mr. Bumble	Paul Whitsun-Jones	Willoughby Goddard
Mrs. Corney	Hope Jackman	Hope Jackman
Mr. Brownlow	George Bishop	Geoffrey Lumb
Sowerberry	Barry Humphries	Barry Humphries
Mrs. Sowerberry	Sonia Fraser	Helena Carroll

Donald Albery produced the original West End production of *Oliver!*, which boasted complicated and effective scenery by Sean Kenny and efficient direction by Peter Coe. Character actor Ron Moody triumphed in the role of Fagin and Georgia Brown shone as Nancy. Keith Hamshere and Martin Horsey were the first of the many boys to play Oliver and the Artful Dodger during the long run. Such a successful run was guaranteed by the rave reviews by the critics and the overwhelming approval by the public. *Oliver!* ran over six years in the West End while tours played all the major cities in the British Isles as well as in Australia and Canada.

David Merrick coproduced with Albery the 1963 Broadway mounting of *Oliver!*, which not only was directed and designed by the London artists but also included much of the West End cast, save the role of Fagin, played by renowned character actor Clive Revill. Only one song was cut (the Sowerberrys’ “That’s Your Funeral”), and Americans embraced Bart’s songs with the same enthusiasm as the London audiences had. Its run of nearly two years on Broadway broke the record held by *The Boy Friend* (1954) as the longest-running British musical in New York.

*Oliver!* soon became a favorite of school groups in the English-speaking nations as well as in summer stock and community theatres. There were successful revivals in London in 1977, 1983, 1994, and 2009. The musical’s return to Broadway in 1965 and 1984 were not hits. The 1968 film version, on the other hand, was an international success and won six Oscars including Best Picture. Being a period piece with timeless songs, *Oliver!* remains a favorite with all kinds of theatre groups. Sadly, it was Bart’s only musical success in America. In the late 1960s he sold his rights to *Oliver!* to finance two failed musical productions, leaving him bankrupt and destitute for the last thirty years of his life. He died in 1999 at the age of sixty-eight from liver cancer.

## **THE ORCHID**

(1903/1907)

A musical comedy by James T. Tanner

*Score:* Ivan Caryll, Lionel Monckton, and others (music), Adrian Ross, Percy Greenbank, and others (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 28 October 1903; Gaiety Theatre; 559 performances

*Original New York production:* 8 April 1907; Herald Square Theatre; 178 performances

*Notable songs:* Little Mary; The Unemployed; Liza Ann; Pushful; Fancy Dress; Come Along with Me (to the Zoo, Dear); Bedalia; Rose-a-Rubie; Fancies; Little Chimney Sweep; (From) Far Peru; I Don't Want the Dark; He Goes to Church on Sunday; (And They Say He Went to) College; No Wedding Bells for Me; Recipe; Come Around on Our Veranda; The Unemployed

*The Orchid* was a true Edwardian musical, opening in the new Gaiety Theatre with King Edward VII in the audience. The contrived plot by James T. Tanner may not have been worthy of royalty but producer George Edwardes provided a superior cast singing some quickly likable tunes that pleased both king and commoner. The title flower was the prop that held the scattered story together. Both Aubrey Chesterton, the British minister of commerce, and the French aristocrat, Comte Raoul de Cassinat, are determined to possess a rare orchid found growing in the mountains of Peru. Chesterton, who has founded a horticultural college, sends Professor Zaccary to South America to find a specimen of the orchid and bring it to a flower competition in Nice, France. Zaccary finds one but accidentally destroys the flower. He then learns that an identical kind of orchid blooms in the garden of the Countess Barwick in England. He secures a specimen from the groundskeeper Meakin, but loses it again, and the orchid ends up in the hat of Caroline Twinning. The plot also concerns two couples in love who get married at the Paris Registry: Guy Scrymgeour and Zaccary's daughter Josephine, and Dr. Ronald Fausett and Lady Violet Anstruther. But the registrar mixes up the wedding licenses and Guy is legally wed to Violet and Ronald to Josephine. It takes two acts to find the orchid and get the couples straightened out. Along the way there are some hilarious scenes, such as a farcical duel between the French Count and the gardener Meakin. Among the other characters tossed into the mayhem is Chesterton's pretty secretary, Thisbe, a secondary role that made a star out of former dancer Gabrielle Ray. Tanner's libretto twisted itself into knots in order to provide comic bits and specialty numbers for the popular performers, but that's the way the playgoers liked it, and there were no complaints.

Several hands contributed to the score of *The Orchid*, but Ivan Caryll and Lionel Monckton composed most of the music and Adrian Ross and Percy Greenbank provided most of the lyrics. Gaiety favorite Gertie Millar as Violet got two of the finest numbers, the graceful "Lady Mary" and the coy "Come with Me (to the Zoo, Dear)," and joined Zaccary in the sassy tale of "Liza Ann." Chesterton boasts of his forceful character in "Pushful," Caroline pictured herself as famous ladies in history with "Fancies," and Meakin and Guy dressed as tramps and sang of

the plight of "The Unemployed." The most popular song in the musical was not written for *The Orchid*, however, but was stolen from a failed Broadway musical. Popular singer Blanche Ring sang the catchy "Bedelia" in the short-lived *The Jersey Lily* on Broadway in 1903 then sang it in vaudeville for years, helping the ditty sell over a million copies of sheet music. George Grossmith Jr., who played Guy, adapted the song's lyric into British pronunciation ("Bedelia" rhymed with "steal yer") and sang it in *The Orchid*. Like Ring, Grossmith sang the song for years, and in Britain it was most associated with him.

	1903 London cast	1907 New York cast
Lady Violet Anstruther	Gertie Millar	Amelia Stone
Josephine Zaccary	Ethel Sydney	Irene Franklin
Hon. Guy Scrymgeour	George Grossmith Jr.	Alfred Hickman
Caroline Twining	Connie Ediss	Trixie Friganza
Prof. Zaccary	Fred Wright Jr.	William Rock
Meakin	Edmund Payne	
Artie Choke		Eddie Foy
Dr. Ronald Fausett	Lionel Mackinder	Melville Ellis
Aubrey Chesterton	Harry Grattan	George C. Boniface
Comte Raoul de Cassignat	Robert Nainby	
Countess Anstruther	Phyllis Blair	Jean Newcombe
Thisbe	Gabrielle Ray	Maude Fulton
Billy	Lydia West	
Zelie	Hilda Jacobsen	Laura Guerite
Lady Warden	Gertrude Aylward	Grace Studiford
Marchand d'Nez		J. C. Newell

The audience at the gala opening night of *The Orchid* in 1903 was highly approving of the musical nonsense on stage and, despite some carping from a few of the critics, the press was also supportive. The new Gaiety Theatre was kept busy for twenty months, then *The Orchid* set out on a tour of Britain. Productions also opened in Australia and South Africa before the musical premiered on Broadway in 1907.

Significant changes were made to the libretto for New York, but it was still complicated and illogical. The popular comic Eddie Foy starred as the gardener Meakin, renamed Artie Choke, and he was given some new songs to sing. The best of them was "He Goes to Church on Sunday" about a corrupt businessman who cheats and outfoxes his clients all week long but on Sunday passes the collection plate at church so he's considered an honest man. Comic actress Trixi Friganza played Caroline and was also a box office draw. A young Jerome Kern wrote two of the new songs for the Broadway version—the up-tempo "Recipe" and the waltz "Come Around on Our Veranda"—but they attracted little attention. The Shubert Brothers' production of *The Orchid* ran five profitable months on Broadway then enjoyed a successful tour.

# P

## ***PATIENCE; OR, BUNTHORNE'S BRIDE***

(1881)

A comic operetta by W. S. Gilbert

*Score:* Arthur Sullivan (music), W. S. Gilbert (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 23 April 1881; Opera Comique; 578 performances

*Original New York production:* 22 September 1881; Standard Theatre; 177 performances

*Notable Songs:* Silvered Is the Raven Hair; I Cannot Tell What This Love May Be; Love Is a Plaintive Song; Prithce, Pretty Maiden; A Magnet Hung in a Hardware Shop (The Magnet and the Churn); If Saphir I Choose to Marry; When I First Put This Uniform On; Let the Merry Cymbals Sound; If You Want a Receipt for a Popular Mystery; Am I Alone and Unobserved? (If You're Anxious for to Shine); When I Go Out of Doors; So Go to Him and Say to Him; Twenty Love-Sick Maidens We

Although the target of this W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan satire, the aesthetic movement in vogue in England in the 1870s and 1880s, may be of only historical interest today, *Patience* remains a delightful musical spoof on cultural fads. Because it mocked Oscar Wilde and other aesthetes of the day, some feel *Patience* is the team's most dated operetta. It is not done as frequently as the most popular Gilbert and Sullivan works. Yet there is something engaging about *Patience* and its admirers are fervent in placing it with the best of the duo's operettas. While Gilbert was planning his operetta about the aesthetic movement, there was a series of cartoons in *Punch* and a nonmusical play about the movement, both popular with the public. Wanting to find an original approach to the subject, Gilbert fashioned a story about two rival preachers who each embraced the affectations of aestheticism in order to win over their parishioners. After struggling with the idea for some time, Gilbert gave up on it and turned the story into two rival poets.

The plot he ended up with is one of Gilbert's simplest. All the unmarried ladies of the village were once smitten with the 35th Dragoon Guards stationed near Bunthorne Castle. But they are now in ecstasy over Reginald Bunthorne, who is an intellectual in the aesthetic movement, writes poetry, wears his hair long, and carries a lily. Bunthorne enjoys the attention but secretly reveals to the audience that the whole act is a sham, that he hates poetry, and that he loves the dairy maid Patience. She loves the dashing poet Archibald Grosvenor, her childhood sweetheart,

but when it is explained to her that true love is unselfish, Patience naively thinks marrying Archibald would be a self-serving act and breaks off her affections for him. When she agrees to wed Bunthorne, the maidens of the village lose their fascination with him and are all drawn to the available Grosvenor. Bunthorne misses the attention and threatens Grosvenor with a fearsome curse to give up his poetic ways and become a common man. Grosvenor does so, but the plan backfires: the maidens return to the dragoons, Patience returns to Grosvenor, and Bunthorne is left alone and unloved. While there are other characters and some minor subplots in *Patience*, the libretto is Gilbert at his leanest and most pointed. He not only satirizes the effete aesthetic movement in poetry, prose, and art, but also addleheaded romantic love, rural naiveté, military bluster, and the power that egotism and hypocrisy have over the gullible public. Modern audiences see Bunthorne as Gilbert's spoof of Oscar Wilde. Yet at the time when *Patience* was written, Wilde was not yet that famous and Gilbert more likely patterned Bunthorne after the poets Algernon Charles Swinburne and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. As Wilde became better known, audiences saw him in the character of Bunthorne and have ever since.

Sullivan's music in *Patience* often sparkles and many of the songs are favorites of Gilbert and Sullivan admirers though few are very effective out of context of the operetta. Patience herself sings two enticing solos, the flowing lament "Love Is a Plaintive Song" and the spirited "I Cannot Tell What This Love May Be." Bunthorne confesses his effective but fake behavior in the clever "Am I Alone and Unobserved?," also known as "If You're Anxious for to Shine," and joins Lady Jane in the wicked rapid-fire duet "So Go to Him, and Say to Him." Jane, an elderly and homely spinster, gets to sing the solo "Silvered Is the Ravened Hair" as she accompanies herself on the violoncello. The facetious lyric lists her unappealing physical features yet Sullivan's music is so mellifluous that the song caught on as an instrumental favorite. Grosvenor sang the silly tale of metal objects in a hardware shop in "The Magnet and the Churn" to charm the ladies and competed with Bunthorne with the tongue-twisting duet "When I Go Out of Door." In a more romantic vein, Grosvenor had lilting duets with Patience, such as "Prithee, Pretty Maiden" and "Though to Marry You Would Very Selfish Be." The Dragoons sang the ardent "The Soldiers of the Queen" and their leader, Colonel Calverley, was similarly virile with "When I First Put This Uniform On" and "If You Want a Receipt for a Popular

	<i>1881 London cast</i>	<i>1881 New York cast</i>
Reginald Bunthorne	George Grossmith	J. H. Ryley
Patience	Leonora Braham	Carrie Burton
Archibald Grosvenor	Rutland Barrington	James Barton Key
Lady Jane	Alice Barnett	Augusta Roche
Colonel Calverley	Richard Temple	William T. Carlton
Major Murgatroyd	Frank Thornton	Arthur Wilkinson
Duke of Dunstable	Durward Lely	Llewellyn Cadwaladr
Lady Angela	Jessie Bond	Alice Burville
Lady Ella	May Fortescue	Alma Stanley
Lady Saphir	Julia Gwynne	Rose Chapelle



Mystery." The choral numbers in *Patience* are also superior, from the lethargic "Twenty Love-Sick Maidens We" to the joyous "Let the Merry Cymbals Sound."

*Patience*, the sixth collaboration between Gilbert and Sullivan, opened in the antiquated Opera Comique in London in 1881 because producer Richard D'Oyly Carte's new theatre, the Savoy, was still under construction. The reviews were nearly unanimously positive, and the public, expecting much from the Gilbert-Sullivan-Carte trio, were not disappointed. After six months, the production moved into the shiny new Savoy Theatre, the first in the world to be lit with electric lights. Future Gilbert and Sullivan works would premiere at the Savoy and become known as the Savoy Operettas. To this day, theatre companies across the English-speaking world devoted to Gilbert and Sullivan often use the term *Savoyards*. *Patience* continued its successful run in the Savoy Theatre for just over another year. Touring productions did not wait for the operetta to close in London, and soon productions appeared in Australia, followed by those in Continental Europe.

The first American production of *Patience* was an unauthorized one in St. Louis in July of 1881, two months before Carte presented the official version on Broadway. There was no aesthetic movement in America, and Carte was worried that New York playgoers would not find the satire of the movement amusing. So Carte wisely sponsored Oscar Wilde's lecture tour of the States and the colorful figure was soon famous in the New World. The Broadway premiere of *Patience* ran a healthy five months but would fare even better in the future. An 1896 Broadway revival, featuring Lillian Russell as *Patience* and matinee idol Henry Dixey as *Bunthorne*, was a major success. Over the past 140 years, *Patience* has returned to Broadway at least twenty-eight times. Add to that the many Off-Broadway revivals; the regional, educational, and summer theatre productions; and the popularity of *Patience* in Gilbert and Sullivan festivals, and it is clear that the operetta has done very well for a supposedly "dated" Victorian musical.

## ***THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA***

(1986/1988)

A sung-through musical by Richard Stilgoe, based on the novel by Gaston Leroux

*Score:* Andrew Lloyd Webber (music), Charles Hart, Richard Stilgoe (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 9 October 1986; Her Majesty's Theatre; 13,500+ performances

*Original New York production:* 26 January 1988; Majestic Theatre; 13,000+ performances

*Notable songs:* The Music of the Night; All I Ask of You; Masquerade; The Point of No Return; Prima Donna; Think of Me; Angel of Music; Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again; The Phantom of the Opera; I Remember/Stranger Than You Dreamt It

Emphasizing the romantic and musical aspects of the tale over the horror story, the Andrew Lloyd Webber version of the French classic may be thin on character and suspense but is overflowing with spectacle and music. The long-running champ in both the West End and on Broadway, playing longer than any previous



A colorful “Masquerade” ball on the grand staircase of the Paris opera house opens the second act of this musical sensation that continues to break records. The romantic pair for the 1988 Broadway production was played by Sarah Brightman (Christine) and Steve Barton (Raoul de Chagny), seen downstage center. *Photofest*

musical, *The Phantom of the Opera* is a phenomenon like no other, finding success wherever it is presented and bringing fans back for repeat viewings like no other theatre attraction. As in the 1910 Gaston Leroux novel and the many film and television versions of it, the basic story is about a disfigured man, the Phantom, who haunts a Paris opera house and kidnaps the young opera singer Christine Daaé, whom he loves. She in turn loves and is loved by the nobleman Vicomte Raoul de Chagny, who eventually rescues her from the Phantom. The details in each version of the tale vary widely. In the novel, the Phantom is named Erik; he was born with a disfigured face and made his living in carnivals before taking to haunting the Palais Garnier, an actual Paris venue with many legends and rumors about being haunted. Erik dies at the end of the novel, and Christine buries him in his underground lair, placing on his finger the wedding ring he gave her. The temperamental prima donna Carlotta; the ballet dancer Meg; and her mother, Madame Girya, who works in the box office; and other characters are all in Leroux’s novel but not in the form they take in the many different adaptations.

*The Phantom of the Opera* has been made into dozens of silent and sound films, radio broadcasts, television movies, ballets, and theatre works. Since the action takes place in an opera house and is about opera singers, music has always played an important role in these adaptations. The Lloyd Webber version is sung through, so lyricists Charles Hart and Richard Stilgoe are the apparent librettists. But Stilgoe plotted out much of the story and Lloyd Webber was involved in how the musical was shaped, contributing much more than just the music. The singing



on the opera stage and backstage is practically continuous, so *The Phantom of the Opera* might be labeled an opera. Director Harold Prince certainly staged it like grand opera. But the soul of the piece is musical theatre, Lloyd Webber aiming more for *South Pacific* than *Faust*.

The idea of musicalizing Gaston Leroux's novel came from both Lloyd Webber and producer Cameron Mackintosh. They screened some of the film versions, but it was when Lloyd Webber read the original novel that he got excited and inspired about the project. Like everyone involved in musical theatre, Lloyd Webber was a great admirer of librettist-lyricist Alan Jay Lerner. When he was approached by Lloyd Webber to work on the project, Lerner agreed. He had not had a hit in decades and he knew *The Phantom of the Opera* sounded like a very good idea. But the sixty-seven-year-old Lerner was battling lung cancer and was only able to complete a few fragments before his death in 1986. His work can be found in much of the lyric for the song "Masquerade." (The mind boggles to think how different *The Phantom of the Opera* would have turned out if Lerner had written all the words.) Lloyd Webber then turned to writer Richard Stilgoe, whom he had worked with on *Starlight Express* in 1984. Not totally pleased with Stilgoe's lyrics, Lloyd Webber hired young writer Charles Hart, who rewrote many of Stilgoe's lyrics and provided some totally new ones. So *The Phantom of the Opera* ended up being the work of many hands.

The libretto starts without singing and, in an intriguing move, begins years after the story has ended. During a prologue, an aged Raoul attends an auction of props and costumes from the now defunct Paris Opera House. As the famous chandelier comes on the block and is uncovered, it slowly rises to its position on the theatre ceiling and the overture blasts out. It is an audience-grabbing opening that is undeniably effective. The libretto includes many of the celebrated scenes and plot points from the novel. But Lloyd Webber's Phantom is a composer, and he not only loves Christine but insists that only she sing his music. The tricks on the diva Carlotta remain, as does the infamous crash of the chandelier, which falls onto the stage rather than on the audience. Madame Girya acts as a liaison between the Phantom and the opera's managers, expressing the Phantom's demands and hinting that she and her daughter Meg are somehow tied up in the Phantom's past. Later in the musical, Madame Girya provides Christine with the exposition about the Phantom's past, which is similar to that in the novel. The kidnapping of Christine and the boat ride on the underground lake is more romantic than terrifying, and even her unmasking of him has less shock value than confusion for Christine, who is a little in love with the Phantom. The masquerade ball that opens the second act is another famous scene, and the Phantom costumed as the Red Death is a theatrical highlight in the production. The end of the Lloyd Webber version allows the Phantom to live. Trapped in his underground lair by the police, he releases Christine and Raoul, then sits on his throne, huddled under his cloak. Meg arrives first, removes the cloak, and finds the Phantom gone.

Although he does a lot of singing, Raoul is a bit of a phantom when it comes to character. He simply loves Christine and acts accordingly. Carlotta, on the other hand, is a secondary role but is a clearly defined, if stereotypic, character. Her vanity is enjoyable and provides the only moments of comedy in the musical. As for the Phantom and Christine, many complain that they lack character, that he

is simply mysterious and she is just an indecisive beauty tossed back and forth by stronger forces. On the other hand, much of the Phantom's appeal lies in the lack of detailed character traits. He is passionate about his music and his love for Christine. In fact, the two passions are tied together. Perhaps that is all one needs or wants to know in order to enjoy *The Phantom of the Opera*. As for Christine, she is the quintessential nineteenth-century heroine: innocent, a bit naive, in love with romantic love, and not a take-charge kind of person. This is not the ideal heroine for modern times, but audiences accept Christine in the musical because she, like them, is mesmerized by what is going on around her.

Most adaptations of *The Phantom of the Opera* use passages from actual operas for the onstage scenes. Lloyd Webber considered doing this as well, writing original music only for the backstage scenes. This idea was soon dropped as he started to write original opera selections that pastiched the kind of operas popular in the late nineteenth century. The fictional operas *Hannibal*, *Il Muto*, and *Don Juan Triumphant* in *The Phantom of the Opera* pastiche various opera composers of the period. But it is the music for the characters when not on stage that most captivates audiences, even though they are still in the classical mode. In fact, Raoul and Christine's duet "All I Ask of You" and the Phantom's solo "Music of the Night" managed to climb the charts along with the title song, the only number in the score that has a modern rhythm. Lloyd Webber's music throughout is lush and romantic, but it is also in the style of nineteenth-century romanticism. This is not the kind of music modern audiences crave, but for some reason, it has seduced audiences around the world. Among the other musical highlights are the already-mentioned contagious march "Masquerade," the mocking "Prima Donna" trying to placate Carlotta, the simple but sublime "Think of Me" for Raoul and Christine, the Phantom's threatening "The Point of No Return," and the gliding trio "Angel of Music" for Meg, Christine, and the Phantom. How surprising and puzzling that this score, perhaps the most popular in the history of British and American musical theatre, has music whose style is over one hundred years old.

Before it was completely finished, the first act of *The Phantom of the Opera* was staged at Lloyd Webber's estate at Sydmonton to see if such an operatic piece was a viable prospect for the West End. Lloyd Webber and Mackintosh were pleased with presentation, and a production staff was assembled. Harold Prince,

	1986 London cast	1988 New York cast
Phantom	Michael Crawford	Michael Crawford
Christine Daaé	Sarah Brightman	Sarah Brightman
Raoul	Steve Barton	Steve Barton
Carlotta	Rosemary Ashe	Judy Kaye
Madame Giry	Mary Millar	Leila Martin
Meg Giry	Janet Devenish	Elisa Heinsohn
Richard Firmin	John Savident	Nick Myman
Gilles André	David Firth	Cris Groenendaal
Ubaldo Piangi	John Aron	David Romano

the American director who had staged *Evita*, was hired; Maria Björnson, the French-born designer from the Royal Shakespeare Company, did both the sets and costumes; and Gillian Lynne, the choreographer of *Cats*, was in charge of the little dance the musical required. Casting was problematic. Lloyd Webber wrote the role of Christine for his then-wife, the soprano Sarah Brightman, so no other actress was considered. Brightman was not an opera singer, but her songs were written for her vocal range, which is considerable. Casting Michael Crawford as the Phantom was an odd choice that paid off threefold. The veteran performer Crawford was known as a comic leading man with a thin singing voice and agile dancing talents. Now forty-four years old, Crawford's voice had lost its boyish quality and, thin as it was, it was also very mystifying, even his falsetto notes bringing chills. His performance made him a major star and he has forever since been known as the original Phantom.

*The Phantom of the Opera* opened in the West End in 1986 to mostly favorable reviews, but the musical was an immediate hit with the public. It is still running at this writing and, like *The Mousetrap*, promises to become a timeless London landmark. Anticipation for the Broadway opening resulted in a \$16.5 million advance. The London production was replicated in New York, complete with Crawford and Brightman reprising their performances. Again the reviews were mostly favorable and the naysayers were drowned out by the public acclaim for the musical. The Broadway production continues to run and shows no sign of stopping. Over the years there have been dozens of touring companies in both the United Kingdom and America. In Canada, a Toronto production ran a record-breaking ten years. Productions of *The Phantom of the Opera* have been seen in nearly thirty countries around the world, from Argentina to New Zealand. In 2011 the amateur rights to present the musical were made available to schools in the States and in Britain. A 2004 film version of *The Phantom of the Opera* was a critical and box-office failure and quickly disappeared. Lloyd Webber's sequel *Love Never Dies* opened in London in 2010 to mixed notices and ran a year and a half. A Broadway production of the sequel has yet to materialize. Meanwhile, the original *Phantom of the Opera* continues to thrill audiences and, because it is a period piece, does not seem likely to go out of date.

## PICKWICK

(1963/1965)

A musical comedy by Wolf Mankowitz,  
based on Charles Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers*

Score: Cyril Ornadel (music), Leslie Bricusse (lyrics)

Original London production: 4 July 1963; Saville Theatre; 694 performances

Original New York production: 4 October 1965; 46th Street Theatre; 56 performances

Notable songs: If I Ruled the World; You Never Met a Feller Like Me; I'll Never Be Lonely Again; That's What I'd Like for Christmas; A Gentleman's Gentleman; There's Something about You; Talk (Yerself Out of It); Bit of a Character; Very; Look into Your Heart; The Trouble with Women

The success of *Oliver!* in 1960 prompted songwriters and producers to look to Charles Dickens for other musical possibilities. In the case of *Pickwick*, it was the rotund comic tenor Harry Secombe who jump-started the musical. Secombe knew he was ideal casting for the optimistic, affable Samuel Pickwick in *The Pickwick Papers* (1836), Charles Dickens's first successful book. An episodic comedy, *The Pickwick Papers* was indeed musical comedy material. In fact, it had been musicalized on the London stage in 1842, 1889, 1893, and on Broadway in 1903. Secombe approached Wolf Mankowitz, who had written music hall sketches for him, and Cyril Ornadel, who had provided music for his songs, then interested producer Bernard Delfont in the project. Leslie Bricusse was brought on to write the lyrics, and director Peter Coe and scenic designer Sean Kenny, both from *Oliver!*, were hired for the new Dickens musical. *The Pickwick Papers*, which was originally published in serial format, has many characters and incidents but Mankowitz selected the most famous ones. The libretto begins with Pickwick in prison because he refuses to pay a breach of promise suit trumped up by two crooked lawyers. He and his valet Sam Weller then recall the incidents that led to Pickwick's confinement and most of the musical is one long flashback. Pickwick and other members of the Pickwick Club set off on adventures that usually become misadventures. The con man Alfred Jingle impersonates the Pickwickian Tracy Tupman, who nearly ends up killed in a duel. Pickwick is mistaken for a candidate in a local election and is called upon to make a speech. Jingle elopes with the spinster Rachel Wardle in order to get a handsome payoff from her brother. Pickwick's landlady, Mrs. Bardell, mistakes his kind words as a marriage proposal and she is talked into suing him for breach of promise. The musical concludes in the prison where Pickwick is exonerated and set free and continues to find life an endless adventure. It is a solid libretto and, considering the fragmented nature of the source material, it holds together well.

Because the star and the creative team came from television, radio, and music hall-like entertainments, much of the score consists of catchy sing-along kind of songs. The rustic servant Sam got to express his streetwise philosophy in "Talk (Yerself Out of It)" and joined Pickwick in the snappy "You Never Met a Feller Like Me." The crafty Jingle described himself as a "Bit of a Character" and dismissed his scoundrel activities in the wordy song "Very." Pickwick's lilting "Look into Your Heart" was a Victorian love song that Mrs. Bardell takes literally while Jingle woos Rachel with the insincere ballad "There's Something about You." Sam and his aged father had a merry duet titled "The Trouble with Women" that ended up being about the foolishness of men. There was a holiday song, "That's What I'd Like for Christmas," and a harmonious "Winter Waltz" with much of the cast skating on an icy pond. The only song to find fame was the indelible "If I Ruled the World," which Pickwick sang when expected to give a political speech. It is an engaging anthem with a simple but heartfelt lyric and it is little wonder it was recorded by various artists in the years that followed.

*Pickwick* tried out in Manchester and word of mouth led to much anticipation when the musical opened in the West End in 1963. The critics contradicted themselves over which aspects of *Pickwick* were true to Dickens and which were not. Yet there were enough favorable notices and enough audience interest that the musical ran a year and a half.

	<i>1963 London cast</i>	<i>1965 New York cast</i>
Samuel Pickwick	Harry Secombe	Harry Secombe
Sam Weller	Teddy Green	Roy Castle
Mr. Jingle	Anton Rodgers	Anton Rodgers
Mrs. Bardell	Jessie Evans	Charlotte Rae
Tracy Tupman	Gerald James	John Call
Augustus Snodgrass	Julian Orchard	Julian Orchard
Nathaniel Winkle	Oscar Quitak	Oscar Quitak
Rachel	Hilda Braid	Helena Carroll
Isabella	Vivienne St. George	Nancy Haywood
Emily	Jane Sconce	Sybil Scotford
Mary	Dilys Watling	Nancy Barrett

American producer David Merrick, who had brought *Oliver!* to Broadway, secured the rights to *Pickwick* but was unsure about its appeal for Americans who did not know *The Pickwick Papers* or Harry Secombe. So he toured the musical to several American cities and recouped the production's costs before opening on Broadway in 1965. Some songs were dropped, others were rearranged, and the script was made a bit less British, especially Sam Weller's cockney dialect. But the mostly American cast was splendid and Secombe quickly won over the audience. The New York reviews were mixed. Several critics were expecting another *Oliver!* and were disappointed. Most reviews praised the players over the material. The public was not drawn to the musical and *Pickwick* closed after seven weeks. Revivals of the musical are infrequent although in 1969 the BBC made a TV musical of *Pickwick* in which Secombe got to reprise his Samuel Pickwick.

***THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE; OR,  
THE SLAVE OF DUTY***

(1879/1880)

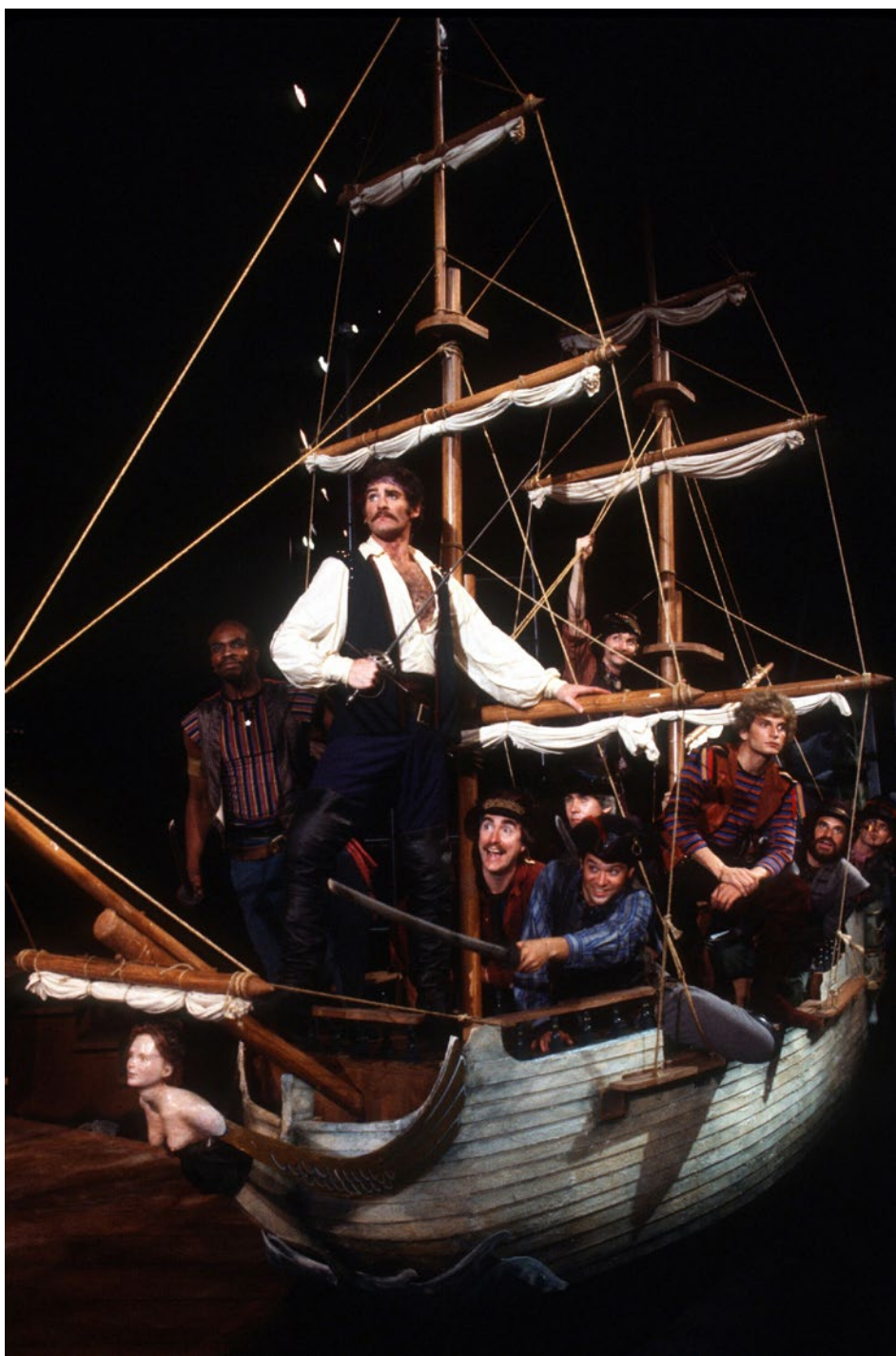
A comic operetta by W. S. Gilbert

*Score:* Arthur Sullivan (music), W. S. Gilbert (lyrics)

*Original New York production:* 31 December 1879; Fifth Avenue Theatre; 91 performances

*Original London production:* 3 April 1880; Opera Comique; 363 performances

*Notable songs:* Poor Wand'ring One; I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major General; When Frederic Was a Little Lad; When a Felon's Not Engaged in His Employment; With Catlike Tread; Oh, Far Better to Live and Die; Go, Ye Heroes; Oh, Is There Not One Maiden Breast?; Paradox Trio (When You Had Left Our Pirate Fold); Ah, Leave Me Not to Pine Alone; When the Foreman Bears His Steel; Climbing Over Rocky Mountain; Pour, Oh Pour, the Pirate Sherry



The New York Shakespeare Festival's 1981 mounting of the comic operetta, featuring Kevin Kline (center) as the Pirate King, holds the record as the longest-running Gilbert and Sullivan production in the history of the New York theatre. *Photofest*

One of the most popular of the Gilbert and Sullivan comic operettas, *The Pirates of Penzance* had its official premiere in New York before opening in London. The explanation is in the title. The Gilbert and Sullivan operettas were so popular that unauthorized or “pirated” productions often popped up in America within weeks after a new work opened in London. So producer Richard D’Oyly Carte thought he’d beat the pirates by opening *The Pirates of Penzance* on Broadway three months before the London production premiered. It was a way to bring more attention to the problem of pirated works of art and the need for international copyright. Recently Carte and the two songwriters had been cheated of thousands of pounds by the many unauthorized productions of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. One would like to think that such pirating gave birth to the plot for *The Pirates of Penzance* but in truth Gilbert’s original story for the operetta involved the rivalry between a band of robbers and a group of policemen, both sides being satirized as either far from dangerous or laughably inefficient. Gilbert eventually abandoned the robbers and returned to some ideas from his 1870 one-act musical farce *Our Island Home*, in which a youth is apprenticed to a band of pirates. Pirates were appearing in novels and on the stages of Europe in the Victorian era, and Gilbert liked the idea of satirizing the swashbuckling heroes and pirates in an operetta. The libretto he wrote is very straightforward with no subplots or secondary couples.

Frederic is celebrating his twenty-first birthday and the end of his apprenticeship to the Pirate King and his band of soft-hearted comrades. Frederic’s former nursemaid, Ruth, now a member of the pirate troupe, had accidentally brought the young Frederic to the pirates when she misheard his father’s instructions to have him apprenticed to a ship’s pilot. She has fallen in love with Frederic and, since he has never seen another female, he believes her when she tells him she is quite a beauty. No sooner does Frederic bid a fond farewell to the pirates than he runs across the comely (and numerous) daughters of General Stanley on the beach and realizes that Ruth has misled him. Frederic is immediately taken with Mabel and she with him. He warns the sisters that there are pirates in the vicinity, but before they can flee, the Pirate King and his men surround the maidens and plan to marry them against their will. General Stanley enters and, after having had the situation explained to him, recalls that the Pirates of Penzance are all orphans and will not harm a fellow orphan. The General informs the Pirate King that he himself is an orphan and the pirates release the sisters and withdraw. But a new complication arises when the Pirate King and Ruth notice that Frederic was born on 29 February and thus is a leap-year baby. Therefore, he is technically not yet twenty-one and must remain with the pirates for many more years. Frederic begrudgingly does his duty, once again becomes a pirate, and even tells the Pirate King that General Stanley was lying when he said he was an orphan. The pirates attack the Stanley mansion but are met by the local police led by the philosophic Sergeant. Just when it looks like the pirates will be the victors, the Sergeant insists they yield in the name of Queen Victoria. Among the pirates’ many soft spots is a loyalty to their queen. They surrender to the Sergeant, and then are informed by Ruth that all these orphaned fellows are actually of noble birth. Frederic and Mabel are reunited, and the pirates marry the General’s daughters. The structure of the libretto is nicely balanced, and the dialogue is among Gilbert’s most facile. The Pirate King and his followers are particularly funny, at once a mock-ferocious



and harmless band of outlaws. Frederic’s naiveté is amusing, while Mabel seems to have more sense than he or her sisters. General Stanley is among the most risible authority figures in the Gilbert and Sullivan canon, less pompous than most and rather endearing in a ridiculous way. Ruth is another one of Gilbert’s homely middle-aged women in love with a younger man, but one enjoys Ruth, and her position as one of the pirates is ludicrous and fun.

Gilbert’s lyrics in *The Pirates of Penzance* range from Mabel’s glittering “Poor Wand’ring One” to General Stanley’s tongue-twisting introductory number “I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major-General.” The wit in the dialogue continues into such lyrics as the Sergeant’s “When a Felon’s Not Engaged in His Employment” and the “Paradox Trio” (“When You Had Left Our Pirate Fold”), sung in double time by the Pirate King, Frederic, and Ruth. As for Sullivan’s music, it soars to heights that echo the high spirits of the characters. Gilbert and Sullivan scholar Ian Bradley states that the music in *The Pirates of Penzance* “comes closer to grand opera than any other of the works of Gilbert and Sullivan, with the possible exception of *The Yeoman of the Guard*.” This may be evident in the sheet music, but the operetta doesn’t feel like opera. The tempos are sometimes furious, the choral sections rollicking, the comic numbers agile and playful, and even the ballads flowing and lucid. The pirates’ opening “Pour, Oh Pour, the Pirate Sherry” has such vigor and sparkle that we know right away these are not grand opera brigands. The music in the sisters’ tripping “Climbing Over Rocky Mountain” is as giddy as they are. “Oh, Is There Not One Maiden Breast?” is Frederic’s plea for affection from a maiden (any maiden!) and the music is as bombastic as his youthful angst. The police and pirates try to move with stealth in the night, but their song “With Cat-like Tread, upon Our Prey We Steal” is a loud and pounding number that reveals Sullivan at his most slapstick. If any aspect of *The Pirates of Penzance* recalls grand opera, it is the challenging vocals required by Mabel. Yet her songs never wallow in operatic mire. Her rangy waltz “Poor Wand’ring One” seems to take flight. If *The Pirates of Penzance* is grand opera, it is one that ignores gravity and insists of being lighter than air.

	<i>1879 New York cast</i>	<i>1880 London cast</i>
Maj. Gen. Stanley	J. H. Ryley	George Grossmith
The Pirate King	Signor Brocolini	Richard Temple
Mabel	Blanche Roosevelt	Marion Hood
Frederic	Hugh Talbot	George Power
Ruth	Alice Barnett	Emily Cross
Sergeant of Police	Fred Clifton	Rutland Barrington

When Carte and the company of *The Pirates of Penzance* sailed to New York for the 1879 premiere, Sullivan still had not completed the orchestrations for act 2 and planned to finish them during the final rehearsals in America. When he arrived in New York and unpacked his luggage, however, Sullivan found to his horror that he had left the file with the first act orchestras in London. There wasn’t enough



time to ship them across the Atlantic, so for several days he worked around the clock rewriting the orchestrations that he could recall from memory and creating new ones in time for opening night. As with most of his operettas, Sullivan conducted the orchestra for the premiere performance of *The Pirates of Penzance*. He had not slept for forty-eight hours and was suffering from an extreme headache, but the operetta opened on schedule and was an unqualified triumph. Although it had to compete with the recent memory of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, the new work was cheered by both critics and playgoers and ran a profitable three months before several companies (both authorized and pirated) went on tour.

The London premiere of *The Pirates of Penzance* opened twelve weeks after the Broadway premiere and was similarly greeted with adulation. Its one-year run in the West End was dwarfed by the dozens of touring companies that performed across Britain and other English-speaking countries. The operetta returned to London numerous times. An 1888 revival ran ten weeks, an 1890 production tallied up 127 performances, and the operetta was a hit again as recently as 1983 when it ran 601 performances. Broadway has seen at least forty revivals of *The Pirates of Penzance* over the decades. A 1926 mounting ran a surprising 126 performances. But most surprising was a 1981 production by the New York Shakespeare Festival that originated in Central Park then transferred to Broadway for 772 performances, still a record for the longest run of any Gilbert and Sullivan operetta in New York. That celebrated production was filmed in 1983 and there have been a handful of other movie and television adaptations of *The Pirates of Penzance* from around the world.

### ***PRINCESS IDA; OR, CASTLE ADAMANT***

(1884)

A comic operetta by W. S. Gilbert, based on Alfred Tennyson's poem *The Princess*

*Score:* Arthur Sullivan (music), W. S. Gilbert (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 5 January 1884; Savoy Theatre; 246 performances

*Original New York production:* 11 February 1884; Fifth Avenue Theatre; 48 performances

*Notable songs:* The World Is But a Broken Toy; Expressive Glances; If You Give Me Your Attention (I Can't Think Why); Whene'er I Spoke Sarcastic Joke; Ida Was a Twelve-Month Old; Would You Know the Kind of Maid; A Lady Fair of Lineage High; O Goddess Wise; I Built upon a Rock; This Helmet I Suppose; Come Mighty Must; We Are Warriors Three; I Am a Maiden Cold and Stately

The fairy tale–like operetta *Princess Ida*, one of Gilbert and Sullivan's lesser known works, is unique on several fronts: it is based on (and a burlesque of) a serious poem, the dialogue is in blank verse, the operetta is in three acts instead of the usual two, and some of it is deadly serious. Yet despite all these unusual features, *Princess Ida* is unquestionably a Gilbert and Sullivan work. In 1870 Gilbert had

written a spoof of Alfred Lord Tennyson's narrative poem *The Princess* (1847). He kept Tennyson's plot but wrote his spoof, also called *The Princess*, in robust meter and added selections from popular operas to turn the serious characters into inflated comic ones. Fourteen years later, Gilbert returned to the same material and fashioned it into a comic operetta retaining the spoken verse and adding mostly satiric lyrics. Yet some serious moments from Tennyson's poem also remained, giving *Princess Ida* a somewhat uneven tone. In a medieval setting, King Gama has betrothed his baby daughter Ida to the baby son Hilarion of the neighboring King Hildebrand. Ida has grown up to be something of a medieval feminist, refuting the company of all men and founding a college for women in Castle Adamant. She will have nothing to do with Hilarion or any male, and Hildebrand is threatening war if the contract is not fulfilled. The two kings tell Hilarion to go to the castle and claim his bride by force if necessary, but he and his courtiers Cyril and Florian instead disguise themselves as female students and join the college. Two of the women discover that Cyril and Florian are men and fall in love with them and keep their secret. But when Princess Ida learns about the three male intruders, she condemns them to death. King Hildebrand's troops arrive and storm the castle, but to lessen the bloodshed, Hilarion and his two friends fight King Gama's three sons and defeat them. Ida admits that she has fallen in love with Hilarion and turns her college over to Lady Blanche so she can marry the man she has been betrothed to for so many years.

