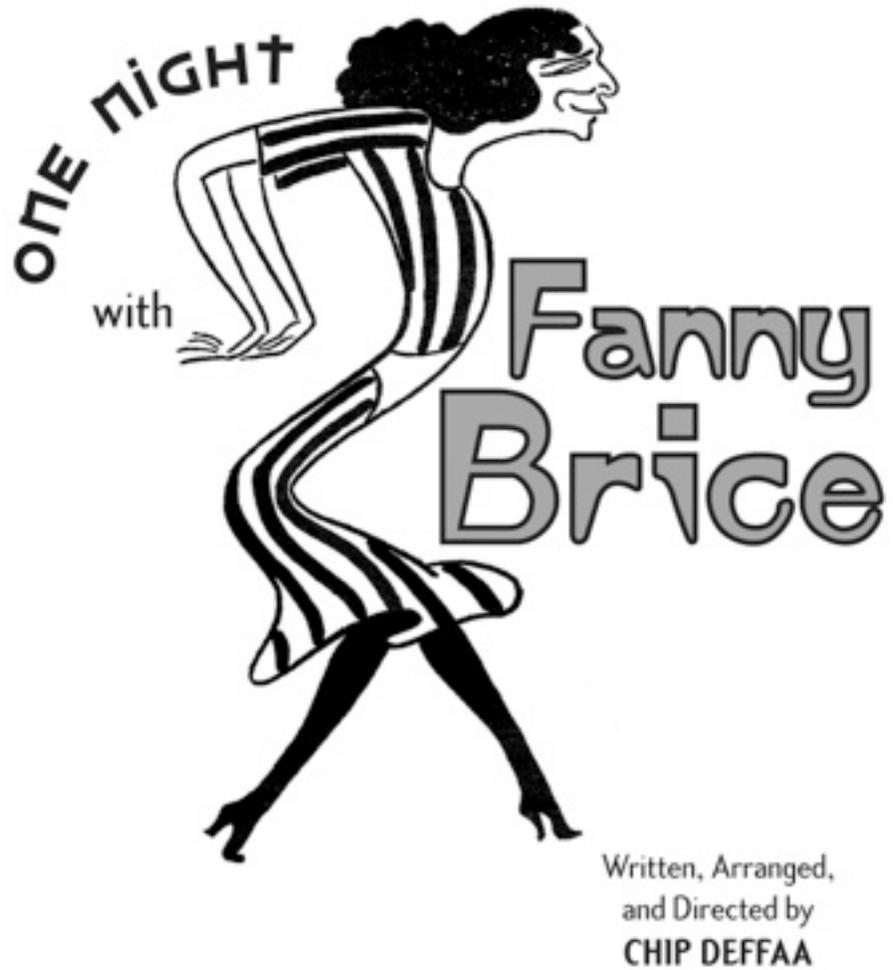
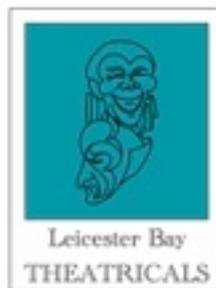


PERUSAL SCRIPT



A Solo Show

With songs from the repertoire of Fanny Brice



Salt Lake City

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ONE NIGHT WITH FANNY BRICE

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**For Max Beer,
a terrific actor and terrific friend,
who, by his presence, added class and magic and wonder
to the opening night of this play in New York....**

ONE NIGHT WITH FANNY BRICE

Musical Numbers.

Act One:

1. **“That Mysterious Rag”** (*words by Irving Berlin, music by Ted Snyder*)
2. **“I’m Always Chasing Rainbows”** (*words by Joseph McCarthy, music by Harry Carroll, based on a theme by Chopin*)
3. **“Bill Bailey, Won’t You Please Come Home?”** (*words and music by Hughie Cannon*)
4. **“Will You Love Me in December as You Do in May?”** (*words by James J. Walker, music by Ernest R. Ball*)
5. **“I’m Sorry I Made You Cry” (underscore)** (*music by N. J. Clesi*)
6. **“When You Know You’re Not Forgotten by the Girl You Can’t Forget”** (*words by Ed Gardenier, music by J. Fred Helf*)
7. **“Be My Little Baby Bumble Bee”** (*words by Stanley Murphy, music by Henry I. Marshall*)
8. **“Be My Little Baby Bumble Bee”–Reprise** (*words by Stanley Murphy, music by Henry I. Marshall*)
9. **“Lovie Joe”** (*words by Will Marion Cook, music by Joe Jordan*)
10. **“Rose of Washington Square”** (*words by Ballard Macdonald, music by James F. Hanley*)
11. **“I’m Always Chasing Rainbows”–Reprise** (*words by Joseph McCarthy, music by Harry Carroll*)
12. **“You Made Me Love You”** (*words by Joseph McCarthy, music by James V. Monaco*)
13. **“Oh! How I Hate that Fellow Nathan”** (*words by Lew Brown, music by Albert Von Tilzer*)
14. **“That Mysterious Rag”–Reprise** (*words by Irving Berlin, music by Ted Snyder*)

* * *

Act Two:

15. **“Second Hand Rose”** (*words by Grant Clarke, music by James F. Hanley*)
16. **“Baby, Won’t You Please Come Home”** (*words and music by Charles Warfield and Clarence Williams*)
17. **“Ja-Da”** (*words and music by Bob Carleton*)
18. **“My Man”** (*English lyrics by Channing Pollack, music by Maurice Yvain*)
19. **“My Man”–Reprise** (*English lyrics by Channing Pollack, music by Maurice Yvain*)
20. **“After You’ve Gone”** (*words by Henry creamer, music by Turner Layton*)
21. **“Rose of Washington Square”–Reprise** (*words by Ballard Macdonald, music by James F. Hanley*)
22. **Bows Music: “Rose of Washington Square”** (*music by James F. Hanley*)
23. **Exit Music: “I’m Sorry I Made You Cry”** (*music by N. J. Clesi*)

REVIEWERS HAVE SAID ABOUT *ONE NIGHT WITH FANNY BRICE*...

Jennifer Farrar of the Associated Press praised *One Night With Fanny Brice* as “a charming new musical. Written, directed and arranged by Chip Deffaa, the solo show chronologically covers Brice's immigrant childhood and long career in show business, and her tumultuous love life with faithless con artist Nick Arnstein. Deffaa has distilled Brice's busy life and career into a well-paced two-hour show.”

In The New York Times, Andy Webster wrote: “*It's to the credit of the actress Kimberly Faye Greenberg and the writer-director-arranger Chip Deffaa. that the solo show 'One Night With Fanny Brice' ducks the formidably long shadow of Barbra Streisand and 'Funny Girl,' the 1964 Broadway musical about Brice. 'Funny Girl' was a whitewash. 'One Night,' at St. Luke's Theater, delves deeper into her story.*”

Joe Franklin (Bloomberg Radio) hailed the show as “*fresh and impressive! A true Golden-Age-of-Show-Business love story. The audience was exhilarated! A personal triumph for author Chip Deffaa.*”

New York Theatre Wire's Paulanne Simmons wrote: “*Deffaa, whose credits include five different shows about George M. Cohan, 'The Johnny Mercer Jamboree' and the musical comedy 'The Seven Little Foys,' clearly knows how to mine the repertoire of stars for the appropriate gems. He also knows how to pace his show with ballads and upbeat numbers, quiet moments of reflection and exuberant hoofing. Fanny Brice has been dead for sixty years. But this season Brice will come alive again.*”

Elizabeth Ahlfors wrote in CurtainUp: “*Deffaa has deftly set up the scenes to lead into just the right song. An ASCAP Award-winning writer/director, Chip Deffaa continues to keep alive the excitement and drama of the years when popular entertainment was taking its baby steps. 'One Night With Fanny Brice' celebrates the essence and gusto of one talented American entertainer.*”

