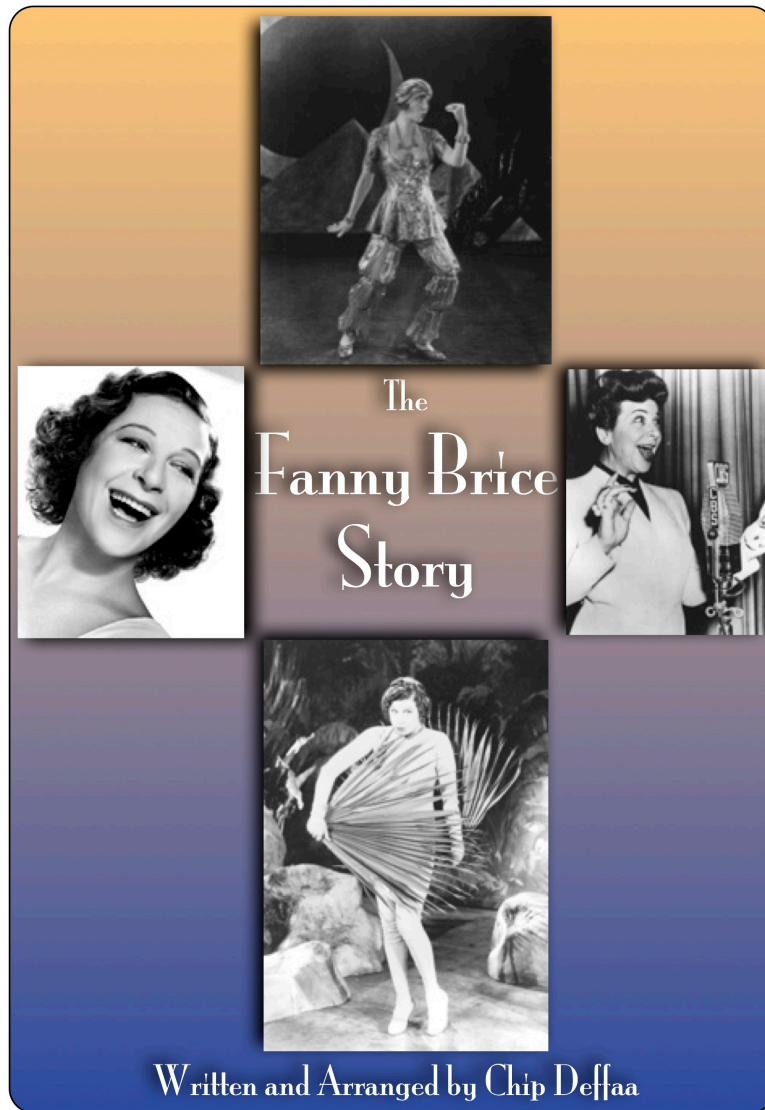


PERUSAL SCRIPT



Featuring songs from the era of Fanny Brice



SALT LAKE CITY

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THE FANNY BRICE STORY

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This script is dedicated with appreciation and respect to the talented friends –
Emmie and Jack – who helped give me inspiration to write this.

MUSICAL NUMBERS...

Act One:

1. **“Say it with Music”** (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1921)
2. **“Becky is Back in the Ballet”** (words by Blanche Merrill, music by Leo Edwards, 1918)
3. **“After the Ball”** (words and music by Charles K. Harris, 1892)
4. **“Mandy”** (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1919)
5. **“The Schoolhouse Blues”** (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1921), plus a brief excerpt of **“School Days”** (words by Will D. Cobb, music by Gus Edwards, 1907)
6. **“Oh, How That German Could Love!”** (words by Irving Berlin, music by Ted Snyder, 1910)
7. **“When You Kiss an Italian Girl”** (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1911)
8. **“Ireland Must be Heaven”** (words and music by Joseph McCarthy, Howard Johnson, Fred Fisher, 1916)
9. **“Simple Melody” / “Musical Demon”** (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1914)
10. **“The Man Who Owns Broadway”** (words and music by George M. Cohan, 1909) / **“Give My Regards to Broadway”** (words and music by George M. Cohan, 1904)
11. **“An Ode to Popularity”** (words by Chip Deffaa, 2010; music by George M. Cohan, 1906)
12. **“So Long Mary”** (words and music by George M. Cohan, 1905)
13. **“Oh, That Beautiful Rag” (a capella excerpts)** (words by Irving Berlin, music by Ted Snyder, 1910)
14. **“Everybody’s Doin’ It Now”** (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1911)
15. **“Stop! Stop! Stop!”** (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1910)
16. **“Under the Mellow Arabian Moon”** (words and music by Caspar Nathan and J. Walter Leopold, 1915)
17. **“Oh, That Beautiful Rag”** (words by Irving Berlin, music by Ted Snyder, 1910)
18. **“Oh, That Beautiful Rag–Reprise”** (words by Irving Berlin, music by Ted Snyder, 1910)

* * *

Act Two:

19. **“Everybody Step”** (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1921)
20. **“So Long Mary-Reprise”** (words and music by George M. Cohan, 1905)
21. **“Everybody Step-Reprise”** (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1921)
22. **“I’m an Indian”** (words by Blanche Merrill, music by Leo Edward, 1922)
23. **“I Want You”** (words and music by George M. Cohan, 1907)
24. **“Lovin’ Sam”** (words by Jack Yellen, music by Milton Ager, 1922)
25. **“I Want You–First Reprise.”** (words and music by George M. Cohan, 1907)
26. **“Snookey Ookums”** (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1913)
27. **“Oh! How I Hate that Fellow Nathan!”** (Words by Lew Brown, music by Albert Von Tilzer, 1922)
28. **“How ‘Ya Gonna Keep Em Down on the Farm?”** (words by Sam M. Lewis and Joe Young, music by Walter Donaldson, 1919)
29. **“Second Hand Rose”** (words by Grant Clarke, music by James F. Hanley, 1921)
30. **“My Man”** (English words by Channing Pollock, music by Maurice Yvain, 1921)
31. **“I Want You-Second Reprise”** (words and music by George M. Cohan, 1907)
32. **“After You Get What You Want, You Don’t Want It”** (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1920)
33. **“Always Leave Them Laughing When You Say Goodbye”** (words and music by George M. Cohan, 1903)
34. **Bows: “Oh, That Beautiful Rag”** (instrumental for curtain calls; music by Ted Snyder, 1910)
35. **Exit Music: “After the Ball”** (music by Charles K. Harris, 1892)

CHARACTERS -- 16M 8W 1TB 2TG + singing and dancing chorus (+a dog)

Fanny Brice (the legendary singing comedienne)

Emmie (a teenaged girl who has come to interview Fanny)

Rose Borach (Fanny's mother)

Charles Borach (Fanny's father)

Lew Brice (Fanny's brother)

Eddie Cantor (the noted entertainer, an old friend of Fanny's)

Young Fanny Brice (Fanny as a girl)

Young Lew Brice (Fanny's brother, as a youth)

Nicky Arnstein (a handsome, dashing, smooth-talking gambler, who woos and weds Fanny)

Theron and Johnson (owners of a variety theater in Brooklyn)

George M. Cohan (the famed Broadway song-and-dance man, songwriter and showman)

J. F. Chance III (a small-time producer)

Madame Victoria Bordonaro (the head of a traveling theatrical company, "Madame Bordonaro's Trans-Atlantic Burlesquers")

J. Saleeby Jackson (emcee and comic in Madame Bordonaro's burlesque troupe)

Max Bierstein and Pops Zander (singing actors in Madame Bordonaro's burlesque troupe)

assorted singing/dancing gals in Madame Bordonaro's burlesque troupe

Flo Ziegfeld (producer of the lavish, star-studded Ziegfeld Follies)

Olive Thomas, Vera Maxwell, Lillian Lorraine, Ann Pennington, Bessie McCoy (Ziegfeld showgirls)

W. C. Fields (the famed comedian)

Arnold Rothstein (an organized-crime kingpin)

a **private investigator**

a **stage manager**

plus assorted **singing/dancing showgirls**, members of the prestigious Ziegfeld Follies. One of the Ziegfeld showgirls (Bessie McCoy) also walks a dog across the stage at two points in the show; so you will also need one dog in the cast.

If actors "double" roles, care must be taken to create distinct characterizations, via manner of speaking, body language, costumes, and makeup, so that audience members cannot confuse one character with another. In the original production, for example, one actor played the roles of both Charles Borach (Fanny Brice's father) and Nicky Arnstein (Fanny's boyfriend and eventual husband); another actor portrayed both W. C. Fields and George M. Cohan; the actors made each characterization vivid and unique. The actresses who played members of Madame Bordonaro's burlesque troupe also doubled as Ziegfeld showgirls, playing the burlesque gals with lower-class attitude, and playing the Ziegfeld gals with more refined style.

Suggested Doubling: (although it can work any way you make it work)

ACTRESS ONE (Fanny Brice)

ACTRESS TWO (Emmie)

ACTRESS THREE (Young Fanny Brice)

ACTRESS FOUR (Madame Bordonaro, Rose Borach)

ACTRESS FIVE (Ann Pennington)

ACTRESS SIX (Bessie McCoy)

ACTRESS SEVEN (Vera Maxwell)

ACTRESS EIGHT (Olive Thomas)

ACTRESS NINE (Lillian Lorraine)

ACTOR ONE (J. Saleeby Jackson, Flo Ziegfeld, W. C. Fields, George M. Cohan)

ACTOR TWO (Young Lew Brice)

ACTOR THREE (Charles Borach, Nicky Arnstein)

ACTOR FOUR (Eddie Cantor, Max Bierstein)

ACTOR FIVE (Theron, Pops Zander, Lew Brice)

ACTOR SIX (John Frederick Chance III)

MUSIC PREPARATION CREDITS

The music has been arranged by Chip Deffaa. The music has been prepared and edited by Donald Brown and Richard Danley (both of whom also made valued additional arranging contributions). Other music copyists who have worked on the project include: Chris Byars, Chase Baird, Evan Barker, Peter Ecklund, Josh Clayton, Shawn Stanley, Seth Sikes, Brett Kristofferson, and D. Jay Bradley. All music preparation, arranging and editing on this project has been done as work-for-hire for Chip Deffaa Productions LLC. Libretto and all arrangements copyright © 2011 by Chip Deffaa.

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SETS AND COSTUMES

Sets and costumes can be as simple or elaborate as you like. At the start of the play, a 16-year-old girl (“EMMIE:”) is seeking to interview longtime star Fanny Brice, who is appearing in a big benefit show. (The year is 1950; Brice is nearly 60.) The girl goes to interview Brice, who’s playing cards in her dressing room. (A table and some folding chairs, downstage left, can represent the dressing room.) As Fanny Brice reminisces (recalling growing up, and singing on street corners and in local theaters in Brooklyn, in the early years of the 20th century), we see scenes of her life enacted on the stage. (Younger performers will portray Brice and her brother as youths.) As the story progresses, we see Brice touring in burlesque, and then conquering Broadway (in the ‘teens and early 1920s), and so on. Scenes take place in and around various theaters, at home, and at an opening-night party.

* * *

About the Playwright....

Chip Deffaa is the author of seven published plays and eight published books. An expert on old-time show business, he has been “following his bliss” since he wrote his first report for school—at 10-page essay on George M. Cohan—at the age of nine.

His play *George M. Cohan Tonight!*, which Deffaa wrote and directed Off-Broadway in New York at the Irish Repertory Theatre, was hailed by *The New York Times* as “brash, cocky, and endlessly euphoric” (*The New York Times*, March 11, 2006). It has since been performed everywhere from Seoul, Korea to London, England. Deffaa has written and directed assorted other plays, including *The Seven Little Foys*, *The Johnny Mercer Jamboree*, and *Theater Boys*.