While Princess Ida is a heroic figure in Tennyson's poem, she comes across in the operetta as a rather stubborn, willful girl of suspect principles. Gilbert is not only satirizing the emerging feminism of the late Victorian era but also making fun of the women's colleges then being established at Oxford and Cambridge. An even more touchy subject, Darwin's recent theory of evolution, is mocked in the song "A Lady Fair of Lineage High" about an ape who woos a lady without success, proving (according to Princess Ida's theory) that men are still basically apes and women are the more high-born creations. It was in such songs that the familiar Gilbert wit could be found. In Hilarion's "Ida Was a Twelve-Month Old," he notes that he was two years old when she was one and a husband twice as old as his wife is not likely to make a successful marriage. In King Gama's introductory song "If You Give Me Your Attention," better remembered by the repeated "I Can't Think Why," he lists all of his disagreeable habits yet cannot understand why he is so disliked. These examples use traditional Gilbert humor. But when Princess Ida sings the fervent "O Goddess Wise" or "I Built Upon a Rock," the lyric is heavy with sincerity and closer to grand opera than comic operetta. This same kind of duality can be found in Gilbert's metered dialogue. It has light and witty sections, but often what King Hildebrand or what King Gama's three brutish sons say is rather sinister without being funny. Perhaps the reason *Princess Ida* has not enjoyed the popularity of some of the other Gilbert and Sullivan works is the confusing signals it sends out to the audience.

Sullivan, who had recently been knighted by Queen Victoria, was pleased with Gilbert's libretto because it gave him an opportunity to write weightier music than what is usually required in comic operetta. Sullivan relished composing the long, demanding musical lines of "O Goddess Wise" and the heavy lamentations in "I Built upon a Rock." In a similar vein is Lady Blanche's "Come Mighty Must,"

in which she acknowledges the powerful feelings women have for men. Sometimes this operatic style was exaggerated enough that it became comic, such as the boastful “This Helmet, I Suppose” sung by King Gama’s sons. But what the audiences most enjoyed were the familiar Gilbert and Sullivan musical romps, as with the already mentioned “I Can’t Think Why.” Also delightful are Cyril’s cockeyed “Would You Know the Kind Maid?,” sung when he is in his cups; King Gama’s silly “Whene’er I Spoke Sarcastic Joke” about how ineffective his insulting satire is; and the trio “Expressive Glances” in which Hilarion and his pals plan to woo the stubborn lady students with their manly charms. Other notable musical numbers include the self-conscious march “We Are Warriors Three” for King Gama’s sons, the farcical “I Am a Maiden Cold and Stately” in which Hilarion, Cyril, and Florian, dressed as women, mock their fellow students, and the graceful quartet “The World Is But a Broken Toy” filled with disappointment and resignation.

	<i>1884 London cast</i>	<i>1884 New York cast</i>
Princess Ida	Leonora Braham	Cora S. Tanner
Hilarion	Henry Bracy	Wallace Maccreery
King Hildebrand	Rutland Barrington	Signor Brocolini
King Gama	George Grossmith	J. H. Ryley
Cyril	Durward Lely	W. S. Rising
Florian	Charles Ryley	Charles F. Long
Lady Blanche	Rosina Brandram	Genevieve Reynolds
Melissa	Jessie Bond	Hattie Delaro
Arac	Richard Temple	W. Ainsley Scott
Guron	Warwick Gray	James Earley
Lady Psyche	Kate Chard	Florence Bemister
Sacharissa	Sybil Grey	Eva Barrington

When producer Richard D’Oyly Carte announced that the new Gilbert and Sullivan operetta at the Savoy Theatre would be *Princess Ida*, he also made news by stating that the acclaimed American stage star Lillian Russell would be playing the title role. But artistic differences during early rehearsals, none of which are perfectly clear to this day, had Russell out of the cast and a Savoy regular, Leonora Braham, playing Princess Ida. Although Sullivan was very ill with various ailments and on morphine, he still conducted the orchestra on opening night in 1884. *Princess Ida* pleased the critics and the playgoers with its topical humor, luscious music, and fine performances. The unusual aspects of the piece, such as its blank verse dialogue and serious passages, did not seem to bother the audience and the majority of the public at the time agreed with Gilbert’s spoofing of women’s education and Darwinism. *Princess Ida* ran nine months in London and two companies toured the British Isles for a year.

American producer John Stetson tried to get Lillian Russell to play Princess Ida in his Broadway production, but she was already booked elsewhere. When the operetta opened in New York later in 1884 with Cora S. Tanner as the princess, the reviews were mixed. Criticisms were aimed at the cast, the unimpressive

production, and the operetta itself. *Princess Ida* lasted only six weeks on Broadway but was later picked up by operetta companies across the country. It also was revived in New York on occasion but usually as part of a tour of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. As time went by, the satire in *Princess Ida* dated and there were fewer and few productions. Today the operetta resurfaces more frequently, as its charms and antiquated Victorian ideas prove to be quite entertaining when done by schools and light opera companies.

### ***PRIVATES ON PARADE***

(1977/1989)

A play with songs by Peter Nichols

*Score:* Denis King (music), Peter Nichols (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 17 February 1977; Aldwych Theatre; 208 performances

*Original New York production:* 22 August 1989; Christian C. Yegen Theatre (Off-Broadway); 64 performances

*Notable songs:* The Price of Peace; Sunnyside Lane; The Latin American Way; Could You Please Inform Us; Les Girls; Danke Schön; Privates on Parade

The semi-musical *Privates on Parade* had many admirers both in Britain and the States but not enough to make the challenging show a mainstream hit in either nation. The play with songs was first done by the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford then moved to London, where it won the Olivier Award for Best New Comedy and ran nearly seven months. Broadway producers considered it far too English for Americans, so it took a dozen years before *Privates on Parade* showed up Off-Broadway. (In the meantime, there had even been a film version in 1982.) It had its American premiere at the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven and it was that production, directed by Larry Carpenter and choreographed by Daniel Pelzig, that was presented by the Roundabout Theatre Off-Broadway in 1989.

The civilian female impersonator Terri Dennis entertains British troops stationed in Singapore and Malaysia in 1947. Under the questionable leadership of Major Giles Flack, the entertainment unit, titled Song and Dance Unit South East Asia (S.A.D.U.S.E.A.), is third rate, but the desperate soldiers are eager for any diversion, so they cheer the tawdry music hall numbers and the ribald jokes. The naive Pvt. Steven Flowers is new to the outfit, while the hardened Sylvia Morgan, the only female in the group, has no illusions left. When Flack stupidly leads his outfit into a zone where Communists are battling the locals, some members of the unit die and the trivial nature of the enterprise turns very sobering. Playwright Peter Nichols wrote the lyrics for the hopelessly cheery songs, which had music by Denis King, that accurately mimicked the variety numbers of the era. While some songs had a phony international flavor, such as "Danke Schön," "The Latin American Way," and "Les Girls," most were very British and nicely contrasted the stiff upper lip with bawdy humor. The old-time sing-along "Sunnyside Lane," the vampy "Could You Please Inform Us," and the smirking title number were not

your usual musical theatre fare, but were closer to an adult-rated pantomime. All the songs in *Privates on Parade* were part of the shows being performed and some might hesitate to call the production a musical, but there were a dozen musical numbers and sometimes they even commented on the action à la the Broadway musical *Cabaret*, particularly with the double-edged "The Price of Peace."

	1977 London cast	1989 New York cast
Terri Dennis	Denis Quilley	Jim Dale
Giles Flack	Nigel Hawthorne	Simon Jones
Sylvia Morgan	Emma Williams	Donna Murphy
Steven Flowers	Ian Gelder	Jim Fyfe
Eric Young-Love	Simon Jones	Edward Hibbert
Kevin Cartwright	Ben Cross	Gregory Jbara
Reg Drummond	David Daker	Donald Burton
Charles Bishop	Tim Wylton	John Curry
Len Bonny	Joe Melia	Ross Bickell

*Privates on Parade* received mostly favorable notices when it moved to the West End in 1977. Denis Quilley was singled out for his funny, outrageous Terri Dennis, but the whole cast was highly lauded. Since the critics saw it more as a dark farce than a musical, there were few comments on the songs. Obviously not for all tastes, *Privates on Parade* still managed to run six and a half months.

Critical reaction to *Privates on Parade* in New York was decidedly mixed, some commentators finding the show potent and disturbing, others dismissing it as a toothless antiwar piece. Most agreed that British actor-singer Jim Dale's performance as Terri, from his campy impersonations of Carmen Miranda and Marlene Dietrich to his heartbreaking moments of lucidity, was compelling. Audiences had only two months to see for themselves, then he and the production were gone because of Actors Equity limitations on Dale performing in the United States. Being cited as the Best Foreign Play by the New York Drama Critics Circle at the end of the season came too late, since *Privates on Parade* closed before November. Ambitious theatre companies in the States have revived it on occasion, but the general consensus remains that the piece is too British for most American audiences. Yet one wonders if the show would still have trouble finding an audience if *Privates on Parade* were about an American USO show and the same wacky characters were on view. In Great Britain, the quasi-musical has been revived with success many times, most memorably a 2001 production at the Donmar Warehouse featuring Roger Allam and a 2012 West End revival starring Simon Russell Beale.

# Q

## ***THE QUAKER GIRL***

(1910/1911)

A musical comedy by James T. Tanner

*Score:* Lionel Monckton (music), Adrian Ross, Percy Greenbank (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 5 November 1910; Adelphi Theatre; 536 performances

*Original New York production:* 23 October 1911; Park Theatre; 240 performances

*Notable songs:* Come to the Ball; Little Grey Bonnet; The Good Girl and the Bad Boy;

Tony from America; Wonderful (O Time, Time); A Quaker Girl; A Dancing Lesson;

Mr. Jeremiah, Esquire; When We Are Rich; Just as Father Used to Do; Something

to Tell; The First Dance; Or Thereabouts

One of the more durable of Edwardian musical comedies, *The Quaker Girl* was a hit in its day and enjoyed a resurgence of interest thirty years later. Producer George Edwardes assembled the popular artists from his Gaiety Theatre production when he took possession of the Adelphi Theatre, and together they created a piece that contained the best of comic operetta and musical comedy. James T. Tanner's libretto centered on the titular Prudence Pym, but she doesn't remain a Quaker for long. At the wedding of the exiled French Princess Mathilde and the British Captain Charteris in a small English village, Prudence is so taken up with the festivities that she takes a sip of champagne, an outrage that gets her ostracized from the Quaker community. Prudence is attracted to Tony Chute, the young American ambassador to France and the best man at the wedding. Another guest is the Parisian couturiere Madame Blum, who finds Prudence's simple gray dress and bonnet quite fetching and brings her to France to create a new style of fashion based on the Quaker garb. In Paris, Prudence becomes quite popular and attracts the amorous attentions of the lady-killer Count Carlo, but it is Tony whom she loves. Tony's former mistress Diane gets jealous and plots to disillusion Prudence by giving her some love letters from Tony. But the letters turn out to be from the government minister Monsieur Duhamel who is so pleased when Prudence returns them to him that he allows Mathilde to legally return to France. Prudence ends up going to America with Tony. Tanner found room in this story for some intriguing complications, such as the chief of police, Monsieur Larose, trying to find and woo the incognito Mathilde, not knowing

she is already married. The libretto also included some merry comic characters, such as the lame-brain French maid Phoebe and the Quaker manservant Jeremiah who courts her.

Lionel Monckton composed most of the music for *The Quaker Girl* with Adrian Ross and Percy Greenbank writing lyrics, all veterans of the Gaiety musicals. Monckton's wife, Gertie Millar, played Prudence in the original London production, and he gave her some lovely solos to sing, including the sweet introductory title number, the plaintive "Little Grey Bonnet" about her Quaker attire, and her spirited song about "Tony from America." She joined Tony for the musical tale "The Good Girl and the Bad Boy" as well as for two "dancing" duets: "A Dancing Lesson" and "The First Dance." Princess Mathilde had a glittering waltz titled "Wonderful (O Time, Time)" in which she was joined by Captain Charteris. The servants Jeremiah and Phoebe carried the comic numbers. In the amusing "Just as Father Used to Do," Jeremiah was torn between his mother's Quaker ways and his father's libertine behavior. He also had two duets with Phoebe, the silly "Mr. Jeremiah, Esquire" and the wishful "When We Are Rich." But the unquestioned hit of the score was sung by a secondary character, the oversexed Prince Carol, who coaxed Prudence to "Come to the Ball." It is not so much a song of seduction as a catchy waltz that immediately caught on with the public and remained popular for decades.

	<i>1910 London cast</i>	<i>1911 New York cast</i>
Prudence Pym	Gertie Millar	Ina Claire
Tony Chute	Joseph Coyne	Clifton Crawford
Capt. Charteris	C. Hayden Coffin	Pope Stammer
Princess Mathilde	Elsie Spain	Daphne Glenne
Phoebe	Gracie Leigh	May Vokes
Jeremiah	James Blakeley	Percival Knight
Prince Carlo	George Carvey	Lawrence Rea
Mme. Blum	Mlle. Caumont	Maisie Gay
Mon. Larose	D. J. Williams	Arthur Klein
Mon. Duhamel	Herbert Ross	Edward Martyn

*The Quaker Girl* opened in London in 1910 and was the biggest musical hit of the season, running a year and a half. Two touring companies were sent out soon after the opening and soon they were singing "Come to the Ball" across Britain. Henry B. Harris produced the New York production with only a few changes in the score. The up-and-coming comedienne-singer Ina Claire played Prudence; she would later be better known for her performances in high comedies, but Claire had the singing voice to meet the vocal demands of *The Quaker Girl*. The Broadway reviews were as commendable as the London notices, and the musical ran a lucrative seven months. About the same time, *The Quaker Girl* opened in Paris and became one of the few British musicals to find solid success in France. While revivals in Britain continued for a decade or so, the musical was not produced

much in the 1930s, even though some of the songs remained popular. Then, in the 1940s, *The Quaker Girl* was a hit again in London, and a revival of interest in the old musical generated productions by regional theatres and amateur groups. It is revived today on occasion in Great Britain and the United States by operetta companies and has proven to be very entertaining with no apologies for its age.



# R

## ***THE RED HUSSAR***

(1889/1890)

A comic operetta by Henry Pottinger Stephens

*Score:* Edward Solomon (music), Henry Pottinger Stephens (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 23 November 1889; Lyric Theatre; 175 performances

*Original New York production:* 5 August 1890; Palmer's Theatre; 78 performances

*Notable songs:* When Life and I; Only Dreams; Song of the Regiment; Variations; Guides of the Night; The Glee Maiden; A Whimsical Girl Was I; In the Morning of the Year; Castles in Spain; Won't You Join the Army?; Where Is the Colonel of the Regiment?

Producer Henry Leslie had previously starred his mistress Marie Tempest in the hit musicals *Dorothy* (1886) and *Doris* (1889) and wasted no time in featuring her in *The Red Hussar*, another in a long line of operettas in which a female disguises herself as a soldier to be with her sweetheart. Henry Pottinger Stephens's libretto made a few variations in the tried-and-true tale. When it is learned that Ralph Rodney is not the legitimate heir to Avon Manor, his greedy fiancée Barbara Belasys loses interest in him and the distraught Ralph enlists in the Hussars as they march off to France. The ballad singer Kitty Carroll, who loves Ralph for himself and not his estate, dresses up as a Hussar and joins the troops in order to be near him. Kitty not only fools all the men in the regiment but shows outstanding bravery in battle, including saving Ralph's life. Meanwhile the inheritance of Avon Manor is examined, and it looks like Ralph will be lord of the estate after all. This prompts Barbara to pay to have Ralph released from his military contract and return home. But it turns out the true inheritor of Avon Manor is Kitty, who reveals herself as a female and wins both Ralph and the Manor. This fairy tale of a plot was embellished with some prankish secondary characters, such as the comic Corporal Bundy and the staunch Sir Harry, who ends up with Barbara.

Stephens had written the libretto some years before as *The White Hussar* and offered it to Leslie as a vehicle for Miss Tempest. Leslie insisted in changes in the script to strengthen the character of Kitty and insisted that composer Edward Solomon provide his star with several songs that showed off her vocal versatility. Stephens wrote the lyrics, and the score ended up being commendable, not only

for Kitty's numbers but for several of the characters. One of the most popular songs from *The Red Hussar* was the glittering ballad "When Life and I," which was not sung by Kitty but by Ralph, who also sang the simple but enticing "Guides of the Night." Solomon and Stephens wrote songs for Kitty that certainly demonstrated her versatility. The rousing march "Song of the Regiment," the coy "A Whimsical Girl Was I," and the waltzes "The Glee Maiden" and "Only Dreams" left no doubt why Miss Tempest was a star. Other notable numbers in the score included the catchy opening song "Won't You Join the Army?"; Sir Harry's ballads "In the Morning of the Year" and "Castles in Spain"; the Rodney-Kitty narrative duet "The Maiden and the Cavalier"; the drummer-boy chorus's tuneful "Where Is the Colonel of the Regiment?"; and Bundy's comic solo "(I Intend to Sing a Song with) Variations." Solomon was far from the finest theatre composer of the late Victorian era, but in *The Red Hussar*, arguably his most accomplished score, he managed to stand with the best of them.

	1889 London cast	1890 New York cast
Kitty Carroll	Marie Tempest	Marie Tempest
Ralph Rodney	Ben Davies	Herndon Morsell
Sir Harry Leighton	C. Hayden Coffin	James Sauvage
Corporal Bundy	Arthur Williams	William Gilbert
Barbara Bellasys	Florence Dysart	Isabelle Urquhart
Sir Middlesex Mashem	Albert Christian	J. W. Handley
Mrs. Magpie	W. Sidney	Fannie Edwards
William Byles	Frank M. Wood	Joseph C. Fay
Daisy	Maud Holland	Leona Clarke

*The Red Hussar* was greeted in 1889 with the same waves of adulation as had the previous two musicals starring Marie Tempest. The critics were also appreciative of the score even if the tired plot was lightly disparaged. The public response was highly enthusiastic, and the musical ran six months followed by a successful tour. During this time, Solomon was summoned into court on charges filed by a rival producer who claimed he had commissioned and paid for *The White Hussar*. The case dragged on and eventually Solomon won. Also in legal difficulty was producer Leslie, whose overspending and poor management left him nearly bankrupt even though he had a West End hit. Leslie tried to make a lucrative deal with Broadway producer A. M. Palmer but made such exorbitant demands that Palmer ended up presenting *The Red Hussar* himself. He wisely saw to it that Leslie's star was included in the package, and Marie Tempest made an auspicious Broadway debut as Kitty. The critics found little else in the musical to their liking. Even comic William Gilbert as Colonel Bundy failed to get the laughs Arthur Williams had in London, so he turned to ad-libbing but with little success. Yet New Yorkers wanted to see Miss Tempest, and they kept *The Red Hussar* on the boards for a little over two months. She and the company then set out on tour, but by the time they reached Baltimore Tempest's voice gave out, she returned to England, and the tour closed. It also marked the end of Leslie's producing career. He had traveled with Tempest

on the road and stayed in the States when she left him in Baltimore. Suffering from various illnesses, including temporary blindness, Leslie eventually returned to London, where he died in 1900. As for *The Red Hussar*, it lived on in revivals for some years, a version titled *Soldier Girl* touring Great Britain as late as 1919.

## **RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET**

(1989/1991)

A musical comedy by Bob Carlton

*Score:* various songwriters

*Original London production:* 18 September 1989; Cambridge Theatre; 1,516 performances

*Original New York production:* 13 October 1991; Variety Arts Theatre (Off-Broadway); 245 performances

*Notable songs:* Great Balls of Fire; Monster Mash; (Why Must I Be a) Teenager in Love; (Hey) Mr. Spaceman; Telstar; All Shook Up; Oh, Pretty Woman; Good Golly Miss Molly; Shake Rattle and Roll; Young Girl; Wipeout; Good Vibrations; Robot Man; I'm Gonna Change the World; The Shoop Shoop Song; Shakin' All Over; I Heard It Through the Grapevine; It's a Man's World; Born to Be Wild

This sci-fi spoof has the dubious distinction of being one of the first "jukebox musicals," those later-popular hybrids in which pop songs were forced into a plot so the show could claim a lot of hit songs. The musical numbers in this case were rock and roll favorites from the 1950s and early 1960s and the plot came from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The 1956 sci-fi film *Forbidden Planet* had cleverly reset the Shakespeare play in outer space with the Prospero character as a sinister scientist marooned on a desert planet with his daughter. Instead of the spirit Ariel, the doctor had created Robby the Robot. With no other humans on the planet, the daughter fell in love with the first man to land there. Many of Shakespeare's themes were retained in the film, and it became one of the few thought-provoking science fiction movies of the decade. The British musical version may have been suggested by the film, but the characters were renamed, the situations trivialized, and the camp dialogue filled with quotations from various Shakespeare works.

The setting was the planet D'Illyria in 2024 and much of the action revolved around the Caliban creature, a monster with tentacles who attacks the space ship. Some of the songs used had sci-fi connections, such as "(Hey) Mr. Spaceman," "Robot Man," "Monster Mash," "Telstar," and "Great Balls of Fire" (which referred now to heavenly bodies in space), and others were more forced. The rocket ship blasted off to the sounds of "Wipeout," Captain Tempest fell in love with Miranda at first sight with "Good Vibrations," and the mad scientist, Dr. Prospero, sang "I'm Gonna Change the World." Other pop hits thrown into the mix turned rock and roll into metaphors for scientific jargon, as with "Shake, Rattle and Roll," "All Shook Up," and "Shakin' All Over." Love songs and ballads, such as "Young Girl," "(Why Must I Be a) Teenager in Love," and "Oh, Pretty Woman," were easy

to insert but one had to suspend a lot of logic to accept “Good Golly Miss Molly” and “The Shoop Shoop Song.”

	<i>1989 London cast</i>	<i>1991 New York cast</i>
Dr. Prospero	Christian Roberts	Steve Steiner
Miranda	Alison Harding	Erin Hill
Captain Tempest	John Ashby	Robert McCormick
Ariel	Kraig Thornber	Gabriel Barre
Science Officer/Gloria	Nicky Furre	Julee Cruise
Cookie	Matthew Devitt	Louis Tucci
Navigation Officer	Kate Edgar	Mary Ehlinger
Bosun Arras	Anthony Hunt	James H. Wiggins Jr.
Narrator	Patrick Moore	James Doohan (voice)

*Return to the Forbidden Planet* was first presented by London’s Bubble Theatre in a bubble tent and was revised when it moved to a Liverpool theatre. After further changes, the musical was produced by the Tricycle Theatre in London and it was that production that transferred to the West End in 1989. *Return to the Forbidden Planet* managed to win the Olivier Award for Best New Musical and ran over three years. The campy show also became a sort of cult musical favorite with many repeat patrons. With such a pedigree, the show seemed destined for Broadway success, but American producers were wary.

When *Return to the Forbidden Planet* finally opened in New York in 1991, it was Off-Broadway. The reviews were mixed, but the musical had enough of a following to camp it up for eight months. The cult following was minimal, and the musical has since pretty much faded away in the United States. Yet it continues to be done in Britain, Australia, and across Europe. Although the musical has left little impact on American stages (regional and school productions have been few), it did foreshadow a trend for jukebox musicals, both hits and flops.

## **RIP VAN WINKLE**

(1882)

A comic operetta by H. B. Farnie, Henri Milhac, and Phillippe Gille, based on Washington Irving’s tale from *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and the play *Rip Van Winkle* by Joseph Jefferson and Dion Boucicault

*Score:* Robert Planquette (music), H. B. Farnie, Henri Meilhac, Phillippe Gille (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 14 October 1882; Comedy Theatre; 328 performances

*Original New York production:* 28 October 1882; Standard Theatre; 28 performances

*Notable songs:* O Where’s My Girl; The Legend of the Katskills; Twilight Shadows;

These Little Heads Now Golden; Letter Song; May You Live and Prosper; The Echo Song; Sea Song; Where Floweth the Wild Mohawk River; Truth in the Well; Yes, No, and Nothing at All; Nine-Pins Song; Before Our Broad Axes, Lo, They Fall; From Deep Forest Hoary

An American literary classic was turned into a comic operetta that was a success everywhere, it seemed, except in America. One of the first, and still one of the best, pieces of American folk fiction is Washington Irving's tall tale *Rip Van Winkle*. In the Hudson Valley before the Revolutionary War lives Rip Van Winkle, a dissolute ne'er-do-well with no illusions about his worthlessness. Although he is content with his idleness, his scold of a wife, Gretchen, is not, and her nagging finally drives him from his home. With his dog, Wolf, he retreats to the mountains, where little men dressed in old-time Dutch clothes invite him to drink liquor from their keg and play nine-pins (an early form of bowling) with them. Rip drinks himself into a stupor then falls asleep. When he awakes and returns home to his village, no one recognizes him, and they do not look familiar to him either. When Rip arrives at his house, it is dilapidated and uninhabited. It appears that twenty years has passed while he slept. Finally, a young woman recognizes the old man and reveals that she is his grown daughter Judith. Hearing that his wife has died (she burst a blood vessel while scolding a peddler), Rip breathes a sigh of relief. Happy to be reunited with Judith, he spends the rest of his days telling his story to others at the local tavern and becomes the envy of all men with shrewish wives. Irving based his story on an old German folk tale and set it in the Dutch community he knew so well. First published in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* in 1819, the story was immediately a favorite and has remained so ever since.

Stage adaptations of *Rip Van Winkle* started appearing in the 1820s, most of them short comic pieces that are now lost. The most substantial play version was one written by Irish-American playwright Dion Boucicault which premiered in London in 1865. Rip was played by the popular character actor Joseph Jefferson. The next year, Jefferson and the production opened in New York. Turning the short story into a full-length play required more characters and scenes, most of which played beautifully on stage. The ending of the play is different from the story. When Rip returns home, his wife Gretchen is still alive and living there. She does not recognize him and thinks him a beggar, so she gives him a penny and takes pity on him. Not until his daughter Meenie realizes who he is do matters change. Rip promises to stay sober and Gretchen to be a good wife. The initial American reception was lukewarm, but Jefferson quickly made changes in Boucicault's text and polished his own performance. The play served as his vehicle for years and remained one of the most popular American stage pieces for the rest of the century. In fact, *Rip Van Winkle* (in its various stage versions) became one of the most popular of all American plays; it is estimated that only *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was more frequently produced.

*Rip Van Winkle* had been turned into a musical on the New York stage in 1855 and 1870, and London saw musical adaptations in 1866, 1876, and 1880, but they were burlesques of Irving's story. It was British producer Alexander Henderson who hired French composer Robert Planquette to score an operetta version of the popular play as a vehicle for the comic Fred Leslie. Noted Paris librettists Henri Milhac and Phillippe Gille wrote the libretto and lyrics in French, and H. B. Farnie translated them into English. All three took a great deal of liberty with Irving's original and the Jefferson-Boucicault play. In the operetta, Rip is happily married to his young wife Gretchen and they have a little girl, Alice, but they are low on funds and the burgomaster, Derrick von Slous, threatens to take possession of

their house. Rip finds a treasure chest in the mountains and brings back enough gold pieces to pay off his debts. The villagers suspect Rip is working for the British to have such money, and they turn on him. Rip hides in the mountains, where, during a stormy night, he meets the ghost of Captain Henrik Hudson, whose treasure he has found. When Rip returns to the village the next morning, twenty years have passed, and Gretchen has married von Slous. Rip is horrified, but then he suddenly awakes and learns it was all a dream. Returning to Gretchen, he learns she has sold their house to the British for a huge profit, and with the money they will find a new home and happiness together. Filling out the libretto are a pair of village lovers, Peter Van Dunk and Katrina Vedder, as well as the comic landlord Nick Vedder and an amorous servant, Jacintha. It is not clear why the two French librettists made so many changes in the story, but while far from faithful to Irving, *Rip Van Winkle* as an operetta libretto worked.

Since the musical was tailored to Fred Leslie's Rip, the score provided him with some choice material. He raised the roof with his pals in the drinking song "May You Live and Prosper," showed his tender side singing "These Little Heads Now Golden" to Alice and a playmate, and had fun with "The Echo Song." When it was discovered in rehearsals that Leslie was an expert yodeler, that effect was added to some of his numbers. Leslie also sang the ballad "O Where's My Girl?" and joined Henrik Hudson in the rousing "Sea Song." Gretchen sang of the "Legend of the Katskills," the flowing ballad "Twilight Shadows," and with Rip performed the duet "Where Floweth the Wild Mohawk River." Katrina joined the local maidens in "Truth in the Well" and led the villagers in the sassy "Yes, No, and Nothing at All." *Rip Van Winkle* was filled with thrilling choral numbers, such as the "Nine-Pins Song," the Woodcutters song "Before Our Broad Axes, Lo, They Fall," and the finale "From Deep Forest Hoary." Planquette's music for *Rip Van Winkle* is deemed to be among the best of his considerable career.

	1882 London cast	1882 New York cast
Rip Van Winkle	Fred Leslie	William T. Carleton
Gretchen Van Winkle	Violet Cameron	Sallie Reber
Nick Vedder	Lionel Brough	Richard Mansfield
Jacintha	Constance Lewis	Alice Gresham
Katrina	Sadie Martinot	Selina Dolaro
Derrick Van Slous	W. S. Penley	Arthur Rouseby
Peter Van Dunk	Louis Kelleher	J. H. Ryley
Alice Van Winkle	Alice Vicat	Theodora Linda daCosta
Capt. Hugh Rowley	Fred Darrell	Arthur Wilkinson
Diedrich Knickerbocker	E. Wilmore	W. H. Seymour
Sara	Clara Graham	Mina Rowley

The London opening of *Rip Van Winkle* in 1882 solidified Fred Leslie's star status and much of the operetta's success was credited to his performance. Yet the reviews for the score and Henderson's production were also appreciative. The

operetta ran just over a year and might have run longer if Leslie had remained in the cast. His salary demands were so high that Henderson could not meet them, so the well-known comic singer J. A. Arnold took over the role of Rip. Business immediately dropped, and Henderson was forced to close the production, which still made a profit.

London producer Richard D'Oyly Carte secured the rights to present *Rip Van Winkle* in New York. He hired the accomplished comedian William T. Carleton to play Rip and filled the cast with expert players. Few changes were made to the script or score which, in this case, might have been a mistake. American audiences knew the Jefferson-Boucicault play version very well and the operetta was too different to be satisfactory. *Rip Van Winkle* struggled to run four weeks before Carte replaced it with Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe*. Because of the popularity of composer Planquette in France, a translated version of *Rip Van Winkle*, now called simply *Rip*, opened in Paris in 1884 and was a hit with a run of fourteen weeks. A decade later, it was revived and again was a success. *Rip Van Winkle* appealed to other continental audiences. The operetta was surprisingly popular in Budapest, revived several times over the years, as well as in Germany and Austria. But in America, playgoers seem to prefer the Irving tale as a play, particularly with co-adaptor Joseph Jefferson playing Rip, which he did for over one thousand performances.

### ***THE ROAR OF THE GREASEPAINT— THE SMELL OF THE CROWD***

(1964/1965)

A musical comedy by Leslie Bricusse, Anthony Newley

*Score:* Leslie Bricusse, Anthony Newley (music and lyrics)

*Original UK production:* 3 August 1964; Theatre Royal (Nottingham); c. 40 performances

*Original New York production:* 16 May 1965; Shubert Theatre; 232 performances

*Notable songs:* Who Can I Turn To (When Nobody Needs Me)?; A Wonderful Day Like Today; Nothing Can Stop Me Now!; Look at That Face; The Joker; My First Love Song; Sweet Beginning; Feeling Good; Things to Remember; My Way; The Beautiful Land

An adventurous musical with an outstanding score, *The Roar of the Greasepaint—The Smell of the Crowd* is a very British work that has yet to have a major production in London even though the musical ran on Broadway and toured America. After the international success of the innovative *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off* (1961), its creators Anthony Newley and Leslie Bricusse moved into musical allegory with their next project. The new musical was not limited to the metaphor of life as a circus act in a circus tent, as in their previous work. In *The Roar of the Greasepaint—The Smell of the Crowd* the setting is more abstract and the world is a



place where the “haves” and the “have-nots” are forced to play “the game.” As in Samuel Beckett’s absurdist plays *Waiting for Godot* (1953) and *Endgame* (1957), logic is ignored and the characters, particularly the “have-nots,” enact their predestined roles with desperate resignation. It all sounds heavy and symbolic, yet, like Beckett, Newley and Bricusse find the situation is sometimes laughable, as the title’s mix-up of the old theatre saying “the smell of the greasepaint, the roar of the crowd” suggests. In fact, one might describe *The Roar of the Greasepaint—The Smell of the Crowd* as an absurdist musical comedy, albeit one with a hopeful ending.

In the ambitious libretto, the “haves” of this world are represented by the self-serving, cigar-smoking Sir and the “have-nots” by the put-upon Cocky, and no matter what game they play, be it money, power, or love, Cocky always loses. A band of female urchins, led by the Kid, act as a Greek chorus but are not impartial. They know how to survive and side with Sir and torment Cocky when necessary. The plot, what there is of it, is a series of games proposed by Sir. Since Sir sets and even changes the rules as they play them, Cocky inevitably loses, and his failures are marked in a giant book. At times Sir seems to take kindly to Cocky, teaching him the ways of the world. On a few occasions Cocky rebels only to be struck down by Sir’s cockeyed logic and power. When Cocky plays the game of love and falls head over heels for the Girl, it turns out she is unfaithful with Sir, and Cocky’s despair grows deeper. Sir tricks Cocky into thinking he has killed Sir’s brother Bertie, and there is even a fake funeral. When a “Negro” comes along, Sir suggests that Cocky play a game against this lowest of the “have-nots.” But the Negro is smart enough to see that the game is rigged and moves on. Cocky sees such denial as a triumph and, challenging Sir to a game to win his cigar, the “have-not” enjoys a small victory. Sir is threatened and realizes the “haves” depend on the “have-nots.” Cocky learns how he can manipulate the game and offers to continue on the road of life with Sir with the agreement that they have equal power. Sir agrees, but instead of moving on, the two characters are frozen in argument as the musical ends, an homage to the two inert tramps at the end of *Waiting for Godot*.

Newley and Bricusse were well aware of how risky such a concept for a musical was, so they filled *The Roar of the Greasepaint—The Smell of the Crowd* with jokes and many tuneful, upbeat songs. The general tone was that of a music hall rather than a Beckett play, and the piece was surprisingly enjoyable for those willing to forgo the usual musical comedy conventions. The score had even more hits than *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off* and four songs in particular were popular on both sides of the Atlantic. The pleading “Who Can I Turn To (When Nobody Needs Me)?,” sung by Cocky when he was at his lowest point of despair, was a hit for singer-songwriter Newley and was recorded by several others as well. The bitter “The Joker,” which Cocky sang about himself after his failed love affair, was turned into a catchy rhythm number by nightclub singers. The contagiously sparkling “A Wonderful Day Like Today,” sung by the self-content Sir near the top of the musical, became a favorite sing-along everywhere from concerts to summer camps. The propulsive “Nothing Can Stop Me Now,” in which Cocky realizes his new-found powers, became an up-tempo number for singers on records and in concerts. Almost as famous, and greatly admired, was the Negro’s stirring anthem “Feeling Good,” which soared with determination even as it had a sense



of resignation. Some of the score's most complex and intriguing songs made little sense outside of the context of the musical, but there was much to commend in the sweet then sour "Look at that Face," Sir's sardonic list song "Things to Remember," the combative duet "My Way," the poignant "My First Love Song," and the exhilarating finale "Sweet Beginnings." Newley and Bricusse, together and with others, scored several stage and film musicals in their careers but in many ways, they were at their best in *The Roar of the Greasepaint—The Smell of the Crowd*.

	1964 Nottingham cast	1965 New York cast
Cocky	Norman Wisdom	Anthony Newley
Sir	Willoughby Goddard	Cyril Ritchard
The Girl	Dilys Watling	Joyce Jillson
The Negro	Cy Grant	Gilbert Price
The Kid	Sally Smith	Sally Smith

Although Newley had starred in *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off*, he only directed *The Roar of the Greasepaint—The Smell of the Crowd*. The talented, diminutive character actor Norman Wisdom was cast as the pint-sized Cocky, and the rotund veteran actor Willoughby Goddard played Sir when *The Roar of the Greasepaint—The Smell of the Crowd* began its tryout tour in Nottingham in 1964. There were script and acting problems (Cocky came across as bitter and harsh rather than the favored underdog that was intended) and the audience reaction to the unorthodox musical was very negative.

Producer Bernard Delfont canceled plans to bring the production to the West End, but American producer David Merrick, who had successfully presented *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off* in New York, caught some of the Nottingham performances and saw possibilities in the piece. He agreed to bring *The Roar of the Greasepaint—The Smell of the Crowd* to Broadway under certain conditions: that the script be revised, that Newley star as Cocky, and that a name actor be hired for Sir. That actor turned out to be the effervescent Cyril Ritchard, whose dandified persona provided the perfect foil for Newley's Cockney Cocky. With two bona fide stars on the marquee, *The Roar of the Greasepaint—The Smell of the Crowd* opened on Broadway in 1965 to decidedly mixed reviews. The press called the musical everything from "unusual freshness of imagination" to "third-rate commerce masquerading as art." The public was confused, but enough people wanted to see Newley and Ritchard, so the musical ran six months. It was not long enough to turn a profit, but Merrick had already recouped his investment during the pre-Broadway tour, and a tour following the run (without stars) also was profitable. Theatre groups looking for provocative and out-of-the-ordinary musicals presented *The Roar of the Greasepaint—The Smell of the Crowd* quite a lot in the 1970s and 1980s. Even in Great Britain, the musical found a following with regional and amateur productions. The closest the musical has gotten to a major London showing was a fringe theatre production in 2011.

## **THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW**

(1973/1975)

A musical spoof by Richard O'Brien

*Score:* Richard O'Brien (music and lyrics)

*Original London production:* 19 June 1973; Theatre Upstairs; 2,958 performances

*Original New York production:* 10 March 1975; Belasco Theatre; 45 performances

*Notable songs:* Sweet Transvestite; What Ever Happened to Saturday Night; The Time Warp; Charles Atlas Song (What Can Make You a Man); Once in a While; Hot Patootie; The Sword of Damocles; Science Fiction Double Feature; Super Heroes; Over at the Frankenstein Place; Damnit Janet; Superheroes; Touch-a, Touch-a, Touch-a, Touch Me

More famous today as a cult film than a stage musical, *The Rocky Horror Show* was a major success in London before Americans discovered the camp classic on the screen. A far-from-subtle spoof of science fiction B movies, *The Rocky Horror Show* takes a series of clichés of the genre, adds pop and rock songs, and ties it all together into a far-fetched fantasy that nevertheless is familiar. New Zealand-born Richard O'Brien, who wrote the book, music, and lyrics, understood and seemed to have an affection for what he was spoofing. A Narrator, also called the Criminologist at times, provides exposition and commentary on a plot that is usually self-evident. Squeaky-clean Brad Majors and his fiancée, Janet Weiss, are driving in a rainstorm looking for the residence of their former science teacher, Dr. Everett Scott. Their car gets a flat tire not far from a castle where, it turns out, Dr. Scott lives. They are greeted by some of the castle's oddball residents, including the hunchback butler Riff-Raff; the eccentric maid Magenta; the tap-dancing groupie Columbia; and the lord of the manor, the transvestite Dr. Frank-N-Furter. Frank-N-Furter has made a stud creature named Rocky to satisfy his peculiar amorous habits, but he soon has sexual designs on both Janet and Brad. Before he manages to seduce the couple, they are rescued by the wheelchair-bound Dr. Scott, who knows that all of the house's inhabitants are space aliens. Brad and Janet manage to escape before the entire castle blasts off into outer space.

O'Brien's songs were a pastiche of various pop genres from the 1950s and 1960s, including early rock and roll, girl group numbers, glam rock, rhythm and blues, and rockabilly. Frank-N-Furter introduces himself with the pounding, salivating "Sweet Transvestite" and later sings a rocking description of the male ideal in "Charles Atlas Song (What Can Make You a Man)." Brad and Janet's duet "Damnit Janet" is a rapid fifties ditty with a Buddy Holly feel while Rocky's "The Sword of Damocles" is an Elvis Presley-like rockabilly number. Brad gets the quietest song in the score, the pop ballad "Once in a While" with a torchy context. Among the other highlights in the popular score are the joyous 1950s pastiche "What Ever Happened to Saturday Night," which praises the newfangled rock and roll; the playful "Science Fiction Double Feature," which is a salute to the sci-fi and horror genre; the folk-rock number "Over at the Frankenstein's Place";

and “Hot Patootie,” a jazzy song with rhythm and blues thrown in. But the song that theatregoers most remember is the catchy “Time Warp,” a contagious dance number in which the lyric describes to the audience the various moves needed to participate and participate they did.

	<i>1973 London cast</i>	<i>1975 New York cast</i>
Frank-N-Furter	Tim Curry	Tim Curry
Riff-Raff	Richard O'Brien	Richard O'Brien
Brad Majors	Christopher Malcolm	Bill Miller
Janet Weiss	Julie Covington Belinda Sinclair	Abigale Hanes
Magenta	Patricia Quinn	Jamie Donnelly
Columbia	Nell Campbell	Boni Enten
Eddie/Dr. Scott	Paddy O'Hagen	Meat Loaf
Rocky Horror	Rayner Bourton	Kim Milford
Narrator/Criminologist	Jonathan Adams	Graham Jarvis

O'Brien was an out-of-work London actor when he wrote *The Rocky Horror Show* and managed to get the well-known director Jim Sharman interested in the project. They convinced producer Michael White to present the eighty-minute musical in a small space in Chelsea in 1973. The piece was expanded with more songs and scenes over the next two months, then it was moved to a larger but dilapidated movie house where its fan base grew rapidly and many patrons returned and started singing along with some of the songs. Sharman's direction, the estimable cast led by Tim Curry as Frank-N-Furter, and the colorful sets, costumes, makeup, and lighting all worked together to make the musical as special as it was eccentric. London critics gradually discovered the wacky little musical and generally applauded it as a delightful novelty. Some reviews went beyond the surface and compared it to *Hair* in its antiestablishment subtext. Young audiences, in particular, didn't need critical approval from the press and flocked to see it. *The Rocky Horror Show* ran five years in the movie theatre before finally transferring to a medium-sized playhouse in the West End. Much of the intimacy and tawdriness of the space was lost, yet still the musical ran for another year. *The Rocky Horror Show* developed a cult status in London. Rock concert and record producer Lou Adler saw possibilities for American productions, and in 1974 presented the musical in Los Angeles in a movie theatre. Tim Curry again played Frank-N-Furter, but the rest of the cast was American. Business was so strong that the production ran nine months and a deal for a movie version was signed.

Adler then took *The Rocky Horror Show* to Broadway, but the New York production did not catch on. Adler should have presented the unconventional musical in an Off-Broadway venue or, even better, a run-down cinema. Instead *The Rocky Horror Show* opened in 1975 in a mid-sized Broadway theatre. Adler took efforts to make the playhouse look more like a cabaret, even tearing out some of the side boxes, but it was always obvious that one was on Broadway. The New York production was an accurate replica of the London one, with the same creative

team and Curry reprising his Frank-N-Furter. The Broadway reviews were almost unanimously negative, the critics finding the spoof unfunny and charmless. Since New Yorkers were not aware of what a hit *The Rocky Horror Show* was in London and Los Angeles, there was little presale, and business was so bad that Adler had to close the production after four weeks.

Everything changed later in 1975 when the film version, now called *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, was released. Sharman directed, and Curry and some other members of the stage cast reprised their performances on screen. The movie was not an immediate hit. The reviews were dismissive and the film's first run was a financial disaster. But in 1976 the Waverly Theatre in New York started doing midnight showings of the movie and encouraged audience members to dress up, bring props, and participate in the musical numbers. Soon there were midnight showings in cities across the United States and in Great Britain, and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* became the most popular cult film of its era. Such success prompted theatre companies to produce the original stage work, and productions of *The Rocky Horror Show* have consistently appeared in academic and regional theatres ever since. London saw revivals in 1979 and 1994, and Broadway was more welcoming when *The Rocky Horror Show* was revived in 2000 and ran nearly a year. The popularity of the musical spoof has not been limited to Great Britain and America. Over the years there have been resident and touring productions in over twenty countries ranging from Belgium to South Korea.