Daryl Glenn wrote in Nightlife Exchange: “*Visit St. Luke's Theatre and enjoy the closest proximity most of us will ever have to the incomparable Fanny Brice. The audience. seemed transported.*”

And famed mentalist The Amazing Kreskin commented: “*The story, acting, and music of 'One Night with Fanny Brice' gave me one of the best theatre experiences I've had in years. I was enchanted! No, you don't have to be a mentalist to predict that Kimberly Faye Greenberg and Chip Deffaa with their 'One Night with Fanny Brice' are destined for a tremendous future.*”

PRODUCTION HISTORY

ONE NIGHT WITH FANNY BRICE had its first public performance on April 4, 2010 at the Rosen Theater, in Wayne, NJ. **Chip Deffaa** was the writer, director and arranger; **Kimberly Faye Greenberg** played Fanny Brice; **Justin Boccitto** was the choreographer; **Cristina Marie** was the assistant choreographer; **Mark Goodman** was the music director; **Maryann Lopinto** was the videographer/photographer, assisted by **Robert Patrick**; **Lydia Gladstone** was the costume designer; **Floyd Busse** was the technical director; **J. K. Saleeby**, Aide-de-Camp. **Harvey Miller**, **Naomi Miller** and **Cheryl Wyles** coordinated the engagement.

ONE NIGHT WITH FANNY BRICE was subsequently presented by the American Century Theater (**Jack Marshall**, Artistic Director) at the Rosslyn Spectrum Theatre in Arlington, VA, opening November 5, 2010. **Esther Covington** played Fanny Brice; **Ellen Dempsey** was the director; **Tom Fuller** was the musical director; and **Gia Mora** was the choreographer.

ONE NIGHT WITH FANNY BRICE was next presented by the Phoenix Stage Company of Naugatuck, Connecticut, opening January 7, 2011. **Mary Cantoni Johnson** played Fanny Brice; **Sharon A. Wilcox** was the director and co-producer; **TJ Thompson** was the musical director; **Ed Bassett** was the set designer and co-producer; and **Renee Purdy** was the costume designer; **Agnes Duggan Dann** was co-producer; **Rachel Armour** was the stage manager.

ONE NIGHT WITH FANNY BRICE opened April 3, 2011 at St. Lukes Theatre, Off-Broadway in New York City. **Kimberly Faye Greenberg** played Fanny Brice, **Chip Deffaa** was the writer/arranger/director; **Richard Danley** was the music director/pianist (with **Jonathan Russell** on violin); **Justin Boccitto** was the choreographer; **Renee Purdy**, the costume designer; **Eric Johnson**, Assistant to the Director; **Josh Iacovelli**, stage manager/set designer; **Cristina Marie** and **Nicky Romaniello**, Assistant Choreographers; **Jack Keating**, production assistant.

ONE NIGHT WITH FANNY BRICE opened April 22, 2013 at the 13th Street Repertory Theater (Edith O'Hara, Founder/Artistic Director; Sandra Nordgren, Producing Artistic Director) in New York City. **Mary Cantoni Johnson** played Fanny Brice, **Chip Deffaa** was the writer/arranger/co-producer; **Sharon A. Wilcox** was the director; **Richard Danley** was the music director/pianist; **Renee Purdy**, the costume designer; **Liz Peak**, stage manager.

A second production of ***ONE NIGHT WITH FANNY BRICE*** premiered June 24, 2013 at the 13th Street Repertory Theater (Edith O'Hara, Founder/Executive Director; Sandra Nordgren, Producing Executive Director) in New York City. **Chloe Brooks** played Fanny Brice, **Chip Deffaa** was the writer/arranger/co-producer; **Rachel Hundert** was the director; **Richard Danley** was the music director/pianist (succeeded in the Spring of 2014 by **Phillip Cheah**).

The original cast album of ***ONE NIGHT WITH FANNY BRICE***, starring Kimberly Faye Greenberg, with musical accompaniment by Mark Goodman and Jonathan Russell, and produced by Chip Deffaa, has been released by Original Cast Records (OC3831), and is available from www.CDBaby.com, www.Amazon.com, iTunes, etc.

* * *

IF YOU'D LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FANNY BRICE...

Fanny Brice (October 29, 1891 – May 29, 1951) became the highest-paid American singing comedienne of her day. This musical play is inspired by her life story. For those who'd 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: Alftred 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).

* * *

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 – George M. Cohan, Al Jolson, Fanny Brice, Eddie Foy, Eddie Cantor, Jimmy Durante, Mae West, W. C. Fields, Will Rogers, Burns and Allen, Bessie Smith, Cab Calloway.... 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. (As a kid, I got to perform numbers like Irving Berlin's "You'd Be Surprised" in American Legion variety shows Fisher directed.) I loved seeing *Funny Girl* on Broadway, but Fisher explained to me that there was a lot more to Brice's story than that entertaining show suggested, and that Brice and Nicky Arnstein – who was then still alive, he noted – 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, her sister June, and their mother, Rose; he'd performed with them in his youth. "And I wish they'd found some way to at least mention Billy Rose, who was married to Fanny after Nicky; Billy was a character in his own right."

The late Robert Alexander – who was the biggest single influence upon me growing up, the best mentor in my youth – was able to fill in some gaps, too; he'd helped Billy Rose create his famed "Aquacade" show, back in the 1930's. And he certainly remembered well Rose, Eleanor Holm, et. al., speaking of them almost as if they were present, as if their activities of decades ago were fresh--as they were in his memories.

Having such personal connections to their era made Brice and her contemporaries feel closer to me. 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....

And I must say... Fanny Brice sure had something. Friends will drop by for a visit at my home today and I'll play 'em a 78 rpm record she made long before I was born, and she speaks to us, and reaches us. And for a moment, she's there; she's right there in the room with us.... Some plays are very hard to write; but this one-woman play, *One Night with Fanny Brice*, seemed to write itself.

Incidentally, I've written another musical play about Brice that is also published by Leicester Bay Theatricals: ***THE FANNY BRICE STORY***. That is a full-scale musical with more than 30 roles, which can be performed by anywhere from 15 players to 40 (or more) players. We had a cast of 16 in the premiere production.

MANY THANKS.

My gratitude to. the one and only **Carol Channing**—not just for sharing recollections of Brice 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; our faithful filmmaker/videographer-to-watch **Max Galassi**; the multi-talented performer/director/choreographer **Tommy Tune**, for sharing his ever-appreciated stardust; the late entertainer **Todd Fisher**, whose fascinating stories, songs, and dances from the vaudeville era—he was an eye-witness to showbiz history that I loved--meant so much to me; **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; **Jack Saleeby**, a first-rate talent, for his terrific energy; the always magical **Victoria Leacock Hoffman** for being who she is; the ever-inspiring **Matthew Broderick**, **Sarah Jessica Parker**, and **Toby Parker**, whose belief in my work has meant a lot. I value, too, the longtime friendship of **Herbert Goldman**, the definitive Brice biographer. He did an amazing job of research; anyone with an interest in Fanny Brice is in his debt. (We've known each other for some 25 years; I was happy to contribute a couple of rare Brice photos from my personal collection, for his terrific book.)