Deffaa has written eight books, including *Swing Legacy*, *Voices of the Jazz Age*, *In the Mainstream*, *Traditionalists and Revivalists in Jazz*, *Jazz Veterans*, *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Princeton Years* (ed.), *Blue Rhythms*, and (with David Cassidy) *C’Mon Get Happy*. He has contributed chapters to the books *Harlem Speaks* and *Roaring at One Hundred*.

For 18 years, Deffaa wrote for *The New York Post*, writing news, feature stories, and reviews dealing with jazz, cabaret, and theater. He was also a longtime writer for *Entertainment Weekly* magazine. He has written scripts for *Jazz at Lincoln Center* radio programs.

Deffaa has written liner notes for many CD’s, including those of such artists as Miles Davis, Benny Goodman, Ray Brown, Diane Schuur, Ruth Brown, Tito Puente, Dick Hyman, Randy Sandke, Scott Hamilton, and the Count Basie Orchestra.

Deffaa has won an ASCAP/Deems Taylor Award, a New Jersey Press Association Award, and an IRNE Award (Independent Reviewers of New England). Deffaa is a member of the Society of Stage Directors & Choreographers, the Dramatists Guild, ASCAP, NARAS, the Jazz Journalists Association, the F. Scott Fitzgerald Society, the Drama Desk, and the American Theatre Critics Association. Deffaa is a trustee of the Princeton *Tiger* magazine.

Deffaa’s most recent plays include *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (published by Leicester Bay Theatricals), *Song-and-Dance Kids*, and *One Night with Fanny Brice*. All of Deffaa’s plays are available for licensing. He is represented by the Fifi Osgard Agency, New York City. For further information, please visit: www.chipdeffaa.com.

* * *

THE FANNY BRICE STORY *Written and Arranged by Chip Deffaa*. 27 Characters (Can be doubled to 9 actresses and 6 actors) plus singing and dancing chorus. (+ a dog) About 2 hours. This musical is inspired by the life of Fanny Brice (1891-1951), who rose from modest beginnings to become the highest-paid American singing comedienne of her day—for many years a famed star of the Ziegfeld Follies. The show begins with EMMIE:, a 16 year old girl in 1950, interviewing the then 60 Year old **FANNY BRICE**: As Fanny reminisces the show unfolds onstage. Featuring 35 songs from the era of Fanny Brice, and characters who are larger than life, (Eddie Cantor, Flo Ziegfeld, W.C. Fields, George M. Cohan and Nicky Arnstein) this show was a hit in its premiere in New Jersey. **ORDER # 3070**.

MANY THANKS...

The first reading of this musical play was held at Roy Arias Studios, 300 W. 43rd Str., New York City, on October 16th, 2011, with the following personnel:

Mary Cantoni Johnson (“Fanny Brice”), **Michael Townsend Wright** (“Eddie Cantor,” “W.C. Fields,” and more), **Ray Yucis** (“Lew Brice,” “Charles Borach,” and more), **Alexandrea Tocco** (“Rose Borach,” “Bessie McCoy,” and more), **Bob Diamond** (“J.F. Chance III,” “Nicky Arnstein,” and more), **Emily Bordonaro** (“Young Fanny”), **Theron Johnson** (“Young Lew,” “Max Bierstein”), **Ben Orlando** (“George M. Cohan,” “Pops Zander,” and more), **Hannah Bellows** (“Emmie”), **Chip Deffaa** (playwright/director).

The world premiere production of “**The Fanny Brice Story**” opened October 12th, 2013, at the Rosen Theater, at the Wayne, NJ, YMCA. **Lauren Moran Mills** was the director; **William Arnold** was the musical director; **Angie Turro** was the stage manager; **Floyd Busse** handled sound and lights. **Hayley Budnick** was the dog wrangler, **Meryl Nagler Budnick** was the producer. **Chip Deffaa** was playwright and consultant.

The cast was as follows:

Danielle Tolep (Fanny Brice); **Mark Dacey** (J. Saleeby Jackson, Flo Ziegfeld, W. C. Fields, George M. Cohan); **Livi Perrone** (EMMIE:); **Hawkins Gardow** (Young Lew Brice); **Claire DeBenedetto** (Young Fanny Brice); **Suzanne Goldensohn** (Madame Bordonaro, Rose Borach); **Joseph Vissichio** (Charles Borach, Nicky Arnstein); **Nino Spallacci** (Eddie Cantor, Max Bierstein), **Michael Budnick** (Theron, Pops Zander, Lew Brice), **Ian Suter** (John Frederick Chance III), **Rachel Bammel** (Ann Pennington), **Marisa Budnick** (Bessie McCoy), **Juliana Clark** (Vera Maxwell), **Yvonne DeSouter** (Olive Thomas), **Anna Simone** (Lillian Lorraine), **Sheila Giardina** (the Russian Wolfhound).

Our thanks, too, to additional artists who helped in the development process of this play, including: **Amy Stiller**, **Jack Saleeby**, **Lisa Lambert**, **Rachel Armour**, **Eve Prouty**, **Maxwell Beer**, **Emma Czaplinski**, **Katie Brandenstein**, **LindaAnn LoSchiavo**, **Brady Chin**, **Peter Dagger**, **Dea Julien**, **Farah Alvin**, **Richard Danley**, **Jonathan Russell**.

My gratitude to... the one and only **Carol Channing**—not just for sharing recollections of Brice on stage (and even singing “Second Hand Rose” for me), but for her general insights into show business and life, and boundless encouragement; the multi-talented performer/director/choreographer **Tommy Tune**, for sharing his ever-appreciated stardust; the late entertainer **Todd Fisher**, whose stories, songs, and dances from the vaudeville era meant so much to me; **Matt Nardozi**, a first-rate talent, for his terrific energy; **Keith Anderson** of Univision, for many kindnesses; the late **George Burns**, for the delightful tales of vaudeville he shared with me at his Hollywood office; the always magical **Victoria Leacock Hoffman** for being who she is; the ever-helpful filmmaker **Max Galassi**; the ever-inspiring **Matthew Broderick**, **Sarah Jessica Parker**, and **Toby Parker**, whose belief in my work has meant a lot. My gratitude, too, to the one-and-only **Howard Cruse**--always a valuable sounding board. My thanks, too, to the good people of the Phoenix Stage Company, led by **Agnes Duggan Dann**, **Sharon A. Wilcox**, **Ed Bassett Jr.** And to **Hansaem Song**, **Edmund Sutton**, and **Jack Marshall**, excellent producers, who’ve helped me more than they’ve realized. Thanks, for help in various ways, to **Okey Chenoweth**, **Joel Grey**, **Slau Halatyn**, **Lynda Barry**, **Cody Green**, **Jack Sprance**, **Emmie Bordonaro**, **Chase Brock**, **Tyler DuBoys**, **Chadwick Von Rankin**, **Santino Fontana**, **Giuseppe Bausilio**, **Alex Craven**, **David Eckstein**, **Frank Avellino**, **Anthony Rapp**, **Nat** and **Alex Wolff**, **Bailey Cummings**, **Michael Kasper**, **Jessee Riehl**, **Alec Bordonaro**, **Alex Dreier**, **Deb**, **Max**, and **Julia Deffaa**, **Casey** and **Janell McCarroll**, **Josh** and **Ava Schaller**. Thanks, too, to my good agent, **Peter Sawyer** of the Fifi Osgard Agency Inc. I value, too, the longtime friendship of **Herbert Goldman**, the definitive Brice biographer; anyone with an interest in Brice is in his debt. (We’ve known each other for some 25 years; I was happy to help contribute a couple of Brice photos from my collection, for his book.) Big thanks to **C. Michael Perry** and **Leicester Bay Theatricals**.

My thanks to all the talented artists who’ve helped in workshoping and developing the Fanny Brice project with me. And--as always--I’m most grateful to my wonderful, spirit-filled family. I’m glad my parents treated me to seeing “Funny Girl” on stage when I was a kid, too. Boy! That present sure had a lasting impact!

* * *

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR ON HOW THIS PLAY CAME TO BE....

Since boyhood, I've been fascinated by the stars and sounds of earlier eras – including George M. Cohan, Al Jolson, Fanny Brice, Eddie Foy, Eddie Cantor, Jimmy Durante, W. C. Fields, Will Rogers, Mae West, Burns and Allen, Bessie Smith, Cab Calloway, and more.... From old recordings that I found as a child in our basement, to vintage film clips, to books that my supportive older brother, Art, got for me, I learned a lot; and wanted to learn more. And by a lucky chance, there were people in my life who'd known, seen, worked with these legends. I loved listening to the reminiscences of an old-time vaudevillian, Todd Fisher, who not only remembered the songs introduced in the "Ziegfeld Follies" by Fanny Brice, Eddie Cantor, and others... he taught them to me. I got to perform old-time numbers in shows Fisher directed. I loved seeing "Funny Girl" on Broadway, but Fisher explained that there was a lot more to Brice's story than that show suggested, and that Brice and Nicky Arnstein – who was then still alive, he told me – were more complicated than the show suggested. "You should ask Gypsy Rose Lee about Fanny some time," he'd say. And pull out from his wallet an ancient snapshot of him with a very young Gypsy Rose Lee. And every time I got to meet someone else with a long history in show business – a Cab Calloway, say, or a George Burns – the past seemed less and less remote.

I wrote a one-woman show, "One Night with Fanny Brice," which has enjoyed success Off-Broadway and elsewhere. (The cast album for that show, released by Original Cast Records, may be helpful to those trying to better understand Brice's era.) Many schools and theaters prefer shows with multiple characters, rather than solo shows. So I wrote this play to help meet such a need. While Fanny Brice is the focus of the show, this show provides good opportunities for actors playing other roles, and for the chorus.

This musical play is a copyrighted work; no changes may be made to the script without permission of the author. Permission will generally be granted to those desiring to make trims or edits, to shorten the running-time of a production. It is generally fine if you wish to stretch out or tighten musical numbers, adding or subtracting choruses to give singers or dancers more or less stage time. Transposing numbers, so that they're in the best keys for your singers, is always acceptable. Permission will generally be denied to those wishing to add to the play completely new material—such as additional songs, lines, or scenes. But application must be made to the publisher, in any event.

* * *

IF YOU'D LIKE TO LEARN MORE....

This play is based on the life of Fanny Brice (Of course, some dramatic liberties have been taken.) For those who would like to learn more about Brice and her era, I'd recommend the following biographies of her: *Fanny Brice: The Original Funny Girl*, by Herbert G. Goldman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); *Funny Woman: The Life and Times of Fanny Brice* by Barbara W. Grossman (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1992); and *The Fabulous Fanny: The Story of Fanny Brice* by Norman Katkov (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953).

In addition, there are valuable chapters on Brice in such books as: *The Great Clowns of Broadway* by Stanley Green (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); *Take My Life* by Eddie Cantor with Jane Kesner Ardmore (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1957); and *As I Remember Them* by Eddie Cantor (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pierce, 1963); and there are also intriguing recollections of Brice in *Gypsy: A Memoir* by Gypsy Rose Lee (New York: Harper, 1957).

For additional background information on Brice's era, you might also want to check out: *The Nine Lives of Billy Rose: An Intimate Biography* by Polly Rose Gottlieb (New York: Crown Publishers, 1968); *The Laugh Makers: A Pictorial History of American Comedians* by William Cahn (New York, Bramhall House, 1957); *The Vaudevillians* by Anthony Slide (Westport, Connecticut: Arlington House, 1981); *Funny, It Doesn't Sound Jewish: How Yiddish Songs and Synagogue Melodies Influenced Tin Pan Alley, Broadway and Hollywood* by Jack Gottlieb (New York: SUNY Press, 2004); *Ziegfeld: The Great Glorifier* by Eddie Cantor and David Freedman (New York: Alfred H. King, Inc., 1934); *Show Biz: From Vaude to Video* by Abel Green and Joe Laurie, Jr. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1951); and *American Vaudeville: Its Life and Times* by Douglas Gilbert (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1963).

