

PERUSAL SCRIPT

**“THE
IRVING BERLIN
RAGTIME REVUE”**

**Written, arranged, and originally directed by
CHIP DEFFAA**

**Music and lyrics by
IRVING BERLIN**



Newport, Maine

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THE IRVING BERLIN RAGTIME REVUE

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This one's for Lawson and Logan Saby

THE IRVING BERLIN RAGTIME REVUE

Conceived, written, and arranged by **Chip Deffaa**
Featuring the songs of **Irving Berlin**

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE:

1. "A SIMPLE MELODY"/"MUSICAL DEMON" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1914)
2. "WHEN THE MIDNIGHT CHOO CHOO LEAVES FOR ALABAMA" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1912)
3. "DAT DRAGGY RAG" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1910)
4. "OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG" (music by Ted Snyder, words by Irving Berlin, 1911)
5. "THAT MYSTERIOUS RAG" (music by Ted Snyder, words by Irving Berlin, 1911)
6. "SADIE SALOME GO HOME" (words and music by Irving Berlin and Edgar Leslie, 1909)
7. "THE INTERNATIONAL RAG" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1913)
8. "A PRETTY GIRL IS LIKE A MELODY" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1919)
9. "ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1911)
10. "AFTER THE BALL" (words and music by Charles K. Harris, 1892)
11. "EVERYBODY'S DOING IT NOW" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1911)
12. "EVERYTHING IN AMERICA IS RAGTIME" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1916)
13. "THE SYNCOPATED WALK" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1914)
14. "EVERYBODY STEP" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1921)
15. "SCHOOLHOUSE BLUES" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1921)
16. "I LIKE IT" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1921)
17. "YOU'D BE SURPRISED" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1919)
18. "I'VE GOT TO HAVE SOME LOVIN' NOW" (Irving Berlin, 1912)
19. "STOP! STOP! STOP!" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1910)
20. "SAY IT WITH MUSIC" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1921)
21. "HOMESICK" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1922)
22. "WHEN I GET BACK TO THE USA" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1915)
23. "I BEG YOUR PARDON DEAR OLD BROADWAY" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1911)

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ACT TWO:

24. "BRING ON THE PEPPER" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1922)
25. "SMILE AND SHOW YOUR DIMPLE" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1917)
26. "I WANT TO BE IN DIXIE" (music by Ted Snyder, words by Irving Berlin, 1912)
27. "ARABY" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1915)
28. "I WANT TO GO BACK TO MICHIGAN" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1914)
29. "MONTMARTE" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1922)
30. "I'M DOWN IN HONOLULU" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1916)
31. "THE DANCE OF THE GRIZZLY BEAR" (words by Irving Berlin, music by George Botsford, 1910)
- 32 "THE GIRL ON THE MAGAZINE COVER" (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1915)
- 32 a. "THE GIRL ON THE MAGAZINE COVER"—OPTIONAL REPRISE (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1915)

33. “WILD CHERRIES RAG” (music by Ted Snyder, words by Irving Berlin, 1909)
34. “SNOOKEY OOKUMS” (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1911)
35. “RAGTIME VIOLIN” (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1911)
36. “PIANO MAN” (music by Ted Snyder, words by Irving Berlin, 1910)
37. “WHILE THE BAND PLAYED AN AMERICAN RAG” (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1915)
38. “RAGTIME SOLDIER MAN” (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1912)
39. “SOMEONE ELSE MAY BE THERE WHILE I’M GONE” (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1917)
40. “PACK UP YOUR SINS AND GO TO THE DEVIL” words and music by Irving Berlin, 1922)
41. “EVERYTHING IN AMERICA IS RAGTIME”–FINALE REPRISE (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1916)
42. BOWS: “EVERYTHING IN AMERICA IS RAGTIME” (music by Irving Berlin, 1916)
43. ENCORE: “I LOVE A PIANO” (words and music by Irving Berlin, 1915)
44. EXIT MUSIC: “DAT DRAGGY RAG” (music by Irving Berlin, 1910)