## **RUDDIGORE; OR, THE WITCH'S CURSE**

(1887)

A comic operetta by W. S. Gilbert

*Score:* Arthur Sullivan (music), W. S. Gilbert (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 22 January 1887; Savoy Theatre; 288 performances

*Original New York production:* 21 February 1887; Fifth Avenue Theatre; 53 performances

*Notable songs:* My Eyes Are Fully Open to My Awful Situation (It Really Doesn't Matter); Cheerily Carols the Lark; To a Garden Full of Posies; If Somebody There Chanced to Be; When the Night Howls; I Know a Youth Who Loves a Little Maid; Painted Emblems of a Race; Henceforth All the Crimes; The Ghost's Nigh Noon; I Shipp'd, D'ye See, in a Revenue Sloop

Gilbert and Sullivan's first new work after the phenomenal success of *The Mikado*, this parody of Victorian gothic melodrama could not hope to compare with its predecessor and was something of a major disappointment when it opened. But over the years *Ruddigore* has been better appreciated, particularly for its superb music. As he had done in the past, Gilbert based his libretto on some of his pre-Sullivan work, in particular his one-act opera *Ages Ago* (1869) and excerpts from his light verse collected under the title *Bab Ballads*. He also drew from the 1828 German opera *Der Vampyr* by Heinrich Marschner and the popular gruesome

melodramas and ghost stories of the day. Yet despite all of the sources that have been attributed to *Ruddigore*, the operetta is pure Gilbert. In the county of Cornwall, the Murgatroyd family has been under the curse of a witch who was burned at the stake by the ancestor Sir Rupert Murgatroyd. The curse dictates that the baronet of the Murgatroyd estate must commit a crime every day of his life or he will suffer an agonizing death. In order to escape this curse, Ruthven Murgatroyd has disguised himself as the simple farmer Robin Oakapple and has fallen in love with the village maiden Rose Maybud. She was once engaged to Roderic Murgatroyd until she found out about his identity and the family curse. Robin's foster brother, Richard Dauntless, returns to Cornwall after years at sea and he too falls in love with Rose. Also arriving on the scene is Robin's brother Despard Murgatroyd, who, because of his elder brother's disappearance, has been named baronet and is thus forced to commit a crime a day. This does not deter Mad Margaret, who has gone insane over her unrequited love for Despard. Learning from Old Adam that Ruthven is alive and disguised as Robin, on Rose and Robin's wedding day, Despard reveals Robin's true identity, and Rose turns her affections to Richard. No longer the baronet and free from the curse, Despard marries Mad Margaret, while poor Ruthven tries to think up minor crimes (cheating on his taxes, disinheriting his unborn son, and so on) to fulfill the demands of the witch's curse. He decides he ought to abduct a maiden, any maiden, and has Old Adam steal Dame Hannah, who is quite a handful. The ghosts of the dead Murgatroyds appear to Ruthven to demand that he continue to commit daily crimes, but he refuses. Instead he comes up with a convoluted piece of logic: when a Murgatroyd does not commit a crime, it is in essence suicide; and since suicide is a crime, all the dead Murgatroyds have outwitted the curse. Free from the family curse, Ruthven is reunited with Rose, Roderic weds Dame Hannah, and Richard ends up with one of Rose's bridesmaids.

Because *Ruddigore* is a satire on the kind of theatrics found in melodramatic opera and gothic fiction of the day, the characters are more stereotypic than in most Gilbert and Sullivan works. Ruthven/Robin is lovestruck but too timid to declare his feelings; Rose is so proper and concerned about etiquette that she gets engaged and unengaged easily; Despard is the cliché villain until he finds out it is no longer necessary; Richard is a dense sailor who casually falls in and out of love; and Mad Margaret is the stock crazy woman who is easily cured by the love of the right man. One enjoys all the characters in *Ruddigore* even as one has little empathy for them and their contrived predicaments. This false playacting carries over to the score where one finds the songs pleasing but rarely involving. The most famous number from the operetta is the rapid-fire trio "My Eyes Are Fully Open" which is better remembered by the repeated phrase "It Really Doesn't Matter." It is sung by Margaret, Ruthven, and Despard as a vocally gymnastic exercise, perhaps the wackiest of all Gilbert and Sullivan patter songs. Even the lyric admits that the song goes so fast that no one in the audience could possibly understand it, but "it really doesn't matter." The number is a guaranteed showstopper. Ruthven has another notable patter song, "Henceforth All the Crimes," which was considered too sardonic and was rewritten after opening night. (Gilbert also rewrote the end of the operetta which had originally concluded with all the dead Murgatroyds coming back to life.) The sailor Richard sings a chipper sea song titled "I Shipp'd,

D'ye See, in a Revenue Sloop," which is particularly critical of the French, as well as the creepy "The Ghost's High Noon (When the Night Wind Howls)" which is almost Germanic in its stirring musical dynamics. Robin and Rose's coy duet "I Know a Youth Who Loves a Little Maid" is romantic without either of them admitting that they themselves are the "youth" and the "maid." Rose's solo "If Somebody There Chanced to Be" is a charming waltz ballad, as opposed to Mad Margaret's frantic ballad "Cheerily Carols the Lark," which is an homage (or spoof of?) Donizetti's mad scene in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The music in *Ruddigore* has been studied with keen interest over the years and many musicologists rate it among Sullivan's finest work.

	1887 London cast	1887 New York cast
Rose Maybud	Leonora Braham	Geraldine Ulmar
Robin Oakapple/Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd	George Grossmith	George Thorne
Sir Despard Murgatroyd	Rutland Barrington	Fred Billington
Mad Margaret	Jessie Bond	Kate Forster
Richard Dauntless	Durward Lely	Courtice Pounds
Dame Hannah	Rosina Brandham	Elsie Cameron
Old Adam	Rudolph Lewis	Leo Kloss
Sir Roderic Murgatroyd	Richard Temple	Frederick Federici

There were complaints from the press and the public about *Ruddigore* before it even opened. Originally titled *Ruddygore*, several thought the word offensive. It was a barely disguised use of the word "bloody" which was considered an obscene expression used only by the lowest members of society. Somehow changing the spelling to *Ruddigore* appeased the objectors. There was also concern that there was an actual Murgatroyd family in Yorkshire who, according to legend, suffered from some kind of family curse. When the operetta premiered in London in 1887, the audience was very receptive to the first act but got restless and then downright hostile during the second act. It is recorded that there were actual hisses and boos during the curtain call. The reviews were also critical of the second act and expressed disappointment in *Ruddigore* in general. More than with any of his operettas, Gilbert made numerous changes in the script and score, the placement of songs, and even the scenery after the opening. Audiences who saw *Ruddigore* a few weeks into the run experienced a much tighter, more enjoyable operetta. This revised version was the one later published and used in future productions. Despite the initial criticisms, *Ruddigore* ran a profitable eleven months and toured with success.

Producer Richard D'Oyly Carte was encouraged by the operetta's modest popularity and presented the New York production. Titled *Ruddygore*, it opened on Broadway later in 1887 and met with mixed notices. Again, the first act was still deemed enjoyable and the second a disappointment. Gilbert and Sullivan were so popular in America after the recent *Mikado* that theatregoers gave *Ruddygore* a

chance, but it managed to run less than two months. Soon the operetta was pretty much forgotten in both Great Britain and the United States, and both Gilbert and Sullivan died thinking it a failure. But in the 1920s there was a resurgence of interest in *Ruddigore*, with revivals in the West End and on Broadway, and the musical was added to the repertory of producible operettas. Today it is not done frequently but is far from obscure or unknown.

## **A RUNAWAY GIRL**

(1898)

A musical comedy by Seymour Hicks and Harry Nicholls

*Score:* Ivan Caryll, Lionel Monckton (music), Aubrey Hopwood, Harry Greenbank (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 21 May 1898; Gaiety Theatre; 593 performances

*Original New York production:* 25 August 1898; Daly's Theatre; 216 performances

*Notable songs:* Soldiers in the Park; The Boy Guessed Right; I'm Only a Poor Little Singing Girl; Barcelona; The Sly Cigarette; Society; Beautiful Venice; Piccaninnies; My Kingdom; Follow the Man from Cook's; Not the Sort of Girl I Care About; No-One in the World

One of the most popular of producer George Edwardes's series of Gaiety musical comedies at the theatre of that name, *A Runaway Girl* offered no surprises in plot but had some of the Gaiety's favorite performers and enough good songs that it all seemed fresh and vibrant. Seymour Hicks, one of the Gaiety's matinee idols, chose to write the libretto rather than appear in Edwardes's latest production. Hicks's wife was audience favorite Ellaline Terriss, and she was cast as the title ingenue in *A Runaway Girl*, so he made sure her role was prominently featured. Harry Nicholls, another actor, helped with the writing, both of them somewhat restricted by making sure there were significant parts for a handful of Gaiety regulars. The authors set the plot in sunny Corsica, where the English heiress Winifred Grey is being educated at a convent school. When Winifred learns that her parents have chosen the nephew of the aged Lord Coodle to be her husband, she runs away from school and joins a band of minstrels. Also joining the troupe is Guy Stanley, a handsome youth with whom Winifred falls in love. But it turns out that the minstrels are really bandits in disguise, and they demand money from Guy. Since he is penniless, Guy escapes to Venice with Winifred and two other new minstrel members, the comic Flipper and the sly Alice. The angry bandits follow them to Venice, where Flipper is paid to kill Guy. Luckily, Flipper is a servant of Lord Coodle, Alice is Lady Coodle's lady's maid, and Guy is the nephew intended for Winifred. Flipper and Alice disguise themselves as blackface minstrels to distract the bandits and allow Guy and Winifred to escape to England. Only after Flipper and Alice join them there does Winifred learn of Guy's true identity, and she has no intention of running away from a marriage to him. In a comic subplot, Brother



Tamarind pursues the comely Spanish dancer Carmenita but it turns out she really comes from London's East End.

There was little to recommend in this tired plot, but the dialogue was sprightly, the characters were custom-made for the performers, and the songs by Ivan Caryll, Lionel Monckton (music), Aubrey Hopwood, and Harry Greenbank (lyrics) were often estimable. Terriss as Winifred was, of course, well provided with several numbers. She coyly admitted "I'm Only a Poor Little Singing Girl," sang and waltzed to an homage to "The Sly Cigarette," and gushed over "Beautiful Venice," but her best number in the musical was the narrative ditty "The Boy Guessed Right" about a mischievous youth who knew very well what the headmaster was hiding behind his back. Connie Ediss, a comic favorite at the Gaiety, sang two dandy comic songs as Carmenita: the silly salute to "Barcelona" and her lament that she wasn't born into "Society." Edmund Payne, the leading male comic in *A Runaway Girl*, played Flipper and joined Alice (Katie Seymour) as two blackface "Piccaninnies" who are scared of the goblins in the woods, a number few would tolerate today. Other memorable songs include Guy's ballad "Not the Sort of Girl I Care About," Winifred and Guy's romantic duet "No-One in the World," the bandits' fervent "My Kingdom" about Corsica, and the sly "Follow the Man from Cooks" sung by an octet of tourists making the best of a Thomas Cooks tour. Ironically, the song from *A Runaway Girl* that became the most famous was sung by a minor character, the second ingenue Dorothy, played by Ethel Hayden. "Soldiers in the Park" is a simple but catchy song with a subtle martial flavor that is both romantic and patriotic. It was sung, played, and danced to for several years in Britain.

	1898 London cast	1898 New York cast
Winifred Grey	Ellaline Terriss	Virginia Earle
Guy Stanley	W. Louis Bradfield	Cyril Scott
Alice	Katie Seymour	Maybelle Gilman
Leonello	John Coates	Arthur Donaldson
Flipper	Edmund Payne	James T. Powers
Carmenita	Connie Ediss	Paula Edwardes
Brother Tamarind	Harry Monkhouse	Herbert Gresham
Lord Coodle	Fred Kaye	Wilfred Clarke
Lady Coodle	M. Talbot	Catherine Lewis
Dorothy Stanley	Ethel Hayden	Yvette Violette
Signor Paloni	Robert Nainby	Henry Stanley
Mr. Creel	Willie Warde	Thomas Hadaway

All the right ingredients came together in *A Runaway Girl* and the musical was greeted with plaudits from the critics and hearty applause by the audience. It turned out to be one of Edwardes's biggest hits, running over a year in London and then going on the road for an extended tour. American producer Augustin Daly presented *A Runaway Girl* on Broadway later in 1898 and, unusual for the



time, made no changes in script or songs. He even managed to cast the characters with performers whose talents resembled those of the London cast. After running a profitable four months in New York, the musical toured the States then returned to Broadway in 1900 and made another tour in 1902. *A Runaway Girl* also did well in other English-speaking countries, such as Australia, and played successfully in foreign-language productions in Austria, Germany, and Hungary.

# S

## **SAIL AWAY**

(1961/1962)

A musical comedy by Noel Coward

*Score:* Noel Coward (music and lyrics)

*Original New York production:* 3 October 1961; Broadhurst Theatre; 167 performances

*Original London production:* 21 June 1962; Savoy Theatre; 252 performances

*Notable songs:* Why Do the Wrong People Travel?; Sail Away; Don't Turn Away from Love; When You Want Me; The Passenger's Always Right; Useful Phrases; You're a Long, Long Way from America; Something Very Strange; The Little Ones' A-B-C; Later Than Spring; Go Slow, Johnny; The Bronxville Darby and Joan

Noel Coward had been writing comedies, dramas, musical revues, and book musicals for the London stage since 1925, with many of them transferring to Broadway, but *Sail Away* was his first work to premiere in New York. Most of the characters in the musical comedy were Americans, and the cast was led by the American character actress Elaine Stritch, for whom he wrote the leading lady role. Ironically, *Sail Away* was a pointed, sometimes deadly, satire on contemporary Americans and the musical did not strike some New Yorkers as funny. The target of the satire was a familiar one: the gauche American tourist who wants to see exotic Europe but is only comfortable with the American way of doing things. Such narrow-minded travelers had been the butt of authors' jokes since the days of Mark Twain. But Coward's wit was often too accurate and too close to home. In fact, the targets of the humor were pretty much the same kind of people who were in the audience watching *Sail Away*. It is little wonder the musical fared better in London than in New York.

The musical that opened on Broadway bore little resemblance to what Coward had started out with. The original libretto focused on the unhappy American wife Verity Craig, who while contemplating a divorce takes a cruise to Europe. On board she finds love in the arms of a younger man, Johnny Van Mier, but when the romance sours, she contemplates suicide rather than reuniting with her husband. With the opera singer Jean Fenn cast as Verity, Coward wrote some lyrical and operatic songs, including a wistful ballad titled "Something Very Strange." The



The uniquely talented Elaine Stritch won plaudits in New York and London as the wisecracking cruise director Mimi Paragon in Noel Coward's musical comedy. But Stritch lacked the box office clout to make the musical a hit in either city. Not until the 1970s would she become a true stage star. *Photofest*

ship's cruise director, the wisecracking divorcee Mimi Paragon, was the comic relief as she cleverly handled the passenger's various problems. While trying out the show in Philadelphia, the audience was bored with the Verity-Johnny romance but loved Elaine Stritch as Mimi. Major rewriting by Coward eliminated the character of Verity completely, made Mimi the leading lady, and had her fall

in love with Johnny. Much of the score had to be rewritten, and Mimi/Stritch was given some dandy comic numbers in the Coward tradition. In the revised libretto, much of the action is set on the British ocean liner *Coronia*, which sets off from Manhattan for the Mediterranean. The experienced and sardonic Mimi Paragon, who is an expert in handling everyone from complaining old ladies to obnoxious children, has seen plenty of shipboard romances. But she is thrown when she finds herself falling for the handsome but much younger Johnny, who is on the rebound from a relationship thwarted by his overbearing mother. Mimi and Johnny are cautious at first, then by the second act deeply in love, only to have doubts on the journey home. They are suddenly reunited after he disembarks and then has a change of heart. It was not the most exciting love story, and audiences kept waiting for Mimi to sing about foreign phrase books, handling children, prepping Americans for Europe, and wondering, in the musical's most famous song, "Why Do the Wrong People Travel?" While the dialogue sometimes recalled Coward's wit of earlier days, the libretto had some dull sequences, such as those involving the love-hungry Nancy Foyle, secretary to her aunt, the famous novelist Elinor Spencer-Bolland, and her chasing the hip young Barnaby Slade. Some of the scenes in Italy and Tangiers had funny moments, but soon everyone was back on board and the lackluster romances continued.

Coward's score, on the other hand, rarely faltered. The title song came from an unsuccessful Coward revue, and one cannot blame him for reusing it; it has catchy music with a lighthearted lyric that also registers a desperate need to escape from life. "Sail Away" was sung near the beginning of the musical by the disillusioned Johnny then picked up by the company. He also had a melancholy ballad titled "Later Than Spring," which Mimi reprised later in the musical, and the pleading number "Don't Turn Away from Love." Both numbers were unabashedly old-fashioned without being very charming, and Johnny's cautionary "Go Slow, Johnny" also did little to help matters. Stritch triumphed with her comic songs, such as her introductory "Come to Me," the sarcastic "Useless Useful Phrases," the caustic "You're a Long, Long Way from America," the vicious "Do Re Mi" spoof "The Little Ones' A-B-C," and the already mentioned comic standard "Why Do the Wrong People Travel (When the Right People Stay at Home)?" But she was also very moving singing the reflective "Something Very Strange," which was meant for an opera-quality voice. Of the songs delivered by the other characters, Coward was at his most waspish with the parallel numbers "The Passenger's Always Right," sung by the ship's crew, and "The Customer's Always Right," mockingly sung by the vendors.

Although the New York critics were dismissive of the libretto and only applauded a few of the songs, Stritch got rave notices and each review recommended *Sail Away* because of her. But Stritch was not a bona fide Broadway star and, although she could carry a show, she was not a box office draw in 1961. All the same, *Sail Away* managed to run twenty-one weeks. Coward, who had also directed the musical, was undeterred, and the next year *Sail Away* opened in the West End with Coward again directing and Stritch reprising her sparkling performance as Mimi.

The London critics, who were severely critical of Coward by the 1960s, were even less kind than the Broadway press. Coward and his recent work were

	1961 New York cast	1962 London cast
Mimi Paragon	Elaine Stritch	Elaine Stritch
John Van Mier	James Hurst	David Holliday
Barnaby Slade	Glover Dale	Grover Dale
Nancy Foyle	Patricia Harty	Sheila Forbes
Mrs. Van Mier	Margalo Gillmore	Mavis Villiers
Elinor Spencer-Bollard	Alice Pearce	Dorothy Reynolds
Mrs. Sweeney	Paula Bauersmith	Edith Day
Mr. Sweeney	Jon Richards	Sydney Arnold
Joe/Ali	Charles Braswell	John Hewer
Sir Gerald Nutfield	C. Stafford Dickens	Edward Steele
Lady Nutfield	Margaret Mower	Hester Paton-Brown
Mamie Candijack	Betty Jane Watson	Stella Moray
Elmer Candijack	Henry Lawrence	Kim Grant
Shuttleworth	Keith Prentice	Tony Adams

deemed out of date by the theatre cognoscenti, and *Sail Away* was just another excuse to proclaim that the Master had no place in the modern 1960s. Yet British audiences still liked Coward, and *Sail Away* ran nearly eight months. The production was mostly unchanged from New York. Cut was the nasty “The Little Ones’ A-B-C” and added was the nimble-witted duet “Bronxville Darby and Joan,” which had been eliminated before the Broadway opening. It was sung in the West End by the Sweeneys, an elderly couple who politely despised each other, and performed by two beloved London stage veterans, Edith Day and Sydney Arnold. In 1963, *Sail Away* was produced in Melbourne, Australia, with Maggie Fitzgibbon as Mimi, then the musical was little heard of until a British revival in 1998 and a New York one in 2008. Although *Sail Away* comes near the end of Coward’s career, there is much in the score to admire and even marvel at.

## SALAD DAYS

(1954/1958)

A musical comedy by Julian Slade and Dorothy Reynolds

*Score:* Julian Slade (music and lyrics), Dorothy Reynolds (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 5 August 1954; Vaudeville Theatre; 2,283 performances

*Original New York production:* 10 November 1958; Barbizon-Plaza Theatre (Off-Broadway); 80 performances

*Notable songs:* It’s Easy to Sing; The Time of My Life; Cleopatra; Oh, Look at Me; We’re Looking for a Piano; I Sit in the Sun; Hush Hush; We Said We Wouldn’t Look Back; The Things That Are Done by a Don

Perhaps no musical illustrates the undefinable difference between American and British tastes more than *Salad Days*, a giant hit in London and a brief non-event in New York. The featherlight, featherbrained musical opened in London and ran five and a half years. In fact, it was the longest-running show on record until *Oliver!* passed it in the 1960s. Yet Broadway producers thought the musical too English and could not determine how it would fare in America. Four years after it opened in London, *Salad Days* was presented Off-Broadway with little fanfare. The notices were mixed. Some critics found it charming, most thought it too silly to contemplate, and a few said it was even better than the West End production. Audiences were curious enough to let it run ten weeks.

The story is set in London during a heat wave, which may account for the foolishness that follows. Sweethearts Timothy and Jane have just graduated from college and need to find jobs in an era of high unemployment. A Tramp in the park offers the couple seven pounds a week for one month to look after his beat-up piano "Minnie," which sits outside the campus. With such a meager but guaranteed income, Timothy and Jane wed and, when checking on Minnie, they find that anyone who listens to music played on the dilapidated instrument is overcome with a desire to dance. Soon anyone who comes within the sound of the piano, from businessmen and children to policemen and clergy, are dancing to its music. News of the piano's power upsets the Minister of Pleasure and Pastime, and he sends police to confiscate Minnie—but the piano has disappeared. Even Timothy and Jane do not know where it has gone. Timothy's mad scientist Uncle Zed takes the couple up over London in his flying saucer and they spot it: the Tramp has taken Minnie away for safety sake. When the month ends, the piano is given to another young couple for guardianship, and Timothy and Jane bid Minnie goodbye with bittersweet affection.

A plot this cockeyed needed a score that was catchy and contagious enough to support such a ridiculous story. For the most part it was. Julian Slade and Dorothy Reynolds came up with a set of songs that almost make you believe in Minnie's powers. The opening number, "The Dons' Chorus (The Things That Are Done by a Don)," is a merry alma mater anthem; the bubbly "Oh, Look at Me" is the musical realization of Minnie's power to inspire dancing; "We Said We Wouldn't Look Back" is a fox-trotting duet about looking forward; the diplomat's "Hush Hush" is a Gilbert and Sullivan-like number about keeping mum at all costs; "It's Easy to Sing" is an idiotically happy sing-along; the tango "Cleopatra" is a farcical tribute to lavish living; the sprightly "We're Looking for a Piano" is a stiff-upper-lip can-can; "I Sit in the Sun" is a lilting number about enjoying nature while waiting for love to arrive; "The Saucer" is a funny polka with a slapstick lyric; and the waltzing "The Time of My Life" is a gliding operatic air about enjoying one's youth (or salad days). If the score recalls any postwar musical at all, it is *The Boy Friend* (1954), which was a gentle spoof of 1920s musical comedy. *Salad Days*, although it has a contemporary setting, has the same kind of nonsensical temperament that places a catchy song above all other elements. Yet *The Boy Friend* did not rely on a flying saucer or a magical piano.

Over the years *Salad Days* has remained a favorite in England. There was a television version and several London revivals, including a fortieth anniversary

	<i>1954 London cast</i>	<i>1958 New York cast</i>
Jane	Eleanor Drew	Barbara Franklin
Timothy Dawes	John Warner	Richard Easton
Timothy's Mother	Dorothy Reynolds	Mary Savidge
Tramp	Newton Blick	Powys Thomas
Uncle Clam	James Cairncross	Jack Creley
Nigel Danvers	Michael Meacham	Tom Kneebone
Fiona Thompson	Christine Finn	June Sampson

production that was very popular. The musical has also been produced with success in Australia and Canada. Meanwhile, Americans who are aware of the show are still scratching their heads. It is as difficult to explain why the Brits love *Salad Days* as it is to clarify why Americans don't. It helps to understand that in 1954, Great Britain was in a deep recession and there was still a shortage of goods because of a war that had ended nearly a decade before. It also matters that in the 1950s, the West End was overflowing with Broadway hits that were boldly proclaiming the superiority of American shows. Then along came *Salad Days*, which was so merrily illogical and was so contentedly un-American and un-Broadway. The critic for the *London Times* even stated that *Salad Days* was "reacting sharply against the hard-hitting, hard-boiled American musical." If the British were embarrassed that such a piece of fluff was their biggest musical hit of the decade, they didn't seem to show it. When Jerome Robbins was in London preparing the West End production of *West Side Story*, he was brought to see *Salad Days*. The somewhat paranoid Robbins thought that the whole thing was a practical joke put together to make fun of him and his Broadway efforts. Not quite, but *Salad Days* would never be mistaken for a *West Side Story*-like musical, which might be why it is essentially British and so proudly un-American.

## ***SAN TOY; OR, THE EMPEROR'S OWN***

(1899/1900)

A musical comedy by Edward A. Morton

*Score:* Sidney Jones, Lionel Monckton, and others (music), Harry Greenbank, Adrian Ross, and others (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 21 October 1899; Daly's Theatre; 778 performances

*Original New York production:* 1 October 1900; Daly's Theatre; 168 performances

*Notable songs:* The One in the World; Love Has Come from Lotus Land; The Petals of the Plum Tree; Six Little Wives; I Mean to Introduce It into China; Rhoda and Her Pagoda; Ladies' Maid; Chinee Soje-Man (Chinese Soldierman); The Butterfly; A.B.C.; Me Gettee Outee Velly Quick; It's Nice to Be a Boy Sometimes; All I Want Is a Little Bit of Fun; Somebody; Sons of the Motherland

London producer George Edwardes had had a runaway hit with *The Geisha* (1896), which was set in Japan, so he commissioned journalist-turned-librettist Edward A. Morton to come up with a musical comedy set in China, hoping lightning would strike twice. The result was *San Toy*, which was equally successful not only in London but in America and around the world. Such a happy ending did not come easily, as *San Toy* had a very difficult birth. Edwardes tried to secure the services of librettist Owen Hall, who had written *The Geisha*, but failed to get him, so the inexperienced Morton was put in charge of the book. Morton struggled before coming up with a story similar to but not too obviously like *The Geisha*. During the writing of the score, lyricist Harry Greenbank died of consumption at the age of thirty-three and Adrian Ross and others had to complete the lyrics. Composer Sidney Jones fell behind in his writing, and the very able Lionel Monckton was hired to write some of the music. During rehearsals, a rivalry developed between the leading lady Marie Tempest and Ada Reeve, who played the comic soubrette. Each actress considered herself the star of the show and undermined the other's performance. Losing the battle to the more famous Tempest, Reeve quit and the soubrette role was taken over by comedienne Gracie Leigh. Despite such backstage melodrama, *San Toy* turned out to be a well-written, beautifully scored, and superbly acted musical comedy.

The Emperor of China has decreed that the daughters of noble families must serve in his all-female army. The revered mandarin Yen How has raised his daughter San Toy as a boy in order to keep her out of the military, but her disguise doesn't fool the Chinese student Fo Hop, who vows to remain silent if Yen How will allow him to marry San Toy. But San Toy has fallen in love with the British consul's son, Captain Bobby Preston, who has also seen through the girl's disguise. Everything gets more complicated when the Emperor changes his mind and rules that the sons of noblemen must make up his army. San Toy is conscripted and sent to Peking followed by her father, Bobby, and Fo Hop. When San Toy reveals herself as a female, the Emperor is quite taken with her and plans to make her one of his wives. This catastrophe is avoided when the astrologers chart the stars and declare that a marriage between the Emperor and San Toy is not advised. So San Toy is free to wed Bobby and her father is made a viceroy. In the subplot, Yen How's private secretary, Li, is in love with the female guard Ko Fan, and the household maid Dudley, along with Fo Hop, provide the comedy. It is a contrived but workable libretto, and it allowed Edwardes to present another romantic Asian tale with sumptuous scenery and costumes, some impressive exotic dancing, and roles for his exceptional cast. Tempest shone as San Toy and was nicely balanced with the funny Gracie Leigh as Dudley, the role Ada Reeve had abandoned. The story was filled with Asian clichés that Western audiences expected: Yen How's six silly wives, Fo Hop's massacre of the English language, the superiority of the British characters, and a fickle Emperor who made outrageous decrees. The musical opened with another Western misconception: the aged servant Chu is condemned to be buried alive with her late husband. Luckily, she does not abide by such laws and escapes. Like the other British operettas and musicals set in Asia at the time, *San Toy* is far from politically correct and could not be performed for an audience today without great difficulty.



Even the score has some comic numbers that would be considered offensive today. Yen How introduces himself boasting of his “Six Little Wives” and their joy in kowtowing to him. Yen How also sang the wry number “I Mean to Introduce It to China” about how he plans to use the smarter Western ways to make his fortune in his backward native land. The Chinaman Li sings about the bravery of the “Chinee Soje-Man (Chinese Soldierman)” but in a ridiculous dialect that strives for laughs. The maid Dudley uses a similar pidgin English in her comic duets with Li, the derogatory “Ladies’ Maid” and the narrative number “Rhoda and Her Pagoda” about an English girl who sets up a Chinese tea house in London and not only makes money but gets to marry into the aristocracy. The serious ballads were sung by San Toy, such as the graceful “Petals of the Plum Tree” and the facile “The Butterfly, and she partnered with Bobby in the charming duet “A.B.C.” Bobby got to sing two superior ballads, the dulcet “Love Has Come from Lotus Land” and the rhapsodic “The One in the World,” both of which enjoyed some popularity outside of the theatre. During the long run and with some cast changes, new songs were added or substituted for dropped numbers. With the Boer War in the news, Bobby sang the patriotic “Sons of the Motherland” and the familiar favorite “Tommy Atkins.” More pidgin English was heard when Li sang “Me Gettee Outee Velly Quick” and San Toy admitted “It’s Nice to Be a Boy Sometimes.” She also led the cast in singing the most popular of the interpolations, “All I Want Is a Bit of Fun.”

	<i>1899 London cast</i>	<i>1900 New York cast</i>
San Toy	Marie Tempest	Marie Celeste
Capt. Bobby Preston	Hayden Coffin	Melville Stewart
Fo Hop	Scott Russell	Joseph Gooderow
Yen How	Rutland Barrington	George K. Fortesque
Li	Huntley Wright	James T. Powers
Sir Bingo Preston	Fred Kaye	Wilfred Clarke
Poppy Preston	Hilda Moody	Flora Zabelle
Dudley	Gracie Leigh	Minnie Ashley
Ko Fan	Maidie Hope	Isobel Hall
Lt. Harvey Tucker	Lionel Mackinder	Henry Girard
Emperor	Akerman May	Sarony Lambert

The backstage nightmares were not evidenced on the stage when *San Toy* opened in London in 1899 to exemplary reviews from the press and cheers from the audience. Not only did all the elements come together, but each aspect of the musical—the cockeyed libretto, the splendid songs, the first-rate production values, and the stellar performances—found favor with the public. *San Toy* ran over two years.

American producer Daniel Frohman presented *San Toy* in New York the next year and didn’t encounter the backstage shenanigans that the London mounting had undergone. Marie Celeste was the undisputed star as San Toy but stealing all of his scenes was the rotund giant George K. Fortesque as the wily Yen How.

Comics James T. Powers, Joseph Gooderow, and Minnie Ashley did not disappoint as *Li, Fo Hop*, and *Dudley*. The score included some of the songs added during the London run, even the British patriotic ditty “Tommy Atkins.” The New York reviews were mostly valentines, and *San Toy* ran twenty-one weeks in two engagements. In addition to a lucrative tour, the musical returned to Broadway in 1902 and 1905. In Great Britain, *San Toy* toured on and off for years, returned to London triumphantly in 1932, and was a favorite of theatre groups up through World War Two. The musical not only found success in Australia and Canada but was soon seen in continental Europe, followed by productions around the world. How odd that the three British works to find international acclaim in this period—*The Mikado*, *The Geisha*, and *San Toy*—were all stereotypic musical comedies set in Asia.

## **SCHOOL OF ROCK**

(2015/2016)

A musical comedy by Julian Fellowes, based on the 2003 screenplay by Mike White

*Score:* Andrew Lloyd Webber and others (music), Glenn Slater and others (lyrics)

*Original New York production:* 6 December 2015; Winter Garden Theatre; 1,309 performances

*Original London production:* 14 November 2016; Gillian Lynne Theatre; 900+ performances

*Notable songs:* School of Rock; Stick It to the Man; When I Climb to the Top of Mount Rock; You’re in the Band; Where Did the Rock Go?; Math Is a Wonderful Thing; If Only You Would Listen; I’m Too Hot for You; Time to Play; Here at Horace Green; Faculty Quadrille; Children of Rock; In the End of Time

*School of Rock* was the first Andrew Lloyd Webber musical since *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971) to premiere on Broadway before opening in London. Also, it marked Lloyd Webber’s return to a (mostly) rock score, his first since *Starlight Express* (1984). The musical is closely based on the 2003 film starring Jack Black as a failed rock musician and singer who gets a job as a substitute teacher at a posh prep school where he inspires a class of fifth-graders to express themselves by forming a rock band. The movie used music by Led Zeppelin, the Doors, Cream, Metallica, David Bowie, the Who, Kiss, and other rockers, as well as a few numbers written by screenwriter Mike White, Jack Black, and the band the Moody Suzuki. The film was an international hit, much of its popularity due to star Black and the vibrant soundtrack. Lloyd Webber bought the rights to turn *School of Rock* into a stage musical with a score by himself and American lyricist Glenn Slater. To adapt the movie into a stage piece, Lloyd Webber, who was also the producer, hired the much-awarded British writer Julian Fellowes. Known for such successful “English” works as *Gosford Park*, *Downton Abbey*, and the stage version of *Mary Poppins*, Fellowes seemed an unlikely choice for such an American project. His libretto follows the film except for details in the plot and a bit more emphasis on



The down-and-out rock musician Dewey Finn (Alex Brightman, center) gets a new lease on life when he inspires the students at the stuffy Horace Green prep school with his love for rock and roll in the Broadway musical version of the popular movie. *Everett Collection Inc. / Alamy Stock Photo*

the kids rather than the adults. The no-longer-young guitarist-singer Dewey Finn gets kicked out of the small-time rock band *No Vacancy* and, desperate to pay his rent, uses his friend Ned Schneebly's name to get a job as a substitute teacher at Horace Green, a very conservative prep school for highly intelligent kids. The hyperactive Dewey doesn't get along with the other teachers or the students until he realizes that his fifth-grade class consists of musical prodigies studying classical music under the principal Rosalie Mullins. Dewey turns the kids on to rock music and gets them an audition for a *Battle of the Bands* competition. Rosalie finds out about the band and plans to put a stop to their participation in the competition, but Dewey takes her out for a drink and we learn Rosalie loved rock as a young girl and secretly still does. The parents find out about the school's band right before the competition and are furious until they see their children perform, and witness the student Tomika singing a song written by fellow student Zack. They don't win the contest, but the performance is a triumph. The police arrive to arrest Dewey for fraud for impersonating Ned, but Rosalie tells them that Dewey is the school's new band coach and not a fraud at all.

*School of Rock* tells a pleasing and predictable story that has often been told before but the wild, off-the-wall protagonist Dewey made the material seem fresh. Fellowes's libretto is filled with too-familiar scenes and characters but manages to flesh out the personalities of some of the students, showing a bit of their home life and illustrating why being in the band was so important to these spoiled yet overlooked kids. The tentative romance between Dewey and Rosalie is of limited

interest, while the individual students keep our attention and engage us in this by-the-numbers tale. Lloyd Webber seems to have fun composing unapologetic rock music after so many years in an operatic mode. Glenn Slater, who did the lyrics for Lloyd Webber's *Love Never Dies* (2010), a sequel to *The Phantom of the Opera*, was the best lyricist that the composer had worked with since parting ways with Tim Rice. Slater, known for a series of Disney scores with composer Alan Menken, not only writes intelligent lyrics but also playful ones. It is rare for theatre rock songs to have such penetrating words as found in Dewey's day-dreaming "When I Climb to the Top of Mount Rock," the frustration-driven "Stick It to the Man," and the driving "In the End of Time" which Dewey delivers a cappella. "You're in the Band" is a vivacious number in which Dewey draws the students (and the audience) into the soul of rock music. The score is balanced with some notable non-rock numbers, such as Rosalie's wistful "Where Did the Rock Go?," the stately march "Horace Green Alma Mater," which turns into a funny list song about the philosophy of the school, and the indelible "If Only You Would Listen" sung by the students who feel ignored by their parents. Added to the score are musical homages to famous rock songs and a satiric use of Mozart's "Queen of the Night" from *The Magic Flute*. *School of Rock* was Lloyd Webber's first bona fide Broadway hit since *The Phantom of the Opera*; the same might be said of this score.

	2015 New York cast	2016 London cast
Dewey Finn	Alex Brightman	David Fynn
Rosalie Mullins	Sierra Boggess	Florence Andrews
Ned Schneebly	Spencer Moses	Oliver Jackson
Patty Di Marco	Mamie Parris	Preeya Kalidas
Summer	Isabella Russo	Isabelle Methven
		Lucy Simmonds
		Eva Todd
Zack	Brandon Niederauer	Toby Lee
		Jake Slack
		Tom Abisgold
Freddie	Dante Melucci	Bailey Cassell
		Noah Key
		Jude Harper-Wrobel
Shonelle	Taylor Caldwell	Amelia Poggenpoel
		Jaydah Bell-Rickets
		Shoshana Ezequiel
Marcie	Carly Gendell	Natasha Raphael
		Leah Levman
		Madeleine Haynes
Tomika	Bobbi MacKenzie	Amma Ris
		Adithi Sujith
		Nicole Dube

The greatest challenge in putting *School of Rock* on stage was finding actor-singer-musicians who could pass for fifth-graders but the wide search in America

resulted in a top-notch group of young artists. Jack Black had dominated the movie version of *School of Rock* and the role seemed to call for a star, but producer Lloyd Webber took a chance with little-known actor Alex Brightman, who had done minor roles in a handful of Broadway musicals. Because the musical is thoroughly American in characters and setting, it was decided to open *School of Rock* on Broadway first. A series of rock concerts was given by the cast in Manhattan's Gramercy Theatre in order to promote the musical and give the singers and musicians some rock concert experience. *School of Rock* then opened on Broadway in 2015 to mostly favorable reviews. The highest praise was for Brightman's propulsive performance as Dewey and for the outstanding young performers. There were also compliments for the score, some critics happy to hear Lloyd Webber return to the rock style that had first made him famous. Because of the popularity of the film, audiences were drawn to see *School of Rock* on stage and the musical played in a large Broadway playhouse for over three years. National tours followed, then the musical was made available for schools and other groups.

The London version, also produced by Lloyd Webber, opened in 2016 with the popular Irish TV star David Fynn as Dewey. The scenery had to be reworked for the oval shape of its West End venue, and a few alterations were made in the script and the score. Again the critical reaction was propitious, with cheers for the cast and the production. Because of the good word from the States, *School of Rock* had a healthy presale in London and business was brisk from the start. It is, as of this writing, still running. An Australian production had a successful run in Melbourne followed by an extensive national tour. In 2019 a tour began in China. Other nations are just discovering the stage version of *School of Rock*, and it is likely to become an international hit. Audiences don't think of *School of Rock* as a British musical because of the American movie it was based on and the American setting and characters. But, except for American lyricist Slater, the creative staff behind the musical is thoroughly British. The musical's appeal, on the other hand, is global.

### **SERGEANT BRUE**

(1904/1905)

A musical farce by Owen Hall

*Score:* Liza Lehmann and others (music), J. Hickory Wood and others (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 14 June 1904; Strand Theatre; 280 performances

*Original New York production:* 24 April 1905; Knickerbocker Theatre; 93 performances

*Notable songs:* The Twopenny Tube; So Did Eve; Under a Panama; I'm a Sergeant of Police; Hail to the Piccadilly Hero; A Cup of Tea; The Sweetest Girl in Dixie; My Lady Busy; Hey Ho, Men Come and Go; If I Built the World for You; My Irish Molly O; Put Me in My Little Cell

This Edwardian musical is notable because it features a woman composer, a rarity in the West End and on Broadway then and for most of the twentieth century. Liza

Lehmann (1862–1918) was a prolific composer of “parlor songs,” dozens of them published and performed on stage and on parlor pianos for several years at the end of the nineteenth century and during the first decades of the twentieth century. Her most famous works were the song cycles “In a Persian Garden” and “The Daisy Chain,” which, like many of her works, remain in print. Although Lehmann had never written for the theatre, producer Frank Curzon asked her to compose the music for a musical comedy he was preparing titled *Sergeant Brue*. She agreed under the condition that she write all the songs, including any extra ones as needed. J. Hickory Wood wrote the lyrics, and the libretto was by the very successful writer Owen Hall. In rehearsals, Curzon broke his promise to Lehmann and interpolated some American songs into the score. Although *Sergeant Brue* was a hit and her music was highly complimented, Lehmann never again wrote for the musical theatre. She did compose the music for two operas, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1906) and *Everyman* (1916), but the British theatre was denied a major talent in losing Lehmann.

Hall’s libretto for *Sergeant Brue* is a solid three-act farce that left plenty of time for songs and a masquerade ball in the last act. The amiable but incompetent Sergeant Brue, a widower with two grown children, Aurora and Michael, will inherit a legacy if he can get promoted to inspector. Also, he loves the aristocratic but impoverished Lady Bickenhall, who has expensive tastes, so he needs to become an inspector to marry her. The sergeant plots with the small-time crook Cookie Scrubbs to stage a robbery so that Brue can make an impressive arrest and get the promotion. But everything goes wrong, Brue get arrested for the attempted burglary, and it looks like he will be thrown off the police force. When Brue catches the magistrate in charge of the case involved with some illegal gambling, he is able to bribe the judge into making him inspector. There were two subplots involving Brue’s children. Michael loves Mabel Widgett and Aurora loves Gerald Traherne, and complications keep the couples from a happy union until the last moment. As was typical of the period, there was a ball in the last act, but this one involved all the characters dressing up like various animals. It was all contrived nonsense, but efficiently written and fast-paced enough that *Sergeant Brue* rarely faltered. It helped that two of the finest comedians of the time were in the leading roles. The bungling sergeant was played with panache by Willie Edouin, and Arthur Williams shone as the wily Cookie Scrubbs. Lady Bickenhall was also a comic character and comedienne Ethel Irving made sure she got her laughs. Since the romantic characters were minor, *Sergeant Brue* was able to move forward in true farce fashion.

Composer Lehmann was able to adapt her parlor song skills to the demands of musical comedy. With lyricist Wood, she provided the sprightly introductory number “I’m a Sergeant of Police” for Brue and two jocular songs for Lady Bickenhall: the rapid ditty “My Lady Busy” and the carefree “Hey Ho, Men Come and Go.” There was a charming duet for Michael and Mabel, “The Twopenny Tube,” in which they recalled their first meeting in an underground station, and Michael sang “So Did Eve,” a wry commentary on the modern woman. Another memorable number was the rousing “Hail to the Piccadilly Hero” sung by the company as an act finale. Lehmann saw her lighthearted ballad “If I Built the World for You” cut in rehearsals, but the song was later sung by renowned soprano Louise Dale and eventually found popularity in concerts and recordings, becoming the



most successful song written for *Sergeant Brue*. Among the interpolations by other songwriters were the minstrel show-like “The Sweetest Girl in Dixie” and the Latin-flavored “Under a Panama,” both numbers already heard and applauded in the United States. During the run of *Sergeant Brue*, Lehman and Wood wrote new numbers as the cast changed, but again outside numbers were also added, much to the frustration of Lehmann.