* * *

Act One

SONG #1. "SAY IT WITH MUSIC"

THE ENTIRE ENSEMBLE: *(except for FANNY BRICE, LEW BRICE, EDDIE CANTOR, and EMMIE)*

SAY IT WITH MUSIC,
BEAUTIFUL MUSIC;
SOMEHOW THEY'D RATHER BE KISSED
TO THE STRAINS OF CHOPIN OR LISZT,
A MELODY MELLOW
PLAYED ON A CELLO
HELPS MISTER CUPID ALONG;
SO SAY IT WITH A BEAUTIFUL SONG.

(The members of the ensemble freeze; the lights on them dim. The music continues softly as underscoring. A spotlight hits a girl of about 16, EMMIE, stepping out from the wings. She addresses the audience.)

EMMIE: *(To the audience, over underscoring.)* It was the biggest benefit show anyone had mounted in years. Lots of stars were here, donating their services to raise funds for the USO. I was just 16. I'd volunteered to be an usher tonight for one reason. I'd heard that my favorite entertainer--Miss Fanny Brice--was headlining the benefit show. Right now, I knew, she was in her dressing room getting ready. Well, I was gathering up my courage. As soon as everyone finished singing this opening number, I was going to march up to her dressing room, knock on the door and meet her.

THE ENTIRE ENSEMBLE: *(except for FANNY BRICE, LEW BRICE, EDDIE CANTOR, and EMMIE)*

SAY IT WITH MUSIC,
BEAUTIFUL MUSIC;
SOMEHOW THEY'D RATHER BE KISSED
TO THE STRAINS OF CHOPIN OR LISZT,
A MELODY MELLOW
PLAYED ON A CELLO
HELPS MISTER CUPID ALONG;
SO SAY IT WITH A BEAUTIFUL SONG.

(As the audience applauds, the members of the ensemble, who have been singing, exit. EMMIE speaks to the audience.)

EMMIE: *(To the audience.)* All right. It was now or never. I tried to muster up all of my courage, headed to the dressing room of Miss Fanny Brice, and--

(EMMIE knocks on the door to the dressing room, which is downstage left. We hear a voice from within, as Fanny Brice answers.)

FANNY BRICE: Come on in! The door is open.

(In the dressing room, we see FANNY BRICE; she is casually dressed, and she is playing cards with two fellows, whose backs are to us at this point: her brother LEW and her

longtime friend, entertainer EDDIE CANTOR. On the wall hangs a calendar; it indicates that the year is 1950. FANNY, EDDIE, and LEW are all in their late 50s.)

EMMIE: Miss Fanny Brice, my name is Emma V. Chaplinsky. My friends call me Emmie I'm 16, and I--

FANNY BRICE: *(Cutting her off)* Wait! Don't say another word, Emma V. Chaplinsky. Let me guess--

LEW BRICE: *(Looking up from his cards for a moment)* She's really good at guessing. A natural. Not good at cards. But good at guessing,

FANNY BRICE: Emmie, that's my brother Lew Brice talking--the nudge! And now I need total silence from everyone, to concentrate.

EDDIE CANTOR: *(Turning to address EMMIE)* Young lady, Fanny's really good at this. Honestly, I do believe she's psychic. And we've been friends for over 30 years, since we starred together in "The Ziegfeld Follies."

EMMIE: Why, you're--you're Eddie Cantor! I listen to you every week on the radio. I've seen all your pictures. You're one of my favorite entertainers, one of the best in the business--

EDDIE CANTOR: Stop! I'm blushing. How you talk--

EMMIE: You're almost as good as Miss Fanny Brice.

EDDIE CANTOR: You can stop now.

FANNY BRICE: Quiet. I think I'm getting something. Let me see.... Emmie, you are a friend of my daughter Frances, right? And she sent you here because she knows we need a fourth person for this card game. Am I right... or am I right? So sit with us; we got room--

EMMIE: Why, Miss Brice, that's not it at all.

FANNY BRICE: No one's going to take your money. We're not really gambling. This is just a friendly game of cards, between friends.

LEW BRICE: We usually play for very small stakes.

EDDIE CANTOR: And occasionally, some french fries.

FANNY BRICE: That's a very old joke, Eddie.

EDDIE CANTOR: You got some very old friends, Fanny.

EMMIE: Miss Brice, I'm not a friend of your daughter's--

FANNY BRICE: No, no, I didn't think so for a minute....

EMMIE: I didn't even know you had a daughter.

FANNY BRICE: I got a son, too--William. But I keep 'em out of the newspapers. They're regular kids; they deserve regular lives. Wait! It's coming in clearer now.

EMMIE: What's coming in?

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* You're a delivery girl from Katz's Deli, aren't you? In that little brown paper sack you're carrying is a fresh, hot pastrami sandwich, sent to me as a courtesy from Katz's Deli, because they know how hungry I am.

LEW BRICE: I hope there's a pickle in there. I could go for a good kosher pickle.

EDDIE CANTOR: Of course there's a pickle.

FANNY BRICE: Who ever heard of a delivery girl from Katz's Deli bringing a sandwich but forgetting a pickle?

EMMIE: I'm not a delivery girl--

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* But you do have a hot pastrami sandwich in that bag, don't you?

EMMIE: I just thought you might like a sandwich--a little present for you.

FANNY BRICE: Aha!

EMMIE: You really are psychic, aren't you?

FANNY BRICE: Sometimes.

LEW BRICE: Also, we can smell the hot pastrami.

(A STAGE MANAGER pops in for a moment; he says his line and then leaves.)

THE STAGE MANAGER. You're on in five minutes, Miss Brice. For your first number.

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* How about you and I split the sandwich, kid--fifty-fifty--and then you can join us in this card game?

(EMMIE hands over half sandwich.)

EMMIE: *(Hurriedly, because she is nervous.)* Miss Brice, I'm your biggest fan. You're my all-time favorite entertainer. I've been listening to you on the radio since I was a little girl.

FANNY BRICE: You seem like a very wise child.... Say! This sandwich isn't half bad.

EMMIE: And my mom's a big fan of yours. We have all your old records, too--from "My Man" to "Becky is Back in the Ballet..."

FANNY BRICE: Already I like your mother.

(To LEW BRICE)

I'll have two cards, Lew.

EMMIE: I take ballet, Miss Brice. And piano, and voice, too.

FANNY BRICE: I'm all for it. Everyone needs a creative outlet or two!

EMMIE: Now, my teacher at Roaring Brook High School said I have to write an essay on the person I admire the most.

FANNY BRICE: She sounds like a very good teacher.

(To LEW BRICE)

Maybe I'll just need one card.

EDDIE CANTOR: Fanny, make up your mind!

FANNY BRICE: How long have you been knowing me, Eddie? I'm not going to change now.

EMMIE: I told my teacher I wanted to interview Miss Fanny Brice. That I admired you more than anybody, not just because you're a star, but because you're an American success story. You rose from rags to riches. You went from poverty to become America's highest-paid singing comedienne.

FANNY BRICE: This is one very wise child.

(To the other card-players.)

I dunno--one card, two cards? Gimme some time to think things over.

(A STAGE MANAGER pops in for a moment; he says his line and then leaves.)

THE STAGE MANAGER. You're on in two minutes, Miss Brice.

EMMIE: And someday I'd like to entertain people myself, just like you, Miss Brice. Make 'em laugh, make 'em cry.

FANNY BRICE: It's a living. This sandwich could maybe use more mustard. Katz usually puts more mustard on the pastrami.

EMMIE: It's not from Katz's Deli. I don't even know where Katz's Deli is. I made the sandwich at home, myself.

LEW BRICE: Fanny, how many cards do you want?

FANNY BRICE: *(Putting her cards down.)* We're not playing cards right now, Lew. We're listening to this young lady.

(To EMMIE)

Kid, you got our undivided attention.

(To LEW)

And Lew, I had a terrific hand. It kills me to walk away from such a terrific hand.

LEW BRICE: All my life I've been playing cards with my sister. I don't think she's ever actually finished a game. At least when I play cards with Nick, he always finishes the game.

FANNY BRICE: And when you play cards with Nick, you always lose your shirt.

LEW BRICE: He always gives me another chance to win it back.

FANNY BRICE: You don't want to believe it, Lew. But do you know why Nick always wins? He cheats!

EMMIE: Do you know what my mother said, Miss Brice, when I told her that I was determined to meet you?

FANNY BRICE: She said: "Having children is like being pecked to death by a duck. And from your room I could hear a quack."

EMMIE: She said that I'm a dreamer, like my father.

FANNY BRICE: I was just about to guess that. She sounds like my mother, exactly.

EMMIE: And Miss Brice, my teacher also says that I dream too big.

FANNY BRICE: No such thing as dreaming too big.

EMMIE: My teacher says a famous star like you would never have time to do an interview with someone like me.

FANNY BRICE: She did, huh? What kind of a teacher have you got?

EMMIE: She says I should be more realistic and write about someone I admire who would actually talk to me.

FANNY BRICE: Listen, kid, I retract all of the nice things I was thinking about your teacher.

EMMIE: But Miss Brice--

FANNY BRICE: How are you going to succeed at anything if you don't even TRY to realize you dreams? The world is filled with people SETTLING for things.

EMMIE: Miss Brice, do you think you'd have time to do an interview with me someday? I know it's unrealistic, I know you are busy--but I just thought that maybe SOMEDAY you might spare me a little time--

FANNY BRICE: So? How about right now?

EMMIE: But you're going to be singing in tonight's big benefit concert. You need time to prepare.

EDDIE CANTOR: Young lady, Fanny's been a star for 40 years.

LEW BRICE: She's been singing for over 50 years. We used to perform on the streets of New York at the turn of the century, when we were just kids.

FANNY BRICE: EMMIE:, what they're saying, is... I've had plenty of time to prepare. So if you've got questions, fire away. I'll go on when they call me.

EMMIE: I don't know where to begin. I'm so nervous.

(A STAGE MANAGER pops in for a moment; he says his line and then leaves.)

THE STAGE MANAGER. Places, Miss Brice!

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* Listen, kid! I gotta do one number now. You watch from the wings. That'll give you time to think of your first question. They want I should do something light and easy, now—one of my old specialties, to help warm up the crowd. Later, I'll come back and hit 'em with something stronger—a torch song maybe.

EMMIE: You're doing something light and easy now?

FANNY BRICE: Well, I'm nearly 60, kid. Nothing is completely easy any more. But some of my ol' fans—they still like these little character bits of mine, so I gotta give 'em what they want.

(She's straightening her hair in the mirror. The pianist starts to play.)

Hah! There's my music.... Get your first question ready, kid....

(FANNY BRICE steps out on stage, into the spotlight and performs her comic specialty "Becky is Back in the Ballet." Note: What follows is the complete song. Optional: If desired, a chorus may be cut without affecting the continuity of the play.)

SONG #2. "BECKY IS BACK IN THE BALLET"

FANNY BRICE:

BECKY WAS A DANCER.
LOOK HOW SHE DANCED.
NIGHT-TIME AND DAY, SHE TRIP-TOED AWAY.
SHE GOT A JOB IN THE BALLET.
BUT ONE NIGHT HER FOOT MADE A SLIP.
SHE FELL ON HER BACK WITH OY! SUCH A CRACK,
SHE ALMOST LOCATED HER HIP.
THEY THOUGHT SHE WAS DEAD FROM THE BUMP ON HER HEAD.
SHE SHOULD BE IN BED BUT INSTEAD:

BECKY IS BACK IN THE BALLET,
KICKING HER FEET TO THE SKY.
BECKY IS BACK IN THE BALLET,
DOING A SWEET BUTTERFLY.
LOOK HOW SHE GOES UP ON HER TOES.
SHE CAN POSE ON HER TOES ON HER BIG BROTHERS'S NOSE.
SHE FLIES, SHE CAN FLITTER.
HITHER AND THITHER, HER FEET THEY GO WITH HER.
SHE HOLDS UP THE FOOT WHILE SHE SMILES WITH THE FACE.
SHE TRIPPLES AND SKIPPLES ALL OVER THE PLACE.
SHE SHAKES WITH A SHIVER,
AND QUIVES WITH A QUIVER.
HER FATHER AND MOTHER WILL NEVER FORGIVES HER,
SINCE BECKY IS BACK IN THE BALLET.