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CAST OF CHARACTERS:

10 performers of varying ages--five male, five female

MISSY—14 -16

ALEX—11-12 (tap dancer)

EMMIE —16 -17

MICHAEL—16 -17

BEN—adult

SAMANTHA—adult

JESSEE—adult

BROOKE—adult

CHIP—adult

SOPHIE—adult

The first reading of “The Irving Berlin Ragtime Revue” took place May 12, 2013 at Ripley-Grier Studios, 520 Eighth Avenue, New York City, with the following cast:

Emily Bordonaro	Michael Kasper	Missy Dreier	Peter Charney
Casie Pepe-Winshell	Alex Craven	Tori Julia Weaver	Rachel Hundert
Chloe Brooks	Michael Townsend Wright	Joris de Graaf	Chip Deffaa

Our thanks to **Richard Danley** and **Don Brown** for their assistance with music preparation.

And to *Alex Dreier, Jack Saleeby, Matthew Nardozzi, Mary Cantoni Johnson, Sharon Wilcox, Agnes Duggan Dann, Matt ZanFagna, and Jonah Mayor* for their assistance in other ways.

The first production of “The Irving Berlin Ragtime Revue” opened November 9th, 2014 at the 13th Street Repertory Theater (Edith O’Hara, founder/artistic director; Sandra Nordgren, producing artistic director), 50 W. 13th Street, NYC, with the following personnel:

Emily Bordonaro (“Emmie”)

Michael Kasper (“Michael”)

Missy Dreier (“Missy”)
Jonah Barricklo (“Alex”)
Keith Anderson (“Chip”)
Maite Uzal (“Brooke”)
Michael Czyz (“Ben”)
Andrew Lanctot (“Jessee”)
Ann Marie Calabro (“Samantha”)
Rayna Hirt (“Sophie”)
Timmy Thompson (swing/ensemble)
Brandon Pollinger (swing/ensemble)
Marisa Budnick (swing),
Carolyn Montgomery-Forant (special guest star)

Chip Deffaa was the writer/arranger/director. *Richard Danley* was the music director. *Tyler DuBoys* and *Alex Acevedo* were the co-choreographers (with additional choreography by *Rayna Hirt*). *Kate Solomon-Tilley* was the stage manager. *Gina Colisimo* was assistant to the director. *Megan Ulan*, *Matt Nardozi*, and *Max Galassi* were production assistants. *Peter Charney* and *Brian Gari* were videographers; *Jonathan M. Smith* was production photographer.

A NOTE ABOUT THIS SHOW...

“THE IRVING BERLIN RAGTIME REVUE” is a lively celebration of Irving Berlin (1888-1989), focusing on the early years of his career, when he was known as “the King of Ragtime.” The most successful individual songwriter in American history, Berlin wrote about 1500 songs.

This song-driven show presents some 40 spirited musical numbers (plus commentary) from the first dozen or so years of Berlin’s long career. This revue includes the terrific songs that first put Irving Berlin on the map.

This show, written and arranged by Chip Deffaa, is fully protected by copyright. No changes may be made without written permission from the author or his representative. Here is a guideline as to what most likely will or will not be permitted. Generally speaking, requests to shorten the show by trimming or deleting material will be granted. (If you wish to shorten the show, it is possible to excise certain songs without damaging the continuity; of course, it is recommended that the shows be performed intact.) Generally speaking, requests to perform additional choruses of songs that are currently part of the show, in order to give greater exposure to singers/dancers, will also be granted. However, permission will *not* be granted to add to the show new dialogue or new songs. (Please note: if you wish to transpose any songs, to put them in keys better suited for particular performers in your cast, feel free to do so; you do not need to ask permission to transpose songs.)