	<i>1904 London cast</i>	<i>1905 New York cast</i>
Sergeant Brue	Willie Edouin	Frank Daniels
Cookie Scrubbs	Arthur Williams	Harry MacDonough
Lady Bickenhall	Ethel Irving	Blanche Ring
Aurora Brue	Olive Morrell	Sallie Fisher
Michael Brue	Joe Farren Soutar	Alfred Hickman
Mabel Widgett	Zena Dare	Anna Fitzhugh
Daisy	Hilda Trevalyan	Clara Bell Jerome
Gerald Traherne	Sydney Barraclough	Walter Percival
Captain Bay	S. Brooke	David Bennett

The London reviews for *Sergeant Brue* when it opened in 1904 were almost all raves. Most of the plaudits were for the two comics Edouin and Williams, who got two of the best roles of their careers and giving their finest performances. The rest of the cast was complimented, in particular the funny Ethel Irving, as was the resplendent production values, the costume ball being highly extolled. The notices for the score were appreciative, the critics pointing out Lehmann’s successful transition to musical comedy. But audiences most enjoyed the two American song hits, “The Sweetest Girl in Dixie” and “Under the Panama.” Box-office business was booming, and the mid-sized playhouse was often sold out. Librettist Hall insisted the musical be moved to a larger, classier venue, which it did for as long as the Prince of Wales Theatre was available. *Sergeant Brue* then returned to its original home and continued to run, chalking up a total of five months. The musical most likely would have run longer, but the public was thrown by the two changes of venue and the momentum was lost.

American producer Charles Dillingham presented the New York production in 1905 and wisely cast two stars to protect his investment: comic Frank Daniels as Brue and Blanche Ring as Lady Bickenhall. Ring had introduced several hits in vaudeville and on Broadway and insisted on singing some new numbers. The catchy “My Irish Molly O” became the hit song for the Broadway production, and it was joined by other interpolations, most memorably the waggish “Put Me in My Little Cell” by Frederick Rose (music) and P. G. Wodehouse (lyric). In fact, there were so many interpolations in the New York version of *Sergeant Brue* that only eight numbers by Lehmann remained. The Broadway critics were less enthused about the musical than the London press, and *Sergeant Brue* ran only three months there. A subsequent tour was more profitable, just as touring productions in Great Britain and Australia were popular and the musical was a favorite in English regional theatres for several years.

## **SET TO MUSIC**

(1932/1939)

A musical revue by Noel Coward

*Score:* Noel Coward (music and lyrics)

*Original London production Words and Music:* 16 September 1932; Adelphi Theatre; 164 performances

*Original New York production Set to Music:* 18 January 1939; Music Box Theatre; 129 performances

*Notable songs:* Mad about the Boy; I Went to a Marvelous Party; Stately Homes of England; Never Again; Children of the Ritz; (I'm So) Weary of It All; Rug of Persia; The Party's Over Now; Three Little Debutantes; Three White Feathers; Let's Live Dangerously; Housemaids' Knees; Something to Do with Spring; The Younger Generation; Midnight Matinee

Noel Coward was Britain's most popular and internationally known songwriter of the twentieth century until the Beatles came along in the 1960s. While some of his most beloved songs came from book musicals, a majority of them came from revues. The 1932 London revue *Words and Music* introduced two of Coward's most famous songs, "Mad about the Boy" and "Mad Dogs and Englishmen." Coward did not appear in the show but wrote the songs and sketches, several of them praised for their acidic wit. The London cast was strong enough to attract audiences for five months. The scintillating score also included the wistful "The Party's Over Now," the jaunty "Something to Do with Spring," the caustic "The Younger Generation," and the jocular "Housemaids' Knees." But the standout numbers, destined to become Coward standards, were the witty "Mad Dogs and Englishmen," about how the Brits abroad refuse to acknowledge the tropical climate, and "Mad about the Boy," a simple and plaintive torch song. The sketches in *Words and Music* spoofed Casanova, the British Raj in India, the World War One drama *Journey's End*, and children speaking like adults. As successful as *Words and Music* was, it would have run much longer if Coward had been in the cast. But by the 1930s, Coward got bored performing in long runs of musicals and plays and often left the cast after a few weeks, causing the production to fold. In the case of *Words and Music*, he stayed out of the cast and hoped the revue would run on its own merits.

American producer-director John C. Wilson, who had presented and staged several of Coward's works in New York over the years, wanted to bring *Words and Music* to Broadway, but Coward did not think highly of the revue and refused. Six years later, Wilson presented a version of *Words and Music* in New York but it was so much changed that Coward insisted on a different title, *Set to Music*. Unlike the London musical, *Set to Music* featured a star, the renowned British comedienne Beatrice Lillie. The zany yet sophisticated performer had first endeared herself to New Yorkers in *Charlot's Revue* in 1924 and, with her return appearances, she was now a bankable Broadway star. Her performance in *Set to Music* did not disappoint. Lillie was hilarious as a tipsy lady who sang "I Went to a Marvelous Party" and as a Middle-Eastern singing star warbling "Rug of Persia" while trying to weave a carpet. She also sang



"Mad about the Boy" as a school girl and was among the characters who lamented "(I'm So) Weary of It All." Coward's score was a mixture of numbers from *Words and Music*, songs from his other works, and some new pieces. Among the other musical highlights was the acidic "Stately Homes of England," the recurring trio "Three Little Debutantes," the torchy "Never Again," and "The Party's Over Now" sung and danced with a haunting effect. The hit song "Mad Dogs and Englishmen" from *Words and Music* was so well known by 1939 that Coward did not include it.

1932 London cast	1939 New York cast
Ivy St. Heller	Beatrice Lillie
Joyce Barbour	Richard Haydn
John Mills	Gladys Henson
Doris Hare	Rosemary Lomax
Romney Brent	Penelope Dudley Ward
Graham Payn	Moya Nugent
	Robert Shackelton
	Hugh French

Coward wrote some roguish sketches for the revue that proved to be as much fun as his songs. There was a spy spoof titled "Secret Service," a man who did impressions of fish in "Fish Mimicry," a droll encounter called "Madame Dines Alone," and a raucous show-within-a-show called "Midnight Matinee." Although Lillie was the main attraction, her supporting cast of British players were first-class; special notice was made of the versatile Richard Haydn. Coward directed the revue, which was well received by the press. Most of the songs were new to Broadway playgoers so the musical highlights were very special and unique. The public kept *Set to Music* on the boards for four months, then the cast returned to England, leaving behind some new Coward standards that appeared on sheet music and recordings for many years.

## ***THE SHOP GIRL***

(1894/1895)

A musical comedy by H. J. W. Dam

*Score:* Ivan Caryll, Lionel Monckton, and others (music), H. J. W. Dam, Adrian Ross, and others (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 24 November 1894; Gaiety Theatre; 546 performances

*Original New York production:* 28 October 1895; Palmer's Theatre; 72 performances

*Notable songs:* Love on the Japanese Plan; Beautiful, Bountiful Bertie; Over the Hills; Her Golden Hair Was Hanging Down Her Back; Brown of Colorado; The Shop Girl; The Foundling; The Smartest Girl in Town; The Song of the Shop; What Could the Poor Girl Do; The Little Mademoiselle; Louisiana Lou; The Vegetarian

Like his earlier musicals *The Gaiety Girl* (1893) and *In Town* (1892), producer George Edwardes's *The Shop Girl* was a "modern" musical comedy with a contemporary setting and fashionable up-to-date clothes. Yet unlike those previous hits, *The Shop Girl* had new talents on stage and backstage. The libretto was written by American Henry Dam, a journalist with few playwriting credits. For the music, Edwardes hired the recently famous Ivan Caryll and the up-and-coming Lionel Monckton. Dam wrote the lyrics with Adrian Ross, an Edwardes regular. His leading players from the past were replaced by performers new to Edwardes productions, though they were far from inexperienced. One might say *The Shop Girl* was a bit of a risk, then, but with its workable script, fine cast, and some memorable songs, the musical was a resounding hit. The contrived plot was filled with so many jocular characters that the musical farce did not seem old hat. The millionaire John Brown, who has made his bundle in mines in America, arrives in England searching for his long-lost daughter, who will inherit his fortune. He traces her to a store owned by Mr. Hooley, only knowing that she is one of the shop girls working there. When it is determined that the plump salesgirl Ada is the heiress, Hooley immediately proposes marriage to her before she herself discovers her lucky future. Although she is engaged to the diminutive floorwalker Mr. Miggles, Ada weds the better-situated Mr. Hooley. When Brown arrives at the store, it turns out his daughter is ten years younger than Ada and the heiress turns out to be Bessie Brent. She and the monied Charlie Appleby are in love, but his family has not approved of his marrying a shop girl. Now that Bessie is an heiress, there is no obstacle to their union. Miggles takes comfort in the arms of the store's attractive fitter Miss Robinson, while Hooley is stuck with the disappointed Ada. Introduced into this simple plot are some clownish characters, such as the desperate French Count St. Vaurien, who tries to woo every shop girl in the hope that she might be the heiress; Charlie's mother, Lady Appleby, who is always raising funds for charity but ends up spending it on her spoiled daughters Faith, Hope, and Charity; and the stage door "Johnny" Bertie Boyd, who uses his wealth to court the pretty chorus girls at the Syndicate Theatre.

The action on stage was rather frantic but *The Shop Girl* found time for plenty of songs, some of which caught on with the public. Ironically, the most popular number from the score was an American song interpolated by actor Seymour Hicks, who played Charlie, and was given a new British lyric by Ross. It was titled "Her Golden Hair Was Hanging Down Her Back" and told the tale of a yellow-haired country girl who goes to London and becomes quite a success when she dyes her hair red. Also finding favor was the silly duet "Love on the Japanese Plan," which was sung by Miggles and Miss Robinson dressed in Japanese costumes and performed with animated fan waving and eccentric dancing. Comic Edmund Payne, as Miggles, also got his laughs with the ludicrous ditty "The Vegetarian" in which he relates how he won his sweetheart by forgoing meat for potatoes. Millionaire Brown sang the funny introductory song "Brown of Colorado" about how he made his fortune in America, and the lusty Bertie Boyd boasted of his appeal to women with "Beautiful, Bountiful Bertie." The pouting Ada had a comic lament about her being "The Foundling" while another shop girl, Maude, declared she

	<i>1894 London cast</i>	<i>1895 New York cast</i>
Bessie Brent	Ada Reeve	Ethel Sydney
Charlie Appleby	Seymour Hicks	Seymour Hicks
Bertie Boyd	George Grossmith	George Grossmith
Mr. Miggles	Edmund Payne	Bertie Wright
Mr. Hooley	Arthur Williams	W. H. Rawlins
Miss Robinson	Katie Seymour	Marie Faucett
Count St. Vaurien	Robert Nainby	J. Gaillard
Lady Appleby	Maria Davis	Leslie Greenwood
Ada Smith	Lillie Belmore	Connie Ediss
Mr. Tweets	Willie Warde	Alfred Asher
John Brown	Colin Coop	Michael Dwyer
Eva Tudor	Fanny Ward	Violet Dene
Maud Plantagenet	Maud Hill	Adelaide Astor

was “The Smartest Girl in Town.” The lovers Bessie and Charlie looked to a future together with “Perambulator Duet” and Bessie sang of life as “The Shop Girl.” It was a cockeyed score written by many hands, but all the songs went over well and made the musical a tuneful diversion.

Edwardes’s production of *The Shop Girl* opened in London in 1894 with a lavish production enhanced by a chorus line of Gaiety Girls, the plot’s show girls from the Syndicate Theatre. The critics found the musical refreshing and enjoyable, particularly its modern aspects. Much of the applause was for the superb cast, from the romantic leads to the many comic characters. There were also compliments for the songs, although the songwriters were not mentioned much because there were too many of them credited with writing the score. *The Shop Girl* ran a surprising eighteen months, followed by a lengthy tour in Great Britain and productions in Australia, South Africa, Austria, and India.

Edwardes coproduced the 1895 New York version with Americans Charles Frohman and Al Hayman. Seymour Hicks and George Grossmith reprised their performances as Charlie and Bertie, the lovely Ethel Sydney played Bessie, and comic Bertie Wright shone as Miggles. There were more American interpolations in the score, but the hit song was still “Her Golden Hair Was Hanging Down Her Back.” Although the Broadway reviews were positive, *The Shop Girl* was not as successful in New York as it was in London. Some blame a current wave of anti-British feeling in America because of a dispute over England’s tampering in Venezuela. All the same, the musical held the boards for two months. Back in London, the popularity of *The Shop Girl* went beyond its original run. In 1920, it was revived in the West End and played for an astonishing 327 performances, quite a feat for a Victorian musical in the Roaring Twenties.

**SIDE BY SIDE BY SONDHEIM**

(1976/1977)

A musical revue by Ned Sherrin

*Score:* Stephen Sondheim and others (music), Stephen Sondheim (lyrics)*Original London production:* 4 May 1976; Mermaid Theatre; 806 performances*Original New York production:* 18 April 1977; Music Box Theatre; 384 performances*Notable songs:* Side by Side by Side; Send in the Clowns; Comedy Tonight; You Could Drive a Person Crazy; I Never Do Anything Twice; Everybody Says Don't; Losing My Mind; I Remember; If Momma Was Married; Anyone Can Whistle; Getting Married Today; Can That Boy Foxtrot; Another Hundred People; Marry Me a Little; Could I Leave You?; The Boy from . . . ; I'm Still Here; Broadway Baby; We're Gonna Be All Right; Pretty Lady

In the late 1970s, composer-lyricist Stephen Sondheim was still caviar to the general theatregoing public, who knew him most as the lyricist for *West Side Story* (1957) and *Gypsy* (1959). Yet Sondheim had a much stronger following in Britain; he was not a mainstream name, but his advocates were more vocal and he was more highly thought of. In 1976, Sondheim had scored (music and lyrics) only six Broadway musicals: *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), *Anyone Can Whistle* (1964), *Company* (1970), *Follies* (1971), *A Little Night Music* (1973), and *Pacific Overtures* (1976). Yet British broadcaster and director Ned Sherrin considered it a significant body of work to build a revue around those musicals and songs Sondheim had written for television and the movies. The idea came from actor-singer David Kernan who got Sherrin and producer Cameron Mackintosh interested. First done as a benefit featuring singer Cleo Laine, the revue, titled *Side by Side by Sondheim* after a song in *Company*, was expanded and booked into the Mermaid Theatre, a fringe venue in London. Appreciative reviews and demands for tickets were encouraging enough that Mackintosh transferred the musical to the West End in 1976, where it ran nearly two years. Sondheim himself was asked to participate in putting the revue together, and he made suggestions for medleys and song selections. It was rare for a musical revue to feature a living songwriter, and forty-seven-year-old Sondheim was far from finishing his career. Yet *Side by Side by Sondheim* was rich with material that covered many subjects, moods, and themes.

1976 London cast	1977 New York cast
Millicent Martin	Millicent Martin
David Kernan	David Kernan
Julia McKenzie	Julia McKenzie
Ned Sherrin	Ned Sherrin

The format for *Side by Side by Sondheim* was deceptively simple. Sherrin acted as host and narrator and tied the numbers together sometimes with necessary information, other times with droll commentary. The cast consisted of Kernan and two superior musical theatre performers, Julia McKenzie and Millicent Martin. There were no costume or scenery changes, and Sherrin's direction was unobtrusive. Yet this was no formal recital or concert-like entertainment. The revue had a casual and intimate feel, and the power of the songs and the performers made the musical special. *Side by Side by Sondheim* received glowing reviews with its West End transfer, and its long run revealed that there were more Sondheim admirers than one might have supposed.

Harold Prince, Sondheim's frequent director-producer on Broadway, wanted to present *Side by Side by Sondheim* on Broadway with the London cast and production. It took some hard bargaining with Actors Equity Association before the revue was able to transfer to New York intact in 1977. The reviews were again auspicious, even New York critics who had not favored some of Sondheim's Broadway musicals finding the revue first-class theatre. *Side by Side by Sondheim* ran just shy of a year. As in England, there were touring versions in the States, then the revue was picked up by various kinds of theatre groups. The only difficulty with revivals of *Side by Side by Sondheim* is that new Sondheim musicals kept opening and the revue did not include such notable works as *Sweeney Todd* (1979) and *Into the Woods* (1987). A subsequent American revue in 1993, *Putting It Together*, brought things up to date. More thorough was the 2010 Broadway revue *Sondheim on Sondheim*.

## SONG AND DANCE

(1982/1985)

A two-part musical

Score: Andrew Lloyd Webber (music), Don Black (lyrics)

Original London production: 26 March 1982; Palace Theatre; 781 performances

Original New York production: 18 September 1985; Royal Theatre; 474 performances

Notable songs: Tell Me on a Sunday; Unexpected Song; Take That Look Off Your Face; I'm Very You, You're Very Me; Married Men; Come Back with that Same Look in Your Eyes; It's Not the End of the World; The Last Man in My Life; Nothing Like You've Ever Known; What Have I Done?; Let Me Finish; So Much to Do in New York; English Girls; Capped Teeth and Caesar Salad

*Song and Dance* was created and performed under unique circumstances and, consequently, revivals of the musical are problematic. In 1977, Andrew Lloyd Webber composed a concert piece titled *Variations* for his brother Julian, a renowned classical cellist. Lloyd Webber took Niccolò Paganini's *Caprice No. 24 in A minor* (1807) and reimagined it, mixing rock and classical music. *Variations* was performed in concert at Lloyd Webber's Sydmonton Festival, was recorded the next year, and was popular enough to reach the number 2 position on the UK album charts. In 1979, Lloyd Webber composed a song cycle with lyricist Don Black specifically



Bernadette Peters starred as the British actress Emma adrift in New York City in the 1985 Broadway production of the two-part musical. The renowned dancer Christopher d'Amboise was Joe, the man who danced in and out of her life. *Photofest*

for the multitalented singer-actress Marti Webb. The fifty-minute, one-woman program, titled *Tell Me on a Sunday*, was performed that summer at the Sydmon-ton Festival. Producer Cameron Mackintosh came up with the idea of putting *Tell Me on a Sunday* and *Variations* together into a West End musical, which he labeled *Song and Dance*. The first half of the program would be all song—a one-woman musical about an English girl in America—and the second act would be a ballet about her and one of her lovers set to the music of *Variations*. Both pieces had to be rewritten and reorchestrated, but the basic songs and dance music were essentially in place.

The first act, still titled *Tell Me on a Sunday*, followed the mostly unsuccessful love affairs of an unnamed British actress who arrives in New York City eager for a career and for love. A series of letters to her mother provides the exposition, and the songs fill out the character and her feelings about her relationships with four men. After breaking up with her current boyfriend, the girl is swept off her feet by the L.A. producer Sheldon Bloom. It looks like both love and a career are in store when he brings her out to Hollywood, but it doesn't take long for her to realize she is only one of his abandoned projects. Back in New York, she falls in love with a younger man, and all seems wonderful until she learns of his habitual infidelity. She then finds herself in a relationship with a married man and soon learns the disadvantages of having to live life as the "other" woman with no future. The first act ends with her alone, bitter, yet somewhat resigned to her single life. In the second half of *Song and Dance*, there is no dialogue or songs. The story is continued through dance as the girl and the younger man are joined by other New Yorkers. This time the young man goes through a series of relationships, each distinguished by a particular kind of music and dance style. In the end, he is reunited with the English girl as the two make an effort to commit to each other.

The songs in the *Tell Me on a Sunday* section, all female solos mostly dealing with the emotions of one woman, offer some surprising variety. For example, the two runaway hits from the score—"Unexpected Song" and "Tell Me on a Sunday"—could not be more different. The section's title song is a quiet, tearful ballad in which she pleads with her lover to have their final parting take place in a zoo in a park on a Sunday. It is a pathetic request, yet both the lyric and the music have a subtle resiliency in them. "Unexpected Song" is a full-throttle love song in which she is both surprised and overwhelmed by her good fortune. Other moods were captured in the bitter pop song "Take That Look Off Your Face"; a sour number about the downside of having empty affairs, ironically titled "So Much to Do in New York"; "Capped Teeth and Caesar Salad," a wry commentary on sunny, pleasant, and phony L.A.; the jazzy "Come Back with That Same Look in Your Eyes"; the equivocating "Let Me Finish," in which she finally gets to have her say; the heartfelt "The Last Man in My Life," about finding the ideal lover; the knowing ballad "Nothing Like You've Ever Known," about the life she imagined with him; and "It's Not the End of the World," on how she will get through the night and survive another breakup. What had begun as a song cycle became vivid musical theatre, especially when performed by a compelling actress.

Marti Webb more than fulfilled the requirements of the role when *Song and Dance* opened in the West End in 1982. Alone on stage with a series of projections, *Tell Me on a Sunday* was a tour de force for both Webb and the songwriters. John

Caird was the astute director for both sections, but it was Anthony van Laast's choreography that triumphed in the "dance" portion of the musical. Taking his cue from the different "variations" of music provided by Lloyd Webber, van Laast selected renowned dancers who were known for specific forms of dance. Ranging from classical ballet to jazz, the dances and the dancers made the second half of *Song and Dance* a dramatic modern ballet filled with distinct characters. Wayne Sleep was featured as the "younger man," and he dominated the act no less than Webb shone in *Tell Me on a Sunday*. Producer Mackintosh knew that the unorthodox nature of *Song and Dance* might be a tough sell, and, in fact, the reviews were not all favorable. Some London critics found the character of the English girl tiresome, but all praised Webb's performance. The "dance" portion also got mixed notices, again some of the press not finding the hero of much interest but everyone agreeing on the quality of the dancers and the choreography. Because some of the songs showed up on the charts, *Song and Dance* soon found an audience, and the large venue was kept busy for two years. In 1984, a television version of the musical was broadcast with Sarah Brightman as the girl and Wayne Sleep reprising his performance as the "younger man." Soon after, *Song and Dance* opened in Australia and in Germany.

	1982 London cast	1985 New York cast
Girl/Emma	Marti Webb	Bernadette Peters
Man/Joe	Wayne Sleep	Christopher d'Amboise
	Jane Darling	Gregg Burge
	Paul Tomkinson	Scott Wise
	Sandy Strallen	Denise Faye
	Andy Norman	Mary Ellen Stuart
	Claude Paul Henry	Charlotte d'Amboise
	Linda Gibbs	Gen Horiuchi
	Linda Mae Brewer	Gregory Mitchell
		Cynthia Onrubia

Mackintosh produced the Broadway production in 1985, but it seems he had had little concern for re-creating the London musical. Director Richard Maltby Jr. made changes to the script and rewrote some of the lyrics. Some songs were dropped and Lloyd Webber provided new music for some new numbers. Anthony van Laast's choreography was replaced by that of American Peter Martins, a respected choreographer from the New York City Ballet. Well-known American scenic, lighting, and costume designers were hired by Maltby, so this *Song and Dance* purposely did not resemble the London original. The girl remained English but was now named Emma, and she was more comic, even kooky. The "younger man" who danced the second half was named Joe but was rather undefined. Fortunately, Broadway favorite Bernadette Peters was cast as Emma and Christopher d'Amboise, principal dancer for the New York City Ballet, played Joe.

The majority of the New York critics, some who had seen *Song and Dance* in London during the past three years, thought the characters annoying and the



production tedious. That did not keep them from adulating Peters's effervescent performance, d'Amboise's dancing, and Martins's choreography. Because of Peters's popularity and strong box office clout, *Song and Dance* ran fourteen months. As in England, there was a national tour with names on the marquee (singer Melissa Manchester starred in the six-month American tour), but *Song and Dance* would not see many revivals; the unusual demands of the musical put it out of reach for most theatre groups. Yet there are those who feel that some of Lloyd Webber's best work is found in the songs and the ballet music in *Song and Dance*.

## **THE SORCERER**

(1877/1879)

A comic operetta by W. S. Gilbert

*Score:* Arthur Sullivan (music), W. S. Gilbert (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 17 November 1877; Opera Comique; 175 performances

*Original New York production:* 21 February 1879; Broadway Theatre; 20 performances

*Notable songs:* Happy Young Heart; A Pale Young Curate; Sprites of Earth and Air; Time Was When Love and I Were Well Acquainted; Let Us Fly to a Far-Off Land; Oh, My Name Is John Wellington Wells; Dear Friends, Take Pity on My Lot; Or I or He Must Die; Hate Me!; Oh, Joyous Boon! Oh, Mad Delight!

*The Sorcerer* is considered the first full-length comic operetta by W. S. Gilbert (libretto and lyrics) and Arthur Sullivan (music) although it is really their second. The team's initial offering, *Thespis* (1871), received one production and then was pretty much forgotten, both script and score lost for decades. After *Thespis*, the two men collaborated on the one-act operetta *Trial by Jury* in 1875 but then went their separate ways, working on projects with other artists. It was producer Richard D'Oyly Carte who recognized something special in the teaming of Gilbert and Sullivan and raised enough upfront money to encourage them to work together again for him. The result was *The Sorcerer*, and, while far from their best or most popular work, it made quite an impact in 1877 when it premiered in London.

As with all their collaborations, Gilbert wrote the libretto first, and if Sullivan approved of it, he set it to music. For *The Sorcerer*, Gilbert drew on a magazine story he had written for *The Graphic* called "The Elixir of Love." It was a farcical piece about a curate who gets his parishioners to taste a magician's love potion, which has some curious results. Gilbert expanded on the idea, creating a sorcerer named John Wellington Wells from London who is summoned to the village of Ploverleigh by the young baronet Alexis. He is about to wed his beloved Aline but realizes that there are several unfulfilled love matches in the town that require some help. His widower father, Sir Marmaduke, and Aline's widowed mother, Lady Sangazure, have long held deep affections for each other but have been too shy to act on them. The village maid Constance loves the vicar, Dr. Daly, but he has been wounded by love in the past and feels he is too old for the younger Constance. To help these and other struggling couples, Alexis instructs the sorcerer Wells to concoct a love

potion that will affect all unmarried persons who drink it. Wells does so, the potion is added to the wedding feast teapot, and all drink of it except Wells, Alexis, and Aline. The first reactions the villagers experience are hallucinations, then they all drop into a faint. At midnight they regain consciousness and the love potion begins to take effect but not as intended. Constance is smitten with the aged town notary, Sir Marmaduke is drawn to Constance's widowed mother Mrs. Partlet, and Lady Sangazure starts chasing after Wells. When Aline later takes a sip of the potion, she forgets her husband Alexis and falls for the vicar, Dr. Daly. Once Alexis realizes that everything has turned out wrong, he pleads with Wells to reverse the spell. This can only be done one way: the sorcerer gives himself up to the spirits and ghosts of the underworld. Wells is swallowed up by them, the effects of the potion disappear, and the various couples are put right.

It is a clever and workable libretto and, though it may not compare favorably with most of Gilbert's later writing, it was quite refreshing in the way it avoided European settings and characters and directed its satire on the British way of thinking. The characters are well-drawn and engaging and fun in the first act. Once the potion takes effect in the second act, the same characters become more buffoonish and the script turns to farce. *The Sorcerer* already shows Gilbert's talent for solid structure and balancing his plot and characters while leaving room for the musical sequences. Although Sullivan was not completely delighted with the elixir premise, composing music for conjuring and magic appealed to him, and he agreed to the project. Also, the love potion idea had been used in several operas and *The Sorcerer* gave Sullivan the opportunity to parody the music in such pieces as Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* and Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. This he did in sections of the score, but for the most part the music in *The Sorcerer* is thoroughly British. The sorcerer's "Oh, My Name is John Wellington Wells" is an English march in double time. It is also one of the earliest of the many memorable introductory patter songs Gilbert and Sullivan would produce over the years. Dr. Daly introduces himself with the very different "(When I Was) A Pale Young Curate," a comic lament with a funereal tone. Aline sings the score's most lovely ballad, "Happy Young Heart," in regard to Alexis. When falling for the elder Dr. Daly, she sings the overheated "Oh, Joyous Boon! Oh, Mad Delight!" The funniest duet, "Hate Me!," is sung by the panic-stricken Wells when pursued by the over-amorous Lady Sangazure. Yet the number that one most recalls from *The Sorcerer* is the bombastic and thrilling "Sprites of Earth and Air" in which Wells conjures up the spirits to create the love potion.

	<i>1877 London cast</i>	<i>1879 New York cast</i>
John Wellington Wells	George Grossmith	William Horace Lingard
Constance	Giulia Warwick	Minnie Clive
Alexis	George Bentham	Tom Bullock
Aline	Alice May	Matilda Scott
Sir Marmaduke	Richard Temple	Frank Budworth
Dr. Daly	Rutland Barrington	W. H. Crompton
Lady Sangazure	Mrs. Howard Paul	Annie Boudinot
Mrs. Partlet	Harriet Everard	Florence Wood
Notary	Fred Clifton	J. P. Swinburne

Producer Carte was adamant that no stars be used in his production of *The Sorcerer* when it opened in 1877. He wanted the characters to come alive on their own and not as vehicles for known performers doing their expected tricks. George Grossmith, for example, was cast as Wells even though he had no operetta experience and his singing voice was far from operatic. But that's what Carte, Gilbert, and Sullivan wanted for the role. All the same, the original cast was experienced and talented and some members, such as Grossmith, Richard Temple, Alice May, Harriet Everard, and Rutland Barrington, would find fame appearing in subsequent Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. The opening night of *The Sorcerer* involved several mishaps involving vocal strains, missed cues, and just plain nerves, yet the audience was charmed by the newfangled kind of comic operetta and thoroughly enjoyed it. Most of the critics were also impressed, citing the unique qualities of the musical, praising the score and the libretto, and complimenting the players. Business was sluggish at first, but the favorable notices and strong word of mouth soon turned *The Sorcerer* into a success. After a few months of full houses, Carte's investors wanted him to close the production before it started to lose money. But Carte insisted on keeping *The Sorcerer* on the boards for six months, only closing it when Gilbert and Sullivan's next work, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, was ready to open in the same theatre.

It was not until the phenomenal success of *H.M.S. Pinafore* that producers in America and elsewhere were interested in Gilbert and Sullivan's earlier operetta. *The Sorcerer* did not play in New York until 1879, and it was such a hastily put-together and inferior production that it only lasted three weeks. A much better mounting of *The Sorcerer*, which had originated in Philadelphia, arrived on Broadway later in 1879 and played in repertory for thirteen performances. The operetta returned to New York sporadically over the decades, usually as part of the repertory of the touring D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. It was more frequently seen Off-Broadway, in schools, and at light opera festivals. In Great Britain, *The Sorcerer* saw many more productions over the years, though it would never join the ranks of the most-seen Gilbert and Sullivan works. Being their first full-length comic operetta to find wide attention and approval, *The Sorcerer* is historically important and, when given a masterful production, still very enjoyable.

## ***THE SPRING CHICKEN***

(1905/1906)

A musical comedy by George Grossmith,  
based on the play by Adolphe Jaime and Georges Duval

*Score:* Ivan Caryll, Lionel Monckton (music), Adrian Ross, Percy Greenbank (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 30 May 1905; Gaiety Theatre; 401 performances

*Original New York production:* 8 October 1906; Daly's Theatre; 115 performances

*Notable songs:* I Don't Know, But I Guess; The British Tourist; The Delights of London; Under and Over Forty; Rosalie; Not So Very Old; The National Theatre; One of the Old Noblesse; Coquin de printemps; I've Come Along to Paris; A Cordial Understanding; Alice Sat by the Fire; The Moon of May; The Very First Time; All the Girls Love Me; A Lemon in the Garden of Love; In Rotterdam; In Seville; Waiting for a Certain Girl

British operettas based on French plays were quite the usual thing in the late nineteenth century, but not so in the new century. So it is curious that producer George Edwardes decided to present *The Spring Chicken*, which was based on the modern French farce *Coquin de printemps* (1897) by Adolphe Jaime and Georges Duval. As in Victorian times, Edwardes knew that the morals and sexual activities in French comedy were often too risqué for English audiences, even Edwardian playgoers used to modern musical comedy. Thus librettist-actor George Grossmith Jr. had to walk a fine line in adapting the French farce into a palatable British comedy. Grossmith played the faithful, proper Paris lawyer Gustave Babori, who is the ideal mate for his wife Dulcie. But every spring Gustave turns rather lusty, a condition the French refer to as a "spring chicken." He is smitten with Baroness Papouche, the wife of his client the Baron, who is seeking a divorce. Gustave tries to seduce the Baroness but is interrupted by the arrival of Dulcie's British parents, Mr. and Mrs. Girdle, and their other children. Of course, Mrs. Girdle is horrified but Mr. Girdle is more understanding, for he himself has secretly slipped away from his overbearing wife and gone to Paris for some amorous excitement. In fact, he quickly finds himself flirting with the saucy French maid Rosalie. Mrs. Girdle informs Dulcie of Gustave's indiscretion and together the two women put their husbands on the right path of behavior.

It was a simple, straightforward libretto with no subplots and it left plenty of room for musical numbers, just about all of them comic. Gustave and his father-in-law lamented about being "Under and Over Forty" and Mrs. Girdle revealed her suspicions about her husband's Parisian infidelities in the sly "I Don't Know, But I Guess." Mr. Girdle and his family sang the wry commentary about "The British Tourist," and he tried to get the French girl Rosalie to come with him to experience "The Delights of London." A comic highlight was Mr. Girdle's argument that he was "Not So Very Old" and, similarly, the Baron boasted that he was "One of the Old Noblesse," which gave him an excuse to become a "Coquin de printemps" once a year. Grossmith wrote a song for himself as Gustave titled "The National Theatre" in which he dressed up like Shakespeare and mocked the recent efforts to found a nationalized theatre organization in Britain. Gertie Millar, who played Rosalie, was married to composer Lionel Monckton, who wrote three charming solos for her: the coquettish "I've Come Along to Paris," the wry "A Cordial Understanding," and the narrative number "Alice Sat by the Fire," in which a girl starts by sitting by the hearth but is soon sitting on her suitor's knee. The Baroness was also given a lovely ballad, "The Moon of May," and Mrs. Girdle recalled her romantic youth with "The Very First Time." The score by Monckton, Ivan Caryll (music), Adrian Ross, and Percy Greenbank (lyrics) did not produce any take-home hits because most of the musical numbers were character or plot driven. All the same, it was a commendable score and provided splendid material for the players. During the run, there was an interesting interpolation titled "Rosalie." Grossmith wrote the lyric and a young Jerome Kern composed the music, an elegant song of affection that, surprisingly, has a march tempo.

*The Spring Chicken* ended up being both naughty and discreet, making it highly appealing to both the critics and the public. The reviews were propitious, and the demand for tickets allowed the musical to run fourteen months before setting out on tour. The American production was produced by actor-manager Richard Carle who played Mr. Girdle in New York. Carle made severe changes in the script and

	1905 London cast	1906 New York cast
Gustave Babori	George Grossmith Jr.	Victor Morley
Rosalie	Gertie Millar	Bessie McCoy
Baron Papouche	Harry Grattan	Sylvain Langlois
Baroness Papouche	Kate Cutler	Adele Rowland
Dulcie Babori	Olive Morrell	May Bouton
Mr. Girdle	Edmund Payne	Richard Carle
Mrs. Girdle	Connie Ediss	Emma Janvier
Stephen-Henry	William Spray	Arthur Conrad
Emmy-Lou	Olive May	Amy Dale
Felix	Robert Nainby	Sylvain Langlois
Boniface	Lionel Mackinder	Richard Ridgely

score in order to “Americanize” *The Spring Chicken* for Broadway playgoers. The setting was still Paris, but now the title referred to Mr. Girdle having been born premature and kept in a chicken coop incubator for a time. He is embarrassed by his past and is very sensitive about any references to chickens, of which there are many in the silly, if not downright crude, libretto. Carle was responsible for the revised script, the direction, and some of the new songs that replaced the London ones. Mr. Girdle boasted “All the Girls Love Me” and later declared that he was “A Lemon in the Garden of Love.” While the West End production had songs that related to the characters, the Broadway score was a hodgepodge, with such non-sensical numbers as “In Rotterdam” and “In Seville.”

Although *The Spring Chicken* paled in comparison to the London original, it was well received by the press, and the public agreed. It ran for four months in two interrupted engagements. The nationwide tour turned *The Spring Chicken* into a very profitable venture, but it was not a musical that dated well and was long forgotten by World War One.

## STARLIGHT EXPRESS

(1984/1987)

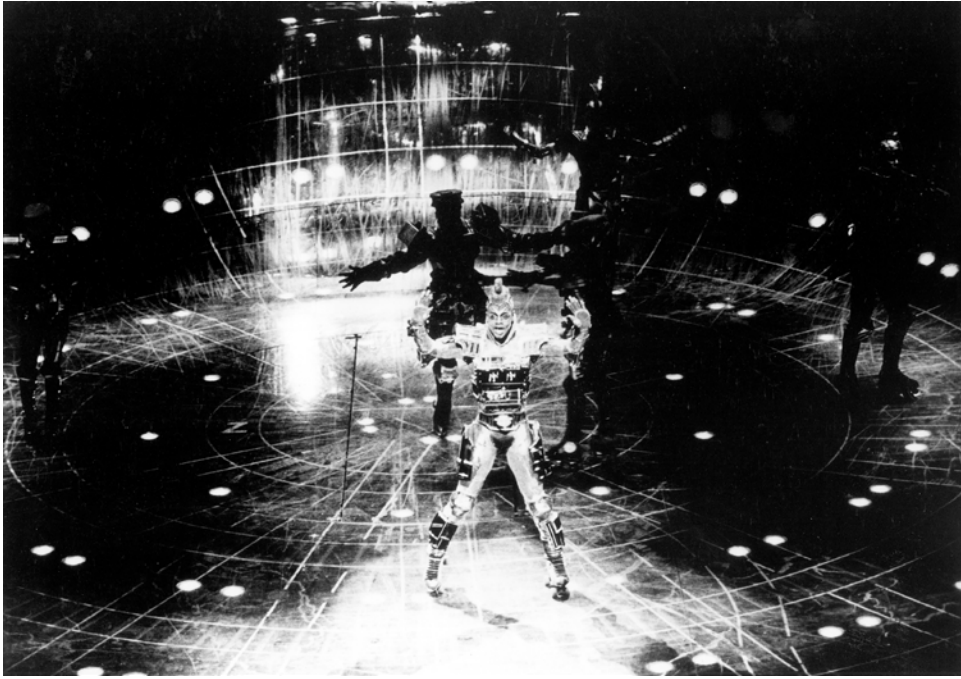
A sung-through musical by Richard Stilgoe and Andrew Lloyd Webber

*Score:* Andrew Lloyd Webber and others (music), Richard Stilgoe and others (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 27 March 1984; Apollo Victoria Theatre; 7,409 performances

*Original New York production:* 15 March 1987; Gershwin Theatre; 761 performances

*Notable songs:* Only You; A Lotta Locomotion; Make Up My Heart; One Rock & Roll Too Many; I Am the Starlight; Light at the End of the Tunnel; U.N.C.O.U.P.L.E.D.; Poppa’s Blues; Rolling Stock; Belle; Freight (Is Great); Starlight Express; The Rap; He Whistled at Me; Laughing Stock; AC/DC; Right Place, Right Time; Wide Smile, High Style, That’s Me; Next Time You Fall in Love; Crazy



The state-of-the-art locomotive Electra (Ken Ard, center) was one of the many nonhuman characters that raced across the stage in the 1987 Broadway production, but, as in the West End, the real stars of the musical were John Napier's scenic and costume designs and David Hersey's lighting. *Photofest*

Opera and musical theatre critic David Chandler wrote that "*Starlight Express*, the musical that followed *Cats*, was quickly dubbed 'Cats on Tracks,' and was the closest Lloyd Webber ever came to repeating himself." But Chandler quickly pointed out that the idea for a musical about trains preceded *Cats* by several years. So, is *Cats* a repeat of the *Starlight Express* concept? Only in the most extreme terms. Both musicals concern nonhuman characters that have very human characteristics. Both musicals rely on a unique look, creating not only spectacle but a whole new visual point of view. And both have the thinnest of plots. But the tone of *Cats* and *Starlight Express* are very different. A feline world becomes mystical at times; a musical in which railroad equipment literally races about you is far from mysterious. It is closer to a circus or, as Chandler described *Starlight Express*, "a sort of cross between a musical and a theme park ride." Like most British children, the young Lloyd Webber loved the stories of *Thomas the Tank Engine* by Rev. W. Awdry in which engines, carriages, and other railroad cars had names and personalities. In 1974, Lloyd Webber proposed to Awdry an animated television series with songs based on the books. The project was begun but never picked up by the networks. In 1977, an American TV network offered Lloyd Webber the job of writing songs for an animated version of *Cinderella* in which all of the characters in the classic tale were train engines. That project also failed to materialize, but the two concepts combined in Lloyd Webber's mind and the idea for *Starlight Express* was born.

Not until 1981, with *Cats* up and running, did the writing begin on the musical. Richard Stilgoe and Lloyd Webber sketched out the characters and the storyline, but the musical is sung through, so there is no dialogue. Lloyd Webber did not use the Awdry characters and stories but instead built a plot around a broken-down steam engine, Rusty McCoy, who loves the observation car Pearl. In order to get her attention, Rusty enters a series of races against such modern and high-powered competition as macho diesel engine Greaseball and the state-of-the-art engine Electra. Winning is a long shot but with encouragement from the aged freight engine Poppa McCoy and a vision of the mystical Starlight Express, Rusty wins the competition and Pearl. If it all sounds like a children's book, it is because the musical takes the form of a tale imagined by a young human boy who is heard but not seen.

Like *Cats*, the musical was overflowing with characters. Among the memorable females were the sexy smoking car Ashley, the country-western gal Dinah the dining car, and the no-nonsense, smart-aleck Buffy the buffet car. The engines taking part in the race also included the French Eurostar Bobo, the Russian Turnov from the Trans-Siberian Express, the Italian Espresso of the Milan-to-Rome run, and Britain's Milton Keynes of British Rail. Among the other assorted vehicles were CB the Red Caboose, Dustin the Big Aggregate Hopper, Flat-Top the Brick Truck, and three boxcars named Rocky 1, 2, and 3. *Starlight Express* started as a simple concert piece for schools, as had *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, but when director Trevor Nunn saw the workshop production he envisioned the musical as a giant West End spectacle. Choreographer Arlene Phillips was in on the early production meetings, but it was set and costume designer John Napier who first suggested putting the actors on roller skates. He envisioned a setting with ramps that would allow for actual races and oversized projection screens that would cover the action live as at a sporting event. It was clear *Starlight Express* was going to be much more than just another musical. But would the audience want to see such an oddball mash-up of theatre and sport?

If there are two things the British love, they are trains and rock music. Trainspotters might not be excited about seeing actors in metal costumes suggesting various railway vehicles, but Lloyd Webber was confident about the rock and roll aspect of *Starlight Express* and he composed what might be described as his only heavy metal rock score. Purists might disagree, for the rock music in the score is more a parody of different kinds of rock that had developed since the 1960s. Lloyd Webber also spoofed country-western music, blues, Broadway, gospel, and pop. Stilgoe's lyrics were equally facile, sometimes making fun of specific songs. The country classic "D.I.V.O.R.C.E." became the lament "U.N.C.O.U.P.L.E.D." "Poppa's Blues" made fun of the traditional blues song structure, explaining why you always have to repeat the first two lines. "He Whistled at Me" recalled a girl group number, "A Lotta Locomotion" was a salute to the early rock pioneers, "Freight (Is Great!)" had fun with the heavy down beat of repetitive rock songs, and Poppa led the cast in the finale, the gospel number "Light at the End of the Tunnel." One of the funniest numbers was the sluggish, slow-motion rock number "One Rock & Roll Too Many" sung by the exhausted losers of the race. As for those exciting races, Lloyd Webber wrote furious rock music with enough riffs and rapid chord changes to power a train engine. Oddly, no song hits came from *Starlight Express*,



though the title number had the elusive quality of a winning Lloyd Webber ballad, and the romantic duet for Rusty and Pearl, "Only You," sounded like it would travel and it received some recordings.

As the West End production of *Starlight Express* began to take shape, word was out that it was enormous. The producers, a group of heavy-hitters in the entertainment empire, booked the Apollo Victoria Theatre, an old movie theatre, and Napier had the interior gutted to make room for a whole new configuration. Ramps surrounded the audience and went as high as the balcony and were connected on stage by a six-ton steel bridge that moved into position for each of the races. The action during these races was sometimes out of sight for sections of the audience but live cameras followed the races and coverage was projected on two mammoth screens. Napier's costumes included metal parts and, for the engines, helmets that indicated character much as the Greek masks did in ancient theatre. David Hersey's lighting moved as rapidly as the skaters, and the phantom *Starlight Express* was created solely by lights. Audiences entering the theatre looked around and above them and knew that this was going to be like a sporting event. A particularly playful detail was a model train on raised tracks that circled the orchestra section of the auditorium before the musical began. In order to get to one's seat, you had to wait for the train to pass and then the track blocking the aisle lifted up like a drawbridge to let the patrons through.