BECKY IS BACK IN THE BALLET,
DANCING AWAY WITH HER FEET.
BECKY IS BACK IN THE BALLET,
LOOK SHE CAN NEAR DO A SPLEET.
SHE KICKS TO THE FRONT, THE BACK AND THE SIDE.
SOMEDAY SHE WILL KICK AND COMMIT SUICIDE.
SHE KNEELS, IT'S A TWISTER,
FROM KNEELING SO MUCH ON HER KNEES IS A BLISTER.
SHE GOES ALL AROUND, SHE GOES ALL 'ROUND THE PLACE.
SHE GETS HERSELF DIZZY AND FALLS ON HER FACE.
NO ONE CAN ENDURE HER,

THEY'LL KILL HER OR CURE HER.
HER FATHER AND MOTHER ARE GOIN' TO INSURE HER,
SINCE BECKY IS BACK IN THE BALLET.

FANNY BRICE: (*Speaking over underscoring.*) Come Becky, dolling. Show all of our friends how you dance.

Oy, such a dancer. Push up the foot, sweetheart. And don't break the toe.

Look how she goes around. Such a balance! Such a balance! Her father should have such a balance! She gets that from me, that balance-- just like she gets her good looks.

Ow! Ow! Ow! So you fell down a little bit, dolling. None of us even noticed. You're more interesting, lying down, than all of those others, jumping around now like jumping jacks--prancing and sprancing all over the place. But let's get up now. Good!

Do for Mama the Dying Duck, like Pavlova. My daughter does it even better than Pavlova. In half the time.

And you should see my Becky dance "The Nutmegger." When she does "The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy," why--you not only imagine a sugar plum, you can practically smell it.

Oh, now honeysuckle, don't forget the twist. That's right! For that I pay \$2 a lesson.

Look out, dolling, Look out you don't break your technique!

HER FATHER AND MOTHER ARE GOIN' TO INSURE HER,
SINCE BECKY IS BACK IN THE BALLET.

(*FANNY BRICE comes back to the dressing room.*)

EMMIE: Oh, Miss Brice! You were terrific! When I grow up, I want to be just like you--a big star! And on the radio every week. You must be so proud.

FANNY BRICE: Ehhh! What I'm actually proudest of, Emmie, is that I've raised two good kids.

EMMIE: I'm so impressed you've made such a success of your life. And you did it all without an education. I read in the papers that you quit school after the eighth grade.

FANNY BRICE: Hah! I quit school after the FOURTH grade. I didn't get much schooling. But I got a terrific education.

EMMIE: I don't get it.

FANNY BRICE: You think education only takes place in a classroom, Emmie? Eddie, Lew, why don't you go and watch the benefit from the wings. I wanna really talk with this girl.

(EDDIE CANTOR and LEW BRICE exit.)

Emmie, how do you think I learned to become a good entertainer? I never took a lesson, never took a class in my life.

EMMIE: But when you were young, like me, you wanted to sing?

FANNY BRICE: I didn't just "want" to sing. I SANG--anywhere I could. My brother Lew, a year younger than me, danced. We learned by doing. And by watching others.

EMMIE: Where did you sing?

FANNY BRICE: At first, we sang on street corners. I was born in 1891. I was "Fania Borach" back then; I didn't Americanize my name to "Fanny Brice" until I was oh, maybe 18. Picture Lew and me out on the streets. We're young. He's ballyhooing the crowd, drawing an audience for us.

(And now YOUNG FANNY and YOUNG LEW come out on stage, followed by a few others who gather to watch them. For the rest of the play, EMMIE will remain seated downstage left, with FANNY BRICE, while Fanny reminisces with her. For the rest of the play we will see, on the main part of the stage, scenes from her life that Fanny is recalling.)

YOUNG LEW: Gather round, gather round. Give a listen to the best singer in all of Brooklyn--the Little Girl with the Big Voice, Miss Fania Borach. She'll lift your spirits if you're blue, calm your nerves if you've got the jitters.

(To a woman among the people gathered around.)

How about you, ma'am. Is there any particular song you'd like to hear? We've got all kinds. Maybe a song about marriage?

FEMALE ONLOOKER. *(Bursting into tears)* Don't speak to me of marriage! I thought he wanted to marry me. I thought his intentions were honorable.

YOUNG LEW: Ah, heartbreak! We got a song or two dealing with heartbreak, don't we Fan?

SONG #3. "AFTER THE BALL"

YOUNG FANNY:

AFTER THE BALL IS OVER,
AFTER THE BREAK OF MORN,
AFTER THE DANCERS LEAVING,
AFTER THE STARS ARE GONE.
MANY A HEART IS ACHING,
IF YOU COULD READ THEM ALL;
MANY THE HOPES THAT HAVE VANISHED,
AFTER THE BALL.

YOUNG FANNY: *(Spoken, to the woman who'd said, "Don't speak to me of marriage...")* Everybody hurts, sometimes. I'm sorry you're feeling so sad tonight, ma'am. I hope this song helps. It's one of my

favorites.

AFTER THE DANCERS LEAVING,
AFTER THE STARS ARE GONE.
MANY A HEART IS ACHING,
IF YOU COULD READ THEM ALL;
MANY THE HOPES THAT HAVE VANISHED,
AFTER THE BALL.

A MALE ONLOOKER: *(To YOUNG LEW and YOUNG FANNY)* You got something cheerful for me? I'm in a great mood. Tomorrow, I'm getting married.

YOUNG LEW: My father always said that the day before he got married was the happiest day of his life.

SONG #4. "MANDY"

YOUNG LEW:

MANDY, THERE'S A MINISTER HANDY,
AND IT SURE WOULD BE DANDY
IF WE'D LET HIM MAKE A FEE.
SO DON'T YOU LINGER:
HERE'S THE RING FOR YOUR FINGER--
ISN'T IT A HUMDINGER?
COME ALONG AND LET THE WEDDING CHIMES
BRING HAPPY TIMES
FOR MANDY AND ME.

(YOUNG LEW tap dances to another chorus of "Mandy.")

YOUNG FANNY: Surely that's worth a penny, don't you think, folks? You can spare a penny for the best dancer in all of Brooklyn--my brother, Lew.

YOUNG LEW: *(Holding out his cap, so people can put coins in it, if they want.)* The money we make isn't just for us, ya know. It helps support our whole family. Our poor old parents are so elderly, they can't work.

A MALE ONLOOKER: I saw you two performing in Prospect Park last week. And you said then that you were two poor starving orphans--that your parents had died.

YOUNG FANNY: Since then, they've made a remarkable recovery.

A FEMALE ONLOOKER: Don't kid me. I know your Ma--Rose Borach; she works as a waitress at the Red Lion.

YOUNG FANNY: She MANAGES the place. My mom works hard. And we help bring in a little money, too.

A FEMALE ONLOOKER: And I know your father, too--Charles Borach--"Pinochle Charlie." But he don't work--he just hangs out there all day, playing cards with his buddies.

YOUNG FANNY: That's not quite true.

YOUNG LEW: He also spends a lot of time at the track--watching the horse races.

YOUNG FANNY: He's really very good at what he does best--relaxing.

YOUNG LEW: Enjoying life. He's an inspiration to all of us.

ANOTHER MALE ONLOOKER: Say, do you take requests?

YOUNG FANNY: For requests, you gotta pay us a nickel. If you pay us a nickel, we'll perform any song you name.

ANOTHER MALE ONLOOKER: What if you don't know the song?

YOUNG FANNY: We're professionals. We know every song ever written. Put a nickel in Lew's cap. If we can't do the song you request, Lew will pay YOU three dollars.

EMMIE: *(To FANNY BRICE)* Miss Brice, did you really know every song ever written?

FANNY BRICE: Of course not, Emmie, If they named a song I didn't know, I'd just make up a song on the spot, and hope they'd buy it. It'd go something like this...

ANOTHER MALE ONLOOKER: *(Putting a nickel in YOUNG LEW's cap.)* Here's my money. I want you two to sing that song about school--

YOUNG FANNY: *(Obviously puzzled.)* That song about school?

ANOTHER MALE ONLOOKER: Yeah. That "school" ditty that everyone's singing in vaudeville these days. You know that song, dontcha? That song about school?

YOUNG FANNY: Oh sure. We're experts on the subject of school.

YOUNG LEW: We used to go to school ourselves.

SONG #5. "SCHOOLHOUSE BLUES"

YOUNG FANNY:

WE'VE GOT THE SCHOOLHOUSE BLUES,
WE'VE GOT THE SCHOOLHOUSE BLUES.
TIRED OF READING HISTORY,
DON'T CARE FOR GEOGRAPHY.

YOUNG LEW:

WE'RE GETTING OH SO SICK
OF GRAMMAR AND ARITHMETIC.

YOUNG FANNY:

THAT'S WHY WE GAVE THE TEACHER THE SACK,

YOUNG LEW:

AND WE'RE NEVER GONNA GO BACK.

YOUNG FANNY:

IF SHE DOESN'T LIKE IT, SHE CAN SIT ON A TACK.

YOUNG FANNY and YOUNG LEW:

WE'VE GOT THE SCHOOLHOUSE BLUES.

(The onlookers applaud--except for the man who'd requested the song. He does not appear satisfied.)

ANOTHER MALE ONLOOKER. No, no, no, that ain't the song I was asking for. The song I wanted--the

song everyone's been singing in vaudeville lately--goes something like this.

(He sings, a capella, a bit of the Gus Edwards song, "School Days.")

SCHOOL DAYS, SCHOOL DAYS,
DEAR OLD GOLDEN RULE DAYS...

YOUNG FANNY: I never heard of that one, mister--the only "school" song that everyone's been asking us for is the one I just sang. It's a swell song, ain't it? That's gotta be worth five cents, don't ya think?

ANOTHER MALE ONLOOKER: I dunno; I think maybe you just made that song up on the spot.

YOUNG FANNY: Are you kidding? This song is a big hit.

YOUNG FANNY and YOUNG LEW:

WE'RE GETTING OH SO SICK
OF GRAMMAR AND ARITHMETIC.
SO THEN IF WE DON'T PASS OUR EXAM,
OH, WE'RE GOING TO BE IN A JAM!

YOUNG LEW:

MOTHER'S GOING TO SPANK US,

YOUNG FANNY:

BUT WE DON'T GIVE A... DARN.

YOUNG FANNY and YOUNG LEW:

WE'VE GOT THE SCHOOLHOUSE BLUES.

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* We auditioned for every theater owner, manager, or booker we could get to listen to us. If we thought the guy was an Irish-American, we'd hit him with an Irish-flavored song. If we thought he was of French background, we'd sing something French. Something we thought they'd go for.

EMMIE: What if you couldn't tell?

FANNY BRICE: That happened a lot. I remember the time we went to Theron & Johnson's Music Hall, to audition for the owners....

THERON. *(To YOUNG LEW and YOUNG FANNY)* I'm Theron.

JOHNSON. I'm Johnson.

THERON. I hope you've got a good song ready for us.

YOUNG LEW: *(To YOUNG FANNY, in a stage whisper.)* What do we do? I have no idea what kind of a name "Theron" is.

YOUNG FANNY: *(To YOUNG LEW, in a stage whisper.)* I'm guessing maybe it's German. Look at his face--he could be German-American.

(To THERON and JOHNSON.)

My brother Lew not only sings swell songs, he writes 'em too!