My thanks to the talented artists who've helped in workshopping and developing the Fanny Brice project with me, including: **Dea Julien**, **Farah Alvin**, **Hawkins Gardow**, **Michael Lavine**, **Liz Pearce**, **Emily Bordonaro**, **Aurelia Carter**, **Michael Townsend Wright**, **Jon Peterson**, **Ray Yucis**, **Ben Orlando**, **Amy Stiller**, **Theron Johnson III**, **Peter Dagger**, **Eve Prouty**, **Katie Branden**, **Brady Chin**, **Peter Charney**, **Danielle Tolep**, **Claire DeBenedetto**, **Lauren Moran Mills**, **Meryl Nagler Budnick**, **Rachel Hundert**, the astonishing **Chloe Brooks**. This play has been developed by Chip Deffaa Productions LLC (Chip and Deb Deffaa, principals). The music for this show has been prepared and edited mostly by **Donald Brown** and **Richard Danley**; they're terrific musicians and I'm grateful for their help. I'm indebted to violinist Jonathan Russell—a remarkably lyrical player, who improvised nightly throughout our original Off-Broadway run—for the violin parts. Additional music copywork was done by **Chase Baird**, **Evan Barker**, **Peter Ecklund**, **Ron Drotos**, 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; interns: **I. Palmer, M. Herwitz.**

Big thanks to: **Deborah Deffaa; Mike and Lois Libien;** the American Century Theater of Arlington, Virginia (**Jack Marshall**, Artistic Director; **Ellen Dempsey**, Artistic Associate); the **Phoenix Stage** and its co-founders **Sharon Wilcox, Agnes Duggan Dann, Ed Nassett; Mary Cantoni Johnson** (none better!); **Edmund Sutton** / Spitalfields Theatrical Ltd.; **Amie Brockway Henson**, Artistic Director of the Open-Eye Theater; the multi-talented **Martha Epstein;** Cracking Inc. (**Casey and Janell McCarroll**, principals); **Marilyn and Will Roy** / Ace-in-the-Hole Productions; the York Theatre. (**James Morgan**, Artistic Director); **Peter Sawyer**, President of the Fifi Osgard Agency, Inc; and **Edith O'Hara** and **Sandra Nordgren** of the one-of-a-kind **13th Street Repertory Company**, which feels like a second home for me; may they and their theater company be around forever!

Producer **Richard-Jay Alexander** has helped me more than he realizes. Thanks, too, to **Marty Jacobs**, who curates the Museum of the City of New York's Theater Archives (a great research resource); ASCAP's theater expert, **Michael Kerker**, who always has time to answer our endless questions; my valued friends at the Irish Repertory Theatre, **Charlotte Moore** and **Ciaran O'Reilley;** **C. M. Smathers**, whose words buoy my spirit; the esteemed **Chase Brock; Justin R. M. Eisbrenner** (such a good writer). Thanks, **Max** and **Julia Deffaa** for your audience-research assistance. Thank you, **Ben Youngstone** and **Sam McCoy**—my remarkable “co-inspirators”; I'm in your debt; I love your spirits.

I value, too, the input, insights, and help in various ways provided by my favorite director, **Okey Chenoweth;** my favorite graphic artist, **Howard Cruse**, and a few of my favorite actors, **John Lloyd Young, Santino Fontana,** and **Matt Nardozzi.** I appreciate, too, the various kindnesses of the talented **Paul Burchett, Zack Riopelle, Shoshana Bean, Will “Old Hickory” Conard, Michael Kasper, Cody Green, Giuseppe Bausilio, Jack Sprance, Lisa Lambert, Anna Holmes** (whom I hope to see play “Fanny Brice” someday), **Jim Caruso, Billy Stritch, Tyler DuBoys, Ralph Lampkin, Nat and Alex Wolff, Jamie DeRoy, Michael Caizzi, M. N. Dikegoros, Lynda Barry, R. Gopal, Cody Dericks, Joe Polsky, Chadwick Von Rankin, Jeremy Phelps, Mike Walker, Mike Ficocelli, Marci Schein,** and **Nicholas Gray.** Thanks to **Frank Avellino** for graphic design and layout. Thanks to producer **Ted Kurdyla** for his ongoing belief in me (and good heart). A very appreciative tip of the hat to publisher **C. Michael Perry** of **Leicester Bay Theatricals.**

Big thanks to one very supportive friend and backer who prefers to remain anonymous. (*Man, you know who you are!*) See you around Crater Lake sometime....

And--as always-- I'm most thankful for my wonderful, and quite spirit-filled family. I'm eternally grateful that my parents—the best in the world!--treated me to seeing *Funny Girl* on stage when I was a kid, too.... Who knew?

About the Playwright.

Chip Deffaa is the author of eight published books. And this is his eleventh published play. 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 age 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 London, England to Seoul, Korea. Deffaa has written and directed assorted other plays, including *The Seven Little Foys*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, *The Fanny Brice Story*, *Irving Berlin & Co.*, *Song-and-Dance Kids*, and *Theater Boys*. All of Deffaa's plays are available for licensing.

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. In addition, 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.

Chip Deffaa is represented by the Fifi Osgood Agency, New York City. For more info, please visit: www.chipdeffaa.com.

ONE NIGHT WITH FANNY BRICE

A Musical Play by Chip Deffaa.

ACT ONE

(We are in a theater; it is rather dark. On the stage, there is a “ghost light”—the work light that is traditionally left on in an empty theater, after hours, to provide a bit of illumination for safety’s sake, and it is lit up. On the stage, there might also be a few trunks, a chair and/or a stool, and a table scattered about—the sort of random clutter one might find in any old theater. Some vintage sheet music has been preset, too; it could be lying atop the piano or a table or a trunk. The pianist begins playing “That Mysterious Rag.” During the eight-bar instrumental introduction, as the general lighting begins to brighten, Fanny Brice walks on, wearing a vaudeville-era outfit—perhaps a dress evocative of the 1920’s, with a cloche hat. She sings a chorus, then begins speaking to the audience, while music continues as underscoring.)

(SONG #1. “THAT MYSTERIOUS RAG.”)

FANNY. *(Sings:)*

THAT MYSTERIOUS RAG,
WHILE AWAKE OR WHILE YOU’RE A-SLUMBERING,
YOU’RE SAYING, “KEEP PLAYING
THAT MYSTERIOUS DRAG.”
ARE YOU LISTENIN’?
ARE YOU LISTENIN’?
LOOK! LOOK!
YOU’RE WHISTLIN’
THAT MYSTERIOUS RAG,
SNEAKY, FREAKY, EVER MELODIOUS,
MYSTERIOUS RAG.

(Fanny speaks to the audience while the music continues softly—and slightly slower than before—as underscoring. The underscoring consists of the music corresponding to the verse, a full chorus, the instrumental intro, plus a safety vamp; Fanny delivers the following remarks to the audience over that underscoring, then sings one final chorus of the song.)

One Night with Fanny Brice by *Chip Deffaa*

FANNY. (*Speaking over underscoring.*) “That Mysterious Rag” was one of the first songs I ever sang professionally. My mother, Rose—a fiercely independent woman, and the sharpest judge of character I ever knew—raised us all to have a healthy respect for the mysterious. Well, she was a Hungarian Jew; so that sort of goes with the territory. Our family believed in ghosts and the supernatural, and such. My mother said I was born with a gift, a little psychic something; oh, she had that sixth sense, too, you know; my aunts had it. If you respect that gift, maybe it gives you a little edge in life.

(*Pointing to the “ghost light.”*)

Do you know what they call this? It’s a “ghost light.” They originally put these in theaters to ward off ghosts, sprits.

(*Calling out.*)

Well, it’s not working! I’m here, aren’t I? Miss Fanny Brice is back! At least for tonight.

(*She turns off the “ghost light.”*)

My friend Gypsy Rose Lee said she saw my ghost once. She told her maid—who had formerly been my maid: “Adele, I went out to the garage, and who do you think I saw sitting on the hood of the car? Miss Fanny Brice.” The maid quit.