	<i>1984 London cast</i>	<i>1987 New York cast</i>
Rusty	Ray Shell	Greg Mowry
Pearl	Stephanie Lawrence	Reva Rice
Electra	Jeffrey Daniel	Ken Ard
Dinah	Frances Ruffelle	Jane Krakowski
Ashley	Chrissy Wickham	Andrea McArdle
Greaseball	Jeff Shankley	Robert Torti
Poppa	Lon Satton	Steve Fowler
Rocky I	Danny John Jules	Frank Mastrocola
Belle	P. P. Arnold	Janet Williams Adderley
Voice of Boy		Braden Danner
Voice of Mother		Melanie Vaughan

When it opened in 1984, the London critics were more impressed with the technology involved in *Starlight Express* than the actual musical, although there was plenty of commendation for a cast who could not only sing but maneuver so deftly on roller skates, sometimes even dancing on wheels. There were some compliments for the Lloyd Webber-Stilgoe score but, frankly, with so much happening on and off the stage, it was easy to experience the production and barely notice the songs. There was no hesitation on the part of the public: this was an extravaganza to be seen, and they came to see it in droves. After filling the large venue for eight years, the producers did the unthinkable. They spent 500,000 pounds to refurbish, redesign, rewrite, and redirect the production and then billed it as *The New Starlight Express*. A dozen songs were dropped, others were redone,



new numbers with lyrics by other writers were added, and Lloyd Webber's son Alastair contributed some new music to the score. It was a worthwhile investment because the musical ran another ten years. By that time, productions of *Starlight Express* had appeared internationally, from Osaka to Las Vegas.

The one place the musical had trouble making money was on Broadway. Although all the creative artists from the London production were involved in the New York version, it was noticeably different. The large and relatively new Gershwin Theatre was booked for the production but, unable to destroy any of the structure, all the action of the musical was confined to the stage. It was still an impressive piece of technology with its giant bridge moving up and down and its ramps on different levels. Some songs were cut and the story, such as it was, was simplified. There were fewer races, several characters were eliminated, and the locale was Americanized, as were the voices of the boy and his mother. The New York critics were not at all kind to *Starlight Express*, even being stingy with their admiration for the high-quality tech involved. Instead, the production was dismissed as an overblown circus and some reviews thought its \$8 million price tag obscene. The public was not so fussy and, with its huge advance, *Starlight Express* was a sell-out and remained so for many months. But the production had such a high overhead that once empty seats started appearing at the Gershwin, the musical was in trouble. *Starlight Express* ended up running nearly two years but didn't pay back its investment. Only during its successful national tour and a four-year booking in Las Vegas did the musical make a profit in America.

## ***STOP THE WORLD—I WANT TO GET OFF***

(1961/1962)

A musical by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley

*Score:* Leslie Bricusse, Anthony Newley (music and lyrics)

*Original London production:* 20 July 1961; Queen's Theatre; 485 performances

*Original New York production:* 3 October 1962; Shubert Theatre; 555 performances

*Notable songs:* What Kind of Fool Am I?; I'm Gonna Build a Mountain; Once in a Lifetime; Lumbered; Typically English; Someone Nice Like You; Meilinki Meilchick; I Want to Be Rich

As late as the early 1960s, most British musicals opened with a chorus number. When the lights rose on Sean Kenny's circus tent setting for *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off*, the audience was confronted with a large transparent egg with an adult male inside, the sounds of a woman giving birth, and the "baby" escaping from the egg and taking his first baby steps. Immediately one knew that this was a musical that you either loved or loathed. Many loved it and Britain's first "concept" musical was able to run fourteen months in a West End Theatre. There is no one generally accepted definition of a "concept" musical except to say that it abandons the conventions of musical theatre in some way and succeeds (or fails) on its own terms. Broadway had already seen such experiments over the previous



A circus tent and mime-like players served as a metaphor for the world and for everyman Littlechap from his birth to his death. As they had in London, Anthony Newley and Anna Quayle played Littlechap and his wife Evie in the 1962 Broadway production. *Photofest*

decades, such as *Lady in the Dark* (1940), *Allegro* (1947), *Love Life* (1948), *Flahooley* (1951), and *The Golden Apple* (1954). The genre would become solidified with Stephen Sondheim's *Company* in 1970. But in 1961 such an oddball musical like *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off* was unique if not downright unorthodox. Not that the musical was difficult to follow. The plot told the story of Littlechap, from his birth to his death, using circus acts, clowning, mime, vaudeville humor and routines,

Brechtian alienation, a Greek chorus, and songs that ranged from gospel to cockney sing-alongs. Littlechap grows up to get a job as a tea-boy, meets and seduces Evie, gets her pregnant, and finds himself compelled to marry her. He gets a job in her father's factory, which requires him to travel, and he has affairs with a Russian, German, and American girl (all played by the same actress who portrays his wife). Put in charge of building a factory in the dead-end town of Sludgepool, Littlechap gets ambitious and becomes successful. But what he really wants is a son instead of his two nagging daughters, who join Evie in pestering him all the time. In his old age, Littlechap writes his memoirs and realizes it is Evie who he always loved and that he ruined his life looking elsewhere. When his daughter is giving birth to a son and it looks like the baby will not survive, Littlechap offers Death his own life so the boy will live. The musical ends with another birth in an egg.

Anthony Newley, a successful singer and actor since his youth, wrote the book, music, and lyrics for *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off* with Leslie Bricusse with the idea of Newley playing Littlechap in a small production utilizing one set, no costume changes, and a cast of twelve. No producer was interested in the unusual little musical despite its low cost. When there was a concert contract mix-up and producer Bernard Delfont owed Newley a favor, the agreement was for a mounting of the odd little musical at the cost of 2,000 pounds, a minuscule amount even in the early 1960s. After a tryout engagement in Manchester, the musical opened in the West End where it received a mixed reaction from the press. Some critics thought *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off* was refreshing and exciting, others dull and pretentious. Newley's performance was roundly saluted, as was Anna Quayle's portrayal of Evie and the three foreign lovers. Prospects for the musical's success did not look good until three songs from the score—"Once in a Lifetime," "Gonna Build a Mountain," and "What Kind of Fool Am I?"—were on the charts and, combined with Newley's box office clout, the musical caught on and ran sixteen months. It is questionable if *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off* would have had such an impact if it wasn't for the superior score. "Gonna Build a Mountain" is in the American gospel mode but is neither a parody nor a "blackface" number. It thrills both musically and lyrically. "Once in a Lifetime" is inspiring without being maudlin and "What Kind of Fool Am I?" is a heartfelt ballad that soars instead of wallowing. There was more wit in the rest of the score. The four women Littlechap seduces—the English girl Evie, the Russian Anya, the German Ilse, and the American Ginnie—each sing a different version of the same introductory song: "Typically English," "Glorious Russian," "Typische Deutsche," and "All-American." Each lyric is filled with hilarious clichés, and the music is flexible enough to change nationalities. Littlechap and Anya sing a sweet duet, "Meilinki Meilchick," about the son he never had, and with Evie he sings the gentle "Someone Nice Like You." Other highlights in the score include the rapid comic turn "Lumbered," the sour "Welcome to Sludgepool," and the nonsense song "Mumbo Jumbo." This score would have stood out in a conventional musical, but it was all the more effective in the context of the offbeat *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off*.

American producer David Merrick was attracted to *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off*, but not for its bold new approach to musical theatre. He liked the low cost, the star appeal of Newley, and the hit songs, which he could use to market the musical on Broadway. And market it he did with an impressive campaign that

	1961 London cast	1962 New York cast
Littlechap	Anthony Newley	Anthony Newley
Evie Littlechap, etc.	Anna Quayle	Anna Quayle
Jane Littlechap	Jennifer Baker	Jennifer Baker
Susan Littlechap	Susan Baker	Susan Baker

resulted in a large advance when the London production arrived intact on Broadway in 1962. Again the critical reaction was all over the map but the musical was a success from the start, running even longer than the London original. Even when Newley had to leave the cast and was replaced by Joel Grey, the box office held steady. Grey led the national tour, which was also very profitable. Sammy Davis Jr. played Littlechap in various venues across the nation in the 1970s and appeared in the 1978 Broadway revival as well as the TV movie that same year. Newley returned to the West End as Littlechap in a 1989 revival of *Stop the World—I Want to Get Off*. A useful record of the original London production is the 1966 filming of the musical with Tony Tanner as Littlechap.

## SUNSET BOULEVARD

(1993/1994)

A musical by Don Black and Christopher Hampton, based on the 1950 screenplay by Billy Wilder, Charles Brackett, and D. M. Marshman Jr.

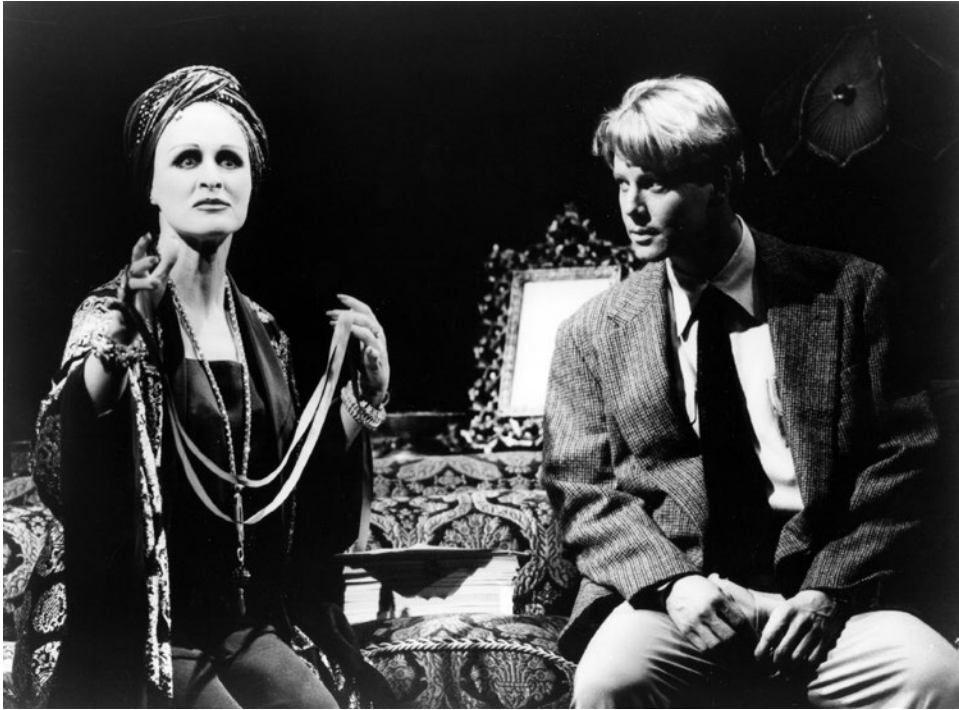
*Score:* Andrew Lloyd Webber (music), Don Black, Christopher Hampton (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 12 July 1993; Adelphi Theatre; 1,529 performances

*Original New York production:* 17 November 1994; Minskoff Theatre; 977 performances

*Notable songs:* With One Look; As If We Never Said Goodbye; New Ways to Dream; Too Much in Love to Care; The Greatest Star of All; The Perfect Year; Girl Meets Boy; Sunset Boulevard; This Time Next Year; Every Movie's a Circus

*Sunset Boulevard* has the distinction of being the first Andrew Lloyd Webber musical that is not sung through. Librettists Don Black and Christopher Hampton wrote actual dialogue scenes for the piece, though, like the classic film it is based on, there is often musical underscoring throughout these scenes. *Sunset Boulevard* also has the distinction of having long runs in London, Los Angeles, New York, Canada, and Australia, yet still losing money in each case. A victim of modern theatre economics and unwise artistic decisions along the way, the musical seems destined to always be in the red. Yet that does not keep thousands of theatregoers from ranking *Sunset Boulevard* highly. Plans to put the 1950 movie on stage go back to 1952, when Gloria Swanson, the star of the film, collaborated on a musical version that only got as far as a demo recording. Stephen Sondheim, Burt Shevelove, Harold Prince, Tim Rice, and others had each begun work on a musical *Sunset Boulevard*



Failed screenwriter Joe Gillis (Alan Campbell) is hired by silent screen star Norma Desmond (Glenn Close) to help her write her comeback movie, *Salome*, but he soon becomes her lover and then her victim. The 1994 Broadway production was a success in every way except in the financial ledger. *Photofest / Photographer: Craig Schwartz*

for such leading ladies as Swanson, Jeanette MacDonald, Angela Lansbury, and Elaine Paige playing the central character of Norma Desmond. Both legal and artistic complications got in the way until 1991 when Lloyd Webber secured the rights and the services of Black and Hampton and *Sunset Boulevard* finally moved ahead.

The fading silent screen star Norma Desmond, tended to in her ghostly mansion on Sunset Boulevard by her butler-ex-husband Max von Mayerling, coerces the down-and-out scriptwriter Joe Gillis to polish up her screenplay of *Salome* as her comeback vehicle. Joe needs the money, so he agrees, moving into the mansion and eventually becoming Norma's lover. When the script is ready, Norma has it delivered to her favorite director, Cecil B. DeMille, then continues to prepare herself to play the young heroine. When Norma gets no response to the script, she visits Paramount Studio to see DeMille, who doesn't have the heart to tell her that the public doesn't want *Salome* or Norma Desmond. Meanwhile Joe is sneaking off to the studio at night to work on a different screenplay with the young scriptwriter Betty Schaefer and the two fall in love. When Joe finally finds the courage to leave Norma, the deranged star shoots him dead and makes a grand exit as the police take her away. Because the Billy Wilder movie and so many of its lines are so famous, the libretto, by necessity, had to stay close to the original. This meant that there were few surprises in the story for older audiences who were very familiar with the old black-and-white film. A stage version would have to impress with its

colorful production values, its songs, and a towering performance by the actress playing Norma. The result was a musical that was big in every aspect, from the performances and songs to the scenery and orchestrations. Even the pistol shot when Norma shoots Joe sounded like a cannon. Ironically, this is not a big story. It involves only a few characters and calls for intimacy rather than a gigantic Hollywood mansion. Even Norma, who might be described as larger than life, is not a broad musical theatre character. She might be crazy, but she's not an Ethel Merman.

Lloyd Webber's music, both in the songs and the underscoring, is an homage to the brash Hollywood sound of the period. (Franz Waxman did the soundtrack score for the film.) This is most evident in the musical's two hit songs: the diva boast "With One Look (I Can Break Your Heart)" and the sentimental "It's as If We Never Said Goodbye." Both are sung by Norma, so they are big on emotion. Also oversized is Joe's bitter rendition of the title song, a scathing number not about the street but about Hollywood. Much more reined in are Max's fervent "The Greatest Star of All" and Joe and Betty's duets, the cheerful "Girl Meets Boy" and the romantic "Too Much in Love to Care." Even Norma has her quieter moments, as in the delicate "New Ways to Dream" and her disillusioned duet with Joe titled "The Perfect Year." There was plenty of sarcasm in the clothing salesman's song "The Lady's Paying" and the beauty consultants' "Eternal Youth Is Worth a Little Suffering." The chorus was little used in *Sunset Boulevard* but they got to join in such upbeat numbers as "Let's Have Lunch" and "This Time Next Year." All in all, it is not such a bombastic score, but it seemed so in the mammoth production directed by Trevor Nunn. John Napier designed the sets, including Norma's mansion, probably the largest and most elaborate interior yet seen on the modern stage. As if it wasn't impressive by itself, the entire thing raised up to show a simultaneous scene taking place at a New Year's Eve party. The price tag for renowned designer Anthony Powell and his gowns for Norma was about the cost of an entire West End musical. *Sunset Boulevard* was a production where you saw where the money went.

	1993 London cast	1994 New York cast
Norma Desmond	Patti LuPone	Glenn Close
Joe Gillis	Kevin Anderson	Alan Campbell
Max von Mayerling	Daniel Benzali	George Hearn
Betty Schaefer	Meredith Braun	Alice Ripley
Artie Green	Gareth Snook	Vincent Tumeo
Cecil B. DeMille	Michael Bauer	Alan Oppenheimer

Actually, you didn't. A great deal of money was spent on contractual miscalculations. Patti LuPone, who had triumphed in the title role in Lloyd Webber's *Evita* on Broadway, was contracted to play Norma first in London and then on Broadway. Before the New York opening, Faye Dunaway was to play Norma in a Los Angeles production. Then Glenn Close, a movie star with more box-office clout, was hired for Los Angeles and Dunaway sued, getting a very large settlement. Close was so well received by the L.A. critics and public that Lloyd Webber decided that she and

not LuPone should play Norma on Broadway. So LuPone's contract was bought out at considerable expense and another expensive settlement was agreed upon. *Sunset Boulevard* was, in essence, paying four stars' top salary. Add to that the high cost to mount and run the huge production and you had a theatrical venture that priced itself out of the profit column before it even opened.

Such errors in judgment were not artistic ones. In London, LuPone received excellent reviews for her Norma when *Sunset Boulevard* opened in 1993. She was a hard, practical woman with a stubborn persona. Yet, as she falls in love with Joe, she becomes weak, and her obsession with playing Salome become a twofold self-delusion. It was a masterful performance filled with subtle nuance when needed, bold and domineering when necessary. The difficulty was the fact that LuPone was a New York stage star and, except for some television exposure in America, was not all that well known to the general public. No wonder Lloyd Webber, whose The Really Useful Company was presenting both the London and Broadway productions, was tempted to have Norma played by a bankable movie star in New York. Close's performance was quite different. From her first entrance, it was clear that Norma was crazy. Her over-the-top portrayal was sometimes comic it was so severe, and audiences liked it that way. The critics were divided about the musical and Close's performance when the musical opened on Broadway in 1994. But Close did bring in the playgoers, and *Sunset Boulevard* ran two and a half years. (The London production ran three and a half years and the Los Angeles mounting just under a year.)

Several American and British actresses also got a chance to play Norma. Betty Buckley, Elaine Paige, Rita Moreno, and Petula Clark were among the star replacements in Great Britain and the United States. *Sunset Boulevard* also toured in both countries and played in Canada and Australia, still failing to repay its initial investment. This has not stopped the musical from being presented in several foreign countries and in regional theatres in Britain and the States. A scaled-down version of *Sunset Boulevard* that originated in Newbury, England, transferred to London in 2008 and was a critical and financial success. A minimalist production/concert with Glenn Close and other original New York cast members had a limited run on Broadway in 2017 and was also well received and popular. Maybe *Sunset Boulevard* was not such a big show after all.

## THE SUNSHINE GIRL

(1912/1913)

A musical comedy by Paul Rubens and Cecil Raleigh

*Score:* Paul Rubens (music), Paul Rubens, Arthur Wimperis (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 24 February 1912; Gaiety Theatre; 336 performances

*Original New York production:* 3 February 1913; Knickerbocker Theatre; 181 performances

*Notable songs:* Brighton; Take Me for—!; I've Been to the Dunbar; Little Girl, Mind How You Go; Miss Blush; The Butler; The Science of Being Lazy; Get a Move On; Men of Business; Lovers; The Other Chap; A Tiny Touch; You Can't Play Every Instrument in the Band; Nuts; I've Been to America; In the Argentine/The Argentine Tango



Producer George Edwardes ignored the passage of time, and with *The Sunshine Girl* he offered the kind of musical comedy that had thrived at the turn of the century—a dozen years into that new century. But the musical was packed with favorite Gaiety Theatre players and a melodious score, so audiences didn't complain and *The Sunshine Girl* ran a year. The title heroine is Delia Dale, who works at the Sunshine Soap factory in Port Sunshine. She falls in love with fellow employee Vernon Blundell, who is not what he seems. Vernon is heir to the family soap business and, according to his late uncle's will, he inherits it all as long as he doesn't get engaged or married for five years. Vernon is also worried that a girl might only love him for his money, so he poses as a factory worker, and has his stockbroker friend Bingo, Lord Bicester, pretend to be the factory owner. The deception doesn't last very long before Bingo is recognized by the Cockney cabman Floom and his wife Brenda from London. Bingo has to buy their silence by making Floom general manager of the factory. Adding another complication is the arrival of Bingo's fiancée, Lady Rosabelle Merrydew, in Port Sunshine. In a subplot, Brenda uses her maiden name and attempts a tryst with the local longshoreman, Commodore Parker. Not until a handful of merry songs (and a new dance from South America called the tango) are performed does the truth come out. When it is decreed by law that no will can keep a man from the woman he loves, the uncle's stipulation is declared illegal and Vernon and Delia are happily united.

The libretto by Paul Rubens and Cecil Raleigh was as contrived as it was old-fashioned, but the talented cast made *The Sunshine Girl* seem like new. Comics George Grossmith Jr. and Edmund Payne got most of the laughs as Bingo and Floom, but Connie Ediss delighted as Brenda. Leading lady Phyllis Dare did not disappoint, and Olive May, a lovely actress who would soon leave the theatre to marry into a titled family, was as beguiling as ever as Rosabelle. Basil Foster played Vernon and, because he was not a singer, took a back seat to the other players. The songs were by Rubens (music and lyrics) and Arthur Wimperis (lyrics) and they were as up-to-date as the script was out-of-date. Brenda sang the score's catchiest number, the sly and plaintive salute to "Brighton," which she much preferred to Monte Carlo or Nice. She also claimed to have been to India in the saucy "I've Been to the Durbar." Bingo sang the cautionary ditty "Little Girl, Mind How You Go" and Floom philosophized with "The Science of Being Lazy." Delia delivered the coy "Take Me for—!" and Rosabelle sang the narrative "The Blush" about a girl who always blushed unless there was no one else around to notice. A merry quartet titled "The Butler" was about the gossip downstairs, and a male octet sang of "The Men of Business." But the musical highlight of *The Sunshine Girl* was when Bingo and Delia danced a tango to "In the Argentine." Some historians claim it was the first time London audiences were exposed to the Latin dance form. That is not likely, but the number was a sensation all the same.

Very few critics complained about the antiquated nature of *The Sunshine Girl* when it opened in London in 1912. Most declared the evening a nonstop musical romp and had high praise for the players and the songs. The public agreed and the musical ran a year then toured with success even without its stars. American producer Charles Frohman presented *The Sunshine Girl* on Broadway the next year. Although he hired the London stage manager to re-create the West End staging for New York, there were several changes in the script and the score. The



	<i>1912 London cast</i>	<i>1913 New York cast</i>
Delia/Dora Dale	Phyllis Dare	Julia Sanderson
Lord "Bingo" Bicester	George Grossmith Jr.	Vernon Castle
Vernon Blundell	Basil Foster	Alan Mudie
Floot/Schlump	Edmund Payne	Joseph Cawthorn
Rosabelle Merrydew	Olive May	Eileen Kearney
Brenda Blacker	Connie Ediss	Eva Davenport
Marie Silvaine	Mabel Sealby	Flossie Hope
Hodson/Hudson	Tom Walls	E. S. Powell
Stepneyak	Robert Nainby	J. J. Horwitz
Commodore Parker	George Barrett	

musical was still set in England but some references were Americanized. "I've Been to the Durbar," for example, was changed to "I've Been to America." Among the new numbers added, the most memorable was the snappy "You Can't Play Every Instrument in the Band," which was written and sung by Joseph Cawthorn, who played the taxi driver now called Schlump. Delia's name was changed to Dora and was played by Broadway favorite Julia Sanderson. But the best casting was dancer Vernon Castle as Bingo. Ironically, in the Broadway version the Latin number, now titled "The Argentine Tango," was performed by Dora and Vernon (Alan Mudie) and not Bingo/Castle. Dancer Irene Foote was in the chorus, and she and her husband Vernon did a dance specialty in the production that was loudly applauded. Within a year Vernon and Irene Castle would become the most famous ballroom dance team in America. *The Sunshine Girl*, old-fashioned or not, was endorsed by most of the Broadway critics and ran a lucrative six months.

# T

## **TABOO**

(2002/2003)

A musical by Mark Davies and Charles Busch, based on the life of Boy George

*Score:* Boy George, Kevan Frost, Richie Stevens, John Themis (music), Boy George (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 29 January 2002; Venue Theatre; c. 1,040 performances

*Original New York production:* 13 November 2003; Plymouth Theatre; 100 performances

*Notable songs:* Everything Taboo; The Fame Game; Stranger in This World; Pretty Lies; Safe in the City; Come on In from the Outside; Out of Fashion; I See Through You; Freak; Petrified; Love Is a Question Mark; Do You Really Want to Hurt Me; Karma Chameleon; Talk Amongst Yourselves; Pie in the Sky; Touched by the Hands of Cool

If a musical is not meant for the West End, chances are it is not ideal fare for Broadway. *Taboo* was a fringe theatre musical, the American equivalent to an Off-Broadway musical. And, while there are many cases in which an Off-Broadway musical moved to Broadway successfully, a fringe musical going to Broadway is a very rare event. *Taboo*, a quasi-biographical musical about 1980s icon Boy George, was presented in a basement dance hall that was converted into a 350-seat theatre. Written by Mark Davies with the cooperation of Boy George, *Taboo* was not so much about the Culture Club singer-songwriter as it was about the 1980s music scene in London that gave birth to the "New Romantic Scene," a vague term that described some of the new styles of music that were cropping up at the time. The plot centers not on Boy George but on the fictional young would-be photographer Billy, who arrives in London from the suburbs and, through the club entrepreneur Philip Sallon, meets singer-songwriter Boy George and his crowd. Billy has a complicated love affair with the punk would-be fashion designer Kim, a relationship that is not nearly as interesting as the characters that flit in and out of the musical: the transvestite Marilyn, the Aussie performance artist Leigh Bowery, the singer-bouncer Steve Strange, and the transsexual druggie and pimp Petal. Boy George forms Culture Club and opens his own club, which he names Taboo. After a fight with Boy George, Billy goes to magazine writer Jane and gives her information

and photos that reveal Boy George's homosexuality and drug addiction. Boy George is arrested, the whole Culture Club scene falls apart, Leigh dies of AIDS, and the survivors go off to India for enlightenment, only to return to England and face reality. Oddly enough, there is very little sex, nudity, or profanity in *Taboo*. The drug scene and the AIDS epidemic are part of the world Billy discovers, but there is no soapbox preaching. In fact, the dialogue is so bitchy and campy that *Taboo* doesn't seem to take anything very seriously.

In many ways *Taboo* is a musical revue about an era. The score is a mix of well-known Boy George songs and new ones that he wrote for the musical. The best-selling pop hit "Karma Chameleon" is actually mocked in the musical, but Boy George's popular ballad "Do You Really Want to Hurt Me?" is sung by his character as a surprisingly up-tempo number. The affecting "Stranger in This World," about acknowledging one's difference, serves as the focal point of the score, sung by Boy George and later reprised by Billy. Some of the score rocks, such as Billy's bitter "I See Through You" when he becomes disillusioned with Boy George and his world. Leigh and the club patrons' "Everything Taboo" has a distinct disco beat, while Billy's song of escape, "Safe in the City," is in a rhythm and blues mode. "Petrified," Philip's lament about loneliness, is one of the score's most poignant numbers, a marked contrast to the musical's opening when he and his cohorts sing about being a "Freak" with a music hall-like pizzazz. The ambivalent "Love Is a Question Mark" is a folkish duet for Billy and Kim, practically an anti-love song. The outrageous Leigh also has two showstoppers, the stream of consciousness rant "Ich Bin Kunst" and the seductive ditty "I'll Have You All" that is so cartoonish it is asexual. The bouncer Steve Strange is given the sobering song "Out of Fashion" to sing about Boy George's fall from fame. *Taboo* ends on a conventional note with the cast singing the hopeful anthem-like "Come On in from the Outside." Although Boy George in his heyday was considered a curiosity by many, *Taboo* makes it clear he was and continues to be a skillful songwriter.

	2002 London cast	2003 New York cast
Billy	Luke Evans	
Kim	Dianne Pilkington	
George	Euan Morton	Euan Morton
Leigh Bowery	Matt Lucas	George O'Dowd
Philip Sallon	Paul Baker	Raul Esparza
Josie James	Lyn Paul	Denise Summerford
Big Sue	Gail Mackinnon	Liz McCartney
Marilyn	Mark McGee	Jeffrey Carlson
Derek/Petal	Mark White	
Josie	Gemma Craven	
Steve Strange	Drew Jaymson	
Marcus		Cary Shields
Nicola		Sarah Uriarte Berry

*Taboo* opened in London without much fanfare in 2002 but it didn't take too long for the press and the public to discover the quirky, captivating little musical in its out-of-the-way venue. The critics were surprised at the quality of the writing, the songs, and the performers. Euan Morton as Boy George was particularly adulated for turning a period icon into a living and breathing character. Rave reviews and strong word of mouth turned *Taboo* into the fringe production not to be missed. It ran two and a half years and the cast recording sold very well.

Among the American visitors to be impressed by *Taboo* was comic actress, talk-show host Rosie O'Donnell, who took on the new role of theatrical producer and bought the rights to present the musical in New York. O'Donnell wisely hired Morton to reprise his Boy George; it was the only wise decision she made. *Taboo* obviously belonged in a shabby venue Off-Broadway to re-create the tacky, intimate atmosphere of the London production. Instead O'Donnell booked a mid-sized Broadway theatre and hired playwright Charles Busch to write a whole new libretto befitting a Broadway-sized production. Busch, a female impersonator and playwright who had found fame for his campy productions, most of which played Off-Broadway, was the appropriate writer for the material. But *Taboo* didn't need to be rewritten. In the new version, the central characters of Billy and Kim were eliminated, as were Petal and Steve Strange. The indecisive libretto concentrates on Boy George's rise to fame in the first act then changes direction in the second act and focuses on the life and death of fashion designer Leigh Berry. There is an attempt to connect the two stories when the two heroes meet in the defunct *Taboo* club for a photo shoot and argue over what is the true story. The shapeless production seemed to go nowhere, but it had dazzling costumes, so one got the impression of a parade passing by for no reason. The London score was greatly altered, but the songs were still powerful. Some solos were turned into duets, trios were changed to solos, and intimate numbers were reimagined as chorus numbers. It was a tribute to Boy George's talent that even when reconfigured, most of the songs still were very effective. *Taboo* also boasted some outstanding performances. Morton, in the somewhat enlarged role of Boy George, was better than ever. In a publicity coup, producer O'Donnell cast the real Boy George (using his actual name George O'Dowd) as Leigh and the forty-two-year-old singer-songwriter gave an over-the-top performance. Also giving a superior portrayal of Philip was Raul Esparza.

But the talented cast could not hide the fact that *Taboo* was a disjointed mess, and an overproduced mess at that. O'Donnell financed the \$10 million production herself then made some serious management mistakes, like not using a professional advertising agency to promote *Taboo*. Instead, the public read the scathing reviews, some of them personal attacks on O'Donnell and her vanity project. Audiences enjoyed the musical more than the critics, and O'Donnell insisted on keeping the production running even though it was losing thousands of dollars each week. After three months on Broadway, *Taboo* finally closed, losing its entire \$10 million investment. The cast recording eventually found an audience, and the musical has been revived on occasion but usually with the London script. In 2012 *Taboo* was revived in the South London section of Brixton, in an ethnic neighborhood, and again the musical was staged in an intimate, non-theatre space. Boy

George wrote a new song for the revival, "No Need to Work So Hard," and the original script was used but with a few revisions. The limited-run engagement was so popular it extended its stay for twenty-seven weeks. The London and New York cast recordings of *Taboo* keep the musical alive and beloved, so more productions in the future are very likely.

## **THIS YEAR OF GRACE**

(1928)

A musical revue by Noel Coward

*Score:* Noel Coward (music and lyrics)

*Original London production:* 22 March 1928; London Pavilion; 316 performances

*Original New York production:* 7 November 1928; Selwyn Theatre; 157 performances

*Notable songs:* A Room with a View; Dance, Little Lady; World Weary; Lilac Time; Try to Learn to Love; Teach Me to Dance Like Grandma; Mary Make Believe; Lorelei; Chauve Souris; Mothers' Complaint; I Can't Think; Playing the Game; The Sun, the Moon, and You

Until Andrew Lloyd Webber came along, no other British songwriter sent as many musicals to Broadway than Noel Coward. Most of these were revues, as was the case with the fondly remembered *This Year of Grace*. Coward wrote the songs and the sketches but did not appear in the revue. Nonetheless, the cast consisted of recognized talents, such as song-and-dance man Sonnie Hale, singer-dancer Jessie Matthews who would have a substantial film career once sound came in, comedienne Maisie Gay, and dancer-choreographer Tilly Losch. Producer Charles Cochran billed the musical as *Cochran's 1928 Revue* when it played in Manchester in 1928. The one-month engagement was a critical and popular hit and when it arrived in the West End later that year the production was titled *This Year of Grace*. It was an odd title choice, since none of the songs or sketches in the revue bore that name. But once the reviews came out and there was high praise for both Coward's work and the cast's expertise, *This Year of Grace* was a substantial success and ran ten months in London. The revue is remembered today for introducing three Coward song classics: the breezy romantic ballad "A Room with a View," the vivacious Charleston number "Dance, Little Lady," and the lackadaisical "World Weary," in which one longs to escape the city and return to nature. Among the other songs in the musical were the jaunty "Teach Me to Dance Like Grandma," the seductive sailor's song "Lorelei," the wry cautionary number "Try to Learn to Love (A Little Bit More)," and the flowing ballad "Mary Make Believe" about a girl looking hopelessly for love. The sketches made fun of London theatregoers, British tourists on the Lido in Venice, passengers waiting endlessly in an underground station, and the goings-on in a private hotel. Losch was featured in a satiric ballet, "The Legend of the Lily of the Valley," and the cast sang a gentle spoof of "Britannia Rules the Waves."

<i>1928 London cast</i>	<i>1928 New York cast</i>
Sonnie Hale	Noel Coward
Jessie Matthews	Beatrice Lillie
Tilly Losch	Dick Francis
Maisie Gay	Madeline Gibson
Douglas Byng	Florence Desmond
Moya Nugent	Queenie Leonard
Lance Lister	Billy Milton
Adrienne Brune	Phyllis Harding
Sheila Graham	G. P. Huntley Jr.
Jean Barry	Marjorie Moss
Jack Holland	Georges Fontana
Lauri Devine	Tommy Hayes
Marjorie Robertson	

Broadway producer Arch Selwyn wanted to present the London production of *This Year of Grace* on Broadway as soon as possible, but Cochran didn't want to break up the cast while the revue was doing such brisk business in the West End. So a new British cast was assembled and Selwyn convinced Coward to appear in the Broadway production. He was joined by another British favorite in New York, comedienne Beatrice Lillie. There were some song changes, and Coward wrote some new sketches for American audiences, including a satire on the distinguished Theatre Guild and a pastiche of American musical comedy called "The Sun, the Moon, and You." The slightly revised *This Year of Grace* opened on Broadway in 1928 to exemplary notices. Coward's interpretations of his own songs were particularly lauded, but for many the highlight of the evening was Lillie's waggish rendition of "World Weary" as she sat and munched on an apple. The revue played to packed houses for five months and would have run longer but Coward and Lillie had to return to England and without them Selwyn knew the musical could not survive. Although Coward would have another musical hit on Broadway the next year with *Bitter Sweet*, he would not appear on a New York stage again for eight years.

### **THREE LITTLE MAIDS**

(1902/1903)

A musical comedy by Paul Rubens

*Score:* Paul Rubens, Howard Talbot (music), Paul Rubens, Percy Greenbank (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 20 May 1902; Apollo Theatre; 348 performances

*Original New York production:* 1 September 1903; Daly's Theatre; 129 performances

*Notable songs:* She Was a Miller's Daughter; Men; The Town and Country Mouse; Tea and Cake Walk; Algy; I'm Only the Caddy; Sal; What Is a Maid to Do; Je vous adore; Girls, Girls, Girls!; Three Little Maids

Besides being an Edwardian musical hit on three continents, *Three Little Maids* gave the twenty-seven-year-old writer, composer, and lyricist Paul Rubens, who had contributed songs to others' productions, his first full musical of his own. He almost didn't get the job. Coproducers George Edwardes and Charles Frohman were looking for someone to write an operatic score for three stars they had engaged: the soprano favorite Evie Greene, the beautiful leading lady Edna May, and comedienne Ada Reeve. Edwardes and Frohman hired Rubens and were taken aback when he turned in the funny script and tuneful songs for a musical comedy titled *Three Little Maids*. The producers smelled a hit and went ahead with the musical, causing Greene and Reeve to abandon the project. Edna May remained and played Edna Branscombe, who, with her sisters Hilda and Ada, leaves the safe and secure household of her village curate father and goes to London, where all three find jobs as waitresses in a tea shop run by Lady St. Mallory. There they attract the amorous attentions of the monied gents Brian Molyneux, Monsieur de L'Orme, and Lord Cheyne, who is known as "Daisy" to his friends. The three men are courting the society ladies Rosemary Beaulieu, Venetia Grafton, and Marjory Crichton, who are not happy when they learn their beaux are smitten by the three little maids at the tea shop. They decide to disguise themselves as waitresses and infiltrate the enemy, but the men prefer the three country girls and invite them to a ball at Lady St. Mallory's estate. The female rivals come face to face again at the ball, but by the end of the evening the three men are matched with the curate's three daughters. It was barely enough story to sustain three acts, but there were comic diversions along the way, such as the young golf caddy Cupid, who keeps getting entangled with various women.

The musical also had twenty-eight musical numbers, so none of the book scenes wore out its welcome before it was interrupted by a song. Although Howard Talbot and Percy Greenbank contributed a few numbers to the score, Rubens wrote most of the songs, including the most popular ones. Hilda's slightly risqué "She Was a Miller's Daughter" told of a girl bored with her beau until he forgot his good manners. Two other audience favorites were sung by Ada: the comic tirade she sang against "Men" and the catchy "Sal," about a gal who was everyone's pal. Better written was Lord Cheyne's comic number about his friend "Algy," who rose to the top of the business world because he was good at algebra. The three waitresses charmed with the title number and sang and danced to the merry "The Tea and Cake Walk." Later the six women rivals had fun with the sextet "The Town and Country Mouse." The caddy Cupid had two comedy numbers that went over well, the complaining "I'm Only the Caddy" and the frustrating "Girls, Girls, Girls!" Few of the songs were very deep or, for that matter, very romantic. Edna did have the torchy solo "What Is a Maid to Do" and Hilda sang the duet "Je vous adore" with Mon. de L'Orme, but Rubens was at his best with lightweight material in script and song.

Edna May was the billed star of *Three Little Maids* when it opened in London in 1902, but the critics were equally pleased with the rest of the superb cast, particularly those playing the comic characters. Some reviewers found certain songs a bit crude or simplistic, yet most admitted they were tuneful and were thoroughly enjoyed by the audience. There were also complaints in the press about the minuscule plot, but the public was not concerned and kept the musical on the boards for

	1902 London cast	1903 New York cast
Edna Branscombe	Edna May	Delia Mason
Hilda Branscombe	Hilda Moody	Elsa Ryan
Ada Branscombe	Madge Crichton	Madge Crichton
Lady St. Mallory	Lottie Venne	Maude Hobson
Lord Cheyne	G. P. Huntley	G. P. Huntley
Brian Molyneux	J. L. Mackay	J. Edward Fraser
Mon. de L'Orme	Maurice Farkoa	Maurice Farkoa
Lady Rosemary Beaulieu	Millie Legarde	Vera Edwardine
Venetia Grafton	Betty Belknap	Eva Kelly
Lady Marjory Crichton	Ruby Ray	Kathleen Warren
Rev. Branscombe	John Beauchamp	R. St. George
Miss Deare	Sybil Grey	Barbara Huntley
Cupid	George Carroll	George Carroll

just shy of one year. *Three Little Maids* was very successful on tour and was even able to return to certain cities with success.

Edwardes and Frohman produced the New York production in 1903, bringing a mostly British cast to Broadway (including four members of the original London cast). Although *Three Little Maids* was thoroughly British in setting, character, and class distinctions, American playgoers didn't seem to mind when the players were so talented and the songs so enjoyable. The critics were also very enthusiastic about the musical and, despite some gripes about the thin story, endorsed it fully. *Three Little Maids* ran four profitable months. Such success was repeated in Australia in 1904, when a production opened in Melbourne and had a profitable run before touring the continent. Today, *Three Little Maids* is of some historical importance because it brought fame to Rubens, who would go on to score several hits over the next fourteen years.

## TOM JONES

(1907)

A comic opera by Alexander M. Thompson and Robert Courtneidge,  
based on the novel by Henry Fielding

*Score:* Edward German (music), Charles H. Taylor (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 17 April 1907; Apollo Theatre; 110 performances

*Original New York production:* 11 November 1907; Astor Theatre; 65 performances

*Notable songs:* For Tonight; Love Maketh the Heart a Garden Fair; A Little Foundling Boy; Dream o' Day Jill; The Barley Mow; By Night and Day; If Love's Content; Benjamin Partridge, a Person of Parts; On a January Morning in Summersetshire; Madrigal: Here's a Paradox for Lovers; For Aye My Love; Beguile, Beguile, with Sweet Music; The Green Ribbon; Gurt Uncle Jan Tappit; Laughing Trio; Says a Well-Worn Saw; As All the Maids (I Knew That He Looked at Me)



Henry Fielding's picaresque work of comic fiction *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, generally considered the first significant English novel, has attracted playwrights and composers since soon after its publication in 1749. There was a French musical version as early as 1765 and four years later the first British musical adaptation opened in London. In 1907, for the two-hundredth anniversary of Fielding's birth, London producer Robert Courtneidge presented a new comic-opera version of the famous novel, and it is generally thought of as the finest version, still produced today. Courtneidge and Alexander M. Thompson condensed, abridged, and sanitized the long and bawdy tale into a succinct libretto that was appealing (without being offensive) to Edwardian theatregoers. Dozens of characters, several subplots, and many of the lusty hero's amorous adventures were eliminated, but the spirit of Fielding's story survived. The baby foundling Tom Jones is raised by Squire Allworthy, becoming a handsome and genial young man attractive to women. But he loves Sophie, the daughter of the neighboring Squire Western, and she is in love with him. Much of the plot consists of the many obstacles that are put in their way: Allworthy's spineless nephew Blifil, who wants to marry Sophie; Squire Western's sister, who accuses Tom of improper behavior with Sophie's maid, Honour; Allworthy's disowning Tom; the oversexed Lady Bellaston, who is overly grateful to Tom for rescuing her from highwaymen; and Sophie's accusing Tom of unfaithfulness. Matters are set right by the comic barber Benjamin Partridge, who has evidence that Tom is not a foundling after all but Allworthy's elder nephew and legal heir. With such knowledge revealed, Squire Western consents to the marriage of Tom and Sophie. It is an economical libretto told in three acts in three settings with room for two dozen songs and some memorable dances.