All 10 of the performers must be able to put over vaudeville numbers with aplomb. All should have lots of personality. And your cast should have variety in terms of age, height, weight, personality, vocal colors. Ideally, some cast members (or--better yet--*all* cast members) ought to be able to tap dance. If none of your cast members can tap dance, you can still do the show successfully--simply substituting other forms of movement or dance for tap dancing. (Cast members can strut or march, or move to the rhythm in other ways, if they can’t tap dance.) But some of the songs really lend themselves wonderfully to tap dancing; the show will be stronger if your cast includes some members who can tap dance. It is also recommended that some of the dance moves reflect dances of the Ragtime Era (and samples may be found on YouTube.)

The youngest cast member, Alex, is a boy of about 11 or 12; ideally, he should be able to tap dance. Missy should appear to be slightly older than Alex (perhaps 13 or 14 or 15), but clearly still a kid. So that when, for example, they sing that they've got the "Schoolhouse Blues," we're seeing two kids—not adults—singing about school. (It adds cuteness and variety to the show to have some numbers done by talented younger people.) Emmie and Michael should be teens, perhaps 16 or 17 years old. The remaining cast members—Ben, Samantha, Jesse, Brooke, Chip, Sophie—are adults. The ten cast members are individuals, but at times they pair off for duets (Alex and Missy, Michael and Emmie, Ben and Samantha, Jesse and Brooke, Chip and Sophie); in casting your production, you may want to think about chemistry between performers who'll be singing duets with each other. (If you want to add a few ensemble members to sing and dance on some numbers, you could; in our original New York production, for example, we let two swings—understudies—perform in several of the bigger numbers: "Bring on the Pepper," "Everything in America is Ragtime—The Finale Reprise," and the encore number, "I Love a Piano." They did not have any spoken lines and they were never addressed by name; they just made the ensembles larger on a few numbers, for greater impact.)

Sometimes, in the show, cast members—singing and talking to the audience—are just being themselves; at other times (as clearly indicated in the script), they may be representing bygone performers associated with certain songs (such as, say, Mae West or Fanny Brice or Sophie Tucker), and it is good if they can, to some extent, suggest or evoke the particular performers cited. (Cast members may be able to find on YouTube samples of older performers' work for reference, if desired.)

Each performer will get some solo exposure within the show. Ben, for example, is featured on such beautiful solo ballads as "A Pretty Girl is Like a Melody" and "Someone Else may be There While I'm Gone"; Jesse sings "Montmartre" by himself, and solos, with backing from other cast members, on "When I Get Back to the USA"; Missy has a solo number, "Smile and Show Your Dimple"; Brooke is the main singer on "Wild Cherries Rag"; Chip solos on "Araby"; Michael is featured on "I'm Down in Honolulu" and "Ragtime Soldier Man"; Sophie sings "Ragtime Violin"; Emmie sings "After the Ball"; Samantha sings "That Mysterious Rag"; Alex is featured on "While the Band Played an American Rag."

Each performer will also get to be in at least one duet. Our two youngest cast members, Missy and Alex, for example, sing the duets "Schoolhouse Blues," "A Simple Melody"/"Musical Demon," and "I Want to Go Back to Michigan"; Emmie and Michael sing together on "When the Midnight Choo Choo Leaves for Alabam," "You'd Be Surprised," and "Snookey Ookums"; Brooke and Jesse sing together on "Stop! Stop! Stop!"; Samantha and Ben have the duet "I Want to be in Dixie"; Sophie and Chip sing together (in counterpoint) on "Pack Up your Sins and go to the Devil in Hades."

And each performer will have times when he or she is simply part of a larger ensemble.

Have fun with the show! There are a good 40 musical numbers. You'll find some famous songs here, plus some wonderful rarities and rediscoveries. There's plenty of variety, in terms of tempo, mood, and feel. There are zesty numbers that need to be belted out with verve; there are some beautiful, stately ballads. There's humor and pathos in the mix. And there are some irresistible, rollicking numbers that set toes a-tappin' a century ago--and will still do the same today. Trust the material. Irving Berlin had magic in him. And it still works!