SONG #6. "OH HOW THAT GERMAN COULD LOVE"

YOUNG LEW: *(with bravado--and a bit of a German accent:)*

OH, HOW THAT GERMAN COULD LOVE,

WITH A LOVE LIKE YOU SEE IN A PLAY;
WHEN SHE SAID "MY DEAR,"
IT WOULD RING IN MY EAR
FOR A YEAR, AND A WEEK AND A DAY.

YOUNG FANNY:

HER "NO" WAS LIKE "YES,"
AND HER "YES" WAS LIKE "NO,"
IT WAS SOMETHING LIKE "YES," IT WAS, WELL.

YOUNG LEW:

WHEN WE GOT TOGETHER
ACH, DONNER UND VETTER,
'T WAS LOVE WITH A CAPITAL "L."

THERON. What a terrible song!

JOHNSON. It doesn't even make sense!

THERON. I can't imagine any of our regulars going for something like that.

YOUNG LEW: *(To YOUNG FANNY, in a stage whisper.)* I don't think these guys are German.

YOUNG FANNY: *(To YOUNG LEW, in a stage-whisper.)* On second thought, I'm thinking maybe they could be Italians. I mean, just maybe... Look at those faces.

YOUNG LEW: *(To THERON and JOHNSON.)* That first number was just to warm up our voices. Here's one of our real specialties that I'm sure you'll love.

YOUNG FANNY: It comes straight from the heart!

SONG #7. "WHEN YOU KISS AN ITALIAN GIRL"

YOUNG LEW: *(with an Italian accent)*

WHEN YOU KISS AN ITALIAN GAL, BOSS,
OH! YOU FEEL-A,
WELL, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO TELL-A,
BUT YOU GET SO EXCITE
YOU GO HOME THAT NIGHT
AND PUT YOUR LEFT-A SHOE
UPON THE FOOT WHAT IS RIGHT.

YOUNG FANNY: *(with an Italian accent)*

LET AN ITALIAN GAL, BOSS,
KISS-A YOU UPON THE CHEEK
AND YOU WON'T WASH YOUR FACE FOR A LONG-A TIME,

YOUNG LEW: *(with an Italian accent, and lots of gestures)*

'CAUSE IT FEEL-A SO SWELL
WHEN YOU KISS AN ITALIAN GAL

THERON. That song's even worse than your German song.

JOHNSON. It's dreadful. Not our kind of stuff at all.

THERON. If my own blessed mother, Mary, was singing it, I'd still hate it!

YOUNG LEW: *(To YOUNG FANNY, in a stage whisper.)* If they're not German and they're not Italian, what's left?

YOUNG FANNY: *(To YOUNG LEW, in a stage whisper.)* I'm thinking, "Theron" might be an Irish name...

YOUNG LEW: *(To THERON and JOHNSON, speaking with a bit of a brogue.)* And now, if you please--a song that's so very dear to us, because it comes from our own heritage.

SONG #8. "IRELAND MUST BE HEAVEN (FOR MY MOTHER CAME MORE THERE)"

YOUNG FANNY: *(with a hint of a brogue)*

OH, HER EYES ARE LIKE THE STARLIGHT,
AND THE WHITE CLOUDS MATCH HER HAIR.

YOUNG LEW: *(with a hint of a brogue)*

SURE, IRELAND MUST BE HEAVEN

YOUNG FANNY and YOUNG LEW:

FOR OUR MOTHER CAME FROM THERE.

THERON. Out! Come back when you're older! You're not ready for Theron--

JOHNSON. --or Johnson!

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* Lew and I entered amateur contests at theaters around Brooklyn. Anyone could enter, and the winners of the contests got cash prizes. That's when we realized we were getting good. We were 14, 15, 16 years old. And we were winning all these amateur contests.

EMMIE: You were entering these together?

FANNY BRICE: Sure, Lew and I were as close as any brother and sister could be. And we had worked up a terrific little act. I liked singing more than dancing; he liked dancing more. We figured we'd always be a team--for life. I wasn't thinking of trying for a solo career. There were lots of family acts in vaudeville--the Four Cohans--Lew idolized George M. Cohan--the Foys, the Keatons.... I remember one night we were appearing at Bailey Wolcott's Variety Arts Theater. We were really hot that night--and a real theater professional happened to be in the audience to catch us.

SONG #9. "SIMPLE MELODY"/"MUSICAL DEMON"

(The refrain of "Simple Melody")

YOUNG FANNY:

WON'T YOU PLAY A SIMPLE MELODY
LIKE MY MOTHER SANG TO ME,
ONE WITH GOOD OLD-FASHIONED HARMONY?
PLAY A SIMPLE MELODY.

(The refrain of "Musical Demon")

YOUNG LEW:

MUSICAL DEMON,
SET YOUR HONEY A-DREAMIN',
WON'T YOU PLAY ME SOME RAG?
JUST CHANGE THAT CLASSICAL NAG
TO SOME SWEET BEAUTIFUL DRAG.
IF YOU WILL PLAY FROM A COPY
OF A TUNE THAT IS CHOPPY,

YOU'LL GET ALL MY APPLAUSE,
AND THAT IS SIMPLY BECAUSE
I WANT TO LISTEN TO RAG.

(The refrains of "Simple Melody" and "Musical Demon" are then performed in counterpoint--twice; the first time, YOUNG FANNY and YOUNG LEW will sing in counterpoint; the second time, YOUNG FANNY will sing her part and YOUNG LEW will tap dance--but not sing--his part. After the number, YOUNG FANNY and YOUNG LEW bow, begin to exit, and are stopped by a distinguished-looking man in the wings.)

J. F. CHANCE III. My name is John Fredrick Chance III. I produce shows, here in Brooklyn. I've got an opening for one dancer. And Lew--you're terrific--I'd like to offer you a job.

YOUNG LEW: I'm sorry, but my sister and I are a team--for life. I'd never take a job if she wasn't part of the deal.

J. F. CHANCE III. I think you're making a mistake, kid. You're both too good to be working amateur shows, but I only have an opening for one male dancer.

YOUNG FANNY: *(To JOHN FREDRICK CHANCE III.)* Look, I know I'm not pretty. If you only want Lew, I understand. He's a fascinating dancer; he's better looking than me; he gets his good looks from his mother. Me, I think I got this face from the stork--the beak, anyway.

(Getting more melodramatic as she goes on.)

I'll never stand in the way of Lew's success. Who needs the show business? I can go back home, spend my life helping my poor, old mother in the kitchen.

(She starts weeping.)

So what if I suffer terribly, not being in a show. If you can only take one of us, take Lew! I'll live... maybe.

(She goes into great convulsive sobs.)

J. F. CHANCE III. *(Comforting YOUNG FANNY, who seems to be sobbing uncontrollably.)* There, there, young lady. I didn't realize it would upset you so much if I split you two up

YOUNG FANNY: *(To JOHN FREDRICK CHANCE III, while still sobbing.)* You'd be mortally wounding the two of us. We're very close. You can't split us up!

J. F. CHANCE III. I see...

YOUNG FANNY: *(She immediately stops crying, looks up at JOHN FREDRICK CHANCE happily, and exclaims.)* You do? You won't regret hiring me, Mr. John Fredrick Chance III! I'm a terrific actor. You're getting an unbeatable brother-sister team!

J. F. CHANCE III. Your tears stopped awfully abruptly, young lady.

YOUNG FANNY: As I said, I'm a terrific actor!

(She grins playfully, winks.)

But honestly, I'm glad you no longer want to split us up. So you've decided you're hiring the both of us?

J. F. CHANCE III. No, no, no, I've decided I won't hire either one of you. A bit too much drama here for my tastes.

YOUNG LEW: But we're desperate to work, Mr. Chance. We've auditioned for every theater owner in Brooklyn.

J. F. CHANCE III. Just Brooklyn? Not Manhattan?

YOUNG LEW: I don't think we're ready for Broadway yet. My sister's only 17, I'm 16.

J. F. CHANCE III. You've got to think big. What have you got to lose? Listen, George M. Cohan's just begun rehearsals for his new show. Tell him I've recommended you to be in his chorus.

YOUNG FANNY: You're recommending us to George M. Cohan? Because you like us that much?

J. F. CHANCE III. Let's just say, he recently recommended a couple actors to me who turned out to be talented, but quite annoying. And now maybe I'm returning the favor.

YOUNG LEW: Cohan's my favorite performer. I've seen him in the theater lots of times. I've modeled my dancing on Cohan's.

J. F. CHANCE III. Great! But just remember-- he's not looking for stars right now. If he hires you for the chorus, you have to just fit in the chorus--be real "team players."

YOUNG FANNY: You won't regret this, Mr. Chance. I'm going to be such a team player--I'm going to blend into the chorus so well--you won't believe it. You won't even know I'm there.

YOUNG LEW: Already I think we're in trouble.

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* So we headed over to the Liberty Theater on 42nd Street. Now George M. Cohan was the top man in the theater in those days. He starred in shows. He wrote those shows. He directed and choreographed, and produced those shows. Rehearsals were in progress when we got there. We watched, appreciatively, as they sang his latest song.

SONG #10. MEDLEY: "THE MAN WHO OWNS BROADWAY"/"GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROADWAY."

THE ENSEMBLE: *(hushed to help build tension)*

HE IS THE MAN WHO OWNS BROADWAY,

THAT'S WHAT THE DAILY PAPERS SAY.

THE GIRLS ARE TURNED AWAY

AT EV'RY MATINEE.

THEY GO TO SEE THE PLAYER NOT THE PLAY, THEY SAY.

KINGS ON THEIR THRONES MAY ENVIOUS BE,

HE'S GOT THE POPULARITY.

IF THERE'S ANYTHING IN NEW YORK THAT YOU SEE YOU WANT, JUST SAY.

DROP A LINE OR WIRE

TO THE SOLE PROPRIETER,

THE MAN WHO OWNS BROADWAY.

THEY SAY.....

(Dressed in a very dapper suit, GEORGE M. COHAN strides on stage, singing out--in a ringing voice--the concluding line of the refrain.)

GEORGE M. COHAN:

... I AM THE MAN WHO OWNS BROADWAY.

(Cohan segues immediately into "GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROADWAY.")

(brightly:)

GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROADWAY,
REMEMBER ME TO HERALD SQUARE.
TELL ALL THE GANG AT FORTY-SECOND STREET
THAT I WILL SOON BE THERE.
WHISPER OF HOW I'M YEARNING
TO MINGLE WITH THE OLD-TIME THRONG.
GIVE MY REGARDS TO OLD BROADWAY
AND SAY THAT I'LL BE THERE E'ER LONG.

(The pianist begins playing the refrain again, while COHAN dances just a bit. He resumes singing with the line, "Whisper of how I'm yearning...")

WHISPER OF HOW I'M YEARNING
TO MINGLE WITH THE OLD-TIME THRONG.
GIVE MY REGARDS TO OLD BROADWAY
AND SAY THAT I'LL BE THERE E'ER LONG.

YOUNG FANNY: Excuse me, Mr. Cohan. We were sent here by John Fredrick Chance III. He thinks we'd be perfect guest-stars for your new show.

GEORGE M. COHAN: Jack just phoned me, said he was sending over two kids who might be good... for the chorus. Now why don't you two just watch, as I sing and dance a routine. After you've watched a couple of times, see if you can pick up any of my steps.

YOUNG LEW: Mr, Cohan, for years I've been studying every move you make on stage. Whenever I could, I'd take the money I've made, performing around Brooklyn, and I'd buy balcony seats to your shows. I can do any step you can do.

GEORGE M. COHAN: Famous last words. All right--when I get to the dance break, see if you can keep up.

YOUNG FANNY: Me, I'll just watch. I'm more of a singer.