Edward German, known for his expertise at re-creating period English music, wrote the music for *Tom Jones* and Charles Taylor provided the agile lyrics. Several of the songs became concert and parlor favorites, none more so than Sophie's captivating waltz "For Tonight (Let Me Dream Out My Dreams of Delight)." Sophie, played by the beloved soprano Ruth Vincent, also sang the lilted ballads "Love Makes the Heart a Garden Fair" and "By Night and Day" and was joined Tom, played by the dashing stage idol Hayden Coffin, in the rhapsodic duet "For Aye My Love." Tom introduced himself with the jaunty "A Little Foundling Boy," and Coffin's high baritone voice shone in the ballad "If Love's Content." The barber Partridge and the maid Honour got the best comic songs. He boasted of his shaving and doctoring skills in "Benjamin Partridge, a Person of Parts," and she sang a saucy number about what a girl will do to get herself "The Green Ribbon" for her hair. Some of the finest music in the score was heard in the chorus numbers, as with the drinking song "The Barley Mow," the barcarolle "Beguile, Beguile, with Sweet Music," a sprightly "Laughing Trio," and a delectable quartet, the madrigal "Here's a Paradox for Lovers." Adding to the gaiety of the score were some country dances, in particular a Morris dance that thrilled the audience. During the run, two notable songs were added: Sophie's waltzing "Dream o' Day Jill" about a girl dreaming of her wedding day, and Honour's sassy "As All the Maids" about the London gent of whom she says, "I

	1907 London cast	1907 New York cast
Tom Jones	Hayden Coffin	Van Rensselear Wheeler
Sophia Western	Ruth Vincent	Louise Gunning
Mr. Allworthy	John Morley	Albert Pellaton
Squire Western	Ambrose Manning	Henry Norman
Miss Western	Marie Daltra	
Honour	Carrie Moore	Gertrude Quinlan
Blifil	Arthur Soames	Vaughan Trevor
Lady Bellaston	Dora Rignold	Laura Butler
Gregory	Jay Laurier	John Bunny

Knew That He Looked at Me.” Edward German wrote some of the finest music of his career for *Tom Jones*, and this superior score is the reason the comic opera is still performed today.

The reviews for *Tom Jones* when it tried out in Manchester then opened in London in 1907 were practically all valentines. Some critics felt Fielding’s novel was short-changed, but most felt that what was lost from the novel was more than made up for by the splendid songs. The performers were generally praised as well with both the romantic and comic actors roundly applauded. If producer Courtneidge feared that Fielding might be too literary for the theatregoing public, he needn’t have feared. The audience reaction was propitious and the box office was very healthy for a time. But the reality of the situation was that contemporary musicals with more modern music and chorines showing a bit of leg were what was selling on the London stage and *Tom Jones*, with its period costumes and elegant but antiquated style of operatic music, struggled to run four months. Most of the London cast were in the subsequent touring company which played well in the provinces.

American producer Henry Savage was convinced *Tom Jones* would play well on Broadway and later in 1907 he opened a solid, well-sung production that was received with highly complimentary notices from the press. The script was little altered, and there were only two interpolations in the score, so New Yorkers pretty much saw what London saw. But the beautifully sung period comic-opera seemed to have limited appeal, and *Tom Jones* only lasted two months. For a while, it seemed the musical had disappeared entirely except for a few songs that remained popular in Great Britain. It was not until decades later that light opera and opera companies rediscovered the piece and productions started to resurface. When *Tom Jones* is produced today, the libretto is often revised, adding some of the bawdy quality audiences expect from the story because of the successful 1963 nonmusical film version. But German’s music is still glorious and highly enjoyable for lovers of light opera.

## TONIGHT AT 8:30

(1936)

A series of nine short plays and musicals by Noel Coward

Score: Noel Coward (music and lyrics)

Original London production: 9 January 1936; Phoenix Theatre; 157 performances

Original New York production: 24 November 1936; National Theatre; 118 performances

Notable songs: You Were There; Has Anyone Seen Our Ship?; We Were Dancing; Hearts and Flowers; Drinking Song; Play, Orchestra, Play; Then; Men about Town; Here's a Toast; Princes and Princesses

An ambitious project, a series of ten short plays performed in repertory over three nights, *Tonight at 8:30* was a vehicle for author Noel Coward and his favorite leading lady Gertrude Lawrence. Friends since childhood, they had appeared on stage together many times. Coward wrote and directed the short pieces, four of which had songs, with Lawrence and himself in mind, providing an opportunity to show off their comic, dramatic, and musical talents. The playlets, six of which are comedies and the other four very serious indeed also featured other actors/characters. Performing the cycle was very demanding, but the two stars so loved acting together that they kept *Tonight at 8:30* on the boards for five months.

The playlets that were mini-musicals of sorts were: *We Were Dancing* in which a married woman quickly falls for a divorced man one night at a dance at a South Pacific outpost. Their plans to elope and run off to Australia seem romantic in the moonlight, but by dawn they see the reality of the situation and part ways. The title song is one of Coward's most entrancing dance songs, with an insistent rhythm that evokes restlessness in the dancing and the emotions. The backstage comedy *Red Peppers* is about a married pair of music hall performers who are playing second-rate playhouses. The two are seen performing the farcical sailor ditty "Has Anyone Seen Our Ship?" on stage, but in the dressing room they quarrel with each other and with the conductor. When the two return to the stage in fancy dress to sing and dance to "Men about Town," the conductor purposely ruins the performance by speeding up the tempo. *Shadow Play* was more serious and featured three songs, including the Coward classic "You Were There." When a husband asks his wife for a divorce, she reacts by taking an overdose of sleeping pills. This leads to a fantasy in which their past is re-created as a "shadow play" about their first encounter, courting, and happy time together. She survives the overdose, and the couple is reunited. The other two songs in the piece were the nostalgic "Then" and the furious "Play, Orchestra, Play." The final musical piece was *Family Album*, a dark comedy about a family gathered after the funeral of a wealthy patriarch. After a pretense of mourning, the truth comes out that no one had liked the old man and that he had attempted to change his will and cut them all out of it. But the spinster sister burned the new will, so now they will all inherit. The songs in the piece are the giddy "Drinking Song," the wry "The Princes and Princesses," the old-fashioned waltz "Hearts and Flowers," and a spirited number sung to the tinkling melody coming from the "Music Box."



Gertrude Lawrence and Noel Coward play two music hall performers who seem to be in their cups as they ask the musical question "Has Anybody Seen Our Ship?" in the mini-musical *Red Peppers* as part of this three-night program of comedy, drama, and music. *Photofest / Photographer: Vandamm Studio*

The most memorable nonmusical playlets in the repertory were: *Fumed Oak*, about a hen-pecked husband who finally rebels against his nagging family; *Ways and Means*, in which a high-society married couple find themselves penniless in a swanky French hotel on the Côte d'Azur but escape their predicament with the help of a chauffeur/burglar; and *Still Life*, in which two people married to others have a series of "brief encounters" at a lunch room where they change trains.

All the short plays and musicals were later filmed or shown on television, most memorably *Still Life*, which became the film classic *Brief Encounter* (1945).

<i>1936 London cast</i>	<i>1936 New York cast</i>
Noel Coward	Noel Coward
Gertrude Lawrence	Gertrude Lawrence
Joyce Carey	Joyce Carey
Alan Webb	Alan Webb
Moya Nugent	Moya Nugent
Kenneth Carten	Kenneth Carten

After a successful tryout run in Manchester, *Tonight at 8:30* opened in London in 1936 to critical and public acclaim. The reviewers felt the versatility of the two stars made the program special and also had compliments about some of the writing and songs. Coward was unhappy with one of the playlets, *Star Chamber*, and cut it after opening night. That still left three plays performed each of the three nights. The task of performing the mini-marathon took its toll on the two stars, but they managed to play out their five-month contract.

Coward took a few months off to rest, then he and the entire London cast took *Tonight at 8:30* to Broadway later in 1936. There were a few song changes, but New Yorkers pretty much saw the exact same program that London did. The critics again were highly approving, and the public, who adored both Coward and Lawrence, clamored for tickets. Producer John C. Wilson contracted the company for five months, but after four months Coward became ill from exhaustion and could not continue on, so *Tonight at 8:30* closed a month early. It was still a profitable venture. The program was soon seen in Canada, Australia, and on tour in Great Britain but without Coward. When *Tonight at 8:30* was revived on Broadway in 1948, Lawrence reprised her performances and Graham Payne played Coward's roles. Only six of the plays were done over a two-night repertory, which ran just over three weeks. The individual plays and musicals are often revived individually in America and Great Britain, and Coward's songs "We Were Dancing" and "You Were There" remain among the finest in his repertoire.

## **THE TOREADOR**

(1901/1902)

A musical comedy by James T. Tanner and Harry Nicholls

*Score:* Ivan Caryll, Lionel Monckton (music), Adrian Ross, Percy Greenbank (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 17 June 1901; Gaiety Theatre; 675 performances

*Original New York production:* 6 January 1902; Knickerbocker Theatre; 121 performances

*Notable songs:* Keep Off the Grass; Everybody's Awfully Good to Me; Archie; Toreador's Song; I'm Romantic; The Language of the Flowers; Captivating Cora; If Ever I Marry; Blanks; O Señor Pray Be Bold of Heart; Maud

George Edwardes, the most prolific and successful producer of musicals in the late Victorian and the Edwardian eras, had one of his biggest hits with *The Toreador*, a musical comedy set in France and Spain but thoroughly British all the same. The musical was presented at the old Gaiety Theatre, where Edwardes assembled his troupe of favorite players and artists and the farcical results thrilled the press and the public. James T. Tanner and Harry Nicholls wrote the libretto with the Gaiety favorites in mind. Beloved comic Edmund Payne played the unlucky Sammy Grigg, who goes to Biarritz, France, to get a job with a circus. In town is the aggressive widow Mrs. Malton Hoppings, who is chasing after the younger, rather dashing toreador Carajola. The wild animal trainer Pettifer is trying to woo Mrs. Hoppings himself and is furious with the toreador. Also arriving in Biarritz is Dora Selby, a rich ward who has been betrothed to stuffy Augustus Traill of the British Consulate. Dora wants to get out of the arrangement, so she tells everyone she is already married and introduces her husband, who is really her friend Nancy Staunton disguised as a man. Also in the mix are the bridesmaid Cora Bellamy, the Governor of Villaya, and Sir Archibald Slackitt of the Welsh Guards. Sammy is attracted to the local florist Susan, but his flirtation is interrupted by the wily Doña Teresa, who convinces him to dress up as a toreador and accompany her across the border into Spain. The other characters also go south, and Sammy gets involved with some Spanish revolutionaries led by Rinaldo. In order to escape, he finds himself in a bullfight arena. Before he is gored to death, Sammy is revealed as a fake toreador, other revelations are made, and a contrived happy ending is reached.

It was a slipshod mess of a plot that ignored any logic, but it allowed plenty of opportunities for comic routines and a variety of songs. The one that caught on the most was a coy little ditty called "Keep Off the Grass" sung by the popular Gertie Millar as Cora. Also to catch on was a silly number titled "Everybody Is Awfully Good to Me," sung by the audience favorite George Grossmith Jr. as Sir Archibald, who couldn't understand why he was so well liked. Grossmith also stopped the show with his witty narrative song "Archie," about a dandy who cannot resist the girls and they cannot resist him. Payne as Sammy got his comic moments in the duet "If Ever I Marry" with Susan and joining Sir Archibald and Augustus in the trio "Blanks" about how a temporary loss of memory can be very useful in life. Carajola got to boast of his fine qualities in the "Toreador's Song," and Doña Teresa used her own talents to bend Sammy to her wishes with "O Señor Pray Be Bold of Heart." Nancy sang an entrancing ballad about the power of giving ladies bouquets in "The Language of the Flowers" and joined her "wife" Dora in "Now I Have Married You, Sir." Lady Hoppings showed little restraint in her song "I'm Romantic," and Cora did likewise in "Captivating Cora," a number added during the run when Connie Ediss took over the role. The score for *The Toreador* has not stood the test of time, but in its day, it was precisely what London audiences wanted to hear their beloved Gaiety performers sing.

The critics raved about *The Toreador* when it opened in 1901 and the audience stopped the show several times on opening night asking for encores. Some of this enthusiasm was nostalgic. The dilapidated Gaiety Theatre was slated to be demolished after *The Toreador* closed, so this was the final first night in the venerable old playhouse. That demolition was delayed for two years because Edwardes's production was packing them in far into 1903.

	<i>1901 London cast</i>	<i>1902 New York cast</i>
Sammy Grigg	Edmund Payne	Francis Wilson
Dora Selby	Marie Studholme	Adele Ritchie
Sir Archibald Slackitt	George Grossmith Jr.	Joseph Coyne
Mrs. Malton Hoppings	Claire Romaine	Maud Raymond
Governor of Villaya	Harry Grattan	Edward Gore
Nancy Staunton	Florence Collingbourne	Christie MacDonald
Carajola	Herbert Clayton	William Broderick
Augustus Traill	Lionel Mackinder	Melville Ellis
Pettifer	Fred Wright Jr.	William Blaisdell
Susan	Violet Lloyd	Queenie Vassar
Cora Bellamy	Gertie Millar	
Doña Teresa	Queenie Leighton	Jennie Hawley
Rinaldo	Robert Nainby	Robert A. Evans
Mr. Probitt	Arthur Hatherton	Joseph Fay

The New York version, produced by Sam Nixon and J. F. Zimmerman, opened in 1902 and ran a profitable five months. Comic Francis Wilson starred as Sammy, and his fellow players were among the best on the New York stage at the time. The script was tampered with somewhat and there were interpolations into the score, most noticeably a Southern number “Yaller Boy and the Moon” which seemed out of place in the script’s French and Spanish locales. While the run of *The Toreador* on Broadway seems slight compared to the London success, the musical did very well touring the States. Similarly, the musical was a favorite in the provinces in Great Britain and there were productions in Melbourne, Vienna, Budapest, and Paris. The French version was particularly popular. *The Toreador* replaced the usual revue at the famous Moulin Rouge and stayed for an unexpected year and a half.

## ***TRIAL BY JURY***

(1875)

A one-act comic operetta by W. S. Gilbert

*Score:* Arthur Sullivan (music), W. S. Gilbert (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 25 March 1875; Royalty Theatre; 131 performances

*Original New York production:* 15 November 1875; Eagle Theatre; 8 performances

*Notable songs:* Oh, Gentlemen, Listen, I Pray; Hark, the Hour of Ten Is Sounding; When First My Old, Old Love I Knew; When I, Good Friends, Was Called to the Bar; Comes the Broken Flower; Oh, Joy Unbounded!; O’er the Season Vernal; A Nice Dilemma We Have Here; I Love Him, I Love Him; All Hail Great Judge; That She Is Reeling

Arguably the most produced short musical in the English language, this early collaboration of Arthur Sullivan (music) and W. S. Gilbert (libretto and lyrics) launched one of the most fertile periods in theatre music. *Trial by Jury* was not the first time Gilbert and Sullivan had worked together. In 1871, former drama critic John Hollingshed convinced Sullivan to set Gilbert's one-act "Christmas operatic" piece *Thespis* to music as part of a double bill at the Gaiety Theatre. A fanciful piece about how gods on Mount Olympus are relieved from their boredom by an actor, the piece ran far too long and the audience got restless. Yet some critics noticed something special in the Gilbert and Sullivan collaboration. *Thespis* ran two months and then pretty much disappeared, the script and the sheet music mislaid or lost for decades. Scholars and musicologists attempted to piece the comic opera together for over one hundred years, but not until recently have all the parts, it is believed, been found. After that initial 1871 production, *Thespis* was not performed again until a New York City production in 1953, which was far from accurate.

Gilbert and Sullivan parted ways after *Thespis* and pursued projects with other artists. It was producer Richard D'Oyly Carte who brought them together four years later. He was presenting Jacques Offenbach's *La Péricole*, but it was too short to fill an evening and he was looking for a short British musical to balance the program. Gilbert had recently completed the libretto and lyrics for the one-act operetta *Trial by Jury* but had lost the interest of composer Carl Rosa. Carte heard about the script and suggested that Gilbert bring it to Sullivan, who immediately liked it. The music was composed in three weeks and *Trial by Jury* opened in 1875 as part of a triple bill with *La Péricole* and a short farce. The piece runs about forty-five minutes and has no spoken dialogue. There is only one female character, but a mixed chorus is used throughout. *Trial by Jury* has many of the hallmarks of Gilbert and Sullivan's later and longer operettas, both in the music and in the libretto-lyrics. Unlike *Thespis*, which garnered little attention, *Trial by Jury* was a triumph from the start.

Gilbert had trained to be a barrister and had practiced law for a time before turning to writing humorous verse. His knowledge of the legal profession was useful in not only the terminology used in the operetta but in the spoofing of the legal system in Great Britain. The plot concerns a breach-of-promise suit brought to court by a pretty Plaintiff, Angelina, against the Defendant, Edwin, who left her for another woman. His defense is that Angelina became so boring that he was forced to turn to another. The Learned Judge in the case is quite taken with the attractive Angelina and is inclined to favor her. But the Judge recalls his own restless youth and how he married an ugly daughter of an influential attorney in order to advance in the law. Once he found fame and money, he threw over the ugly wife. So the Judge's sentiments lie with Edwin as well. Testimony from Edwin, Angelina, and her bridesmaids only make the situation more complicated and the question of who should pay the court costs is argued. In the end, the Judge decides to dismiss the case and marry Angelina himself, which seems to please everybody.

From the first note of the opening number, Sullivan's music sparkles and continues to do so throughout the delectable piece. The choral numbers are vivacious and fun, whether they be greeting the Judge ("All Hail Great Judge!"), anticipation over seeing Angelina in court ("Where Is the Plaintiff?"), or reacting to the



situation (“A Nice Dilemma We Have Here”). The Learned Judge’s narrative “When I, Good Friends, Was Called to the Bar” is the first of the merry introductory songs for the comic lead that Gilbert and Sullivan would write over the years. The tenor solos for Edwin—“When First My Old, Old Love I Knew” and “Oh, Gentlemen, Listen, I Pray”—are lilting and graceful without slowing down the action. Similarly, Angelina’s “I Love Him, I Love Him (with Fervor Unceasing)” is heartfelt without being maudlin. The Judge’s brief musical commentary keeps *Trial by Jury* on a comic track and the score ends with the jubilant “Oh, Joy Unbounded!” The fact that this short comic operetta has never gone out of fashion and still entertains demonstrates that the team of Gilbert and Sullivan reached a high level of quality early on.

	<i>1875 London cast</i>	<i>1875 New York cast</i>
Learned Judge	Frederic Sullivan	G. H. MacDermott
Plaintiff (Angelina)	Nelly Bromley	Rose Keene
Defendant (Edwin)	Walter H. Fisher	W. Forrester
Counsel for the Plaintiff	John Hollingsworth	G. H. Coes
Usher	Belville R. Pepper	J. Hogan
Foreman of the Jury	Charles Kelleher	J. Danvers

*Trial by Jury* quite overshadowed the other two pieces on Carte’s triple bill. The critical reaction in London in 1875 was exemplary and the public cheered for more. Soon the short operetta was being produced with other works that needed a boost time-wise and popularity-wise. Announcing *Trial by Jury* as part of an evening’s entertainment guaranteed good box office. Productions started appearing across Great Britain within weeks of the London opening, just about all of them “pirated” mountings.

The first production in America was in Philadelphia in 1875 and *Trial by Jury* made its New York debut later that year in a triple bill with two short comedies. The critics were not as overwhelmed as they had been in England, and the program was withdrawn after a week. But *Trial by Jury* would return to Broadway twenty-six times over the next 145 years, usually on a bill with one of Gilbert and Sullivan’s shorter full-length operettas, most often *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Over the years *Trial by Jury* has been a regular visitor Off-Broadway, and with regional theatres, light opera companies, and schools. Like the most popular of Gilbert and Sullivan’s works, the short piece has remained a perennial favorite in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India, South Africa, and many foreign-language nations.

# U

## ***UNDER THE COUNTER***

(1945/1947)

A comedy with songs by Arthur Macrae

*Score:* Manning Sherwin (music), Harold Purcell (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 22 November 1945; Phoenix Theatre; 665 performances

*Original New York production:* 3 October 1947; Shubert Theatre; 27 performances

*Notable songs:* The Moment I Saw You; Let's Get Back to Glamour; No-One's Tried to Kiss Me (Close Your Eyes); Everywhere; Ai Yi Yi

With only five songs, *Under the Counter* barely qualifies as a musical. Yet it was one of the few London productions during the fallow 1940s and 1950s. So few British musicals showed up on Broadway in that period that it behooves us to include this one here. It is also a good example of a work that delighted London audiences but could not find approval in New York. Arthur Macrae wrote the comedy about actress-producer Jo Fox, who is preparing a musical titled *Under the Counter*. The title has a double meaning, since Jo is very good at getting food and luxury items on the black market during the wartime shortage. To save money on renting a theatre, Jo uses her house for rehearsals and the principals and chorus girls descend on her home in farce-like fashion. In addition to launching her musical and forestalling bill collectors, Jo is also pulling strings to get her former lover Mike Kenderdine posted back in Britain from overseas. To this end, she uses Sir Alec Dunn from the ministry and his secretary, Tim Garret, who keeps trying to get his songs into *Under the Counter*. By the last act, Mike has returned and is reunited with Jo, Tim is singing away with the chorus girls, and the final curtain falls on general mayhem. The farce was written for middle-aged comedienne Cicely Courtneidge, who was on stage most of the evening and sang most of the songs. What might have turned into a one-woman show was broadened by a fashion show by the chorines, some song-and-dance duets, and the feel of a full-blown musical. The songs by Manning Sherwin (music) and Harold Purcell (lyrics) were all numbers in or intended for the show-within-the-show. "Everything" was the opening number for the arriving chorus girls, "No-One's Tried to Kiss Me (Close Your Eyes)" was sung by Tim teaching the girls a new number for *Under the Counter*, "Let's Get

Back to Glamour” was the fashion parade number for Jo and the chorines, and “Ai Yi Yi” was a silly ditty shared by Jo and Lt. Commander Hugo Conway, who was somehow thrown into the mix. The score did produce one modest hit, the lovely duet “The Moment I Saw You,” which Jo sang with Tim as the love song in *Under the Counter*.

	1945 London cast	1947 New York cast
Jo Fox	Cicely Courtneidge	Cicely Courtneidge
Mike Kenderdine	Cyril Raymond	Ballard Berkeley
Tim Garret	Thorley Walters	Thorley Walters
Sir Alec Dunn	Hartley Power	Wilfred Hyde White
Mr. Burroughs	George Street	George Street
Mr. Appleyard	Frederick Farley	Frederick Farley
Eva	Irene Hand	Winnifred Hindle
Lt. Hugo Conway	John Gregory	John Gregory
Det. Inspector Baxter	Francis Roberts	Francis Roberts
Zoe Tritton	Yvonne Marling	Glen Alyn
Kitty	Audrey Godfrey	Ingrid Forrest

Courtneidge, a West End favorite for years, was the main draw when *Under the Counter* toured the provinces before opening in London in 1945. Both critics and playgoers welcomed her back to the boards with warm affection and plenty of laughs. The semi-musical was an immediate hit and ran so long that at one point the exhausted Courtneidge had to take a month off and *Under the Counter* continued on with Florence Desmond as Jo. Courtneidge returned and the production ended up chalking up a run of a year and a half.

While another company continued to tour Britain, Courtneidge and other cast members went to New York in 1947 to brave Broadway. The Shubert Brothers took quite a gamble in bringing *Under the Counter* to New York. Courtneidge was not well known in America and the farce centered on wartime and postwar shortages, which were very different from what went on in the States. Also, *Under the Counter* was the first London production to transfer to Broadway in ten years, so there was no recent precedent for British works succeeding in New York. The Broadway critics favored Courtneidge with mild appreciation but thought the farce silly and the musical numbers amateurish. (Concurrently playing on Broadway were such American blockbusters as *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, *Finian's Rainbow*, *Brigadoon*, and *Annie Get Your Gun*.) New Yorkers were not interested, and *Under the Counter* closed in three weeks. Courtneidge was not discouraged. Instead of returning to England, she headed a company of *Under the Counter* that successfully toured Australia for a year. The failure of the British production on Broadway discouraged producers on both sides of the Atlantic from bringing London musicals to New York for several years.

**UTOPIA (LIMITED); OR,  
THE FLOWERS OF PROGRESS**

(1893/1894)

A comic operetta by W. S. Gilbert

Score: Arthur Sullivan (music), W. S. Gilbert (lyrics)

Original London production: 7 October 1893; Savoy Theatre; 245 performances

Original New York production: 26 March 1894; Broadway Theatre; 55 performances

Notable songs: Eagle High in Cloudland Soaring; First You're Born; Oh, Make Way for the Wise Men; Oh, the Rapture Unrestrained; Oh Maiden Rich in Griton Lore; Words of Love Too Loudly Spoken; Some Seven Men Form an Association; A Tenor; There's a Little Group of Isles Beyond the Wave; Society Has Quite Forsaken

One of the lesser-known Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, *Utopia (Limited)* was written in their waning years together yet is politically astute and has some memorable musical moments. After the success of *The Gondoliers* (1889), the two men went their separate ways and had good experiences with others. Sullivan's opera *Ivanhoe* (1891) was well received, and Gilbert's operetta *The Mountebanks* (1892) with composer Alfred Cellier enjoyed a long and profitable run. The only communications between the two (and with producer Richard D'Oyly Carte) consisted of letters of complaint about the profits from *The Gondoliers* being spent on improvements to the Savoy Theatre. It was Gilbert who broke the stalemate by writing to Sullivan about an idea he had for a comic opera set on a South Seas island where everything ran smoothly and to perfection until British ideas about government are introduced. Sullivan was intrigued and, guaranteed that there be no fantasy, magic potions, or other such "topsy-turvy" in it, agreed to compose the music. Carte was, obviously, overjoyed and seemed to get carried away, spending more money on the sets and costumes than on any previous Savoy production. This, and disagreements between Gilbert and Sullivan during rehearsals (the finale was rewritten a few times, even after the musical opened), meant that *Utopia (Limited)* did not have an easy birth.

The libretto harks back to some of Gilbert's earliest poems and plays. The island kingdom of Utopia is ruled by King Paramount, but most of the decisions are made by his two advisors Phantis and Scaphio. If the king does not do what they suggest, he is turned over to Tarara, the Public Exploder, who executes the monarch and then ascends the throne himself. The king has sent his daughter Zara to England to be educated, and when she returns, she brings with her a group of experts known as the "Flowers of Progress." Captain Fitzbattleaxe is the authority on army doings, Captain Edward Corcoran is the naval expert, Sir Bailey Barre is the legal authority, Mr. Blushington specializes in local government, Lord Chamberlain Dramaleigh is the specialist on national government, and Mr. Goldbury represents big business. Believing the British system to be the finest in the world, the king allows the six experts to redo the government, military, and business practices of Utopia. Princess Zara has fallen in love with Captain Fitzbattleaxe,

and her two sisters, Nekaya and Kalyba, who have been raised under the strict tutelage of their English governess, Lady Sophy, are attracted to Goldbury and Dramaleigh. The two Britons return the sentiment and encourage the sisters to be more playful and carefree like English girls. Soon Utopia is transformed and, much to the dissatisfaction of Phantis, Scaphio, and Tarara, business is booming, culture is thriving, better sanitation has decreased the need for doctors, the courts are empty because the laws are all upheld, and the military is left idle because there is no war. In fact, Utopia has become too perfect, a Britain without any of that nation's faults. It is Princess Zara who comes up with the solution. She recommends that the island nation adopt the United Kingdom's two-party system of government. Under such an arrangement, each party will see that the other party makes no progress and perfection is impossible. Phantis and Scaphio are thrown in jail, the lovers are all united, and the king and the nation rejoice because now they are like Britain.

Such a story line hints at the many British institutions and beliefs that Gilbert satirizes in *Utopia (Limited)*. Some of his targets are very specific and contemporary, such as the recent laws governing limited liability for businesses, allowing them to go bankrupt and have no obligation to their investors. Also in the news were mergers and conglomerates, the use of the military in acts of imperialism, and even gossip about scandal in the royal family. Unlike the spoofing in his past comic operettas, Gilbert seems to take a slightly bitter tone in *Utopia (Limited)* and his jabs at British icons are more pointed. Ironically, Gilbert had no difficulty with the censors, and the audiences found the parody of their nation to be quite hilarious. On the other hand, it is these contemporary references that limit the operetta's appeal for modern audiences. It is the score that has saved *Utopia (Limited)* from oblivion. Sullivan's music, while not as vibrant as in his best work, is still quite commendable when taken on its own terms. One also has to consider that his most recent musical project was the very serious opera *Ivanhoe*, so Sullivan's ability to return to composing in a lighter vein must be admired. The standout comic numbers in *Utopia (Limited)* are the king's "First You're Born," a bouncy lesson about life and love; "Society Has Quite Forsaken," a wordy frolic for the king and the Flowers of Progress about how perfection has ruined the country; Goldbury's convoluted economic instructions in "Some Seven Men Form an Association"; and Fitzbattleaxe's "A Tenor," in which he is so overcome with passion for Zara that he cannot hit his high notes. "O Make Way for the Wise Men" is a cheerful march welcoming the Flowers of Progress to Utopia. More complicated is "Oh Maiden Rich in Griton Lore," a lyrical greeting for Zara by the women's chorus that alternates with a military salute by the Troopers, then both welcomes are sung together. The score's notable romantic duet is "Words of Love Too Loudly Spoken" warmly harmonized by Zara and Fitzbattleaxe. A more autumnal romance is that of the king and Lady Sophy, expressed in their duet "Oh, Rapture Unrestrained." "Eagle High in Cloudland Soaring" is a stirring and complex anthem sung by the Utopians, and the operetta ends with a fervent salute to Britain, "There's a Little Group of Isles Beyond the Wave."

Because *Utopia (Limited)* is so infrequently produced today, it may come as a surprise that the operetta was a resounding hit when it opened in London in 1893. It seems that after so many wonderful comic operettas, Gilbert and Sullivan

	<i>1893 London cast</i>	<i>1894 New York cast</i>
King Paramount	Rutland Barrington	J. J. Dallas
Princess Zara	Nancy McIntosh	Isabel Reddick
Phantis	John Le Hay	Frank Danby
Scaphio	W. H. Denny	J. W. Hooper
Capt. Fitzbattleaxe	Charles Kenningham	Clinton Elder
Lady Sophy	Rosina Brandran	Kate Talby
Mr. Goldbury	R. Scott Fishe	John Coates
Princess Nekaya	Emmie Owen	Aileen Burke
Princess Kalyba	Florence Perry	Millicent Pyne
Tarara	Walter Passmore	J. H. Poskitt
Lord Dramaleigh	Scott Russell	Frank Boor
Capt. Edward Corcoran	Lawrence Gridley	Mr. Peterkin
Sir Bailey Barre	Hugh Enes Blackmore	Eckford Smith
Mr. Blushington	Herbert Ralland	Buchanan Wake
Calynx	Bowden Haswell	Leslie Walker

could do no wrong. The first act ran nearly two hours, yet the audience was enthralled and only a few critics quibbled about the overlong libretto. The score was welcomed with uninhibited enthusiasm, as was the cast, few of whom were holdovers from the glory days of the 1880s. *Utopia (Limited)* ran eight months in London and four road companies were sent out to cover the demand for the latest Gilbert and Sullivan work.

A D'Oyly Carte Opera Company production opened in New York in 1894, but neither the press nor the public took kindly to *Utopia (Limited)*. Perhaps it was the very Britishness of the piece, or maybe New Yorkers were disappointed after all excellent press from London. Regardless, the operetta ran less than two months and has not been revived on Broadway since. Not the case in Australia, where *Utopia (Limited)* was a hit in Melbourne in 1906 and saw many revivals nationally over the next few decades. Gilbert and Sullivan collaborated only once more after *Utopia (Limited)*. It was the comic operetta *The Grand Duke* (1896), the only work by the two to lose money on its original London offering. There was no Broadway production, then or since. Both *Utopia (Limited)* and *The Grand Duke* are not totally neglected today. They live in recordings and occasional productions by light opera companies who feel every Gilbert and Sullivan operetta deserves to be seen and heard.

# V

## VALMOUTH

(1958/1960)

A musical play by Sandy Wilson, based on the novel by Ronald Firbank

*Score:* Sandy Wilson (music and lyrics)

*Original London production:* 2 October 1958; Lyric-Hammersmith Theatre; 186 performances

*Original New York production:* 6 October 1960; York Playhouse (Off-Broadway); 14 performances

*Notable songs:* Where the Trees Are Green with Parrots; Only a Passing Phase; All the Girls Were Pretty; Magic Fingers; Just Once More; My Talking Day; Little Baby Girl; Valmouth; Mustapha; Niri-Esther; Big Best Shoes; Cathedral of Clemenza

It is odd to describe a musical based on a 1919 novel as being ahead of its time but *Valmouth* was just such a curiosity. This British musical was truly unique, definitely strange, and clearly not for all tastes. Ronald Firbank's novel concerned the elderly patrons of a fictional Edwardian spa town called Valmouth. The major characters were aged Roman Catholic women who were still physically active and sexually frustrated. The book was in the form of a fantasy of sorts so its sordid details were not to be taken literally. Firbank followed the novel with other books set in the same locale. Producer Oscar Lewenstein commissioned Sandy Wilson to turn *Valmouth* into a musical vehicle for actress Bertice Reading. Wilson, known in America for writing the book, music, and lyrics for the pastiche musical *The Boy Friend* (1954), took different events and characters from Firbank's novels and fashioned them into a bizarre musical that cannot be compared to any other. The ancient Lady Parvula de Panzoust is chasing the young shepherd David Tooke; the reformed courtesan Mrs. Hurstpierpoint, who once had a brief dalliance with a British king, is trying to baptize the infant of the young unmarried Niri-Esther whose lover has left her for the sea; and the worldly Cardinal Pirelli shows up and is willing to do the christening, but they learn he has been excommunicated for baptizing a dog. Holding sway over all of these eccentric people is the exotic masseuse Mrs. Yajnavalkya from India, whose magical powers keep the old folks so randy and spry. As for Mrs. Yaj herself, she is content with the 102-year-old Grannie Tooke as her "companion." Captain Dick Thoroughfare returns to marry

Niri-Esther, then fire descends on Valmouth and the wicked are swept away while the innocent set off to find a better life on a South Seas island. Add to all this Sister Ecclesia, a singing nun who only speaks one day each year, and you know *Valmouth* is not going to be another *The Boy Friend*.

What kind of score comes from such an unorthodox musical? It has a 1920s flavor but is filtered through a 1950s cool jazz sound at times. The title song is a waltzing welcome number, "All the Girls Were Pretty (And All the Men Were Strong)" that fondly looks back to past escapades, and "Niri-Esther" is a dandy soft-shoe number about the charms of the heroine. Mrs. Yaj lists the fine qualities of her "Magic Fingers" and cuts loose with the swinging "Big Best Shoes" about a night on the town. "Where the Trees Are Green with Parrots" is a warm ballad about an exotic place in the tropics. There are a handful of songs about sex, filled with double entendres and clever word play, as in "Just Once More" and "Only a Passing Phase." Then there are some definitely offbeat numbers that grow out of the offbeat libretto: the Cardinal's wordy list song in which he compares (unfavorably) every other church to his "Cathedral of Clemenza"; the nun's furious "My Talking Day," with everything she wants to say all year spilling out; an odd lullaby, "Little Baby Girl," urging an infant to sleep now because as an adult she will be up nights worrying about her man; and Mrs. Yaj's recollection of her late husband, "Mustapha," the song moving back and forth from a romantic fox trot to a jazzy two-step. It is a glittering score but not enough to save the problematic subject matter and unconventional characters.

	1958 London cast	1960 New York cast
Mrs. Yajnavalkya	Bertice Reading/Cleo Laine	Bertice Reading
Grannie Tooke	Doris Hare	Beatrice Pons
Lady Parvula de Panzoust	Fenella Fielding	Constance Carpenter
Mrs. Hurstpierpoint	Betty Hardy	Anne Francine
Mrs. Thoroughfare	Barbara Couper	Philippa Bevans
Niri-Esther	Denise Hirst	Gail Jones
David Tooke	Peter Gilmore	Franklin Kiser
Capt. Dick Thoroughfare	Aubrey Woods	Gene Rupert
Lt. Jack Whorwood	Alan Edwards	Thom Koutsoukos
Cardinal Pirelli	Geoffrey Dunn	Ralston Hill
Sister Ecclesia	Marcia Ashton	Elly Stone

Lewenstein lost interest in the musical, so when it was completed young producer Michael Codron presented *Valmouth* in 1958, first in Liverpool, then in the London suburb of Hammersmith. Although several critics called the musical depraved and smutty, others thought it audacious and oddly touching. English playgoers were curious enough to give the musical a healthy run in Hammersmith and then in the West End, running just under six months. When the musical transferred to the London playhouse, acclaimed singer Cleo Laine took over the role of Mrs. Yaj.

Because of the popularity of *The Boy Friend* in New York in 1954, Sandy Wilson was someone New York producers courted. But none would risk doing *Valmouth*



on Broadway, so some daring producers presented it Off-Broadway, where they spent an unprecedented \$40,000 on the elaborate production. (Tony Walton did the lush sets and costumes as he had in London.) Reading again played Mrs. Yaj and her supporting cast was first-rate. The press was more confused than outraged. Several did praise the score and the cast was roundly applauded but just explaining the show in the reviews was enough to frighten audiences away. The musical closed inside of two weeks. *Valmouth* has found a small but determined following over the years, helped by the London cast recording starring Cleo Laine as Mrs. Yaj. A successful 1982 revival at Chichester (with several original cast members) was also recorded, and productions in England do appear on occasion. Stateside, you're not likely to see a revival in your neighborhood no matter where you live. Too British? Possibly. But it is more likely that *Valmouth* is too odd for mainstream tastes and in America mainstream is the only route to wide success.

# W

## ***THE WOMAN IN WHITE***

(2004/2005)

A musical by Charlotte Jones, based on the Wilkie Collins novel

*Score:* Andrew Lloyd Webber (music), David Zippel (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 15 September 2004; Palace Theatre; c. 600 performances

*Original New York production:* 17 November 2005; Marquis Theatre; 109 performances

*Notable songs:* I Believe My Heart; Evermore without You; A Gift for Living Well; Trying Not to Notice; All for Laura; I Can Get away with Anything; If I Could Only Dream This World Away; The Perfect Team; If Not for Me for Her; Back to Limmeridge; You See I Am No Ghost

Wilkie Collins's 1859 novel *The Woman in White*, an early and influential work of detective fiction, had inspired many plays, films, and TV movies before Andrew Lloyd Webber was drawn to the story. The Victorian tale was ideal for composing the operatic kind of music he had written for *The Phantom of the Opera*, although the small cast and intimate nature of *The Woman in White* would call for a less grandiose production. The scenery and costumes may have been scaled down, but some of the characters were bigger than life and demanded a passionate score. So *The Woman in White* never seemed small or intimate, and the musical ended up being another expensive and grandiose evening of theatre. For many, this was the kind of Lloyd Webber musical they most enjoyed. The British playwright Charlotte Jones wrote the adaptation of Collins's novel, which was told by multiple narrators, each version presented as if testimony in a courtroom. Collins himself turned his book into a play in 1871 and realized this device was not workable on stage. Jones must have agreed because her libretto has no narrator and a linear structure with information about past events revealed as the characters learn about them. Also, *The Woman in White* is not sung through, so there are scenes and some piquant dialogue that come directly from the novel. Jones limits the cast to a handful of characters, but there is an ensemble of extras to give the score a fuller sound. Sung through or not, there are many musical numbers in *The Woman in White*. Sometimes a whole scene is sung, but it doesn't come across as recitative.

The young art teacher Walter Hartright has been hired by Mr. Fairlie to come to the Limmeridge Estate to give art lessons to his daughter Laura and her half-sister



Michael Crawford, who had become famous as the tormented yet romantic Phantom in *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) was hardly recognizable as the crafty villain Count Fosco in the London production of the musical based on Wilkie Collins's classic mystery novel. *PA Images / Alamy Stock Photo*

Marian Halcombe. On the way to Limmeridge, Walter sees a woman dressed in white running through the dark woods of the estate. As he teaches the two young women, Walter falls in love with Laura but both Laura and Marian fall in love with him. Complicating the love triangle is the fact that Laura is betrothed to the older Sir Percival Glyde, who arrives at the estate with his friend Count Fosco, a corpulent Italian dandy who is to serve as best man at the wedding. Glyde explains the mystery of the woman in white. She is Anne Catherick, who was placed in an asylum years ago and escapes on occasion. Although Laura is afraid of the controlling Glyde, she agrees to go through with the wedding. The despondent Walter returns to London and Marian moves into Glyde's home, Blackwater House, to be with Laura. Soon it is clear Glyde is an abusive husband and is only after Laura's inheritance. Marian overhears Glyde and Fosco planning to get Limmeridge as soon as possible to pay off Glyde's gambling debts. That night, Marian hears screams in her nightmare, but in the morning, she is told that Laura is dead; walking in her sleep, she fell out of her bedroom window. Marian goes to London to get Walter's help in trying to stop Glyde and Fosco. Marian finds a document that identifies the asylum in which Anne is kept, and when they go there, they find Laura. Glyde and Fosco killed Anne and had her buried in Laura's place. Glyde convinces Mr. Fairlie to sign over the estate to him, but before he can get away Laura appears all in white in an effort to haunt her husband. The truth about the past comes out: Anne is Laura's half-sister, and years ago Glyde raped Anne and then drowned her baby. Glyde attempts to kill Laura but instead falls onto the railway tracks in the path of a speeding train. Walter and Laura are united but Marian is guilt-ridden about Anne and futilely still in love with Walter.

With so much plot to tell, Lloyd Webber and Jones often blended the songs into the scenes so that the story kept moving forward. Lloyd Webber chose American lyricist David Zippel for *The Woman in White*, an unusual choice, since Zippel was best known for his musical comedy lyrics for the lightweight *City of Angels* (1989) and *The Goodbye Girl* (1993). One could tell Zippel was most comfortable with Count Fosco's sardonic songs. "A Gift for Living Well" is Fosco's boasting of his talent for getting and enjoying the best things in life, and his words seem to gloat with self-indulgence. Similarly, Fosco's "I Can Get Away with Anything" has a sly lyric about betrayal and survival that is set to a merry Italianate melody, giving the song a macabre sense of humor. Most of the other songs are deadly serious, such as the narrative number "You See I Am No Ghost," in which Anne finally speaks to Walter and reveals her name and pathetic story. Laura and Marian sing "If I Could Only Dream This World Away," a nervous lament about escape. Marian joins Anna for the passionate duet "All for Laura," in which they vow to amend the wrongs they have caused in letting Laura marry Glyde. There is a lovely trio titled "Trying Not to Notice," in which Walter, Laura, and Marian sing their thoughts of not giving themselves away about their strong feelings for each other. The two finest ballads in the score have the Lloyd Webber qualities of being memorable and soaring. Walter and Laura's duet "I Believe My Heart" is a sublime number about suddenly falling in love, and Walter's solo "Evermore without You" is an unbridled love song about losing Laura. Zippel provides the required Victorian wording that strains to be poetic as it chases after Lloyd Webber's highly romantic music.

	2004 London cast	2005 New York cast
Walter Hartright	Martin Crewes	Adam Brazier
Marian Halcombe	Maria Friedman	Maria Friedman
Count Fosco	Michael Crawford	Michael Ball
Anne Catherick	Angela Christian	Angela Christian
Laura Fairlie	Jill Paice	Jill Paice
Sir Percival Glyde	Oliver Darley	Ron Bohmer
Mr. Fairlie	Edward Petherbridge	Walter Charles

*The Woman in White* was workshopped at Lloyd Webber's Sydmonton Festival in the summer of 2003, then it took over a year to put together the elaborate production. Trevor Nunn directed the superb cast, which featured Michael Crawford, who had become famous as the original Phantom. He played the secondary role of Count Fosco, but in his overstuffed costume and makeup and with his chilling and funny performance, he was easily the star of the production. Maria Friedman, who had become a favorite leading lady for her performances in a series of West End musicals, played Marian and was the emotional heart of *The Woman in White*. There were fine performances from all the cast, from Martin Crewes's Victorian hero Walter and Jill Paice's Victorian heroine Laura to Angela Christian's turbulent Anne and Edward Petherbridge's spineless Fairlie. William Dudley was credited for his "production and video design," which hinted at the unique and resplendent look of *The Woman in White*. The action took place within a curved wall onto which moving projections were used to not only indicate locale but create mood and even psychological visions, as during Marian's nightmare.

The production that opened in 2004 was indeed sumptuous and beautifully performed. But it was also very long and heavy-handed. The reviews were mixed, and there was no consensus on Jones's libretto or the Lloyd Webber-Zippel score. Only the actors and the technical aspects of the musical were unanimously applauded. But there was such an advance sale because Lloyd Webber and Crawford still had plenty of box-office clout that business was brisk at first. When Crawford started to suffer heat prostration from the padded costume and had to leave the production, the box office intake dropped. Nunn and Webber were not happy with the way *The Woman in White* had turned out, so after ten months into the run they closed the production and did major rewriting and recasting. Songs were cut, but new material was added, so when the "new version" of the musical opened, it ran just as long. According to the critics, it was nevertheless a tighter and more effective production. Some further cuts were made while the musical continued to run, but it was clear *The Woman in White* was losing a lot of money each week, so after nineteen months it closed for good.