Nicky Arnstein, the great love of my life, also thought he saw my ghost once. He told my brother, Lew, “I saw Fanny today. She just looked at me, like she was disappointed in me, maybe a little angry with me.” Lew said skeptically: “Fanny didn’t speak or sing? She took all that trouble to come back just so she could look at you reproachfully?” And Nick says: “I’d like to think I’m worth it.”

Oh, I could tell you so much about Nicky Arnstein. And I will, in a bit. He was the only man I ever loved. But I never liked him.

FANNY. (*Sings:*)

THAT MYSTERIOUS RAG,
WHILE AWAKE OR WHILE YOU’RE A-SLUMBERING,
YOU’RE SAYING, “KEEP PLAYING
THAT MYSTERIOUS DRAG.”
ARE YOU LISTENIN’?
ARE YOU LISTENIN’?
LOOK! LOOK!
YOU’RE WHISTLIN’
THAT MYSTERIOUS RAG,
SNEAKY, FREAKY, EVER MELODIOUS,
MYSTERIOUS RAG.

One Night with Fanny Brice by *Chip Deffaa*

FANNY. The happiest moments of my life were spent on stage. So why shouldn't I want to hang around here? Offstage, I had headaches, I had insomnia, I had neuritis. I worried about my man. With Nicky Arnstein, there was always something to worry about. But you give me a chance to perform, anywhere, and--bam!--everything feels like it's meant to be. It was like that for me, as far back as I can recall. Long before I even dreamed I could ever make performing my career--much less be a star. You think I ever imagined, as a kid, that I'd someday be the highest-paid American singing comedienne? Hah! My dreams weren't that big. In our family, it was my father who was the best at dreaming.

(She picks up and looks at a piece of sheet music that is lying atop the piano, or a trunk or table.)

Do you remember this one?

(SONG #2. "I'M ALWAYS CHASING RAINBOWS.")

FANNY. *(Sings:)*

I'M ALWAYS CHASING RAINBOWS,
WATCHING CLOUDS DRIFTING BY.
MY SCHEMES ARE JUST LIKE ALL MY DREAMS,
ENDING IN THE SKY.
SOME FELLOWS LOOK AND FIND THE SUNSHINE,
I ALWAYS LOOK AND FIND THE RAIN.
SOME FELLOWS MAKE A WINNING SOMETIME.
I NEVER EVEN MAKE A GAIN.
BELIEVE ME,
I'M ALWAYS CHASING RAINBOWS,
WAITING TO FIND A LITTLE BLUEBIRD IN VAIN.

(The pianist begins playing another chorus of the song--softer and slower--as underscoring. The pianist plays the music corresponding to the following lines of the chorus, while Fanny speaks the paragraph below, after which she finishes singing the song: "I'M ALWAYS CHASING RAINBOWS, / WATCHING CLOUDS DRIFTING BY. / MY SCHEMES ARE JUST LIKE ALL MY DREAMS, / ENDING IN THE SKY. / SOME FELLOWS LOOK AND FIND THE SUNSHINE, / I ALWAYS LOOK AND FIND THE RAIN. / SOME FELLOWS MAKE A WINNING SOMETIME. / I NEVER EVEN MAKE A GAIN. / BELIEVE ME.")

FANNY. *(Speaking over underscoring, remembering her father with great affection.)* My father loved that melody. Even today, when I hear it, I think of him. His name was Charles Borach; his friends called him "Pinochle Charlie." As a kid, I thought he was the best-looking man in the world: tall, slender, with a dapper mustache. Perfectly groomed. I never saw a better looking man until--years later--I met Nicky Arnstein when

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I was 20. Our family had a saloon, right across the street from Penn Station in Newark, New Jersey. And oh boy, my father believed in me. On Sundays, when the saloon was closed, I'd stand on top of the bar, and sing for my father. He'd say, "Fania Borach, my little golden child"—for I was still Fania Borach then; I hadn't yet Americanized my name to Fanny Brice—"someday you could be a star. (*Note: she pronounces the name FAN-ya BORE-ack.*)

FANNY. (*Sings:*)

I'M ALWAYS CHASING RAINBOWS,
WAITING TO FIND A LITTLE BLUEBIRD IN VAIN.

FANNY. Papa-- that sweet, gracious man--would throw coins at me--the first money I ever got for performing. This was the turn of the 20th century. I was nine, ten years old. And my mother, Rose Borach, would scowl at us. She labored so hard to earn those coins my father would throw at me. Mama ran the saloon, working 12, 14 hours a day. People called her "The Tiger"; that was Mama's nickname—"the Tiger."

Papa had such great warmth; his eyes twinkled; he glowed. Always. Papa never really worked. Oh, he liked the horses plenty; he drank a good bit; and he loved playing cards with his pals. Sometimes they'd all go off to the theater, too. Papa would bring me back sheet music from the theater, too. Oh, I was his pet all right. He'd say, "Sing to me, Fania!"

(SONG #3. "BILL BAILEY, WON'T YOU PLEASE COME HOME?")

FANNY. (*Sings, and struts:*)

WON'T YOU COME HOME, BILL BAILEY, WON'T YOU COME HOME?

SHE MOANS THE WHOLE DAY LONG.

I'LL DO THE COOKING, DARLING, I'LL PAY THE RENT.

I KNOW I'VE DONE YOU WRONG.

'MEMBER THAT RAINY EVENIN' I DROVE YOU OUT

WITH NOTHING BUT A FINE-TOOTH COMB?

I KNOW I'M TO BLAME.

WELL, AIN'T THAT A SHAME?

BILL BAILEY, WON'T YOU PLEASE COME HOME.

COME ON! TAKE IT HOME!

BILL BAILEY, WON'T YOU PLEASE COME HOME?

FANNY. My father had a good smile for everyone—a lot of charm. My mother never smiled. My mother, Papa's

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friends said, was “difficult.” Those card-playing buddies telling my father: “You’re married to a difficult woman, Charlie. When she nags you, ignore her. That’s in the Talmud: Nothing is worse for a man than a wife who nags.”

At night, I heard my parents argue. sometimes about sex. She’d say, “Don’t bother me, Charles Borach. Just let me be. The biggest mistake I ever made was marrying you. I could have married Carl the fiddler. But you said YOU would make a real living. I earn the money; you gamble it away. How are the horses running today, Charles Borach? You don’t have the strength to work? You say it’s your health, you need to rest? You’re lazy, Charles Borach, just like my father was.”

Oh, they fought over his drinking, too. He’d tell her, “I need it, Rose; it relaxes me, makes it easier for me to breath.” Papa had asthma so bad. So did my older brother Phil, who would die from it when he was just 20. Papa couldn’t sleep lying down; he slept in his chair at the table. He got winded so easily, it scared me sometimes; he couldn’t catch his breath. He’d say, “I just need to rest.” I’d sing for him.

(SONG #4. "WILL YOU LOVE ME IN DECEMBER AS YOU DO IN MAY?")

FANNY. *(Sings:)*

WILL YOU LOVE ME IN DECEMBER AS YOU DO IN MAY?

WILL YOU LOVE ME IN THE GOOD OLD FASHIONED WAY?

WHEN MY HAIR HAS ALL TURNED GRAY,

WILL YOU KISS ME THEN AND SAY,

THAT YOU LOVE ME IN DECEMBER AS YOU DO IN MAY?

(Dance break. The pianist plays the music corresponding to the lines “WILL YOU LOVE ME IN DECEMBER AS YOU DO IN MAY? / WILL YOU LOVE ME IN THE GOOD OLD FASHIONED WAY?” Fanny say to the audience, as she perhaps does a few dance steps: “Sometimes my kid brother Lew would dance a bit, while I sang. Me? I didn’t know from dancing yet.” And then Fanny continues with the song.)