SONG #11 "AN ODE TO POPULARITY"

GEORGE M. COHAN:

IT'S POPULARITY WE'RE ALL NEEDIN',
IT'S POPULARITY WE ALL CRAVE.
YOU GIVE ME WHAT I'M NEEDIN'
AND YOU'LL PRETTY MUCH MAKE ME YOUR SLAVE.
I KNOW THAT SOME FOLKS SAY THEY NEED RICHES,

SOME FOLKS SAY THEY NEED WEALTH.
BUT IF YOU ASK ME FOR MY WISHES,
I'LL SAY "POPULARITY AND GOOD HEALTH"

Ready, now! Dance break! Five-Six-Seven-Eight!

(The music begins playing again, and GEORGE M. COHAN dances to the music corresponding to the words "IT'S POPULARITY WE'RE ALL NEEDIN', / IT'S POPULARITY WE ALL CRAVE. / YOU GIVE ME WHAT I'M NEEDIN' / AND YOU'LL PRETTY MUCH MAKE ME YOUR SLAVE," and then he resumes singing, to finish up the number. He is, of course, a terrific dancer. But LEW, to COHAN's surprise, dances along side of him, matching him step for step.)

I KNOW THAT SOME FOLKS SAY THEY NEED RICHES,
SOME FOLKS SAY THEY NEED WEALTH.
BUT IF YOU ASK ME FOR MY WISHES,
I'LL SAY "POPULARITY AND GOOD HEALTH."

GEORGE M. COHAN: *(To YOUNG LEW)* Kid, you're hired! We've only got an opening in the chorus.

But I'm going to teach you everything I know. And in the next show, I'll be able to give you a good featured spot. You've got the potential to be a star.

YOUNG LEW: I've never cared about being a star, Mr. Cohan. My sister feels the same way. We just want to work.

YOUNG FANNY: Speak for yourself, Lew.

YOUNG LEW: Put my sister in the chorus, too, Mr. Cohan!

GEORGE M. COHAN: *(To YOUNG FANNY)* So long as you can blend in well, young lady, you've got a job in the chorus.

YOUNG FANNY: Once you see what I can do, Mr. Cohan, you'll want to give me a big part.

GEORGE M. COHAN: *(Handing YOUNG FANNY some sheet music.)* Just sing exactly what the others are singing—not one note more. If you can fit in well, you're hired.

YOUNG FANNY: Wait till you see how good I fit in. If you don't like me, just say, "Back to the kitchen!" and I'll quit the show business forever and spend my life helping my poor, tired mother in the kitchen.

GEORGE M. COHAN: All right, everyone. Let's hear the chorus on "So Long Mary."

SONG #12. "SO LONG MARY"

THE ENSEMBLE:

SO LONG, MARY.
MARY, WE WILL MISS YOU SO.
SO LONG, MARY.
HOW WE HATE TO SEE YOU GO.
AND WE'LL ALL BE LONGING FOR YOU, MARY,
WHILE YOU ROAM.
SO LONG, MARY.
DON'T FORGET TO COME BACK HOME.

SO LONG, MARY.

MARY, WE WILL MISS YOU SO.

YOUNG FANNY: *(Exclaims.)* We're gonna miss you, Mary!

THE ENSEMBLE:

SO LONG, MARY.

HOW WE HATE TO SEE YOU GO.

YOUNG FANNY: *(Exclaims.)* Bye-bye!

THE ENSEMBLE:

AND WE'LL ALL BE LONGING FOR YOU, MARY,
WHILE YOU ROAM.

YOUNG FANNY: *(Exclaims.)* It's not good to roam!

THE ENSEMBLE:

SO LONG, MARY.

DON'T FORGET TO COME BACK HOME.

YOUNG FANNY: *(Exclaims.)* I feel a dance break--
(And now YOUNG FANNY improvises a tap dance.)

GEORGE M. COHAN: Wait! Wait! Wait!

(To YOUNG FANNY, incredulously.)

You "feel a dance break"?!?

YOUNG FANNY: It needed something; the number was beginning to drag. So I improvised a little dance.
And, wait! I got more!

(She dances a bit more, without music.)

GEORGE M. COHAN: Stop! Stop! Stop! You--with the St. Vitus Dance--

YOUNG FANNY: *(Hopefully.)* Yes, Mr. Cohan?

GEORGE M. COHAN: Back to the kitchen!

(She exits. And we will not see "YOUNG FANNY" again in this play; her childhood is over. From this point forward, we see only "FANNY BRICE")

EMMIE: *(To FANNY BRICE)* And did you really go back home--"back to the kitchen," as Mr. Cohan said?

FANNY BRICE: For a good stretch, I did just that. I needed time to lick my wounds. And to grow up a bit.
I remember, my mother eventually saying to me....

ROSE BORACH: For a little child, it's fine to have dreams of being a star someday. But you are a woman now, Fania. Not a pretty woman, any more than I was. But you are 18. You must be practical--not a dreamer. If the show business is not for you, the sweat shops are always looking for help. Finding work for you here in New York won't be too hard. Finding you a husband--well, that will be more of a challenge.

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* My father, that sweet, gentle, charming man, was more encouraging.

CHARLES BORACH: Nothing wrong with dreaming, Fania. Where would we be without our dreams?

ROSE BORACH: I didn't realize I was marrying such a dreamer. Before we were married, Charles Borach was a hard worker. Once he got married, though, he didn't want to work any more; he left it to me to support the family.

CHARLES BORACH: I have asthma, I got heart palpitations; sometimes I just need to rest.

ROSE BORACH: He's been resting for 20 years. Him and his card-playing buddies. Lazy. Hmph!

CHARLES BORACH: Fania, I had a pretty good day today at the track. One of my horses came in.

ROSE BORACH: And whatever my husband won in that race, I'm sure he lost most of it in the next race.

CHARLES BORACH: I bought you a present, Fania, with a bit of my winnings--some wonderful new sheet music. The prettiest song I've ever heard--"Oh! That Beautiful Rag."

(He sings a little bit of it, a capella.)

SONG 13a. "OH, THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG" (a capella excerpt)

CHARLES BORACH: *(Sings, a capella:)*

OH! OH! OH! OH! OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG

IT SETS MY HEART A-REELIN'.

OH! OH! OH! OH--

Ach! I'm no singer, Fania. I can't do this wonderful song justice. But someday, I hope I'll hear you sing it on a stage. I've given you lots of sheet music over the years. But I'm never giving you another piece; I can't top this one, ever.

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* My father actually wrote on the front cover of the sheet music: "This is the last piece of sheet music I am ever giving you. Nothing can surpass this song."

CHARLES BORACH: Look at you! You've grown up very nicely, Fania. The next time my horses come in, I want to get you a brand new outfit--a navy-blue sailor-suit dress--very smart! So you'll look as beautiful as any of them up there on the stage.

EMMIE: *(To FANNY)* And did he ever buy you that sailor-suit dress?

FANNY BRICE: It was almost two years before he was able to buy me that dress; he mailed it to me, out on the road. I cherished it. That was the last present he ever gave me. Oh, I loved Papa. The best-looking, best-groomed man you could ever hope to meet. Such charm! He always had such a warm smile for everyone. Mama never smiled. She always looked like she was angry at the world.

ROSE BORACH: Life is hard. In this world, you must be like iron. Or they will take advantage of you. They will crush you.

FANNY BRICE: *(To ROSE)* Who, Mama?

ROSE BORACH: Everyone!

EMMIE: *(To FANNY)* But I'm sure your mother loved you.

FANNY BRICE: No doubt. And she raised me well. She believed I'd inherited a little psychic gift she had.

EMMIE: Did you?

FANNY BRICE: I dunno. I've had some moments that are hard to explain. Kid, life's more mysterious than most people want to admit. Mama taught me to always trust my hunches, my instincts, my intuitions--like she did. Mama always knew, from the very moment when she met someone, if she'd like them or not--if she could trust them or not. She sized people up immediately. I'm the same way. I get a feeling right away, and I trust it.

EMMIE: Like you did with me.

FANNY BRICE: And there are plenty of job offers I got over the years that sounded pretty good, but I just got some hunch that something wasn't quite right--something inside of me was saying, "Oogie boogie--NO!" And so I turned 'em down. I trust my hunches, kid. Totally. I like people who do the same.

EMMIE: I'm not sure I ever get any hunches like that.

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* You get 'em, all right. Why else are you here today? You just gotta learn to listen to 'em more often. I took my first important real theatrical job—even though it was just a third-rate touring show—because I had somehow a hunch, the moment I met the woman who ran the show, that she'd help me somehow. I liked her from the moment I met her, at a little theater in Brooklyn.

FANNY BRICE: *(To Madame Bordonaro, for whom she is auditioning.)* For this audition, I would like to sing the prettiest song I know. In fact, when you hire me for this show, I want to sing this song in the show.

MADAME BORDONARO: In the first place, who says I'm going to hire you?

FANNY BRICE: I got a feeling. I can see you're a very smart woman.

MADAME BORDONARO: In the second place, who says I'd ever let you pick which songs you'll sing? I've sung before the crowned heads of Europe. I've got royalty among my closest personal friends. But even if the Queen of Roumania herself begged to be in my show, do you think I would let her pick her own songs? I pick all the songs. Now, sing me this pretty number you're talking about, before I change my mind.

SONG 13b. "OH, THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG" (a capella excerpt)

FANNY BRICE: *(a capella)*

OH! OH! OH! OH! OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG,
IT SETS MY HEART A-REELIN'.

OH! OH! OH! OH! OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL DRAG--

MADAME BORDONARO: Wait! Wait! Wait! I don't need to hear more. You're exactly what I'm looking for. You're hired.

FANNY BRICE: You can see already that I got "star quality"?

MADAME BORDONARO: I can see already that you're the exact same size—exactly—as the gal who just quit the show, who you're replacing. I won't have to pay Madame Purdy to make any new costumes. What a break!

EMMIE: *(To FANNY)* And so you headed off on tour--

FANNY BRICE: Just before we left, Papa slipped me a wad of cash "for emergencies." I don't know where he came up with it, because I never really saw him work.

CHARLES BORACH: *(To the audience.)* Sometimes, if I was heading out to the track, friends in the neighborhood would give me a little something to place a bet for them. Things like that... I made a little money, here and there; I got by.

FANNY BRICE: Mama's going-away present for me was home-made underwear; she always sewed the most beautiful underwear for me.

ROSE BORACH: *(To FANNY.)* I'll mail you more underwear, when you're out on the road.

EMMIE: *(To FANNY.)* And did she?

FANNY BRICE: Oh, sure! I traded the underwear she sent me for dance lessons from other gals in the troupe.

EMMIE: Tell me about the show! It must be so glamorous to tour!

FANNY BRICE: Ho! Not with that show! But for a couple of years it was fun. I was making \$20 a week, and I thought that was a fortune. Friends I grew up with were making \$5 a week working in factories. I never imagined that someday I'd be getting \$2000 a week, working for Ziegfeld.

EMMIE: But your first big tour. What was the troupe called?

FANNY BRICE: Madame Victoria Bordonaro's "Trans-Atlantic Burlesquers." The posters said: "With a Company of 50 International Stars."

EMMIE: The "Trans-Atlantic Burlesquers, with a Company of 50 International Stars." You must have been so proud!

FANNY BRICE: There were never more than 20 of us in the company. And we were all from Brooklyn! But, as Madame Bordonaro told me....

MADAME BORDONARO: Sure, we're from Brooklyn--but from both sides of Atlantic Avenue. So our troupe is definitely, honestly, and completely "Trans-Atlantic."

FANNY BRICE: But you're advertising "50 International Stars," Madame Bordonaro. Won't somebody notice there's only 20 of us?

MADAME BORDONARO: Hah! Who'll be counting? All the men in the audience will be noticing is that on stage we'll have a lot of great-looking gals in tights.

FANNY BRICE: But I'm not exactly great-looking.

MADAME BORDONARO: All right. A lot of gals in tights.... Trust me; it works! I give the audience a killer opening--plenty of gals singing a hot ragtime number. And later, I'll keep bringing back various performers, in new costumes and with new names.... By the show's end, the audience will swear they've seen 50 international stars.