Interest in *The Woman in White* in New York was considerable, so Lloyd Webber coproduced the Broadway version with the Nederlander Organization and other groups. The Broadway production was considerably shorter than the two London versions, and the visual design was even better. (Some kinks in the London production often left the projections slightly out of line with the real doors

and windows.) Friedman, Paice, and Christian reprised their Marian, Anne, and Laura roles, but Crawford dared not return to the role of Fosco, so it was played with wit and humor by Michael Ball (who had taken over for Crawford for a time in the West End). The New York critics were not as vicious as they had been on past Lloyd Webber projects, but again the notices were mixed and often the players and the design got more applause than the musical itself. Friedman, who was making her Broadway debut, received the highest praise, and New Yorkers understood why she was considered the first lady of musicals in London. But Friedman had been diagnosed with breast cancer during the Broadway previews and missed some performances. She returned to the cast by opening night, but during the New York run she missed more performances. Plans for a permanent replacement were made, but they were unnecessary; *The Woman in White* closed after a run of fourteen weeks. There was no tour in either Great Britain or America. But there was a well-received revival in London in 2017 and its limited twelve-week run in a mid-sized theatre was sold out. Perhaps there is a future for a shorter, smaller *The Woman in White*. It is possible that this giant Victorian spectacle will one day become a popular chamber piece.

**WORDS AND MUSIC.** See *Set to Music*

# Y

## ***THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD, OR THE MERRYMAN AND HIS MAID***

(1888)

An operetta by W. S. Gilbert

*Score:* Arthur Sullivan (music), W. S. Gilbert (lyrics)

*Original London production:* 3 October 1888; Savoy Theatre; 423 performances

*Original New York production:* 17 October 1888; Casino Theatre; 100 performances

*Notable songs:* I Have a Song to Sing, O (The Merryman and the Maiden); Free from His Fetters Grim; Is Life a Boon?; 'Tis Done, I Am a Bride; Were I Thy Bride; Night Has Spread Her Pall Once More; Oh, a Private Buffoon Is a Lighthearted Loon; A Man Who Would Woo a Fair Maid; When a Wooer Goes a Wooing; When Our Gallant Norman Foes; Hereupon We're Both Agreed; How Say You, Madam, Will You Wed?; Rapture! Rapture!; When Jealous Torments Rack My Soul

*"The Yeomen of the Guard* is the nearest that Gilbert and Sullivan got to grand opera." This statement by Gilbert and Sullivan scholar Ian Bradley hints at the many ways this operetta differs from the other works by the famous Victorian team. *The Yeomen of the Guard* is not an opera, but it is a very somber operetta with a far-from-happy ending. It is also the only Gilbert and Sullivan work that does not begin with a choral number. Instead the curtain rose on a young woman, Phoebe, sitting at a spinning wheel and singing woefully of her love of another and the worry that it brings her. Also breaking the Gilbert and Sullivan pattern, the principal comic role, the jester Jack Point, is actually a tragic character. Set during Tudor England, *The Yeomen of the Guard* has some humor, but it cannot be seen as a very satiric piece. The dialogue aims for an Elizabethan tone, but is not written in verse, blank or otherwise. The plot has no mistaken identities, fantasy, or other "topsy-turvy" elements. As for the music, it is arguably Sullivan's richest and most musically complex score. The overture, for example, is not a medley of some of the musical numbers but a sonata-like composition with three distinct sections to set up the bittersweet nature of the operetta. Gilbert's libretto is inspired from the French play *Don César de Bazan*, which had served as the basis for William Vincent Wallace's opera *Maritana* (1845), but *The Yeomen of the Guard* goes beyond its source material and is unmistakably a Gilbert concoction.

All of the action of the operetta takes place on the Green inside the Tower of London during the reign of Elizabeth I. Colonel Fairfax is condemned to die for sorcery, a charge invented by a relative who is greedy and wishes to inherit Fairfax's estate. The colonel decides to avoid this by getting married before he is executed, his widow then inheriting all. The traveling performer Elsie Maynard agrees to wed Fairfax, even though she is unofficially engaged to her fellow troubadour, the jester Jack Point. The jester is not very happy about the arrangement but sees that, in the long run, it is a practical one for both Elsie and himself. The wedding takes place, but then Fairfax's friend Sergeant Meryll and his daughter Phoebe help the colonel escape from the Tower. Instead of being a widow, Elsie finds herself the wife of an escaped criminal. She is wooed by Meryll's son, Leonard, who is really Fairfax in disguise. Believing Fairfax is dead, Elsie agrees to wed Leonard only to learn that Fairfax is not only alive but has been pardoned for the crime of witchcraft. When Fairfax arrives to be reunited with his wife, Elsie is overjoyed to find that he and Leonard are the same person. Their happy reunion weighs so heavily on Jack that he collapses into a faint at Elsie's feet as the curtain falls. This final scene has been interpreted by some actors or directors as tragic; Jack doesn't just faint, he dies of a broken heart. Such an ending seems out of place for an operetta, even one in which Gilbert left the word "comic" out of the description. The important thing is the character of Jack, dead or alive. He is the comic lead, but there is a sad and even bitter quality to his jokes. Unlike the other leading buffoons that had delighted audiences in the previous Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, Jack is a three-dimensional character. One does not laugh at him comfortably; one actually feels for him. Similarly, Elsie is not the shallow and naive young heroine who easily shifts her affections from Jack to Leonard. At one point, her dilemma is so overwhelming that Elsie faints, a foreshadowing of Jack's final outcome. Gilbert has surrounded these principal characters with colorful secondary figures: the woe-begotten jailer Wilfred Shadbolt; the man-chasing housekeeper Dame Carruthers; the pompous Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir Richard Cholmondeley; and the lovesick Phoebe. They are not out of place in a comic operetta, yet there is something in the music in *The Yeomen of the Guard* that cast a sobering shadow over all the proceedings.

Many consider Sullivan's music for *The Yeomen of the Guard* to be his finest. Perhaps that is because it is more "serious" and more emotional, rather than simply tuneful. The nature of the story allowed the composer to write operatic music in the English style, as opposed to the European opera sound. His solos for the romantic leads, for example, are demanding and resplendent. Fairfax sings the tenor favorite "Is Life a Boon?" about his sad fate and ponders his decision to marry a stranger in the delicate ballad "Free from His Fetters Grim." Elsie's soliloquy "'Tis Done, I Am a Bride" is a felicitous piece with multiple emotions. Phoebe's opening air, "When Maiden Loves, She Sits and Sighs," is a tripping lament that bounces rather than wallows. She later sings the fiery comic ditty "Were I Thy Bride." Dame Carruthers's "When Our Gallant Norman Foes" is a lively history lesson with a heavy march tempo. The most popular song from the score is the much lighter, catchier "I Have a Song to Sing, O!" performed by Jack and Elsie as they perform their act called "The Merryman and the Maiden." Jack also describes the art of jestering in the rapid patter song "O, a Private Buffoon Is a Lighthearted Loon" and, in a duet with Wilfred titled "Hereupon We're Both Agreed," they work out the details of Fairfax's invented death. The quartet "When



a Wooer Goes a Wooing” is a flowing waltz with a melancholy air, the duet “Rapture! Rapture!” for Dame Carruthers and Sergeant Meryll is a sprightly piece that gallops forward, and the trio “How Say You, Madam, Will You Wed?” is a restless and animated debate involving Sir Richard, Elsie, and Jack. Also of great interest to scholars and Gilbert and Sullivan devotees are the excellent songs written for *The Yeomen of the Guard* but cut before opening night, most memorably Wilfred’s “When Jealous Torments Rack My Soul.” It and other dropped numbers have sometimes been included in revivals of the operetta over the decades.

	<i>1888 London cast</i>	<i>1888 New York cast</i>
Jack Point	George Grossmith	J. H. Ryley
Colonel Fairfax	Courtice Pounds	Henry Hallam
Elsie Maynard	Geraldine Ulmar	Bertha Ricci
Phoebe Meryll	Jessie Bond	Sylvia Gerrish
Sir Richard Cholmondeley	Wallace Brownlow	George Broderick
Sergeant Meryll	Richard Temple	George Olmi
Leonard Meryll	W. R. Shirley	Charles Renwick
Wilfred Shadbolt	W. H. Denny	Fred Solomon
Dame Carruthers	Rosina Brandram	Isabelle Urquhart
Kate	Rose Hervey	Kate Uart

Both Gilbert and Sullivan relished working on such a weighty operetta, but both also worried about how the public would react to *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Fearing that the piece was getting too serious, some musical sections were cut in rehearsals and Gilbert rewrote dialogue up until opening night. Yet as nervous as they were, both men felt proud of what they had done and considered the operetta their finest achievement. *The Yeomen of the Guard* opened in London in 1888 to favorable reviews but the praise was mostly for Sullivan’s music. Gilbert had anticipated that his usual satiric kind of comedy would be missed and he would be scolded for it. The critics paid more attention to the players and the glorious music that they sang than to the libretto or lyrics. At the same time, the press thoroughly recommended the operetta and audiences kept *The Yeomen of the Guard* on the boards for just over a year. It was also successful touring Great Britain and Australia.

The very British nature of the operetta did not keep it from being a hit in continental Europe and in America. Rudolph Aronson coproduced the 1888 New York production with the D’Oyly Carte Opera Company. The cast included British, American, and Australian actors, who were roundly cheered, as was the operetta itself. There were no contemporary British allusions for Americans to ponder in *The Yeomen of the Guard* and, despite its more serious nature, it turned out to be very accessible to New Yorkers. The operetta ran a profitable three months and has returned to Broadway eleven times since then. *The Yeomen of the Guard* has seen many more productions Off-Broadway, in light opera companies, schools, and community theatres, and has appeared several times on American and British television. While the operetta may not be among the four most-often produced Gilbert and Sullivan works, it holds a special place in their repertoire. Never had they aimed so high and surprised themselves and their audiences so much.

# Guide to Recordings, Films, and Videos

Collecting and listing recordings of British musicals is a much more complicated task than doing the same thing for Broadway musicals. As far back as the end of the nineteenth century, London musicals frequently were recorded with members of the original cast. Such a practice with Broadway musicals would not become common until the 1940s. This listing of recordings, films, and videos is an attempt to show what is out there, even though several items are very rare or currently unavailable. Many British and American television broadcasts of musicals were live, and no copy exists. A set of 78s from early in the twentieth century may only survive in special collections, while others were later transferred to LPs or even CDs. Even some more recent recordings were produced in limited numbers, so sometimes a not-so-old CD is very difficult (and expensive) to obtain. Also, this guide cannot be complete. There are, for example, over forty known recordings of *The Mikado* in English. We have not included recordings or films in foreign languages. Finally, the status of a recording or a film changes daily. More and more old recordings and videos are being reissued on CD or DVD all the time.

## *THE ARCADIANS*

- 1910 (78s) original London cast members
- 1927 (silent film) with Ben Blue (UK)
- 1929 (78) Light Opera Company medley
- 1941 (78s) original New York cast members
- 1968 (CD, LP) studio recording
- 1969 (LP) studio recording
- 1999 (CD) Ohio Light Opera
- 2003 (CD) *The Monckton Album*
- 2007 (CD) studio recording highlights

## *ASPECTS OF LOVE*

- 1989 (LP, CD) original London cast

***AT THE DROP OF A HAT***

- 1957 (LP, CD) fiftieth London performance (live)  
 1959 (LP) New York performance (live)  
 1991 (LPs, CDs) *The Complete Flanders and Swann*  
 2007 (CD) *Hat Trick: Flanders & Swann Collector's Edition*

***THE BEGGAR'S OPERA***

- 1920 (MP3 Music) London cast  
 1946 (TV movie) with Fabian Smith (UK)  
 1951 (LPs) studio recording  
 1952 (TV movie) with Stephen Douglass (USA)  
 1953 (film, DVD) with Laurence Olivier (UK)  
 1963 (TV movie) with Kenneth McKellar (UK)  
 1964 (LPs) studio recording  
 1981 (LPs, CD) studio recording  
 1983 (TV movie, DVD) with Roger Daltry (UK)  
 1991 (CD) studio recording  
 1991 (film) with Josef Abrhám (Czech)  
 1993 (CD) studio recording  
 1995 (CD) studio recording  
 1997 (CD) studio recording  
 2003 (CD) studio recording  
 2005 (CD) studio recording  
 2009 (CD) studio recording  
 2010 (CD) studio recording  
 2016 (CD) London cast

***THE BELLE OF BRITTANY***

- 1909 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley

***BILLY ELLIOT***

- 2006 (CD) original London cast  
 2015 (DVD) London cast (live performance)

***BITTER SWEET***

- 1929 (78s, LP, CD) original London cast  
 1929 (78) Columbia Light Opera Company medley

1933 (film) with Anna Neagle, Fernand Gravey (UK)  
1940 (film) with Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy (USA)  
1940 (78s, LP) film soundtrack  
1959 (LP, CD) studio recording  
1961 (LP) studio recording  
1962 (CD) studio recording  
1969 (CD) studio recording  
1988 (CD) Sadler Wells cast

***BLOOD BROTHERS***

1983 (CD) original London cast  
1988 (CD) London cast  
1992 (CD) London cast  
1995 (CD) London cast  
1995 (CD) studio international recording  
2012 (CD) studio recording

***THE BOHEMIAN GIRL***

1909 (78) Light Opera Company medley  
1929 (78) Columbia Light Opera Company medley  
1968 (LP, CD) studio recording of highlights  
1991 (CD) studio recording  
1992 (CD) studio recording  
2008 (CD) studio recording

***THE BOY (GOOD MORNING, JUDGE)***

1919 (78s) original London cast

***THE BOY FRIEND***

1954 (LP, CD) original London cast  
1954 (LP, CD) original Broadway cast  
1965 (LP) studio recording  
1967 (LP) London production  
1968 (LP) Australian production  
1970 (LP, CD) Broadway cast  
1971 (film) with Twiggy (UK)  
1971 (LP, CD) film soundtrack  
1984 (CD) London cast

***BUDDY: THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY***

- 1989 (CD) original London cast
- 1995 (CD) London performance (live)

***BY JEEVES***

- 1996 (CD) original London cast
- 2001 (CD) American recording
- 2001 (TV movie, DVD) with Martin Jarvis, John Scherer (Canada)

***THE CANTERBURY TALES***

- 1968 (LP) original London cast
- 1969 (LP) original Broadway cast

***CATS***

- 1981 (LP, CD) original London cast
- 1982 (LP, CD) original Broadway cast
- 1985 (LP, CD) Australian production
- 1998 (DVD) video version with Elaine Paige
- 2019 (film) with Jennifer Hudson (UK, USA)

***CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY***

- 2013 (CD) original London cast
- 2017 (CD) original Broadway cast

***CHARLOT'S REVUE***

- 1924 (78) New York cast

***CHESS***

- 1984 (LP, CD) concept album
- 1986 (Cassette, CD) original London cast
- 1988 (CD) original Broadway cast
- 2001 (CD) Danish tour
- 2008 (CD) Swedish concert
- 2009 (CD) concert version

2009 (DVD) concert  
2012 (CD) studio recording  
2018 (CD) Danish production

***A CHINESE HONEYMOON***

1902 (78s) original London cast

***CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG***

2002 (CD) original London cast

***CHU CHIN CHOW***

1916 (78s) original London cast  
1923 (film) with Betty Blythe (UK)  
1931 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley  
1934 (film, DVD) with Anna May Wong (UK)  
1959 (LP, CD) studio recording  
1961 (LP, CD) studio recording

***CONVERSATION PIECE***

1934 (78, LP) original London cast  
1936 (CD) radio broadcast (UK)  
1951 (LP, CD) studio recording

***A COUNTRY GIRL***

1902 (78s) original London cast  
1911 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley  
1930 (78) Columbia Light Opera Company medley

***COX AND BOX***

1913 (silent film) with Pearl White (USA)  
1961 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte recording  
1972 (LP, CD) studio recording  
1978 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte recording  
1982 (TV movie) with Russell Smythe, John Fryatt (UK)  
1984 (LP) Sir Arthur Sullivan Society recording

- 1994 (CD) studio recording
- 1998 (CD) studio recording
- 2001 (TV movie) with Mark Evans, Joseph Shovelton (UK)
- 2003 (CD) studio recording
- 2004 (CD) studio recording
- 2006 (CD) studio recording
- 2007 (CD) Madison Savoyards

***A DAY IN HOLLYWOOD—A NIGHT IN THE UKRAINE***

- 1980 (LP, CD) original Broadway cast

***DOROTHY***

- 1911 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley
- 2018 (CD) studio recording

***THE EARL AND THE GIRL***

- 1904 (78s) original London cast

***ERMINIE***

- 1897 (78) U.S. Marine Band selections
- 1911 (78) Columbia Light Opera Company medley
- 1915 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley
- 2015 (CD) Comic Opera Guild

***EVITA***

- 1976 (LP, CD) concept album
- 1978 (LP, CD) original London cast
- 1979 (LP, CD) original Broadway cast
- 1996 (film, DVD) with Madonna (USA)
- 1996 (CD) film soundtrack
- 2006 (CD) London cast
- 2012 (CD) Broadway cast

***FIVE GUYS NAMED MOE***

- 1990 (CD) original London cast
- 1992 (CD) original Broadway cast

***FLORODORA***

1900 (78s, LP, CD) original London cast  
1911 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley  
1911 (78) Columbia Light Opera Company medley  
1930 (78) Columbia Light Opera Company medley  
2013 (CD) Comic Opera Guild

***THE GEISHA***

1901 (78s) original London cast  
1930 (78) Columbia Light Opera Company medley  
1931 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley  
2006 (CD) studio recording

***THE GIRL BEHIND THE COUNTER***

1906 (78s) original London cast

***THE GIRL FROM KAYS***

1903 (78s) original London cast

***THE GIRL FROM UTAH***

1913 (78) Chappell Light Opera Company medley  
1939 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley  
2011 (CD) Comic Opera Guild

***THE GONDOLIERS***

1927 (78s, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1931 (78s, CD) studio recording  
1931 (78s, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1950 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1957 (LP, CD) studio recording  
1961 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1962 (LP, CD) studio recording  
1972 (TV movie) with Dennis Dowling (UK)  
1972 (TV movie) with Donald Adams (UK)  
1977 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1982 (TV movie, DVD) with Keith Michell (UK)  
1984 (TV movie, DVD) with Eric Donkin, Stratford Festival (Canada)  
1989 (CD) studio recording



- 1990 (TV movie, DVD) with Dennis Olsen (Australia)
- 1991 (CD) New D'Oyly Carte
- 1993 (CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1997 (TV movie) with Donald Maxwell (UK)
- 2001 (DVD) Australian Opera with Robert Gard (Australia)
- 2002 (CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 2003 (CD) Light Opera Orchestra
- 2007 (CD) Ohio Light Opera
- 2015 (CD) studio recording

**GOOD MORNING, JUDGE.** See *The Boy*

### ***H.M.S. PINAFORE***

- 1907 (78s, CD) studio recording
- 1908 (78s) studio recording
- 1922 (78s, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1930 (78s, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1939 (TV movie) with John Cherry (USA)
- 1942 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley
- 1949 (78s, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1956 (TV Movie) with Harry Mossfield (Canada)
- 1958 (LP, CD) studio recording
- 1960 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1960 (TV movie) with Eric House (Canada)
- 1971 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1972 (LP, CD) studio recording
- 1972 (TV movie) with John Cartier (UK)
- 1973 (TV movie) D'Oyly Carte (UK)
- 1981 (video, DVD) Stratford Festival (Canada)
- 1981 (TV movie) with Dennis Olsen (Australia)
- 1982 (video, DVD) with Peter Marshall (UK)
- 1987 (LP, CD) studio recording
- 1997 (video, DVD) with Jon English (Australia/New Zealand)
- 2000 (CD) New D'Oyly Carte
- 2001 (video) with Richard Suart (UK)
- 2005 (video, DVD) Opera Australia (Australia)
- 2006 (video) with Simon Butteriss (UK)
- 2010 (DVD) Madison Savoyards
- 2011 (video, DVD) Guthrie Theatre (USA)

### ***HALF A SIXPENCE***

- 1962 (LP, CD) demo recording with Tommy Steele
- 1963 (LP, CD) original London cast

1965 (LP, CD) original Broadway cast  
1967 (film, DVD) with Tommy Steele  
1967 (LP, CD) film soundtrack  
2016 (CD) London cast

### **HAVANA**

1908 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley

### **IOLANTHE**

1922 (78s, CD) studio recording  
1929 (78s, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1930 (CD) historic recordings 1900–1912  
1931 (78s, CD) studio recording  
1951 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1959 (LP, CD) studio recording  
1960 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1962 (LP, CD) Sadler Wells Opera  
1964 (TV movie) with Patricia Kern (UK)  
1968 (TV movie) with Tricia Noble (UK)  
1972 (LP, CD) studio recording  
1972 (TV movie) with Ann Hood (UK)  
1974 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1980 (TV movie) with June Bronhill (Australia)  
1982 (TV movie, DVD) with Beverly Mills (UK)  
1984 (video, CD, DVD) Stratford Festival (Canada)  
1991 (CD) New D'Oyly Carte  
1997 (TV movie) with Carol Sue Hunting (USA)  
2002 (TV movie) with Maria Jones (UK)  
2013 (DVD) Madison Savoyards (USA)  
2013 (CD) Lamplighters (live performance)

### **JEROME KERN GOES TO HOLLYWOOD**

1985 (CD) original London cast

### **JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR**

1970 (LP, CD) concept album  
1971 (LP, CD) original Broadway cast  
1972 (LP, CD) original London cast  
1973 (film, DVD) with Ted Neeley  
1973 (CD) film soundtrack  
1992 (CD) twentieth anniversary London cast

- 1996 (CD) studio recording
- 2000 (CD) video soundtrack
- 2012 (DVD) Live Arena Tour with Ben Forster (UK)
- 2015 (DVD) live performance of London cast (UK)
- 2018 (DVD, CD) live TV broadcast with John Legend (USA)

### ***JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT***

- 1969 (LP, MP3) original concept album
- 1972 (TV movie, CD, DVD) with Gary Bond (UK)
- 1979 (LP) studio recording
- 1982 (LP, CD) Broadway cast
- 1991 (DVD) TV movie with Jason Donovan (UK)
- 1991 (CD) London Palladium cast
- 1992 (CD) Canadian cast with Donny Osmond
- 1993 (CD) Los Angeles cast
- 1996 (CD) American touring cast with Michael Damian
- 1999 (DVD, CD) video with Donny Osmond (UK)
- 1999 (CD) studio recording with Patrick Cassidy

### ***LADY MADCAP***

- 1904 (78s) original London cast

### ***THE LILY OF KILLARNEY***

- 1968 (LP, CD) studio recording of highlights

### ***THE MAID OF THE MOUNTAINS***

- 1917 (78s, LP, CD) original London cast
- 1917 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley
- 1932 (film) with Nancy Brown (UK)
- 1958 (LP) studio recording
- 1964 (LP) studio recording
- 1968 (LP) studio production
- 1972 (LP, CD) London production
- 2006 (CD) New London Light Opera

### ***MAMMA MIA!***

- 1999 (CD) original London cast
- 2006 (CD) fifth anniversary combination recording

2008 (film, DVD) with Meryl Streep (UK/USA)  
2008 (CD) film soundtrack

**MARY POPPINS**

2005 (CD) original London cast  
2011 (CD) touring production (live performance recording)  
2011 (CD) Australian cast

**MATILDA**

2011 (CD) original London cast  
2013 (CD) original Broadway cast

**ME AND MY GIRL**

1938 (78s) London production (live performance)  
1939 (film aka *The Lambeth Walk*) with Lupino Lane (UK)  
1985 (CD) London cast  
1986 (CD) Broadway cast

**THE MESSENGER BOY**

1900 (78s) original London cast

**THE MIKADO**

1906 (78) studio recording  
1907 (78, LP) studio recording  
1912 (78) studio recording  
1917 (78, CD) studio recording  
1926 (film) D'Oyly Carte (UK)  
1926 (78, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1930 (78, CD) studio recording  
1936 (78, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1939 (film, DVD) with Martyn Green (UK)  
1939 (CD) film soundtrack  
1950 (78, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1957 (LP, CD) studio recording  
1957 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1960 (TV movie, LP, CD) with Groucho Marx (USA)  
1962 (LP, CD) Sadler Wells

- 1962 (TV movie) with Derek-Hammond Stroud (UK)
- 1966 (TV movie, DVD) D'Oyly Carte (UK)
- 1972 (LP, CD) studio recording
- 1972 (TV movie) with John Cartier (UK)
- 1973 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1973 (TV movie) with Derek-Hammond Stroud (UK)
- 1983 (video, DVD) with Clive Revill (UK)
- 1984 (video, DVD) Stratford Festival (Canada)
- 1987 (TV movie, DVD) with Eric Idle (UK)
- 1987 (TV movie, DVD) with Graeme Ewer (Australia)
- 1990 (CD) New D'Oyly Carte
- 1995 (CD) studio recording
- 1996 (TV movie) with Drew Forsythe (Australia)
- 2001 (video, DVD, CD) Carl Rosa Opera (live performance)
- 2001 (video) with Fenton Gray (UK)
- 2001 (TV movie) with Eric Roberts (UK)
- 2002 (video) with Richard Suart (UK)
- 2004 (video) with Simon Butteriss (UK)
- 2008 (CD) Ohio Light Opera
- 2011 (TV movie, DVD) with Mitchell Butel (Australia)

### ***MISS HOOK OF HOLLAND***

- 1907 (78s, CD) Victor Light Opera Company

### ***MISS SAIGON***

- 1989 (CD) original London cast
- 1991 (CD) Broadway cast highlights
- 2014 (CD) twenty-fifth anniversary London cast (live performance)

### ***MONSIEUR BEUCAIRE***

- 1919 (78s) original London cast
- 1932 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley

### ***THE MOUNTEBANKS***

- 1965 (LP) Lyric Theatre Company
- 2018 (CD) studio recording

***MY LADY'S MAID.*** See *Lady Madcap*

***OH, WHAT A LOVELY WAR!***

- 1963 (LP, CD) original London cast
- 1969 (film, DVD) with Laurence Olivier (UK)
- 1969 (LP) film soundtrack

***OLIVER!***

- 1960 (LP, CD) original London cast
- 1962 (CD) London studio cast
- 1963 (LP, CD) original Broadway cast
- 1966 (LP) British touring cast
- 1968 (film, DVD) with Ron Moody (UK)
- 1968 (LP, CD) film soundtrack
- 1994 (CD) London revival cast
- 2009 (CD) London revival cast

***PATIENCE***

- 1921 (LP) studio recording
- 1930 (78, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1951 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1961 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1962 (LP, CD) studio recording
- 1965 (TV movie) D'Oyly Carte (UK)
- 1966 (TV movie) Ann Hood (UK)
- 1982 (TV movie, DVD) with Sandra Dugdale (UK)
- 1994 (CD) New D'Oyly Carte
- 1995 (CD, DVD) Opera Australia
- 2010 (CD) Ohio Light Opera

***THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA***

- 1986 (LP, CD) original London cast
- 1990 (CD) Canadian cast
- 2004 (film) with Gerard Butler (UK/USA)
- 2004 (CD) film soundtrack
- 2012 (CD, DVD) Royal Albert Hall concert

***PICKWICK***

- 1963 (LP) original London cast
- 1966 (CD) London revival cast
- 1969 (TV movie) with Harry Secombe (UK)

***THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE***

- 1928 (78) studio recording
- 1929 (78, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1931 (78, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1932 (LP) Civic Light Opera of New York
- 1949 (78, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1957 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1961 (LP, CD) studio recording
- 1962 (LP, CD) studio recording
- 1966 (LP, CD) studio recording
- 1968 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1972 (LP, CD) studio recording
- 1981 (LP, CD) Broadway revival
- 1982 (TV movie, DVD) with Peter Allen (UK)
- 1983 (film, DVD) with Kevin Kline (USA)
- 1985 (video, DVD) Stratford Festival (Canada)
- 1986 (LP) New Zealand cast
- 1990 (CD) New D'Oyly Carte
- 1993 (CD) studio recording
- 1994 (video, DVD) with Jon English (Australia)
- 2006 (TV movie, DVD) with Anthony Warlow (Australia)
- 2006 (CD) Welsh National Opera
- 2009 (CD) studio recording
- 2010 (video, DVD) Madison Savoyards

***PRINCESS IDA***

- 1924 (78, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1932 (78, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1955 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1982 (TV movie, DVD) with Nan Christie (UK)
- 2000 (CD) Ohio Light Opera
- 2003 (TV movie) with Samantha Hay (UK)
- 2013 (CD) Lamplighters Music Theatre (live performance)
- 2015 (video, DVD) Madison Savoyards

***PRIVATES ON PARADE***

- 1977 (LP, CD) original London cast
- 1983 (film, DVD) with Denis Quilley (UK)

***THE QUAKER GIRL***

- 1910 (78s) original London cast
- 1911 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley

1912 (78) Columbia Light Opera Company medley  
2003 (CD) *The Monckton Album*

***RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET***

1989 (CD) original London cast  
1991 (LP) American cast recording  
2012 (CD) studio recording

***THE ROAR OF THE GREASEPAINT—THE SMELL OF THE CROWD***

1965 (LP, CD) original Broadway cast

***THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW***

1973 (LP, CD) original London cast  
1974 (LP, CD) Los Angeles cast  
1975 (film, DVD) with Tim Curry (UK/USA)  
1975 (LP, CD) film soundtrack  
1981 (CD) Australian cast  
1995 (CD) studio recording  
2000 (CD) twenty-fifth anniversary anthology  
2001 (CD) Broadway revival

***RUDDIGORE***

1924 (78, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1931 (78, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1950 (78, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1962 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1963 (LP, CD) studio recording  
1966 (animated video) with John Reed (UK)  
1972 (video, LP, CD) with John Cartier (UK)  
1982 (video, DVD) with Vincent Price (UK)  
1987 (LP, CD) New Sadler Wells  
2004 (video as *The Ghosts of Ruddigore*) with Mason Taylor (UK)  
2005 (video) with Simon Butteriss (UK)  
2009 (CD) Ohio Light Opera  
2010 (video, DVD) Madison Savoyards (USA)

***A RUNAWAY GIRL***

1898 (78s) original London cast  
1911 (78) Victor Light Opera Company medley



**SAIL AWAY**

1961 (LP, CD) original Broadway cast

1962 (LP, CD) original London cast

**SALAD DAYS**

1954 (LP, CD) original London cast

1976 (LP, CD) London revival cast

1982 (LP, CD) London revival cast

1983 (TV movie) with Susan Beagley (UK)

1994 (LP, CD) fortieth anniversary studio recording

1996 (LP, CD) London revival cast

**SAN TOY**

1899 (78s) original London cast

**SCHOOL OF ROCK**

2015 (CD) original Broadway cast

**SERGEANT BRUE**

1904 (78) original London cast (partial)

**SET TO MUSIC.** See *Words and Music*

**SIDE BY SIDE BY SONDHEIM**

1976 (LP, CD) original London cast

**SONG AND DANCE**

1982 (CD) original London cast (live performance)

1984 (TV movie) with Sarah Brightman (UK)

1985 (CD) original Broadway cast

**THE SORCERER**

- 1933 (78, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1953 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1966 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1982 (TV movie, DVD) with Clive Revill (UK)
- 2002 (MP3) Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Houston
- 2005 (CD) Ohio Light Opera
- 2005 (video) with Simon Butteriss (UK)
- 2007 (video) Madison Savoyards (USA)
- 2013 (CD) Lamplighters Music Theatre

**STARLIGHT EXPRESS**

- 1984 (LP, CD) original London cast
- 1987 (LP, CD) studio cast recording
- 1993 (CD) new London cast recording

**STOP THE WORLD—I WANT TO GET OFF**

- 1961 (LP, CD) original London cast
- 1962 (LP, CD) original Broadway cast
- 1966 (film, DVD) with Tony Tanner (UK)
- 1966 (LP) film soundtrack
- 1978 (TV movie, DVD) with Sammy Davis Jr. (USA)
- 1978 (LP) Broadway cast revival
- 1996 (CD) studio recording

**SUNSET BOULEVARD**

- 1993 (CD) original London cast
- 1994 (CD) original American recording (L.A.)
- 1995 (CD) original Canadian cast

**THE SUNSHINE GIRL**

- 1912 (78s) original London cast

**TABOO**

- 2003 (CD) original London cast
- 2003 (video, DVD) London cast (UK)
- 2004 (CD) original Broadway cast

***THIS YEAR OF GRACE***

1928 (78s, LP) Noel Coward studio recordings  
1928 (78s, LP) London Pavillion Orchestra medley

***THREE LITTLE MAIDS***

1902 (78s) original London cast

***TOM JONES***

1967 (LP) studio recording  
2009 (CD) studio recording

***TONIGHT AT 8:30***

1936 (78s, LP) original London cast

***THE TOREADOR***

1901 (78s) original London cast

***TRIAL BY JURY***

1927 (78s, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1949 (78s, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1961 (LP, CD) studio recording  
1972 (LP, CD) studio recording  
1972 (TV movie) with Lawrence Richard (UK)  
1974 (TV movie) with Eric Shilling (UK)  
1975 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte  
1982 (TV movie) with Gordon Sandison (UK)  
1984 (TV movie, DVD) with Frankie Howerd (UK)  
1995 (CD) studio recording  
2000 (TV movie) with John Dennison (UK)  
2004 (CD) studio recording  
2005 (TV movie, DVD) Opera Australia

***UTOPIA (LIMITED)***

1963 (LP) Lyric Theatre Company  
1964 (LP) D'Oyly Carte

- 1965 (LP) Los Angeles Savoy-Artes
- 1976 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 2001 (CD) Ohio Light Opera

**VALMOUTH**

- 1958 (LP, CD) original London cast
- 1982 (LP, CD) studio recording

**THE WOMAN IN WHITE**

- 2004 (CD) original London cast (live performance)

**WORDS AND MUSIC**

- 1932 (78, LP) original London cast plus Noel Coward

**THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD**

- 1907 (78s, CD) studio recording
- 1920 (78s, CD) studio recording
- 1928 (78s, LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1931 (78s, CD) studio recording
- 1957 (TV movie, CD, DVD) with Alfred Drake (USA)
- 1958 (LP, CD) studio recording
- 1964 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1972 (LP, CD) studio recording
- 1972 (TV movie) with John Cartier (UK)
- 1972 (TV movie) with Alistair Duncan (Australia)
- 1975 (TV movie) with Derek Hammond-Stroud (UK)
- 1978 (TV movie) with Tommy Steele (UK)
- 1979 (LP, CD) D'Oyly Carte
- 1982 (TV movie, DVD) with Joel Grey (UK)
- 1993 (CD) studio recording
- 1993 (CD) New D'Oyly Carte
- 1995 (CD) studio recording
- 2003 (CD) Ohio Light Opera
- 2006 (TV movie) with Simon Butteriss (UK)



# Bibliography

- Ainger, Michael. *Gilbert and Sullivan: A Dual Biography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Bardsley, Garth. *Stop the World . . . The Biography of Anthony Newley*. London: Oberon Books, 2003.
- The Best Plays*. 90 editions. Editors: Garrison Sherwood and John Chapman (1894–1919); Burns Mantle (1919–1947); John Chapman (1947–1952); Louis Kronenberger (1952–1961); Henry Hewes (1961–1964); Otis Guernsey Jr. (1964–2000); Jeffrey Eric Jenkins (2000–2009). New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1894–1988; New York: Applause Theatre Book Publishers, 1988–1993; New York: Limelight Editions, 1994–2009.
- Bloom, Ken, and Frank Vlastnik. *Broadway Musicals: The 101 Greatest Shows of All Time*. New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 2004.
- Bloom, Ursula. *George Edwardes: Curtain Call for the Guv'nor*. London: Hutchinson Press, 1954.
- Bordman, Gerald, and Richard Norton. *American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Bricusse, Leslie. *The Music Man: The Life and Good Times of a Songwriter*. London: Metro Publishing, 2006/2016.
- Citron, Stephen. *Sondheim and Lloyd Webber: The New Musical*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Coveney, Michael. *Cats on a Chandelier: The Andrew Lloyd Webber Story*. London: Hutchinson, 1999.
- DeAngelis, Frank W. *The British Are Coming . . . Again! A Musical History of the Second British Invasion*. CreateSpace, 2018.
- Eden, David, and Meinhard Sarembe (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- English, William. *The History of the British Musical*. CreateSpace, 2012.
- Everett, William A., and Paul R. Laird (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Ganzl, Kurt. *The Blackwell Guide to the Musical Theatre on Record*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.
- . *The British Musical Theatre, 1865–1984*. 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- . *The Complete Aspects of Love*. London: Aurum Press, 1990.
- . *The Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre*. 3 vols. New York: Schirmer Books, 1993.
- Gordon, Robert, Olaf Jubin, and Millie Taylor. *British Musical Theatre Since 1950*. London: Methuen Drama, 2016.
- . (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of the British Musical*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Goron, Michael. *Gilbert and Sullivan's "Respectable Capers": Class, Respectability and the Savoy Operas 1877–1909*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

- Grant, Mark N. *The Rise and Fall of the Broadway Musical*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004.
- Green, Stanley. *Broadway Musicals Show by Show* (revised and updated by Kay Green). 6th ed. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Publishing Corp., 2008.
- . *Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1976.
- Harding, James. *Cochran: A Biography*. London: Methuen, 1988.
- Hartnoll, Phyllis. *The Oxford Companion to the Theatre*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Hartson, William R. *Chess: The Making of the Musical*. London: Pavillion Books, 1986.
- Hischak, Thomas S. *Broadway Plays and Musicals: Descriptions and Essential Facts of More Than 14,000 Shows through 2007*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2009.
- . *The Jerome Kern Encyclopedia*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2013.
- . *Off-Broadway Musicals since 1919*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011.
- . *The Oxford Companion to the American Musical: Theatre, Film and Television*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Hoare, Philip. *Noel Coward: A Biography*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013.
- Holdsworth, Nadine. *Joan Littlewood*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Inverne, James. *Wrestling with Elephants: The Authorised Biography of Don Black*. London: Sanctuary, 2003.
- Jarvis, Martin. *Broadway Jeeves?* London: Methuen Drama, 2003.
- Kaplan, Joel, and Sheila Stowell. *Looking Back in Pleasure: Noel Coward Reconsidered*. London: Methuen, 2000.
- Kennedy, Michael Patrick, and John Muir. *Musicals*. Glasgow, UK: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997.
- Lamb, Andrew. *Jerome Kern in Edwardian London*. New York: City University of New York, 1985.
- . *150 Years of Popular Musical Theatre*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Lehmann, Liza. *The Life of Liza Lehmann by Herself*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1919/2011.
- Lloyd Webber, Andrew. *Unmasked: A Memoir*. New York: HarperCollins, 2018.
- Macpherson, Ben. *Cultural Identity in British Musical Theatre, 1890–1939: Knowing One's Place*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- Mander, Raymond, and Joe Mitchenson. *The Theatrical Companion to Coward*. London: Salisbury Square, 1957.
- Mantle, Jonathan. *Fanfare: The Unauthorised Biography of Andrew Lloyd Webber*. London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1989.
- Maunder, Andrew. *British Theatre and the Great War, 1914–1919*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Moore, James Ross. *Andre Charlot: The Genius of Intimate Musical Revue*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland Publishers, 2005.
- Morley, Sheridan. *Hey, Mr. Producer! The Musical World of Cameron Mackintosh*. Back Stage Books, 1998.
- . *Spread a Little Happiness: The First Hundred Years of the British Musical*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1987.
- Norton, Richard C. *A Chronology of American Musical Theatre*. 3 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Parker, Derek, and Julia Parker. *The Story and the Song: A Survey of English Musical Plays, 1916–1978*. London: Art Books International, 1979.
- Pearson, Hesketh. *Gilbert and Sullivan: A Biography*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1935/2015.
- Perry, George. *Sunset Boulevard: From Movie to Musical*. New York: Pavilion Books, 1994.
- Platt, L. *Musical Comedy on the West End Stage, 1890–1939*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

- Portantieri, Michael (ed.). *The TheatreMania Guide to Musical Theatre Recordings*. New York: Back Stage Book, 2004.
- Prince, Harold. *Sense of Occasion*. Milwaukee: Applause Theatre and Cinema Books, 2017.
- Raymond, Jack. *Show Music on Record*. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1982.
- Rice, Tim. *Oh, What a Circus: The Autobiography*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1999.
- Roper, David. *Bart! The Unauthorized Life & Times, Ins and Outs, Ups and Downs of Lionel Bart*. London: Pavillion Books, 1994.
- Seeley, Paul. *Richard D'Oyly Carte*. London: Routledge Press, 2018.
- Shellard, Dominic. *British Theatre Since the War*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Singleton, Brian. *Oscar Ashe, Orientalism, and British Comedy*. New York: Praeger, 2004.
- Snelson, John. *Andrew Lloyd Webber*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Stafford, David, and Caroline Stafford. *Fings Ain't Wot They Used t' Be: The Lionel Bart Story*. London: Omnibus Press, 2011.
- Suskin, Steven. *Opening Night on Broadway: A Critical Quotebook of the Golden Era of the Musical Theatre*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1990.
- Swann, Donald, and Lyn Smith. *Swann's Way: A Life in Song*. London: Heinemann, 1991.
- Traubner, Richard. *Operetta: A Theatrical History*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Wade, Stephen. *A Victorian Somebody: The Life of George Grossmith*. Gosport, UK: Chaplin Books, 2015.
- Walsh, Basil. *Michael W. Balfe, A Unique Victorian Composer*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010.
- Walsh, Michael. *Andrew Lloyd Webber: His Life and Works*. Revised ed. New York: Abrams, 1997.
- Whitehouse, Edmund. *London Lights: A History of West End Musicals*. London: This England Books, 2005.
- Wilson, Sandy. *I Could Be Happy: An Autobiography*. London: Michael Joseph, 1975.
- Wollman, Elizabeth L. *The Theater Will Rock: A History of the Rock Musical from Hair to Hedwig*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006.
- Wright, Adrian. *Must Close Saturday: The Decline and Fall of the British Musical Flop*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2017.
- . *A Tanner's Worth of Tune: Rediscovering the Post-War British Musical*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2010.
- . *West End Broadway*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2012.





# Index

*Note:* Page numbers in **bold** indicate the main entry.