FANNY. *(Sings:)*

WHEN MY HAIR HAS ALL TURNED GRAY,

WILL YOU KISS ME THEN AND SAY,

THAT YOU LOVE ME IN DECEMBER AS YOU DO IN MAY?

One night, after dinner, Mama surprises us all with a huge announcement: “Tomorrow we are moving to Brooklyn.” Papa says: “I don’t want to move to Brooklyn.”

She says: “YOU’RE not moving, Charles Borach. The children and I are moving. I can’t carry you any more, Charles. ” The next morning, Mama took all of us kids to Brooklyn. My Mama Rose—“The Tiger”—

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walked out on the handsomest, best-groomed man in the world.

I cried each night because Papa was gone. Until Mama slapped me: “Never ever let anyone see you cry.” I never saw Mama cry.

Occasionally, after we moved to Brooklyn, Papa would come around to our new home. “I’ve found a good job,” he told us proudly one day. “I’m a bookie.” He wanted to move back with us, but Mama would not have it. He’d bring me sheet music. I’d thank him and then leave the house. I couldn’t stay there, knowing he’d be gone soon, or I’d start crying.

But don’t feel sorry for me. I had a pretty good childhood. If there was anything we really wanted that Mama could not afford to buy, my brother Lew and I knew we could always steal it.

(SONG #5. "I'M SORRY I MADE YOU CRY"—underscore.)

(This instrumental underscoring starts now; it should be played softly under the dialogue.)

FANNY. One night when I was 14 and Lew was 13, Lew took me down to Keeney’s vaudeville theater. Their amateur-night shows were a big deal in Brooklyn.

And from the wings, I am watching this terrible amateur perform. The audience is throwing rotten tomatoes at him. Keeney says to me: “You’re next.”

I’m about to tell him, “No way-- I’m not going out there,” when I see—in the wings on the other side of the stage—this old lady, dressed all in black crinoline, and she’s staring at me oddly, and smiling and nodding, as if to tell me, “Say yes, you can do it.” And I’m affected by her. *(The underscoring stops.)*

I step cautiously out on stage, as Keeney introduces me to the audience: “Miss Fania Borach.”

The audience begins a chant: “Bore-Act! Bore-Act! Bore-Act!” .

I step to the very edge of the stage and look down, nervously.

Someone yells, “Jump! Jump!”

And I glance at the wings, and this old, old woman, all in black crinoline, is smiling kindly at me and nodding, like I got a future. I close my eyes and begin to sing:

(SONG #6. “WHEN YOU KNOW YOU’RE NOT FORGOTTEN BY THE GIRL YOU CAN’T FORGET.”)

FANNY. *(Sings.)*

WHEN YOU KNOW YOU’RE NOT FORGOTTEN
BY THE GIRL YOU CAN’T FORGET;
WHEN YOU FIND THE GIRL YOU LEFT BEHIND
IS THINKING OF YOU YET;
‘ROUND YOUR HEART A FEELING STEALING

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COMES TO DRIVE AWAY REGRET.
WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT FORGOTTEN
BY THE GIRL YOU CAN'T FORGET.

(The music continues as underscoring.)

FANNY. *(Speaking over underscoring.)* And behind me, Lew is doing a nice little soft-shoe dance. And then I hear that wonderful sound—someone has thrown a coin, and it's landing at my feet. And another! And another! They like me! The coins are coming, I'm singing, and—without missing a word—I'm thanking the audience, and bending down and picking up the coins. I'm in heaven. *(And now Fanny goes back into the song, with spoken interjections as she picks up coins being thrown at her.)*

FANNY. *(Sings: _*
'ROUND YOUR HEART A FEELING STEALING
COMES TO DRIVE AWAY REGRET.

Thank you!

WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT FORGOTTEN
BY THE GIRL YOU CAN'T FORGET.

Oooh, a nickel!

WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT FORGOTTEN
BY THE GIRL YOU CAN'T FORGET.

Can you believe it, folks? Dimes! Now, if someone wants to throw me two-bits, I could buy my poor starving mother some bagels, some lox, maybe a little herring would be nice. Ah, yes. Thanks!

'ROUND YOUR HEART A FEELING STEALING
COMES TO DRIVE AWAY REGRET.

Mama's eatin' good tonight!

WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT FORGOTTEN
BY THE GIRL YOU CAN'T FORGET.

WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT FORGOTTEN
BY THE GIRL YOU CAN'T FORGET.

FANNY. And now people are shouting, "Encore! Encore!" I tell everyone: "I don't got an encore. What do you want from my young Jewish life?"

I strut into the wings; I've never been happier, and that old lady in black is smiling at me, like I done good. As I pass her, I hear her say softly but clearly: "The men who run this world will cheat you if they can." A strange thing to say. Lew hugs me--we have a fortune in change. And I turn to show the old lady our money,

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but she's vanished. "The men who run this world will cheat you if they can."

At night's end, Keeney tells the audience that I've won the theater's grand prize—\$10. And this is 1906--there are plenty of grown men working in factories for \$7 a week.

Keeney invites me into his office. He says he wants to manage me—get me jobs, take a commission. But suddenly I think of that old lady in black and I can't help blurting out, "The men who run this world will cheat you if they can."

Keeney says, "I take it you were a fan of Maude Beckett. Oh, Maude was great, wasn't she?"

I shrug. I don't know what he's talking about.

He says, "That line you just quoted is her closing line from 'The Widow Returns.' She toured in that play for years. You know, she gave her very last performance right in this theater."

Suddenly I have no doubt who I'd seen. I tell Keeney: "Maude Backett died in this theater, didn't she?" I am convinced that the ghost of this actress is trying to help me.

Keeney looks uncomfortable. He changes the subject: "Fania, the other thing I wanted to tell you is this--a real performer never picks up money until after the song is over. That's the mark of a real professional; you never pick up the coins people throw until you've finished singing. Tomorrow, it's amateur night at another theater I own, the Alhambra. I want you there, singing the same number."

The next night, Lew and I behaved like true professionals. Neither of us picked up any of the coins people were throwing as we performed. And while we were being the true professionals Keeney wanted, Keeney's stagehands were busy grabbing up every coin for him. Lew and I wound up getting nothing.

FANNY. (*Sings:*)

WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT FORGOTTEN
BY THE GIRL YOU CAN'T FORGET.

FANNY. For the next couple of years, I'd audition for other men, but nothing seemed to work out. I'd get hired, and then soon get fired, told I wasn't good enough. I hoped someone would eventually recognize my talents.

Madame Elisa Friedman did. Her ads in the trade papers said "auditions by appointment only." When I telephoned, she said she could see me at once at a restaurant on Second Avenue. I get there, she's eating stuffed cabbage, some kasha varnishkes. She looks up, and immediately she is impressed, she is amazed:

"Such a bearing! Such a carriage! Such a bone structure! My dear, you do not even need to audition. There's a place in the theater for you. My theatrical company is my family. And I welcome you into my family. You look starved; have some kasha."

I say, "Tell me about the part I'll be playing."

She says: "I look at you and see myself at your age, exactly. You have such a burning desire to perform. But men have cheated you! Men have lied to you! Men have taken advantage of you! So why not give a woman a chance?"

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“I am offering you a run-of-the-play contract to tour with me in ‘The Royal Slave.’” I shrug. “My dear, this is my 23rd year, touring in ‘The Royal Slave.’ I play the ingenue. You’ve never heard of Madame Friedman? I am world famous.

(Fanny obviously doesn’t recognize the name.)

I also tour sometimes under the name of Madame Lambert. And sometimes under the name of Madame McNibby. I can see you were raised in a vacuum bottle.

“Nevertheless, I am going to add a small but exciting role for you, in full costume. I will pay you 25 cents per show.”