* * *

A LITTLE BACKGROUND....

Some years ago, a prominent New York supper club, Michael's Pub, planned to do a salute to Irving Berlin, telling his life story via songs and commentary. I wrote a preview piece for The New York Post. (For 18 years I wrote about jazz, cabaret, and theater for The Post.) Berlin—who was then up in his 90s--read my article in The Post, and phoned the club's owner, Gil Wiest, demanding that the club cancel the tribute. Berlin made it clear that he did not want anyone telling his life story while he was alive—not in a cabaret show, not in a musical play, not in a motion picture, not *anywhere*; he zealously guarded his privacy. And just as zealously maintained control, as much as possible, over his music. The club cancelled the tribute. Berlin got the BBC to cancel a planned television dramatization of his life, too. And repeatedly turned down requests from Hollywood to film his life story. But his story is a fascinating one. And his songs—as this show remind us—remain irresistible.

* * *

A NOTE ON SETS AND COSTUMES, AND PERFORMANCE STYLES....

For our original New York production, we used a very simple unit set, with a wooden platform (a riser) upstage, to give us an additional level. Upstage left, we had a wooden folding screen covered with images of Berlin, and his songs, and his shows. We had a steamer trunk and a bench on one side of the stage; a steamer trunk, and a café table with two simple black chairs on the other side of the stage. (You need not follow our set plan, of course; we're just giving you one possible set design.) . Our goal was simply to give actors different places to sit or stand (a platform, a steamer trunk, a bench, a couple of chairs at a table), and to leave much of the stage open so we'd have room, if need be, for big dance numbers.

At the start of the show, our actors (for the most part) entered from the back of the house, walking up to the stage as they sang their numbers. Actors singing solos or duets might stand to deliver their numbers, while their castmates sat and watched.

For our original New York production, we chose a basic costume color scheme of Navy blue and white, to give the ensemble some unity. The gals wore Navy blue skirts and white blouses. The guys wore Navy blue trousers with white dress shirts. Individuals could add accents, as desired. ("Alex," for example, wore red suspenders, which added a dash of life and color. He also wore short pants, emphasizing his youth.) The outfits were ones individuals could wear today—but could just as well have worn in the Ragtime Era. We discouraged actors from wearing anything that seemed particularly contemporary; we wanted, at times in the show, to be able to evoke an earlier era.

The main advice I can give any performers doing this show is: Have fun with this! Play the numbers out to the audience. There are some high-spirited songs that need to be put over with brio, with robust vitality. You'll have plenty of opportunities to strut, to sing, and to raise the rafters. There are some quiet, pretty ballads for contrast, too. This show is a joy to perform.

MANY THANKS...

My gratitude, always, for their encouragement and wisdom, to the one and only Carol Channing and to master song-and-dance man Tommy Tune. My gratitude, too, to the ever-inspiring Matthew Broderick and Sarah Jessica Parker; to the irrepressible Victoria Leacock Hoffman; to the gifted Max Galassi, Tyler DuBoys, and Peter Charney—I'm glad to have them in my corner—for their ongoing assistance; to playful playwright/songwriter Lisa Lambert; to Matt Nardozi, a first-rate actor and valued friend; to my audience-research consultants, Max and Julia Deffaa; to Logan and Lawson Saby, and family; to Donnie, Earl, and Lucas Snyder; to Ava and Josh Schaller and family; to that spirit-lifting performer, Erich Schuett; to my Korean producer friend, Hansaem Song; to my British producer friend Edmund Sutton; to dancer extraordinaire Julius Taiber; to Hawkins ("Max") Gardow of AMDA; to director Okey Chenoweth; and to Keith Anderson of Univision. Big thanks to Amie Brockway Henson, Artistic Director of The Open Eye Theater, in Margaretville, New York, for helping me to launch my Berlin project. And to the late John Wallowitch, for prompting this whole project.