- A to Z*, 54  
ABBA, 38, 56, 148–49  
Ackland, Joss, 88  
Adler, Lou, 216–17  
*Ages Ago*, 217  
*Aida*, 22  
*Ain't Misbehavin'*, xxii, 91  
*Aladdin*, xxii  
Alberry, Donald, 183  
Aldridge, Michael, 39  
*Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, 64  
Allam, Roger, 202  
*Allegro*, 255  
Ambient, Mark, 1  
Ames, Percy, 124  
Andersson, Benny, 56–57, 59, 148–49  
*Andre Charlot's Revue of 1924*. *See Charlot's Revue*  
Andrews, Julie, 34, 36, 62  
*Annie*, ix, xxii  
*Annie Get Your Gun*, ix, xxi, 280  
*Annie 2*, 159  
*Anyone Can Whistle*, 241  
*Anything Goes*, ix  
*The Arcadians*, xx, **1–3**  
Ard, Ken, 251  
Arlen, Harold, xx  
Armitage, Richard, 158–59  
Arnold, J. A., 212  
Arnold, Sydney, 226  
Aronson, Rudolph, 294  
Arthurs, George, 122  
*An Artist's Model*, **4–6**  
*As You Like It*, 101  
Asche, Oscar, 64–65  
Ashley, Minnie, 231  
*Aspects of Love*, **6–10**  
*At the Drop of a Hat*, xxi, **10–11**  
*At the Drop of Another Hat*, 11  
Attenborough, Richard, 138  
Avian, Bob, 169  
Awdry, Rev. W., 251–52  
Ayckbourn, Alan, 39–41  
*Bab Ballads*, 115, 128, 217  
Baddeley, Hermione, 44  
Baker, Evelyn, 45  
Balfe, Michael William, 31–32  
Ball, Michael, 8, 291  
Bantock, Leedham, 17–18, 98  
*Barnum*, xxii  
Baron, Marie, 162  
Barrington, Rutland, 248  
Barrow, P. J., 17–18  
Bart, Lionel, 181–83  
*Battling Butler (Battling Buttler)*, **12–14**  
Bay, John, 76  
Beale, Simon Russell, 202  
*The Bear*, 75  
the Beatles, xxi, 237  
*Beaucaire*, 171–72  
*Beauty and the Beast*, 62  
Beckett, Samuel, 213  
*Beggar's Holiday*, 17  
*The Beggar's Opera*, xix, xx, **14–17**  
Belasco, David, 99, 169  
Bellamy, Claxton, 85  
*The Belle of Bond Street*, 106  
*The Belle of Brittany*, **17–19**  
*The Belle of Mayfair*, **19–22**  
Benedict, Julius, 143  
Bennett, Michael, 56, 58  
Berlin, Irving, ix  
Bernard, Sam, 106

- Berry, W. H., 113, 123  
 Beryl, H. Cecil, 60  
*The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, xxii  
*Beyond the Fringe*, 11  
*Big River*, xxii  
*Billy Elliot*, ix, xxii, **22–25**, 30  
*Bitter Sweet*, **25–27**, 267  
 Björnson, Maria, 8, 192  
 Black, Don, 8, 242, 257–58  
 Black, Jack, 231, 234  
*The Black Crook*, x, xx  
 Blake, Eubie, 55  
 Blitzstein, Marc, 17  
*Blood Brothers*, **27–30**  
 Blue, Ben, 3  
 Bode, Milton, 95  
*The Bohemian Girl*, xx, **31–32**  
*Bolero*, 49  
 Boote, Rosie, 160  
 Bordman, Gerald, 96  
 Borle, Christian, 53  
 Boubil, Alain, 167, 169  
 Boucicault, Dion, 142–43, 210, 212  
 Bourne, Matthew, 153  
 Bowie, David, 231  
*The Boy*, **112–14**  
*The Boy Friend*, xxi, **33–36**, 183, 227, 284–85  
 Boy George (George O’Dowd), 263–66  
 Boyd-Jones, Ernest, 92  
 Bradfield, W. Louis, 98, 127  
 Bradley, Ian, 292  
 Braham, Leonora, 200  
 Braham, Philip, 13, 55  
 Brammer, Alistair, 168  
 Bratton, John, 82  
 Brayton, Lily, 65  
 Breaux, Marc, 62  
 Brecht, Bertolt, 17, 23, 87  
 Brent, Romney, 69  
 Brian, Donald, 108  
 Bricusse, Leslie, 51, 193, 212–14, 256  
*Brief Encounter*, 273  
*Brigadoon*, xxi, 280  
 Brightman, Alex, 232, 234  
 Brightman, Sarah, 9, 192, 245  
 Brightman, Stanley, 13  
 Broccoli, Albert R., 62  
 Broughton, Phyllis, 126  
 Brown, Georgia, 182–83  
 Brown, Nancy, 148  
 Bruce, Henry Lyndhurst, 21  
 Bryan, Alfred, 113  
 Buchanan, Jack, 12–14, 54–55, 173  
 Buckley, Betty, 49, 260  
*Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*, **37–38**, 148  
*The Buddy Holly Story*, 37  
 Bullock, Donna, 157  
 Bunn, Alfred, 31–32  
 Burke, Billie, 21  
 Burnand, Francis C., 72, 117  
 Burnside, R. H., 177  
 Burton, Tim, 51  
 Bury, John, 178, 180  
 Busch, Charles, 265  
 Butt, Alfred, 113  
*By Jeeves*, **39–41**  
*Bye Bye Birdie*, xxi  
  
*Cabaret*, xxii, 87, 202  
 Cadman, Ethel, 3  
 Caesar, Irving, 55, 113  
*La Cage aux Folles*, ix, xxii  
 Cagney, James, 161  
 Caine, Georgia, 82–83, 167  
 Caird, John, 244–45  
 Calthrop, Donald, 113  
 Calthrop, Gladys, 69  
*Camelot*, xxi  
 Campbell, Alan, 258  
*Candide*, 87  
*Canterbury Pilgrims*, 43  
*The Canterbury Tales*, **42–44**  
 Cantor, Arthur, 132  
 Carby, Fanny, 179  
 Carle, Richard, 249–50  
 Carlton, Billie, 113  
 Carlton, Bob, 208  
 Carlton, William T., 212  
 Carne, Judy, 36  
*Carousel*, xxi, 280  
 Carpenter, Larry, 201  
 Carr, F. Osmond, 125–26  
 Carroll, David, 57, 59  
 Carte, Richard D’Oyly, 73, 111–12, 117–18, 128, 130, 161, 165, 188, 196–97, 200, 212, 219, 246, 248, 277–78, 281  
 Caryll, Ivan, 81–82, 105, 122, 145, 160, 175, 184, 221, 239, 249  
 Casnoff, Philip, 57, 59  
 Cassidy, David, 28, 30  
 Cassidy, Shaun, 30  
 Castle, Irene (Foote), 103, 262

- Castle, Vernon, 103, 262  
*The Catch of the Season*, 44–46  
 Cats, ix, xxii, 7, 46–50, 56, 192, 251–52  
 Cawthorne, Joseph, 108, 262  
 Celeste, Marie, 230  
 Cellier, Alfred, 78–80, 173–75, 281  
 Cervantes, Miguel, 31  
 Chandler, David, 251  
*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, 50–53  
 Charlot, Andre, 54–55  
*Charlot's Revue*, 14, 54–55, 237  
*Charlot's Revue of 1926*, 55  
 Chaucer, Geoffrey, 42–44  
*Cheer*, 54  
 Chekhov, Anton, 75  
*Chess*, xxii, 56–59, 149  
 Chesterfield, Lord, 16  
*Chicago*, xxii  
 Chilton, Charles, 179  
*A Chinese Honeymoon*, xx, 59–61  
*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, xxii, 61–64  
*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang: The Magical Car*, 62  
 Choos, George, 13  
*A Chorus Line*, xxii  
 Christian, Angela, 290–91  
*Chu Chin Chow*, xx, 64–66  
 Cibber, Colley, 16  
*The Circus Girl*, 66–68  
*City of Angels*, xxii, 289  
 Claire, Ina, 107, 204  
 Claire, Stella, 34  
 Clark, Petula, 28, 30, 260  
 Clifford, Camille, 21  
 Close, Glenn, 258–60  
 Cochran, Charles, 26, 46, 54, 69–70, 266–67  
 Codron, Michael, 285  
 Coe, Peter, 183, 193  
 Coffin, C. Hayden, 5, 80, 98, 100, 102, 270  
 Coghill, Nevill, 42–43  
 Cohan, George M., xx  
 Cohen, Alexander, 11, 77–78  
*The Colleen Bawn*, 142–43  
 Collins, Joan, 138  
 Collins, José, 147  
 Collins, Wilkie, 287–88  
 Colson, Kevin, 7–8  
*Company*, xxii, 87, 241, 255  
 Comstock, E. Ray, 66  
*Conversation Piece*, 68–70  
 Cooper, Gladys, 32  
*Coquin de Printemps*, 249  
 Cordon, James, 50  
*The Corsican Brothers*, 29  
*A Country Girl*, 5, 70–72  
 Courtneidge, Cecily, 2, 279–80  
 Courtneidge, Robert, 1–2, 270–71  
 Covington, Julie, 87  
 Coward, Noel, xxi, 25–27, 54–55, 68–70, 223–26, 237–38, 266–67, 272–74  
*Cox and Box*, 72–74, 117  
 Coyne, Joseph, 107  
 Crawford, Michael, 192, 288, 290–91  
 Craymer, Judy, 148–49  
 Cream, 231  
 Creston, Dormer, 68  
 Crewes, Martin, 290  
 Cronin, A. J., 23–24  
 Cross, Beverly, 120  
 Crowley, Bob, 153  
 Crumb, Ann, 7–8  
 Cullum, John, 9  
 Curry, Tim, 157, 216–17  
 Curzon, Frank, 102, 140, 167, 173, 235  
  
 Daboll, W. S., 84  
 Dahl, Roald, 51–52, 62–63, 153–54  
 Daldry, Stephen, 23  
 Dale, Jim, 202  
 Dale, Louise, 235  
 Dalton, Buddy, 76–77  
 Daly, Augustin, 67–68, 98, 100–101, 221  
 Dam, Henry J. W., 239  
 d'Amboise, Christopher, 243, 245–46  
 Damian, Michael, 136  
*Damn Yankees*, ix, xxi  
 Dana, Charles, 45  
 Dance, George, 60  
*The Dancing Years*, xxi  
 Danielle, Marlene, 49  
 Daniels, Frank, 18, 167, 236  
 Dare, Phyllis, 2, 21, 261  
 Dare, Zena, 45  
 Darling, Peter, 23, 155  
 Davenport, Eva, 124  
 Davies, Ben, 80  
 Davies, Mark, 263  
 Davis, Jimmie. *See* Hall, Owen  
 Davis, N. Newnham, 176  
 Davis, Sammy, Jr., 257  
 Day, Edith, 226  
*A Day in Hollywood — A Night in the Ukraine*, xxii, 75–78

- Decker, Edith, 124  
 Dee, Kiki, 29  
 Delfont, Bernard, 193, 214, 256  
 Delmar, Elaine, 131  
 Dench, Judi, 48, 50  
 Depp, Johnny, 51  
*Der Vampyr*, 217  
 Desmond, Florence, 280  
 Dickens, Charles, 181–82, 192–93  
 Dickson, Barbara, 87  
*Die Fledermaus*, 25  
 Dillingham, Charles, 236  
 Disney, Walt, 62  
*Divorce Me, Darling!*, 36  
 Dixey, Henry, 66, 188  
*Don César de Bazan*, 292  
 Donizetti, Gaetano, 219, 247  
 Donovan, 138  
 the Doors, 231  
*Doris*, 206  
*Dorothy*, 78–80, 206  
 Douglas, Charles Noel, 82  
*Downton Abbey*, 231  
 D'Oyly Carte, Richard. *See* Carte, Richard  
     D'Oyly  
 Drew, Anthony, 150–51  
 Dryden, John, 16  
 Dubin, Al, 55  
 DuClos, Danielle, 7  
 Dudley, William, 290  
 Duff, J. C., 72, 80  
 Dumont, Margaret, 75  
 Dumas, Alexandre, 29  
 Dunaway, Faye, 259  
 Duncan, Sandy, 36, 44  
 Duval, Georges, 249  
  
*The Earl and the Girl*, 46, 81–83  
 Eddy, Nelson, 27, 77  
 Ediss, Connie, 3, 103, 221, 261, 275  
 Edouin, Willie, 85, 105, 235–36  
 Edwardes, George, 4–6, 67, 71, 80, 96–98,  
     99–100, 104–5, 107, 122–24, 125, 127,  
     144, 147, 159, 161, 175, 177, 184, 203,  
     220–21, 229, 239–40, 249, 261, 268–69,  
     275  
*Eine tolle Nacht*, 67  
 Elba, Idris, 50  
 Elfman, Danny, 51  
 Eliot, T. S., 47–48, 50, 56  
 Eliot, Valerie, 48  
  
*The Elixir of Love*, 247  
 Elliman, Yvonne, 124  
 Ellington, Duke, 17  
 Ellison, Sidney, 93  
*Endgame*, 213  
 Erlanger, Abe, 173  
*Erminie*, xx, 83–85  
 Esparza, Raul, 265  
 Essex, David, 88  
 Everard, Harriet, 248  
*Everyman*, 235  
*Evita*, xxii, 48–49, 56, 85–89, 192, 259  
 Eyre, Richard, 153  
  
 Fairbrother, Sydney, 13  
*Family Album*, 272  
 Farkoa, Maurice, 5–6, 176  
 Farnie, H. B., 210  
*Faust*, 190  
 Fellowes, Julian, 151, 231–32  
 Fenholt, Jeff, 134  
 Fenn, Jean, 223  
 Feuer, Cy, 35  
*Fiddler on the Roof*, xxi–xxii  
 Fiedler, Arthur, 32  
 Fielding, Harold, 121  
 Fielding, Henry, 270–71  
 Fields, Lew, xx, 102–3  
*Fings Ain't Wot They Used t' Be*, 181  
*Finian's Rainbow*, 280  
 Firbank, Ronald, 284  
 Fitzgibbon, Maggie, 226  
*Five Guys Named Moe*, 90–91  
*Flahooley*, 255  
 Flanders, Michael, 10–11  
 Fleming, Ian, 61–63  
*Flora; or, Hob in the Well*, xix  
*Florodora*, xx, 20–21, 92–93, 122  
*Follies*, xxii, 87, 241  
*Forbidden Planet*, 208  
 Fortesque, George K., 230  
*42nd Street*, 36  
 Foster, Basil, 261  
*Four Quartets*, 48  
 Foy, Eddie, 83, 185  
 Francis, Ben, 120  
 Franklin, Howard B., 70  
 Fraser-Simson, Harold, 147  
 Freear, Louie, 60  
 French, T. Henry, 175  
*The French Maid*, 94–95

- Fresnay, Pierre, 69–70  
 Friedman, Maria, 138, 290–91  
 Friganza, Trixie, 185  
 Frohman, Charles, 3, 5, 19, 21, 45, 105, 108, 167, 240, 261, 268–69  
 Frohman, Daniel, 230  
 Fry, Stephen, 158  
 Fuller, Larry, 87  
*Fumed Oak*, 273  
*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, xxi, 241  
 Furber, Douglas, 13, 55, 156–57  
 Fynn, David, 234
- The Gaiety Girl*, 4, **96–98**, 127, 239  
 Gandillot, Leon, 104  
 Gänzl, Kurt, 1, 32, 86, 134  
 Garnett, David, 8  
 Garrison, David, 76–77  
 Gay, John, xix, 14–16  
 Gay, Maisie, 266  
 Gay, Noel, 157–58  
 Gaynes, George, 109  
*Gay's the Word*, xxi  
*The Geisha*, xx, 5–6, 71, **99–101**, 229, 231  
*Gentleman Jim*, 95  
 German, Edward, 270–71  
 Gershwin, George, ix, xx, 113  
 Gershwin, Ira, ix, xx  
 Gest, Morris, 66  
 Gilbert, W. S., and Arthur Sullivan, xx, 3, 5, 72–74, 78, 85, 92, 97, 101, 109–11, 115–19, 128–30, 161–65, 173–75, 186–88, 194–97, 198–200, 212, 217–20, 246–48, 277–78, 281–83, 292–94  
 Gilbert, William, 207  
 Gille, Phillippe, 210  
*The Girl behind the Counter*, **101–3**  
*The Girl Friend*, 33–34  
*The Girl from Kays*, 102, **104–6**  
*The Girl from Utah*, 3, **106–8**  
*The Girl in the Red Velvet Swing*, 92  
*La Gitanella*, 31  
 Goddard, Willoughby, 214  
 Godfrey, Thomas, xix  
*The Golden Apple*, 255  
 Goldsmith, Oliver, 78  
*The Gondoliers*, xx, **108–12**, 173, 281  
*Good Morning, Judge*, **112–14**  
*The Goodbye Girl*, 289  
 Gooderow, Joseph, 231
- Gordon, Lady Duff, 45  
 Gordon, Robert, 23  
*Gosford Park*, 231  
 Goz, Henry, 57  
 Graham, Harry, 147  
*The Grand Duke*, 283  
*Grand Hotel*, xxii  
 Graves, George, 18  
*Grease*, xxii  
*A Greek Slave*, 5, 71  
 Green, Marion, 172  
 Green, Martyn, 44  
 Greenbank, Harry, 4, 6, 97, 100, 221, 229  
 Greenbank, Percy, 17–19, 71, 82, 107, 113, 160, 176, 184, 204, 249, 268  
 Greene, Evie, 122–23, 268  
 Greet, William, 82  
 Gregory, Gillian, 159  
 Greig, David, 52  
 Grey, Joel, 257  
 Griffiths, W. H., 95  
 Grossmith, George, 130, 165, 240, 248  
 Grossmith, George, Jr., 122, 185, 249, 261, 275  
 Grossmith, Lawrence, 102, 123  
 Grout, David, 121  
 Gunton, Bob, 89  
*Guys and Dolls*, ix, xxi  
 Gwynne, Haydn, 24–25  
*Gypsy*, xxi, 241  
*La Gypsy*, 31  
*The Gypsy Blonde*, 32
- H.M.S. Pinafore*, xx, 73, **115–19**, 196, 198, 248, 278  
 Haines, Herbert, 45  
*Hair*, xxii, 44, 134, 216  
*Hairspray*, xxii, 52  
 Hale, Sonny, 266  
*Half a Sixpence*, xxi, **119–22**  
 Hall, Lee, 22–24  
 Hall, Owen (Jimmie Davis), 4–5, 96–97, 99, 104, 229, 235–36  
 Hall, Pauline, 84  
 Hallam, Lewis, Jr., xix  
 Hamilton, Cosmo, 21, 45  
 Hamilton, Henry, 97  
 Hammerstein, Oscar, ix, xxi, 3  
 Hampton, Christopher, 257–58  
 Hamshere, Keith, 183  
 Hardy, Oliver, 32

- Harburg, E. Y., xx  
 Harrigan, Edward, xx, 98  
 Harris, Henry B., 204  
 Harrison, William, 143  
 Hart, Charles, 8, 189–90  
 Hart, Lorenz, xx, 3  
 Hart, Moss, 36  
 Hart, Tony, xx, 98  
 Hassell, George, 113, 114  
*Havana*, **122–24**  
 Hawkins, John, 43  
 Hayden, Ethel, 221  
 Haydn, Richard, 238  
 Hayman, Al, 5, 240  
 Head, Murray, 58, 133  
*Hello, Dolly!*, xxi  
 Hemmings, David, 39  
 Henderson, Alexander, 210, 212  
 Heneker, David, 119–21  
 Herbert, Victor, 83  
 Herman, Jerry, 77  
 Hersey, David, 169, 251, 253  
 Hewett, Peggy, 77  
 Hicks, Seymour, 45, 81, 220, 239–40  
 Hill, Richard, 43  
 Hipp, Paul, 37–38  
*The History of Tome Jones, a Foundling*, 270  
 Hobson, Maud, 98, 100  
 Hodge, Douglas, 53  
 Hollingshed, John, 277  
 Holly, Buddy, 37–38, 90  
 Holmes, Scott, 132  
 Homfrey, Gladys, 123  
 Hood, Basil, 19–21, 94–95  
 Hood, Marion, 80  
*Hook of Holland*, 167  
 Hooper, Tom, 50  
 Hope, Bob, 173  
 Hope, Vida, 35–36  
 Hopwood, Aubrey, 221  
 Horsey, Martin, 183  
*The Hot Mikado*, 165  
*How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*, xxi  
 Howell, Rob, 154–55  
 Hudson, Jennifer, 50  
 Hughes, Ken, 62  
 Hugo, Victor, 167  
 Huntley, J. P., 167  
 Hurgon, Austen, 166  
 Hytner, Nicholas, 169  
*In Town*, **125–27**, 239  
*Into the Woods*, xxii, 242  
*Iolanthe*, **127–30**, 212  
*Irma La Douce*, xi  
 Irving, Ethel, 235–36  
 Irving, Washington, 210  
*Ivanhoe*, 110, 281–82  
*Jacob's Journey*, 138  
 Jaime, Adolphe, 249  
 Jakobowski, Edward, 84–85  
 Janes, Alan, 37  
 Jarvis, Martin, 41  
 Jay, Isabel, 102  
 Jeans, Ronald, 55  
 Jefferson, Joseph, 210, 212  
*Jeeves*, 39  
 Jenn, Myvanwy, 179  
*Jerome Goes to Hollywood*, 131  
*Jerome Kern Goes to Hollywood*, **131–32**  
*The Jersey Lily*, 185  
*Jesus Christ Superstar*, xxi, xxii, 39, 56, 86–87, **132–35**, 231  
 John, Elton, 22–25,  
 Johnson, Catherine, 148–49  
 Jolson, Al, 113  
 Jones, Charlotte, 287, 289  
 Jones, Davy, 182  
 Jones, Paul, 87  
 Jones, Sidney, 4, 6, 97, 100, 107, 140, 229  
 Jordan, Louis, 90–91  
*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, xxii, 39–40, 133–34, **135–38**, 252  
*Journey's End*, 237  
 Jubin, Olaf, 56  
 Kean, Thomas, 16  
 Keaton, Buster, 12, 14  
 Keillor, Garrison, 42  
 Kelly, Dennis, 153–54  
 Kelly, Michelle, 153  
 Kenny, Sean, 183, 193, 254  
 Kenwright, Bill, 27–30  
 Kerker, Gustav, 61, 145  
 Kern, Jerome, 3, 44, 46, 81–82, 106, 108, 113, 131–32, 140–41, 185, 249  
 Kernan, David, 131–32, 241–42  
 Kerr, Walter, 11  
*Kill That Fly!*, 54  
 King, Carole, 30, 37–38

- King, Charles, 114  
 King, Denis, 201  
*The King and I*, xxi, 54  
*The King of Cadonia*, **139–41**  
*King's Rhapsody*, xxi  
*Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul*, 119, 156  
*Kismet*, 65  
 Kiss, 231  
 Kline, Kevin, 195  
 Knight, Percival, 3  
 Körberg, Tommy, 58  
 Kortner, Fritz, 66  
 Kuhn, Judy, 57, 59
- La Touche, John, 17  
*Lady in the Dark*, xxi, 255  
*Lady Madcap*, 21, **175–77**  
 Laine, Cleo, 241, 285–86  
 Lambart, Ernest, 124  
*The Lambeth Walk*, 157  
 Land, David, 134  
 Lane, Lupino, 156–57  
 Lansbury, Angela, 258  
 Laska, Edward, 46, 82  
*L'Auberge des Adrets*, 83  
 Laurel, Stan, 32  
 Lawrence, Gertrude, 26, 54–55, 272–74  
 Lay, Dilys, 34  
 Laye, Evelyn, 26  
 Lazarus, Frank, 75–77  
 Leader, James. *See* Tanner, James T.  
 Led Zeppelin, 231  
 Lehmann, Liza, 234–36  
 Leigh, Gracie, 107, 140, 167, 229  
 Lerner, Alan Jay, 190  
 Leroux, Gaston, 189–90  
*Les Misérables*, xi, xxii, 152, 167, 169–71  
 Leslie, Fred, 210–11  
 Leslie, Henry, 80, 206–8  
 Leslie, Sylvia, 13  
 Lester, Alfred, 2, 123  
 Levine, Joseph I., 11  
 Lewenstein, Oscar, 284–85  
*Life in New York; or, Tom and Jerry on a Visit*,  
 xix–xx  
 Lillie, Beatrice, 54–55, 237–38, 266  
*The Lily of Killarney*, xx, **142–43**  
 Lind, Letty, 100  
 Lindsay, Robert, 159  
*The Lion King*, xxii, 22, 47, 62  
*Little Christopher Columbus*, **144–45**
- Little Miss Hook of Holland*, 167  
*A Little Night Music*, xxii, 87, 241  
 Littlewood, Joan, 178–80  
 Lloyd Webber, Alistair, 254  
 Lloyd Webber, Andrew, ix, xxi, 6–10, 39–41,  
 47–50, 56, 81, 85–88, 132–34, 135–38,  
 188–92, 231, 233–34, 242, 251–54, 257–  
 60, 266, 287, 289–91  
 Lloyd Webber, Julian, 242  
*Lock Up Your Daughters*, 181  
*London Calling!*, 54  
 Long, John Luther, 99, 169  
 Lonnen, E. J., 144  
 Lonsdale, Frederick, 139–40, 146–47, 172  
 Lopez, Priscilla, 76–77  
 Losch, Tilly, 266  
*Love Life*, 255  
*Love Never Dies*, 192, 233  
*Lucia di Lammermoor*, 219  
 LuPone, Patti, 89, 259–60  
 Lynne, Gillian, 48, 63, 192
- MacDonald, Ballard, 13  
 MacDonald, Christie, 21, 167  
 MacDonald, Jeanette, 27, 77, 258  
 MacKay, Leonard, 123  
 MacKenzie, Julia, 242  
 Mackintosh, Cameron, 48, 91, 150, 152–53,  
 167, 170–71, 190–91, 241, 244–45  
 Macrae, Arthur, 279  
*Madama Butterfly*, 168–69  
*Madame Butterfly*, 99, 169  
 Madonna, 89  
*The Magic Show*, xxii  
*The Magistrate*, 112, 114  
*The Maid of the Mountains*, xx, **146–48**  
 Mailbaum, Richard, 62  
 Maltby, Richard, Jr., 169–70, 245  
 the Mamas & the Papas, 50  
*Mame*, xxii  
*Mamma Mia!*, ix, xxii, **148–50**, 165  
*Man of La Mancha*, xxii  
 Manchester, Melissa, 246  
 Mankowitz, Wolf, 193  
 Mansfield, Laurie, 37  
 Mansfield, Richard, 171  
*La Mariée recalitrante*, 104  
*Maritana*, 292  
 Marschner, Heinrich, 217  
 Martin, Ernest, 35  
 Martin, Millicent, 34, 242



- Martins, Peter, 245–46  
*Mary Poppins*, xxii, 62, **150–53**, 231  
*Matilda*, xxii, **153–56**  
 Marx Brothers, 75–78  
 Matthews, Jessie, 266  
 May, Alice, 248  
 May, Edna, 20–21, 46, 268  
 May, Olive, 261  
 McAllen, Kathleen Rowe, 8  
 McCartney, Paul, 37  
 McKellen, Ian, 50  
*Me and My Girl*, xxii, 121, **156–59**  
 Melford, Austin, 13  
 Mendes, Sam, 53  
 Menken, Alan, 233  
 Merman, Ethel, 259  
 Merrick, David, 180, 183, 194, 214, 256  
 Messenger, Andre, 172–73  
*The Messenger Boy*, **159–61**  
 Metallica, 231  
 Meyer, Joseph, 55  
 Meyerhold, Vsevolod, 87  
*The Mikado*, xx, 99, 115, 119, **161–65**, 217, 231  
 Milhac, Henri, 210  
 Millar, Gertie, 122, 184, 204, 249, 275  
 Miller, Gilbert, 173  
 Mills, John, 50  
 Minchin, Tim, 155  
*Miss Hook of Holland*, **165–67**  
*Miss Saigon*, ix, xi, xxii, 152, **167–71**  
 Mitzman, Marcia, 57  
 Monckton, Lionel, 1–3, 71, 113, 122, 160, 184, 204, 221, 229, 239, 249  
 Monkhouse, Harry, 98, 100  
*Monsieur Beaucaire*, **171–73**  
*Monty Python's Flying Circus*, 11  
 Moody, Ron, 183  
 the Moody Suzuki, 231  
 Moreno, Rita, 260  
 Morley, Victor, 82–83  
 Morton, Edward A., 229  
 Morton, Euan, 265  
 Morton, J. Maddison, 72  
 Moulan, Frank, 3  
*The Mountebanks*, **173–75**, 281  
*The Mousetrap*, 192  
 Mozart, Wolfgang A., 233  
 Mudie, Alan, 262  
*Mulligan Guard*, xx  
 Murray, Alfred, 159  
 Murray, Walter, 16  
*The Music Man*, xxi  
*My Fair Lady*, xxi, 36, 158  
*My Lady's Maid*, **175–77**  
  
 Napier, John, 48–49, 169, 251–53, 259  
 Neagle, Anna, 27  
 Nelson, Richard, 58  
 Neofitou, Andreane, 169  
 Nesville, Juliette, 98  
 Newley, Anthony, 51, 212–14, 255–57  
 Newman, Ethel, 21  
 Nicholls, Harry, 220, 275  
 Nichols, Peter, 201  
*Nine*, xxii  
 Nixon, Sam, 161, 276  
*No No Nanette*, 33–34  
 Noble, Adrian, 63  
 Norton, Frederic, 65–66  
 Novello, Ivor, xxi, 32, 55  
 Nunn, Trevor, 8, 48, 50, 56, 58, 252, 259, 290  
  
 O'Brien, Jack, 53  
 O'Brien, Richard, 215–16  
 O'Brien, Timothy, 87  
 Ockrent, Mike, 158  
 O'Donnell, Rosie, 265  
 O'Dowd, George. *See* Boy George  
 Offenbach, Jacques, 32, 72, 277  
*Oh, Boy!*, 114  
*Oh, What a Lovely War!*, 23, **178–81**  
 O'Horgan, Tom, 134  
*Oklahoma!*, xxi, 64, 280  
*Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, 47–48  
*Oliver!*, xxi, 119, **181–83**, 193–94, 227  
*Oliver Twist*, 181  
 Olivier, Laurence, 17  
*The Orchid*, **184–85**  
 Orndel, Cyril, 193  
 Osmond, Donny, 138  
*Our American Cousin*, 45  
*Our Island Home*, 196  
 Oxenford, John, 143  
  
*Pacific Overtures*, xxii, 241  
 Paganini, Niccolò, 242  
 Page, Ken, 49–50  
 Paice, Jill, 290–91  
 Paige, Elaine, 48, 50, 58, 88, 258, 260  
*The Pajama Game*, xxi  
*Pal Joey*, xxi

- Palings, Walter, 67  
 Pallant, Walter, 67  
 Palmer, A. M., 207  
 Parker, Alan, 89  
 Parloto, Dennis, 57  
*Patience*, 130, **186–88**  
 Patinkin, Mandy, 89  
 Paulton, Edward, 177  
 Paulton, Harry, 80, 84–85  
 Pavek, Janet, 109  
 Payne, Edmund, 107, 159–60, 221, 239, 261, 275  
 Payne, Graham, 274  
 Pelzig, Daniel, 201  
 Pepusch, Johann Christoph, 16  
*Perchance to Dream*, xxi  
*La Péricole*, 277  
 Perrault, Charles, 44  
 Peters, Bernadette, 243, 245–46  
 Peters, Clarke, 91  
 Petheridge, Edward, 290  
*The Phantom of the Opera*, ix, xxii, 7–9, 40, 47, 49, 152, 165, 170–71, **188–92**, 233, 287–88  
 Phillips, Arlene, 252  
 Phillips, Joseph, 124  
*Pickwick*, **192–94**  
*The Pickwick Papers*, 192–94  
 Piggy, 106  
 Pinero, Arthur Wing, 112–14  
*Pippin*, xxii  
*The Pirates of Penzance*, xi, xx, 130, **194–98**  
 Pixley, Frank, 93  
 Planquette, Robert, 210–12  
 Porter, Cole, ix, xx, 3, 36  
 Potter, S., 97  
 Pounds, Courtice, 20–21  
 Pounds, Louie, 20–21  
 Powell, Anthony, 259  
 Power, Tyrone, 66  
 Powers, James T., 124, 161, 231  
 Presley, Elvis, 38, 90  
 Prince, Harold, xxii, 47, 56, 87–88, 190–91, 242, 257  
*The Prince of Parthia*, xix  
*The Princess*, 199  
*Princess Ida*, **198–201**  
 Printemps, Yvonne, 69–70  
*Privates on Parade*, **201–2**  
*The Producers*, ix, xxii  
*Promises, Promises*, xxii
- Pryce, Jonathan, 170–71  
 Puccini, Giacomo, 168–69  
 Purcell, Harold, 279  
 Purcell, Henry, 16  
*Putting It Together*, 242  
 Pyne, Louisa, 143
- The Quaker Girl*, 107, **203–5**  
 Quayle, Anna, 255–56  
 Quilley, Denis, 202
- Raffles, Gerry, 179–80  
*Ragtime*, xxii, 92  
 Raleigh, Cecil, 144–45, 261  
 Ravel, Maurice, 49  
 Rawlston, Zelma, 83  
 Reading, Bertice, 284, 286  
*The Red Hussar*, **206–8**  
*The Red Mill*, 83  
*Red Peppers*, 272–73  
 Reddy, Helen, 30  
 Reeve, Ada, 229, 268  
*The Regent and His Daughter*, 68  
*Return to the Forbidden Planet*, **208–9**  
 Revill, Clive, 182–83  
 Reynolds, Dorothy, 227  
 Reynolds, Herbert, 106  
 Rice, Edward E., 95, 145  
 Rice, Tim, xxi, 8, 39, 56–59, 85–88, 132–34, 135–38, 149, 233, 257  
 Rich, Frank, 49  
*The Rich Mr. Hoggenheimer*, 106  
 Richardson, J. P. (Big Bopper), 37  
 Richings, Caroline, 143  
 Ring, Blanche, 185, 236  
*Rip*, 212  
*Rip Van Winkle*, **209–12**  
 Ritchard, Cyril, 214  
*The Roar of the Greasepaint—The Smell of the Crowd*, **212–14**  
 Robbins, Jerome, 228  
 Roberts, Arthur, 125–26  
 Robertson, Liz, 131  
 Robey, George, 66  
*The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, 217  
*The Rocky Horror Show*, xxii, **215–17**  
 Rodgers, Richard, ix, xx, 3  
 Rolyat, Dan, 2  
*Romeo and Juliet*, 19–20, 126  
 Rosa, Carl, 277  
 Rose, Billy, 55

- Rose, Frederick, 236  
 Rose, George, 44  
 Rose, L. Arthur, 156–57  
 Ross, Adrian, 71, 105, 107, 113, 122, 125–26, 140, 160, 172, 184, 204, 229, 239, 249  
 Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 187  
 Rubens, Paul, 71, 92, 107, 166, 175–76, 261, 268  
*Ruddigore (Ruddygore)*, **217–20**  
 Ruggles, Charles, 13  
*A Runaway Girl*, **220–22**  
 Russell, Ken, 36  
 Russell, Lillian, 80, 175, 188, 200  
 Russell, Willy, 27, 29  
 Ryley, Thomas, 21  
 Ryly, J. H., 130
- Sail Away*, xi, **223–26**  
*Salad Days*, xxi, **226–28**  
 Sally, 141  
 Salonga, Lea, 170–71  
 Sams, Jeremy, 63  
*San Toy*, xx, 5, 71, **228–31**  
 Sanderson, Julia, 3, 108, 262  
 Savage, Henry, 271  
 Saville, Victor, 3  
 Scherer, John, 41  
 Schönberg, Claude-Michel, 167, 170  
*School of Rock*, **231–34**  
 Scott, Walter, 110  
 Secombe, Harry, 193–94  
 Sedger, Horace, 174–75  
 Selwyn, Arch, 27, 54–55, 70, 267  
 Selwyn, Edgar, 54–55  
*Sergeant Brue*, **234–36**  
*Set to Music*, **237–38**  
 1776, xxii  
 Sewell, Danny, 182  
 Seymour, Katie, 221  
*Shadow Play*, 272  
 Shaiman, Marc, 52–53  
 Shakespeare, William, 42, 78, 208  
 Sharman, Jim, 135, 216–17  
 Shaw, George Bernard, xi  
*She Loves Me*, 87  
 Sheridan, John, 144  
 Sheridan, Richard B., 78  
 Sherman, Richard M., and Robert B., 62–63, 150–51  
 Sherrin, Ned, 91, 241–42  
 Sherwin, Manning, 279
- Shevelove, Burt, 257  
*The Shop Girl*, **238–40**  
 Shubert Brothers, 18, 21, 61, 82–83, 113, 124, 140, 177, 185, 280  
*The Sicilian Romance*, xix  
*Side by Side by Sondheim*, **241–42**  
 Sims, George R., 144–45  
 Sissle, Noble, 55  
*The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, 210  
 Skidmore, Karen, 162  
 Slade, Julian, 227  
 Slater, Glenn, 231, 233  
 Slaughter, Walter, 95  
 Sleep, Wayne, 245  
 Smith, Edgar, 103  
 Smith, Greg, 37  
 Smith, Harry B., 108  
 Smithson, Florence, 2  
*Soldier Girl*, 208  
 Solomon, Edward, 206–7  
 Sondheim, Stephen, ix, xxii, 241–42, 255, 257  
*Sondheim on Sondheim*, 242  
*Song and Dance*, **242–46**  
*The Sorcerer*, 117, 174, **246–48**  
 Sothorn, E. A., 45  
 Sothorn, Sam, 45  
*The Sound of Music*, xxi  
*South Pacific*, xxi, 190  
*Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*, xxii  
 Spinetti, Victor, 179–80  
*The Spring Chicken*, **248–50**  
 St. John, Florence, 125–26  
*Star Chamber*, 274  
 Starkie, Martin, 43–44  
*Starlight Express*, xxii, 7–8, 190, 231, **250–54**  
*The Stars Look Down*, 23  
 Steafel, Sheila, 76  
 Steele, Tommy, 119–22  
*Step This Way*, 103  
 Stephens, Henry Pottinger, 206–7  
 Stephenson, B. C., 78–80  
 Stetson, John, 200  
 Stewart, Nellie, 5  
 Stigwood, Robert, 39, 88–89, 134–35  
 Stiles, George, 150–51  
 Stilgoe, Richard, 189–90, 252–53  
*Still Life*, 273–74  
*Stop the World—I Want to Get Off*, xxi, 212–14, **254–57**  
 Strallen, Scarlett, 151

- Strauss, Johann, 25  
 Stritch, Elaine, 223–25  
 Stuart, Leslie, 20–21, 92, 122–24  
 Sturgis, Julian, 110  
 Sullivan, Arthur. *See* Gilbert, W. S.  
*Sunday in the Park with George*, xxii  
*Sunset Boulevard*, xxii, **257–60**  
*The Sunshine Girl*, **260–62**  
 Suratt, Valeska, 21  
 Sutherland, Evelyn Greenleaf, 171  
*Swan Lake*, 24  
 Swann, Donald, 10–11  
 Swanson, Gloria, 257–58  
 Swash, Bob, 27  
*Sweeney Todd*, xxii, 242  
 Swift, Jonathan, 16  
 Swift, Taylor, 50  
 Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 187  
 Sydney, Ethel, 240  
*The Swing Mikado*, 165  
  
*Taboo*, **263–66**  
*Tails Up!*, 54  
 Talbot, Howard, 1–3, 17–19, 60, 113, 268  
 Tanner, Cora S., 200  
 Tanner, James T. (James Leader), 67, 71,  
     106, 125–26, 159, 184, 203, 275  
 Tanner, Tony, 257  
 Tarkington, Booth, 171  
 Taylor, Charles T., 45–46, 270  
 Tchaikovsky, Pyotr, 24  
*Tell Me on a Sunday*, 244–45  
*The Tempest*, 208  
 Tempest, Marie, 4, 6, 80, 100, 206–7, 229  
 Temple, Richard, 248  
 Tennyson, Alfred Lord, 199  
 Terriss, Ellaline, 45, 220  
 Teyte, Maggie, 172  
*Thespis*, 246, 277  
*This Year of Grace*, **266–67**  
*Thomas the Tank Engine*, 251  
 Thompson, Alexander M., 1, 270  
 Thompson, Emma, 159  
 Thompson, Fred, 112–13  
*Three Little Maids*, 175, **267–69**  
*The Threepenny Opera*, 17  
*Tom and Jerry; or, Life in London*, xix  
*Tom Jones*, **269–71**  
*Tonight at 8:30*, **272–74**  
*Topsy Turvy*, 165  
*The Toreador*, xx, **274–76**  
  
 Travers, P. L., 150  
*Trial by Jury*, 117, 246, **276–78**  
*A Trip to Chinatown*, xx  
*Tristan and Isolde*, 247  
 Tune, Tommy, 77  
 Tuson, Thelma, 66  
 Twain, Mark, 223  
*Twenty to One*, 156  
 Twiggy, 36  
  
 Ulvaeus, Bjorn, 56–57, 59, 148–49  
*Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 210  
*Under the Counter*, **279–80**  
*Utopia Limited*, **281–83**  
  
 Valentino, Rudolph, 173  
 Valli, Frankie, 38  
*Valmouth*, **284–86**  
 Van Dyke, Dick, 62  
 van Laast, Anthony, 245  
*Variations*, 242, 244  
 Venne, Lottie, 4, 98  
 Vereen, Ben, 134  
*The Vicar of Wakefield*, 235  
 Vincent, Ruth, 270  
 Vosburgh, Dick, 75, 77, 131  
  
 Wagner, Richard, 247  
 Wagner, Robin, 59  
*Waiting for Godot*, 213  
 Wakefield, Ann, 34  
 Wallace, William Vincent, 292  
 Walsh, Thommie, 77  
 Walsh, Valerie, 179  
 Walton, Tony, 286  
 Warbeck, Stephen, 23  
 Warchus, Matthew, 155  
 Ward, Anthony, 63  
 Waxman, Franz, 259  
*Ways and Means*, 273  
*We Were Dancing*, 272  
 Webb, Marti, 244–45  
 Webber, Andrew Lloyd. *See* Lloyd Webber,  
     Andrew  
 Webber, Julian Lloyd. *See* Lloyd Webber,  
     Julian  
 Weber, Joe, xx, 102  
 Weill, Kurt, 17  
 Weisberg, Noah, 51  
 Welch, Elizabeth, 131  
 Wells, H. G. 119–21, 156

- West Side Story*, xxi, 228, 241  
*Where's Charley?*, 35  
 White, Michael, 39, 216  
 White, Mike, 231  
 White, Onna, 120  
*The White Hussar*, 206–7  
 Whiting, Richard A., 77  
 the Who, 231  
*Wicked*, ix  
 Wilde, Oscar, 26, 186–88  
 Wilder, Billy, 258  
 Wilder, Gene, 51  
 Wilkinson, Colm, 87  
 Williams, Arthur, 80, 207, 235–36  
 Williams, Charles, 16  
*Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, 51  
 Wilson, Francis, 84, 276  
 Wilson, John C., 237, 274  
 Wilson, Peter, 131–32  
 Wilson, Sandy, 33–36, 284–85  
 Wimperis, Arthur, 1, 261  
 Windsor, Barbara, 179  
 Wisdom, Norman, 214  
 Wise, Tom, 167  
 Wittman, Scott, 52–53  
*The Wiz*, xxii  
 Wodehouse, P. G., 39–41, 236  
*The Woman in White*, **287–91**  
 Wong, Anna May, 66  
 Wood, Dee Dee, 62  
 Wood, J. Hickory, 235–36  
 Wood, Karen, 162  
 Wood, Peggy, 26  
*Words and Music*, 237  
 Wright, Bertie, 240  
 Wright, Huntley, 72, 100, 140  
  
*The Yeoman of the Guard*, 110, **292–94**  
 Yohé, May, 144  
 Youmans, Vincent, xx  
  
 Zada, Eva Noble, 168  
 Ziegfeld, Florenz, 27  
*Ziegfeld Follies*, 54  
 Zimmerman, J. F., 161, 276  
 Zippel, David, 289

# About the Author

**Thomas S. Hischak** is an internationally recognized author and teacher in the performing arts. He is the author of over thirty nonfiction books about film, theatre, and popular music, including *The Oxford Companion to the American Musical*; *1939: Hollywood's Greatest Year*; *The Woody Allen Encyclopedia*; *The 100 Greatest Animated Feature Films*; *The Encyclopedia of Film Composers*; *The Rodgers and Hammerstein Encyclopedia*; *Broadway Plays and Musicals*; *Through the Screen Door*; *The Tin Pan Alley Encyclopedia*; *Disney Voice Actors*; *The Disney Song Encyclopedia* (with Mark A. Robinson); *Word Crazy: Broadway Lyricists*; *American Literature on Stage and Screen*; *Theatre as Human Action*; and *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre* (with Gerald Bordman).

He is also the author of fifty published plays that are performed in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia. Hischak is a Fulbright scholar who has taught and directed theatre in Greece, Lithuania, and Turkey.

Hischak is emeritus professor of performing at the State University of New York at Cortland, where he has received such honors as the 2004 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activity and the 2010 SUNY Outstanding Achievement in Research Award. He currently teaches film at Flagler College in St. Augustine, Florida. Website: [www.thomashischak.com](http://www.thomashischak.com).