FANNY BRICE: But I'm just one person.... "Miss Fanny Brice"

MADAME BORDONARO: Yeah, yeah. But in scene three, you'll be one of the "Armour Sisters"--wearing an armour-plated Brunhilde costume for an operatic spoof. In scene five, you'll be Princess Lena Fatima, "direct from the deserts of Arabia, sought after by many sheiks," as it says on our posters.

FANNY BRICE: But this face of mine--

MADAME BORDONARO: Will be wisely covered by a veil. You'll dance to a beautiful melody, "The Arabian Moon." You can dance Arabian, can't you?

FANNY BRICE: I don't know.

MADAME BORDONARO: Well, try your best. I'm paying you \$20 a week.

FANNY BRICE: But you have so many stars on the poster: "Palmer and Herwitz--Snappy Songs and Patter," "Galassi and Max, Apache-Dancers from France," "Orlando and Benjamin, Gaucho Rope-Twirlers from the Argentine..."

MADAME BORDONARO: All ably played--in different costumes--by our own Max Bierstein and Pops Zander here. I love these two as if they were actual relatives of mine.

MAX BIERSTEIN: Mainly because we are actual relatives of hers.

POPS ZANDER: Anything you need to know about show business, just ask us. We've done it all.

MAX BIERSTEIN: You've heard of Professor Ian Pomeranian and his Highly Trained Dogs, Cats and Rats, haven't you?

FANNY BRICE: I don't think so--

MAX BIERSTEIN: For three seasons with this show, I was also Professor Ian Pomeranian.

POPS ZANDER: In a pinch, he could have doubled as one of the highly trained dogs, cats, or rats.

MAX BIERSTEIN: It was a heck of an act, until one of the cats ate all of the rats.

POPS ZANDER: Actors can be so jealous. The trained rats used to get the most applause.

MADAME BORDONARO: And Fanny, I'd like to introduce you to our master of ceremonies--one of my oldest friends--Mr. J. Saleeby Jackson. You'll learn a lot about comic timing from him.

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: *(To FANNY)* I've been touring with her for over 20 years!

MADAME BORONARO: Join Madame Bordanaro and see the world!

EMMIE: *(To FANNY)* Gosh, Miss Brice, did you actually see the world?

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* Emmie, I don't think Madame Bordonaro ever got overseas in her life. But for two years, we toured wherever we could get bookings--as far south as New Orleans, as far west as Kansas City. Wherever we played, the performance would start out something like this.

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: Our friends, we're delighted to be performing once again in our favorite city, uhhhh

(reads a card he's holding, to remind him of the name of the city)

South Bend, Indiana. We're particularly delighted to be booked back into, uhhhh

(reads a card he's holding, to remind him of the name of the venue)

Henry Evans' famed Trocodero Theater, widely acknowledged to be one of the cultural high points of the South Bend business district. We come to you directly from a sold-out, 12-month tour of the great cities of Europe. And now, may I bring on stage the toast of seven continents, the head of this happy theatrical family...

(MADAME BORDONARO strides on stage. She smiles and waves to the audience. The music begins. She and J. SALEEBY JACKSON dance across the stage to the music, exiting into the wings as MADAME BORDONARO'S GALS come on stage to dance and sing boisterously. These are lower class burlesque gals.)

SONG #14 "EVERYBODY'S DOIN' IT NOW"

MADAME BORDONARO'S GALS.

EV'RYBODY'S DOIN' IT,
DOIN' IT, DOIN' IT,
EV'RYBODY'S DOIN' IT,
DOIN' IT, DOIN' IT;
SEE THAT RAGTIME COUPLE OVER THERE,
WATCH THEM THROW THEIR SHOULDERS IN THE AIR,
SNAP THEIR FINGERS--HONEY, I DECLARE,
IT'S A BEAR, IT'S A BEAR, IT'S A BEAR.
THERE!
EV'RYBODY'S DOIN' IT,
DOIN' IT, DOIN' IT,
EV'RYBODY'S DOIN' IT,
DOIN' IT, DOIN' IT;
AIN'T THAT MUSIC TOUCHING YOUR HEART?
HEAR THAT TROMBONE BUSTIN' APART?

COME, COME, COME, COME LET US START,
EVERYBODY'S DOIN' IT NOW.

(MADAME BORDONARO enters, with J. SALEEBY JACKSON. She sings to him, and to the audience.

MADAME BORDONARO:

HONEY, HONEY, CAN'T YOU HEAR?
FUNNY, FUNNY MUSIC, DEAR.
AIN'T THE FUNNY STRAIN
GOIN' TO YOUR BRAIN?
LIKE A BOTTLE OF WINE, FINE,
HON, HON, HON, HON, TAKE A CHANCE,
ONE, ONE, ONE, ONE LITTLE DANCE;
CAN'T YOU SEE THEM ALL
SWAYING UP THE HALL?
LET'S BE GETTIN' IN LINE.

MADAME BORDONARO'S GALS, plus MADAME BORDONARO and J. SALEEBY JACKSON:

EV'RYBODY'S DOIN' IT,
DOIN' IT, DOIN' IT,
EV'RYBODY'S DOIN' IT,
DOIN' IT, DOIN' IT;
SEE THAT RAGTIME COUPLE OVER THERE,
WATCH THEM THROW THEIR SHOULDERS IN THE AIR,
SNAP THEIR FINGERS--HONEY, I DECLARE,
IT'S A BEAR, IT'S A BEAR, IT'S A BEAR.
THERE!
EV'RYBODY'S DOIN' IT,
DOIN' IT, DOIN' IT,
EV'RYBODY'S DOIN' IT,
DOIN' IT, DOIN' IT;
AIN'T THAT MUSIC TOUCHING YOUR HEART?
HEAR THAT TROMBONE BUSTIN' APART?
COME, COME, COME, COME LET US START,
EVERYBODY'S DOIN' IT NOW.

MADAME BORDONARO: *(To the audience, reciting a speech she has obviously given many times, with less-than-convincing sincerity.)* My dear public, I am touched deeply by your generous applause. This will be, I'm afraid, my last year touring. I am no longer young. I must retire. I know; it is all so, so sad. And there is something I like to do, once a year, to help those who are in need. We will be taking a collection in this theater for a charity that means so much to me: the Old Actors' Fund. Every dollar you contribute will help an old actor. I hope you'll drop some money into the baskets we are passing around. That will truly be music to my ears.

MADAME BORDONARO'S GALS, plus MADAME BORDONARO and J. SALEEBY JACKSON:

AIN'T THAT MUSIC TOUCHING YOUR HEART?

HEAR THAT TROMBONE BUSTIN' APART?
COME, COME, COME, COME LET US START,
EVERYBODY'S DOIN' IT NOW.

(The performers exit, except for FANNY, MADAME BORDONARO, and J. SALEEBY JACKSON.)

FANNY BRICE: Madame Bordonaro, I was so moved by your speech.

MADAME BORDONARO: You should have seen me the week we played Cleveland. I produced real tears, every night that week. The collection was double what we usually get.

FANNY BRICE: You were so eloquent and honest tonight.

MADAME BORDONARO: Nothing an audience appreciates more than sincerity. Once you can fake that, kid, you've got it made.

FANNY BRICE: I'd like to contribute a little something myself. I don't have much, but I want to help the old actors.

(She gives MADAME BORDONARO some cash.)

MADAME BORDONARO: Thanks, kid.

FANNY BRICE: This really does go to help old actors, doesn't it?

MADAME BORDONARO: Absolutely.

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: Have you ever met any actors older than Madame Bordonaro and myself?

FANNY BRICE: Where will you spend your retirement?

MADAME BORDONARO: I'm never going to retire.

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: She's been giving that speech every night for years.

FANNY BRICE: But you sounded so convincing.

MADAME BORDONARO: Well, there's a part of me that WOULD like to do less, sometimes. I'm feeling my years.

FANNY BRICE: Listen! Any time you feel like taking things easy, I'd be glad to go on for ya.

MADAME BORDONARO: I'm not going to pay you anything extra! I'm already paying you \$20 a week. No one's ever going to pay you more than \$20 a week!

FANNY BRICE: Hey, I'm not asking for more money. I'm just happy if I can work more.

EMMIE: *(To FANNY)* And did you, Miss Brice?

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* Little by little, I wound up doing more and more in the show. Madame Bordonaro did less and less. Reviewers began taking note of me, too.

EMMIE: *(To FANNY)* I bet that meant a lot to you, having reviewers notice you.

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* You know what really meant a lot to me? Getting this telegram from my brother, who was between shows, you know, just taking things easy.

LEW BRICE: I see that on February 24th, Pop's birthday, you'll be fairly close--playing Connecticut. We're going to take the train up from New York to see you. Make it an extra good show! We'll be cheering extra loud. We'll find you after the show.

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* I hadn't seen Pop or Lew in almost two years. And when that day rolled around-- knowing that they would be out in the audience--I was determined to give my all. I remember that night like it was yesterday, kid....

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: *(To the audience.)* Our friends, we're delighted to be performing once again in our favorite city, uhhhh

(reads a card he's holding, to remind him of the name of the city)

Waterbury, Connecticut. We come to you directly from a sold-out, 12-month tour of the great cities of Europe. And now, may I present the toast of seven continents....

(MADAME BORDONARO strides on stage. She smiles and waves to the audience. The music begins. She and J. SALEEBY JACKSON dance across the stage to the music, exiting into the wings as MADAME BORDONARO'S GALS come onstage to dance and sing with elan.)

SONG #15. "STOP, STOP, STOP (COME OVER AND LOVE ME SOME MORE)"

MADAME BORDONARO'S GALS:

CUDDLE AND SQUEEZE ME, HONEY,
LEAD ME RIGHT TO CUPID'S DOOR,
TAKE ME OUT UPON THAT OCEAN CALLED THE LOVABLE SEA,
FRY EACH KISS IN HONEY, THEN PRESENT IT TO ME.
CUDDLE AND PLEASE ME, HONEY.
ANCHOR AT THAT KISSING SHORE;
MY HONEY, STOP, STOP, STOP, STOP,
DON'T DARE TO STOP,
COME OVER AND LOVE ME SOME MORE.

(FANNY BRICE steps out in front of the ensemble, and sings to fellow cast-member MAX BIERSTEIN.)

FANNY BRICE:

HON, DID I HEAR YOU SAY YOU'RE GOING HOME?
JUST 'CAUSE THE CLOCK IS STRIKING NINE,
MY DEARIE--
THAT CLOCK AT ITS BEST
IS AN HOUR FAST,
EIGHT O'CLOCK JUST PAST,
STAY, LET THE PARTY LAST.
SURELY YOU WOULDN'T LEAVE ME ALL ALONE
JUST FOR TO SATISFY THE TIME,
SING ME THAT LOVIN' SONG
THAT GOES SOMETHING LIKE
UMM-UMM-UMMM-UMM.

MADAME BORDONARO'S GALS:

CUDDLE AND SQUEEZE ME, HONEY,
LEAD ME RIGHT TO CUPID'S DOOR,
TAKE ME OUT UPON THAT OCEAN CALLED THE LOVABLE SEA,
FRY EACH KISS IN HONEY, THEN PRESENT IT TO ME.

CUDDLE AND PLEASE ME, HONEY.
ANCHOR AT THAT KISSING SHORE;
MY HONEY, STOP, STOP, STOP, STOP,
DON'T DARE TO STOP,
COME OVER AND LOVE ME SOME MORE.

(Everyone exits except for MAX BIERSTEIN. He sings.)

SONG #16. "UNDER THE MELLOW ARABIAN MOON"

MAX BIERSTEIN:

MY HEART'S IN ARABIA TONIGHT,
WHERE STAR SHINE BRIGHT ON DESERT SAND,

(POPS ZANDER steps out to join him.)

POPS ZANDER:

WHERE THE MOON SENDS BLESSINGS WITH ITS LIGHT
FROM FAR ABOVE,

MAX BIERSTEIN AND POPS ZANDER:

OH LAND OF LOVE.