I mutter that’s awfully little pay. She nudges me to try the kasha varnishkes. Not bad.

She tells me: “But wait! It gets even better. While we tour, you will be learning from me everything you will ever need to know about acting. And I’ve worked with actors like Barrymore, Booth, Bernhardt, and Thomashevsky.”

“You’ve worked with Barrymore, Booth, Bernhardt, and Thomashevsky?”

“With actors just like them. I can offer you my complete 90-day course in theatrical instruction, in person, for just \$90.”

I tell her I have no money. She encourages me to also try the cabbage. “Kasha without cabbage is nothing; it’s like eggs without onions.” The stuffed cabbage is pretty good.

“Fania, tell no one! I am going to offer you the exact same, complete 90-day course in theatrical instruction, in just 30 days, for just \$30.”

I persuade my mother to pay her the \$30. My mother says: “If I’m paying that woman \$30, she had better teach you everything there is to know about acting.”

So I go out on the road. Every actor in the troupe, I discover, is paying Madame Friedman something to teach them everything there is to know about acting. Madame Friedman tells us all, “You will learn by doing.”

In the show, I play an alligator. I have no lines. I am also given responsibility for all of the theater company’s props, wigs, and costumes. And for personally carrying Madame Friedman’s luggage. I am learning by doing.

Within a few weeks, though, when we’re in Slatington, Pennsylvania, the whole tour goes bust. No more bookings. We have to sneak out of McCarroll’s Hotel without paying our bills.

Madame Friedman tells me to audition for a burlesque troupe run by a friend of hers.

I say: “I’d never be accepted; the girls in burlesque are all beautiful and sexy.”

“Hah! They only look that way. Fania, go to the audition believing that you are desirable. And pick a new name for yourself; you’re making a fresh start.”

The next day, auditioning under my newly chosen name of Fanny Brice, I get cast right away. For the next couple of years, I’m tourin’ in burlesque!

Picture me, part of a scantily dressed chorus, singing invitingly:

(SONG #7. BE MY LITTLE BABY BUMBLE BEE.)

FANNY. (*Sings:*)

BE MY LITTLE BABY BUMBLE BEE,
BUZZ AROUND, BUZZ AROUND, KEEP A BUZZIN' ROUND.
BRING HOME ALL THE HONEY, LOVE, TO ME,
LITTLE BEE, LITTLE BEE, LITTLE BEE.
LET ME SPEND THE HAPPY HOURS
ROVING WITH YOU MONGST THE FLOW'RS,
AND WHEN WE GET WHERE NO ONE ELSE CAN SEE.
CUDDLE UP, CUDDLE UP, CUDDLE UP.
BE MY LITTLE BABY BUMBLE BEE,
BUZZ AROUND, BUZZ AROUND, KEEP A BUZZIN' ROUND.
WE'LL BE JUST AS HAPPY AS CAN BE,
YOU AND ME, YOU AND ME, YOU AND ME.
HONEY KEEP A BUZZIN' PLEASE,
I'VE GOT A DOZEN COUSIN BEES,
BUT I WANT YOU TO BE MY BABY BUMBLE BEE.

FANNY. Our burlesque show is playing in Albany, one cold night in February, when this fellow comes to the stage door, and invites me to have dinner with him. I'm 18, no one's ever asked me out before. His name is Frank White. He tells me he owns three barbershops

Right away, I let him know: "I'm a good girl. I'm not doin' nothin' with nobody until I'm married." "OK," he says, "I'll marry you."

The other gals tell me that any man who owns three barbershops is a catch. No gal in burlesque is ever going to do better. But one gal cautions me: "The first time you have sex is going to hurt like hell. You won't even be able to walk right the next day."

So I tell Frank--this is February--"I'll marry you now, but I won't consummate the marriage until the season is over, in June. I don't want to risk losing any work." He says "OK." The whole burlesque troupe attends our wedding.

After a few days, though, his friends are mocking him because he hasn't consummated the marriage. He

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refuses to wait any longer. He grabs me, says that as his wife I am legally obligated to fulfill my wifely duties. I have to obey him! He has friends who are cops. He leads me home, like a lamb to the slaughter.

While he is on top of me—heavy, grunting, forcing himself roughly, the stubble on his chin chafing me, his thick breath in my face—I am thinking of how my good nightgown is being ruined. When he is finally finished, he holds up high the bloodstained nightgown like a trophy, he says he has to take it to show his people.

For three horrible nights, I endure him in silence—this rough, grunting, heavy man on top of me. And three nights is all I can take. No more! I tell him it's over. We agree to divorce.

I had my work, and that was enough. Some girls in our burlesque troupe were good dancers. I traded them underwear that my mother made, for dance lessons. When I got to be the best dancer in the company, I demanded a featured spot. I chose to wear men's formal attire—top hat, white tie, and tails. The other girls, in their scanties, are backing me, and I'm featured, tapping--

(SONG #8. "BE MY LITTLE BABY BUMBLE BEE"-Reprise.)

FANNY. *(Sings:)*

BE MY LITTLE BABY BUMBLE BEE.

(And now the pianist keeps playing—in somewhat staccato fashion, for tap-dancing--the music for the remainder of the chorus, and Fanny dances to it. So we see her dance for a full chorus. If the director or choreographers prefers, this dance break can be shortened to a half chorus.)

Flo Ziegfeld—the greatest musical-theater producer I ever knew—discovered me in burlesque. He wanted me for his famed "Follies." I never in my life met another man like Ziegfeld. Even Mama adored him. Money meant nothing to him. He just wanted the best people around him—the best singers, actors, designers, musicians.

Ziegfeld's biggest financial backer hated the fact that Ziegfeld had hired me out of burlesque—to him, that was the gutter. And he hated that Ziegfeld had hired the gifted black songwriters Joe Jordan and Will Marion Cook to write for the Follies. Show business was racially segregated back then. And, boy! This backer fumed when he heard me rehearsing the song that these two black men had written for me:

(SONG #9. "LOVIE JOE.")

FANNY. *(Sings:)*

OH! LOVIE JOE, THAT EVER LOVIN' MAN
FROM WAY DOWN HOME IN BIRMINGHAM.
HE CAN DO SOME LOVIN' AN' SOME LOVIN' SHO',

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AN' WHEN HE STARTS TO LOVE ME, I JES' HOLLER MO'.

FANNY. This backer tells Ziegfeld with disgust: "That singer and that song are low-class. Get rid of them! I want a high-class singer. She should be singing an art song." Ziegfeld refuses. The backer argues that if I'm going to sing the song, I should at least articulate the words "properly." He says I can't sing:

FANNY. *(Sings:)*

HE CAN DO SOME LOVIN' AN' SOME LOVIN' SHO',
AN' WHEN HE STARTS TO LOVE ME, I JES' HOLLER MO'.

FANNY. To the backer, that sounds far too black. He insists I should sing, with propriety:

FANNY. *(Sings, with exaggerated dignity, with a propriety suggestive of operetta:)*

OH! HE CAN DO SOME LOVING, AND SOME LOVING SURE.
AND WHEN HE STARTS TO LOVE ME, I JUST HOLLER MORE.

FANNY. Well, this guy is full of it, and I helpfully inform him of that fact. I tell him, "You don't know what the fuck you're talking about."

He says, "Where I come from, the better people do not use that word."

I tell him, "I don't trust anyone who can't say the word 'fuck.'"

Ziegfeld suggests a time-out, and tells me privately, "Fanny, in rehearsals, sing it the way he wants. On opening night, follow your instincts."

So at every rehearsal I sing "Lovie Joe" all prim and proper—and totally wrong—just as this rich guy demands. Then comes opening night. I stroll on stage and sing.