My gratitude, also, to the late George Burns and Todd Fisher, for the tales they so generously shared with me from their early days in vaudeville, which influence this work; to show people Santino Fontana, Jack Corbin, and Anthony Rapp, who've helped more than they realized; to ASCAP's unfailingly helpful musical-theatre expert, Michael Kerker, who's always been there to answer any questions. Thanks, too, for the help provided in various ways, by Danny Coelho, John Kander and his late partner Fred Ebb, Jack "Sprack" Sprance, Cody Green, Chase Brock, Jerry Herman, Bailey Cummings, Robert Dahdah, Jacqueline Parker (who was part of the original group that serenaded Berlin on Christmas Eve), Colin McLevy, Zack Riopelle, Bernice Burge, Max Beer, Gabriel Beer, Giuseppe Bausilio, Oscar Williams, Cole Williams, Joe Franklin, Will Conard, Howard Cruse, Joe Polsky, Aleksander Nick "King" Keeperman, Cody Dericks, Chadwick Von Rankin, Cole Patno, Jonah Mayor, Jamie DeRoy, Tommaso Di Blasi, Michael Kasper, Jonah Barricklo, Emily Bordonaro, Betty Buckley, Colin McLevy, Beth Bartley, Alec Bordonaro, Rayna Hirt, Michael Czyz, Matt ZanFagna, Ann Marie Calabro, Andrew Lanctot, Maite Uzal, Missy Dreier, Timmy Thompson, Ricky Schroeder, Mike Walker, Andris "Novs Scotia" Kundzins, Ben Youngstone, Samantha McCoy, Sharon A. Wilcox, Agnes Duggan Dann, Ed Bassett, Foster Evans Reese, and Danny Rabbit (for many kindnesses).

Richard Danley has been more than just a music director on this project; he's been a good friend and sounding board. And the thoroughly professional, unflaggingly supportive help of Don Brown, who's overseen music preparation (and much more), can't be beat. The show has been developed by Chip Deffaa Productions LLC (Chip and Deb Deffaa, principals). A tip of the hat to my favorite interns, Ian Palmer and Michael Herwitz.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON IRVING BERLIN AND HIS TIMES...

If you would like to learn more about Irving Berlin and his times, here are some recommended books:

- *As Thousands Cheer: The Life of Irving Berlin* (by Laurence Bergreen; New York, DaCapo Press, 1996)
- *Irving Berlin: Songs from the Melting Pot: The Formative Years, 1907-1914* (by Charles Hamm; New York, Oxford University Press, 1997)
- *Irving Berlin and Ragtime America* (by Ian Whitcomb; New York, Limelight, 1988)
- *Irving Berlin: American Troubadour* (by Edward Jablonski; New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1999)
- *Irving Berlin: A Life in Song* (by Philip Furia, with the assistance of Graham Wood; New York, Schirmer Books, 1998)
- *The Irving Berlin Reader* (by Benjamin Sears; New York, Oxford University Press, 2012)
- *The Complete Lyrics of Irving Berlin* (edited by Robert Kimball and Linda Emmet; New York, Borzoi Books, published by Alfred A. Knopf, 2001)\
- *Irving Berlin* (by Michael Freedland; New York, Stein and Day, 1983)
- *Irving Berlin: A Daughter's Memoir* (by Mary Ellen Barrett; New York, Limelight, 1988)
- *The Story of Irving Berlin* (by Alexander Woolcott; New York; DaCapo, 1983)
- *Irving Berlin's American Musical Theater* (by Jeffrey Magee; New York, Oxford University Press, 2012)

And these books offer additional valuable information on Berlin and his fellow songwriters:

- *Funny, It Doesn't Sound Jewish: How Yiddish Songs and Synagogue Melodies Influenced Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, and Hollywood* (by Jack Gottlieb; New York, State University of New York Press, 2004)
- *American Popular Song: The Great Innovators 1900-1950* (by Alec Wilder, edited and with an introduction by James T. Maher; New York, Oxford University Press, 1972)
- *A History of Popular Music in America* (by Sigmund Spaeth; New York: Random House, 1948)
- *They're Playing Our Song* (by Max Wilk; New York, Atheneum, 1973)
- *The House that George Built* (by Wilfrid Sheed; New York, Random House, 2008)
- *Word Crazy: Broadway Lyricists from Cohan to Sondheim* (by Thomas S. Hirschak; New York, Praeger Publishers, 1991)
- *The Melody Lingers On* (by Roy Hemming; New York, Newmarket Press, 1986)
- *Music in the Air* (by Philip K. Eberly; New York, Hastings House, 1982)
- *Show Biz: From Vaude to Video* (by Abel Green and Joe Laurie, Jr.; New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1951)

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**HERE'S WHAT THE PRESS HAS BEEN SAYING ABOUT
"THE IRVING BERLIN RAGTIME REVUE..."**

"Chip Deffaa, who wrote, arranged and directed this revue, has put together a masterpiece of musical theater.... Forty-four songs are presented in two acts in just under two hours, but the time flies because there is always an interesting storyline to keep the revue moving.... 'The Irving Berlin Ragtime Revue' is a huge hit. It deserves to run for years." –**Thomas Robert Stevens**, **"Applause! Applause!"**

"Chip Deffaa's high-energy 'Irving Berlin Ragtime Revue' drew packed houses throughout its run, in its world-premiere engagement. It proved such a hit that a cast album (to be released by Original Cast Records) is now in the works." –**Theaterscene.net**

"Stuffed with lively songs—more than 40!—wow!—Chip Deffaa's 'The Irving Berlin Ragtime Revue' revved up for a run that ends too soon.... but rarely runs out of smiles and spirit..... [It features Berlin's] very early numbers from the era of zippy, zestful zing: the time of ragtime. We get some selections rarely performed or recorded.... In fact, some have never been recorded—although that will be untrue, happily, in short order, as the company is recording a cast album....Oh, what a treat it is to hear rarities like 'The Syncopated Walk,' 'The Ragtime Soldier Man,' 'That Draggy Rag,' and 'Everything in America is Ragtime'.... there is a snazzy jazziness, a syncopation situation, and some choreography to add style and flair.... The highlight of the show is the Act Two opener... it looked like everyone had been given two shots of adrenaline.... It was simply terrific! When singers were in their most advantageous keys and material, and embraced the matter at hand, everything clicked.... the production floated on marvelous musical air and the 21st century... disappeared for a dreamy time warp.... Long live vaudeville!" –**Rob Lester**, **"Cabaret Scenes" magazine** (www.cabaretszenes.org)

"The Irving Berlin Ragtime Revue—packed with some 40 spirited numbers—drew standing-room-only houses throughout its limited engagement." –**Broadwayworld.com**

"Chip Deffaa has assembled an appealing group of young performers... that concentrates only on Irving Berlin's ragtime music..... It's amazing how prolific Berlin was considering that he couldn't even read music.... We are treated to over 40 songs with range from comedy to touching. This is a show that will appeal to everyone. I'm happy to report that an album is being produced even as I write." –**Eva Heineman**, **"Hi Drama"**

THE IRVING BERLIN RAGTIME REVUE

ACT ONE

Written and arranged by **Chip Deffaa**
Featuring the songs of **Irving Berlin**

(The pianist begins playing the introduction, then MISSY, a young girl, strolls on stage and begins singing, lyrically, nostalgically.)

(SONG #1. "A SIMPLE MELODY"/"MUSICAL DEMON.")

MISSY. *(Sings, freely:)*

(The verse to "A Simple Melody.")

IN DAYS OF YORE,
BEFORE THE WAR,
WHEN HEARTS NOW OLD WERE YOUNG,
AT HOME EACH NIGHT BY FIRELIGHT,
SUCH DEAR OLD SONGS WERE SUNG.
WHEN MOTHER WAS A GIRL.
SWEET MELODIES, THEIR MEMORIES
AROUND MY HEART STILL CLING.
THAT'S WHY I LONG TO HEAR A SONG
LIKE MOTHER USED TO SING.