(THE ENTIRE ENSEMBLE files out on stage, and sings. MISS FANNY BRICE, dressed in an Arabian outfit, and wearing a veil, weaves in and out of the ensemble, slipping in comments—and feel free to ad lib—and facial expressions that generally seem to send up the situation.)

ENSEMBLE:

UNDER THE MELLOW ARABIAN MOON,
WITH AN ARAB MAID IN THE DESERT SHADE,
HUMMING A SWEET ARABIAN TUNE,

FANNY BRICE: That's me...._Humming prettily!

ENSEMBLE:

HOLDING SOMEONE BY THE HAND
IN THAT FAR OFF DESERT LAND,
LET ME TELL YOU THAT'S THE WAY TO SPOON:
JUST GET AN ARAB SWEETHEART.

MISS FANNY BRICE: I'm available!

ENSEMBLE:

UNDER THE MELLOW ARABIAN MOON,
TELL HER PRETTY THINGS,
DO YOUR WANDERINGS,
WHERE COLD DECEMBER SEEMS LIKE JUNE;
YOU WILL BE CONTENT IN THE ORIENT.
YOU'LL FIND LOTS OF PLEASURE THERE,
LOVE AND MUSIC IN THE AIR.
UNDER THE MELLOW ARABIAN

UNDER THE MELLOW ARABIAN
UNDER THE MELLOW ARABIAN MOON.

(Everyone exits, except for FANNY)

FANNY BRICE: I miss them already. The desert can be such a lonely place.

(Mr. J. SALEEBY JACKSON, dressed as a sheik, enters.)

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: Say, lady.... lady.... LADY!

FANNY BRICE: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see you come in....

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: How could you not see me? I just walked in from stage-right, with a big surprise-pink spotlight following me.

FANNY BRICE: Say, who are you?

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: Who am I? Such a question, such a question. I'm the Sheik here, ma'am, that's who I be. And all the gals, they fall for me.

FANNY BRICE: Don't tell me, you're the Sheik--

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: --of Araby. Yes. In person. World-famous. At your service. And I gotta tell you, ma'am--you're the prettiest girl in the whole desert.

FANNY BRICE: Stop! I bet you say that to all the girls in your harem.

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: I do... I'm a terrible liar.

FANNY BRICE: I bet you're actually a pretty good liar.... I'm not as dumb as I look.

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: That's hard to believe! But listen, I think you're very beautiful and I'd like to marry you.

FANNY BRICE: I'd love to marry you--but I'm not here.

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: You're not here?!?

FANNY BRICE: I'll bet you \$100 that I'm not here. You can put up \$100, can't you?

(He holds up a \$100 bill, which she takes from him.)

I'll just hold onto this for safe-keeping. There are some mighty tricky people here in the desert. If I can prove that I'm not here, I'll keep the \$100.

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: But if you ARE here--

FANNY BRICE: Then I'll pay YOU \$100. Now try to figure out where I am. Go on, take some guesses.

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: Well, you're obviously not in Boston.

FANNY BRICE: No, I'm definitely not in Boston.

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: And I'm guessing you're not in Saskatchewan.

FANNY BRICE: No, I'm certainly not in Saskatchewan

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: And you're probably not in Los Angeles.

FANNY BRICE: Well... if I'm not in Boston or Saskatchewan or Los Angeles, I must be someplace else, right?

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: Right.

FANNY BRICE: And if--as you say--I am currently someplace else--

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: Yes?

FANNY BRICE: Then obviously I am not here!

(She pockets the money.)

J. SALEEBY JACKSON: I can't argue with that.

(He exits. Max Bierstein and Pops Zander enter.)

MAX BIERSTEIN: We couldn't help noticing.

POPS ZANDER: You won a hundred dollars off of him by proving you're not here.

FANNY BRICE: That's right. Now would you excuse me a moment? I've got to slip into a different dress for the next number.

(She steps behind a screen; she will change out of the Arabian outfit and into a Navy-blue sailor suit. But she doesn't emerge from behind the screen, permitting us to see the dress, until the conclusion of this bit.)

MAX BIERSTEIN: But what about us?

POPS ZANDER: If we can prove you're not here, can we win a hundred dollars off you?

FANNY BRICE: You can try! First, to show good faith, you should each put up one hundred dollars.

(They each hand her a hundred-dollar bill.)

Now, go ahead and prove.

MAX BIERSTEIN: You're not in Boston, Saskatchewan, or Los Angeles, are you?

FANNY BRICE: No. Don't be silly.

POPS ZANDER: Then, obviously you're someplace else.

FANNY BRICE: Obviously.

MAX BIERSTEIN: And if you're someplace else, that means you're not here.

POPS ZANDER: So give us your money!

FANNY BRICE: *(Reasonably.)* I'd like to give you my money, boys. But I can't.

MAX BIERSTEIN and POPS ZANDER: Why?

FANNY BRICE: Because, as you two schmart boys have just proven... I'm not here!

MAX BIERSTEIN: Can't argue with that.

POPS ZANDER: This is one smart lady.

(MAX BIERSTEIN and POPS ZANDER exit. FANNY steps out from behind the screen, now wearing the Navy-blue sailor-suit dress.)

FANNY BRICE: *(To the audience.)* Isn't this a terrific outfit? It's a present from my own father. He mailed it to me, and I decided to save it until a special occasion. Pop, if you're sitting out there, this song is for you.

SONG #17. "OH THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG"

FANNY BRICE:

OH! OH! OH! OH!
OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG,
IT SETS MY HEART A-REELIN'.
OH! OH! OH! OH!
OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL DRAG,
THAT FUNNY FEELING STEALING.
HEAR THAT TROMBONE BLOWIN', HON,
AIN'T DEM FIDDLES GOIN' SOME?
OH, SIR! OH, SIR! CUDDLE UP CLOSER,

SQUEEZE ME LIKE YOU WOULD A FLOWER,
MAKE A MINUTE LAST AN HOUR.
OH! OH! OH! OH!
OH! THAT HEAVENLY STRAIN,
IT MAKES ME FEEL SO FUNNY.
IF I EVER CRY, "DON'T PLAY IT AGAIN,"

JUST DON'T BELIEVE ME, HONEY,
OH, MY DEARIE,
CAN'T YOU HEAR ME CALLIN'?
COME UP NEAR ME,
CATCH ME, DEAR, I'M FALLIN',
OH! OH! OH! OH!
OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG.

(To the audience, over underscoring—the music for the verse of this song.)

I was midway through singing that song when somehow I knew—don't ask me how I knew it; I suddenly just knew--that Papa was gone. That he'd passed away. I would rather have believed that he and my brother Lew were out in the audience tonight, cheering for me. But somehow I was sure—don't ask me how I sensed it, because I don't really understand these things—that I'd be getting a telegram from Lew saying they'd never made the trip up to Connecticut. That Papa had taken ill, back in New York, and then slipped away.

FANNY BRICE & MADAME BORDONARO'S GALS:

OH! OH! OH! OH!
OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG,
IT SETS MY HEART A-REELIN'.
OH! OH! OH! OH!
OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL DRAG,
THAT FUNNY FEELING STEALING.
HEAR THAT TROMBONE BLOWIN', HON,
AIN'T DEM FIDDLES GOIN' SOME?
OH, SIR! OH, SIR! CUDDLE UP CLOSER,
SQUEEZE ME LIKE YOU WOULD A FLOWER,
MAKE A MINUTE LAST AN HOUR.
OH! OH! OH! OH!
OH! THAT HEAVENLY STRAIN,
IT MAKES ME FEEL SO FUNNY.
IF I EVER CRY, "DON'T PLAY IT AGAIN,"
JUST DON'T BELIEVE ME, HONEY,
OH, MY DEARIE,
CAN'T YOU HEAR ME CALLIN'?
COME UP NEAR ME,
CATCH ME, DEAR, I'M FALLIN',

OH! OH! OH! OH!
OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG.

(Everyone takes a bow; they exit, with FANNY BRICE leaving last. MADAME BORDONARO introduces FANNY to a very distinguished and prosperous-looking gentleman.)

MADAME BORDONARO: Fanny, we had a very special guest watching your performance tonight. May I present Mr. Florenz Ziegfeld Jr.

FANNY BRICE: *(Subdued.)* I'm not in the mood for gags tonight. What would the world's greatest theatrical producer be doing here, in this rinky-dink theater?

FLO ZIEGFELD. Miss Brice, I'd like to hire you, to appear in The Ziegfeld Follies.

FANNY BRICE: *(To MADAME BORDONARO.)* Madame Bordonaro, when you do a gag, you certainly know how to do it right. This fellow you've found even looks like Ziegfeld.

FLO ZIEGFELD. I can assure you, Miss Brice, this is no joke. You were charming tonight.

FANNY BRICE: You wouldn't kid a kidder, would you?

FLO ZIEGFELD. Whether you were being funny or serious, Miss Brice, the audience just took to you. They like you.

MADAME BORDONARO: Fanny, I invited Flo to see you. I knew him back in Chicago, before he was famous. It's time for you to move on. This must be the happiest day of your life.

FANNY BRICE: What would I do in the Follies?

FLO ZIEGFELD. The same sorts of thing you've been doing, but you'll be part of a much grander enterprise. I hire only the best--the best set designers, costume designers, songwriters, and performers. You write your own material, be any characters you want.

FANNY BRICE: You're famous for presenting the most beautiful girls in the world. Well, I ain't exactly beautiful. And you've never before had a singing comedienne.

FLO ZIEGFELD. Miss Brice, I aim to present the best performers in the world.

FANNY BRICE: Maybe you'd want my brother Lew, too. He's pretty good.

FLO ZIEGFELD. "Pretty good" isn't quite good enough. You'll be sharing a stage with the greatest stars working today.

FANNY BRICE: *(To EMMIE)* Emmie, I had no idea I was beginning an association that would last some 25 years.

FLO ZIEGFELD. By the way, Miss Brice--I particularly loved that last song you chose to sing, "Oh! That Beautiful Rag." You have terrific taste.

FANNY BRICE: Actually, my father picked that song.

FLO ZIEGFELD. Well, please tell him that HE has terrific taste. Come round to my theater on Monday. We're starting rehearsals right away.

FANNY BRICE: Thank you, Mr. Ziegfeld. And now, if you'll excuse me, I'll just need a little time to rest.

MADAME BORDONARO: Fanny, I bet you've dreamed for years of a night exactly like this.

FANNY BRICE: *(Quietly.)* Well, not exactly like this night. But thanks.

MADAME BORDONARO: Oh! I almost forgot. A telegram came in, Fanny, while you were performing your last number.

(She hands the telegram to FANNY, who holds it, staring at without opening it, as if dazed.)

Don't you want to read that now?

FANNY BRICE: Maybe later, Madame B. Actually, I already know what it says.

MADAME BORDONARO: Just think, Fanny--the next time I see you, you'll be starring in The Ziegfeld Follies.

FLO ZIEGFELD. A new chapter of your life is about to begin, young lady. When the new edition of the Follies opens in eight weeks, you're going to be the toast of Broadway. Now celebrate!

(MADAME BORDANARO and FLO ZIEGFELD exit. FANNY opens the telegrams, reads it quietly, pensively to herself. Then begins singing softly, slowly, sadly.)

SONG #18. "OH THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG-Reprise"

FANNY BRICE:

OH! THAT HEAVENLY STRAIN,
IT MAKES ME FEEL SO FUNNY.
IF I EVER CRY, "DON'T PLAY IT AGAIN,"
JUST DON'T BELIEVE ME, HONEY,
OH, MY DEARIE,
CAN'T YOU HEAR ME CALLIN'?
COME UP NEAR ME,
CATCH ME, DEAR, I'M FALLIN',
OH! OH! OH! OH!
OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG.

-END OF ACT ONE-

27 more pages of the script are in Act Two!