(The above speech could be edited to the following, if the language would not be acceptable in your area:)

FANNY. Well, this guy is full of it, and I helpfully inform him of that fact.

Ziegfeld suggests a time-out, and tells me privately, "Fanny, in rehearsals, sing it the way he wants. On opening night, follow your instincts."

So at every rehearsal I sing "Lovie Joe" all prim and proper—and totally wrong—just as this rich guy demands. Then comes opening night. I stroll on stage and sing.

(Then continue on as written)

FANNY. *(Sings, with gusto:)*

OH! LOVIE JOE, THAT EVER LOVIN' MAN
FROM WAY DOWN HOME IN BIRMINGHAM.

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HE CAN DO SOME LOVIN' AN' SOME LOVIN' SHO',
AN' WHEN HE STARTS TO LOVE ME, I JES' HOLLER MO'.
HE'S MASTER OF THEM EVER LOVIN' ARTS.
WHEN ALL YOUR LOVERS QUIT
THAT'S WHEN HE STARTS.
AN' WHEN I HEAR THE WEDDIN' MARCH SO GRAN',
I JES GET MYSELF A WEDDIN' BAN'.
TAKE IT TO THE PREACHER MAN,
MAKE THE PREACHER UNDERSTAND
HE MUS' JOIN ME HAN' IN HAN'
TO LOVIE JOE, THAT EVER LOVIN' MAN.

FANNY. "Wait! Wait! The management has been asking me to sing an art song. Well, I think I found one."

(SONG #10. "ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE.")

FANNY. *(Sings:)*
ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE,
A FLOWER SO FAIR
SHOULD BLOSSOM WHERE THE SUN SHINES.
ROSE, FOR NATURE DID NOT MEAN
THAT I SHOULD BLUSH UNSEEN,
BUT BE THE QUEEN OF SOME FAIR GARDEN.

(Instrumental break, while the pianist plays the music corresponding to the lines: ROSE, I'LL NEVER DEPART, / BUT DWELL IN YOUR HEART, / YOUR LOVE TO CARE. This will serve as underscoring while Fanny speaks the following lines, before going back to singing the song.)

FANNY. *(Speaking to the audience, over the underscoring.)* Can you believe it? I've got producers trying to tell me what to sing. As if I don't got enough trouble just trying to please my mother, who's sitting right out over there tonight, watching me.

(Mock dramatics.)

Oh, the pressure! How we suffer for our art!

FANNY. *(Sings:)*

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I'VE GOT THOSE BROADWAY VAMPIRES LASHED TO THE MAST.
I'VE GOT NO FUTURE BUT OH! WHAT A PAST.
I'M ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE.
I'M ROSIE, THE QUEEN OF THE MODELS.
I USED TO LIVE UP IN THE BRONX.
BUT I WANDERED FROM THERE
DOWN TO WASHINGTON SQUARE
AND BOHEMIAN HONKY TONKS.
ONE DAY I MET HARRISON FISHER.

(Spoken aside.)

–the artist!

SAID HE, “YOU’RE LIKE THE ROSES, THE STEMS.
I WANT YOU TO POSE FOR A PICTURE ON THE COVER
OF JIM JAM JEMS.”
AND THAT’S HOW I FIRST GOT MY START.
NOW MY LIFE IS DEVOTED TO ART.
THEY CALL ME ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE.
I’M WITHERING THERE.
IN BASEMENT AIR I’M FADING.
ROSE, WITH PLAIN OR FANCY CLOTHES;
THEY SAY MY ROMAN NOSE,
IT SEEMS TO PLEASE ARTISTIC PEOPLE.
BEAUX, I’VE PLENTY OF THOSE,
WITH SECOND-HAND CLOTHES
AND NICE LONG HAIR.

(Dance break, while the pianist plays the music corresponding to the lines: I'VE GOT THOSE BROADWAY VAMPIRES LASHED TO THE MAST. / I'VE GOT NO FUTURE BUT OH! WHAT A PAST. / I'M ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE.)

I'VE GOT THOSE BROADWAY VAMPIRES LASHED TO THE MAST.
I'VE GOT NO FUTURE BUT OH! WHAT A PAST.
I'M ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE.

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(She raises a hand to her brow—like for a salute--winks, and offers a salute to the audience; that little wink and salute was a signature gesture of Brice's, a way of appreciatively acknowledging her public.)

FANNY. “Ain’t that a song, folks! Ain’t that a song!”

Flo Ziegfeld was to be, by far, the most important producer in my career. I’d be with him, off and on, for over 20 years

Ziegfeld gave me such freedom. I could sing what I wanted, spoof who I wanted. I’d be a phony evangelist, Soul-Savin’ Sadie—inspired by Sister Aimee Semple McPherson. “I’m selling salvation, and making it pay!” Or a master of modern dance—my take on Martha Graham.

(She strikes a Graham-esque pose.)

I could be a little kid taking ballet lessons, or that kid’s overly-protective mother: “Watch out, dolling! Make sure you don’t break your technique!”

The only sad part was, just as I was breaking through big, just when I was starting to feel so good about the future, my father died. He was barely 50.

SONG #11. “I’M ALWAYS CHASING RAINBOWS”-Reprise.)

FANNY. *(Sings:)*

SOME FELLOWS LOOK AND FIND THE SUNSHINE,
I ALWAYS LOOK AND FIND THE RAIN.

(The pianist plays 12 bars of underscoring.)

FANNY. *(Speaking over underscoring.)* That damned asthma took him. I was shaken. I respected Mama. But I always felt Papa loved me. Mama couldn’t show much love. When Papa died, I cried hard—just at home, you know, not at the funeral. My Mama taught her kids—your real feelings must always be private.

FANNY. *(Sings:)*

I’M ALWAYS CHASING RAINBOWS,
WAITING TO FIND A LITTLE BLUEBIRD IN VAIN.

I certainly wasn’t looking for any romance—I was still in mourning—when I chanced to meet Nicky Arnstein. The first thing he told me was that he loved horse races. And, he added buoyantly, “I never bet on a loser; what would be the point? I can always tell if I’m looking at a winner.”

He was older than me—at least ten years older. He was the best-looking man I’d ever met: tall, slender, a dapper mustache; meticulous. And with an infinite capacity for dreaming.

He came to the show again and again. Just to see me. He told me that when he sat in the theater, he felt I was singing just for him. “Sing for me, Fanny!” And I WAS singing just for him. There were even some

performances when I actually left the stage, walked out into the house, and sang right to him in his seat.

(SONG #12. "YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU.")

FANNY. *(Sings:)*

YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU.

I DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT, I DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT.

YOU MADE ME WANT YOU,

AND ALL THE TIME YOU KNEW IT, I GUESS YOU ALWAYS KNEW IT.

YOU MADE ME HAPPY SOME TIMES, YOU MADE ME GLAD.

BUT THERE WERE TIMES, DEAR, YOU MADE ME FEEL SO BAD.

YOU MADE ME SIGH FOR I DIDN'T WANT TO TELL YOU,

I DIDN'T WANT TO TELL YOU.

I WANT SOME LOVE THAT'S TRUE,

YES I DO, DEED I DO, YOU KNOW I DO.

GIVE ME, GIVE ME WHAT I CRY FOR,

YOU KNOW YOU GOT THE BRAND OF KISSES THAT I'D DIE FOR.

YOU KNOW YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU.

(The melody continues as underscoring.)

FANNY. *(Speaking over underscoring.)* So Nick moves in with me. We live together, just as if we were married. And Nick is teaching me things, constantly. What wines I should order, how I should fix my hair. He finds me top stylists who make custom gowns for me. I'm honored that such a gorgeous man, who could have chosen anyone, has chosen me.

(The underscoring fades out.)

My mother, I should tell you, from the very first meeting, she hates Nick. "He's a phony, a silk herring."

I say, "Ma, you always tell me, 'Trust your instincts.' You say, 'Search your heart. How you feel about someone, that's how they feel about you.' Well I love Nick with all my heart. And I know he loves me, too."

"Fania, he's using you."

"Do you think he wants me for my money? Nick has money of his own."

"And we know that. how?" my mother says. "He gave up his place to live with us, in our little apartment?"

"Look at his clothes, his hair, everything about him. Everything about him is perfect. Right down to his fingernails."

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“Yeah, Nick has clean fingernails. So did your late father. That comes from not working.”

“Nick has a glow about him, always.”

“So did your late father. That comes from drinking.”

“You don’t like Nick—“

“Ehhhhh. He is charming; he could give lessons in charming,” Mama says. “But what does Nick do?”

Nick tells me: “Why, I’m. a promoter. I promote things. And very well, I might add. I’m good at what I do, Fanny. Always have been; always will. It’s a gift. I’ve walked with kings, Fanny. With kings. To be able to walk with kings, without losing the common touch; to me that is just so important.”

My mother wasn’t having any. “Where’s your money come from, Nick?”

“I’ve also done very well with gambling—with wisely placed wagers; with high-stakes card-games requiring nerves of steel; with knowing my way around horses.”

My brother Lew, I might add, always idolized Nick, felt privileged when Nick let him go to the track with him. My brother Lew even grew a mustache just like Nick’s.

Now Nick said he wanted to marry me, but six long years passed without him even setting a date. In the mean time, I got pregnant. Nick arranged for me to get an abortion.

Whether I was playing in the Ziegfeld Follies or headlining vaudeville bills in the off-seasons, Nick came to all of my openings. He’d say, “Where do you keep coming up with these brilliant bits?”

Whatever I sang or acted, whatever characterizations I created, there was always a little bit of me inside it. Oh, maybe exaggerated a bit for comic affect, like the Jewish accent I often used on stage. But there was always a little bit of me. That’s what kept it real. Nick loved when I’d sing.

(SONG #13. “OH! HOW I HATE THAT FELLOW NATHAN.”)

FANNY. *(Sings:)*

YOU REMEMBER NATHAN, WHO TREATED ME SO ROTTEN.

WHAT DID I GET FOR WAITIN’?

FOR WAITIN’ I GOT NOTTIN’.

I FEEL SO BAD, BUT HE DON’T CARE.

I’M A RAG, AND A BONE, AND A HUNK OF HAIR.

MY FOLKS ALL LAUGH BECAUSE THEY SAY A FOOL I WAS.

WHEN I ASK NATHAN WHEN WE’RE GOIN’ TO WED,

HE TELLS ME HE CAN’T THINK THAT FAR AHEAD.

OH! HOW I HATE THAT FELLER NATHAN.

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OH! HOW HE USED TO KEEP ME WAITIN’.

HE ALWAYS USED TO SAY, “I’LL MARRY YOU AND YOU MY DEAR,”

HE TOLD ME THE MONTH, BUT HE DIDN’T SAY WHAT YEAR.

OH! I’LL SUE HIM FOR THE BREACH OF PROMISE.

BUT I DON’T REMEMBER WHAT HE PROMISED TO DO.

FOR MY ENGAGEMENT HE GAVE ME A STONE THAT I SHOULD WEAR.

HE SAID, “IT’S NOT A DIAMOND BUT YOU KNOW THE THOUGHT IS THERE.”

OH! HOW I HATE THAT FELLER NATHAN

FOR MAKING ME LOVE HIM THE WAY I DO!

(The pianist plays the music as underscoring.)

FANNY. *(Speaking over the underscoring.)* I got four reasons for not liking him, and they're all the same. I could have married Meyer the Butcher, Jake the Plumber, Sam the Tailor, Louie the Lawyer. And no! Now I got nuttin'!

That's what I get for fooling around with a traveling salesman. And he's an independent salesman, too; he don't take orders from anybody.

He used to say that he'd lay down and die for me. But he won't stand up and work for me.

I thought he was going to marry me this winter. Because he always said, "It will be a cold day when I marry you!"

YOU SHOULD HEAR THE PROMISES HE MADE TO ME EACH DAY.

BUT NOW I KNOW I FELL FOR HIM, AND HE JUST LET ME LAY.

OH! HOW I HATE THAT FELLER NATHAN.

AND I’M GONNA RAISE MY KIDS TO HATE HIM, TOO!

FANNY. My Mama would tell me, over and over: “Fania, Nick is a bum. Getting rid of your late father, may be rest in peace, was the best thing I ever did. It hurt, just like it hurts to have a rotten tooth pulled by the dentist. But it needs to be done. Look at me today! I don’t have a single tooth left in my mouth, and I never felt better.”

“My teeth are just fine,” I tell Mama.

The only thing bothering me is. Nick sometimes disappears for days with no explanation.

(SONG #14. “THAT MYSTERIOUS RAG”-Reprise.)

FANNY. *(Sings:)*

THAT MYSTERIOUS RAG,
WHILE AWAKE OR WHILE YOU'RE A-SLUMBERING,
YOU'RE SAYING, "KEEP PLAYING
THAT MYSTERIOUS DRAG."

(Vamp.)

So I hire a detective. I tell him to find out if Nick could be cheating on me. Eventually this detective tells me, after Nick doesn't come home one night, "We followed him to this dame's place. We could see them standing together, talking, through the window. And then the lights went out, and we couldn't see any more."

I tell the detective: "You didn't see anything after that?"

"No, the lights went out."

"Then we don't really know what happened, do we?"

ARE YOU LISTENIN'?

ARE YOU LISTENIN'?

LOOK! LOOK!

YOU'RE WHISTLIN'

THAT MYSTERIOUS RAG,

(Vamp)

The detective says, "Wait! There's more. The man you know as Nick Arnstein, we've found, is known to some of his associates as Jules Ames, to others as Jules Arnold, to others as Jules Adams, to still others as John Wilson Adair."

SNEAKY, FREAKY, EVER MELODIOUS,

MYSTERIOUS RAG.

(Vamp.)

The detective says, "In the last decade, Nick has been arrested on serious charges of swindling in Paris, in Monte Carlo, and in London."

THAT MYSTERIOUS RAG,

WHILE AWAKE OR WHILE YOU'RE A-SLUMBERING,

YOU'RE SAYING, "KEEP PLAYING

THAT MYSTERIOUS DRAG."

(Vamp.)

The detective says, "Nick Arnstein is also a married man. He's not living with his wife any more – "Well, of course not, Nick lives with me; we have a gorgeous apartment in the city, plus a house in the country. "But

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Nick hasn't divorced his wife—Mrs. Carrie Greenthal Arnstein.”

ARE YOU LISTENIN'?

ARE YOU LISTENIN'?

LOOK! LOOK!

YOU'RE WHISTLIN'

THAT MYSTERIOUS RAG,

(Vamp.)

Nick is married?!? Well, THAT upsets me. I confront Nick. And HE gets angry at me for hiring a detective. Says it shows a lack of trust on my part that he doesn't find at all attractive.

As for his wife, Nick says, he's separated from her and plans to file for a divorce in the very near future.

Nick, my mother tells me, always has plans.

SNEAKY, FREAKY, EVER MELODIOUS,

MYSTERIOUS RAG.

(Blackout!)

(Note: If the play is performed in two acts—which is recommended -- this is the end of Act One, and there is now a brief intermission; the actor can, if you wish, change into a new costume during the intermission.... If desired, however, this play can be performed in one act, in which case, the action simply continues—without any costume change--after the blackout.)

END OF ACT ONE

14 more pages in ACT TWO