(The refrain of "A Simple Melody":)

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

(ALEX, a boy of about 11-12 strolls on stage and begins singing, jauntily.)

ALEX. (Sings:)

(The refrain of "Musical Demon":)

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

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DO NOT COPY IN ANY MANNER!

I WANT TO LISTEN TO RAG.

(The refrains of “A Simple Melody” and “Musical Demon” are now sung--by MISSY and ALEX, respectively--in counterpoint. After they sing that in counterpoint, MISSY and ALEX speak to the audience as follows.)

MISSY. Ladies and gentlemen, my kid brother Alex also dances.

ALEX. Yep, yep! I sure do. And I love this ragtime number. Missy, will you start?

(The refrains of “A Simple Melody” and “Musical Demon” are now performed--by MISSY and ALEX, respectively--in counterpoint. Only this time, MISSY sings “A Simple Melody” and ALEX tap-dances to “Musical Demon.” When the number is over, they address the audience as follows.)

ALEX. And now let’s bring on Emmie and Michael.

EMMIE. I’m supposed to follow that?!? There’s no dignity in this business. Being upstaged by a little kid!

MICHAEL. I want it in my contract, next time; I will not have to follow a little kid.

EMMIE. I will not have to *share a stage* with a little kid.

MICHAEL. How old are you, kid?

ALEX. I’m 12.

(The actor can state his actual age; if he is, for example, 10, he can say he is 10; if he is 11, he can say he is 11.)

MICHAEL. I’m dying here; I’m dying!

ALEX. Performing’s in my blood. My great-uncle was in vaudeville, worked with Mickey Rooney.

MICHAEL. A tap-dancing 12-year old.

ALEX. *(To MICHAEL, helpfully.)* Just do the best you can.

MISSY. Ladies and gentlemen, we’re here to celebrate Irving Berlin’s ragtime numbers. This show, featuring a cast of 10--is really more about the songs than about us. Terrific early songs--

ALEX. --the songs that first put him on the map--

MISSY. -- from one of the greatest of all songwriters .

MICHAEL. *(To the audience.)* All right. Folks, here’s a number that Emmie and I first learned when we saw the great Judy Garland--

EMMIE. One of my favorite performers--

MICHAEL. --and the great Fred Astaire, one of MY favorite performers--do it in Irving Berlin’s film “Easter Parade.”

ALEX. Oh! That song’s one of my favorites, too--“When the Midnight Choo-Choo Leaves for Alabam.”

(SONG #2. “WHEN THE MIDNIGHT CHOO CHOO LEAVES FOR ALABAM’.”)

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*

WHEN THE MIDNIGHT CHOO-CHOO LEAVES FOR ALABAM’,

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)*

ALABAM', ALABAM',

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE,

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)*
WHERE'LL YA BE? WHERE'LL YA BE?

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*
I'VE GOT MY FARE.

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)*
SHOW IT TO ME! SHOW IT TO ME!

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*
WHEN I SEE THAT RUSTY-HAIRED CONDUCTOR MAN,

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)*
WHAT'LL YOU DO? WHAT'LL YOU DO?

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*
I'LL GRAB HIM BY THE COLLAR
AND I'LL HOLLER,
"ALABAM'! ALABAM'!"

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)* POW!

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*
THAT'S WHERE YOU STOP YOUR TRAIN
THAT BRINGS ME BACK AGAIN,
DOWN HOME WHERE I'LL REMAIN,
WHERE MY HONEY LAMB
AM.
I WILL BE RIGHT THERE WITH BELLS,
WHEN THAT OLD CONDUCTOR YELLS,
"ALL ABOARD! ALL ABOARD!
ALL ABOARD FOR ALABAM'."

(DANCE BREAK: EMMIE and MICHAEL, or perhaps just MICHAEL, will dance to the music that goes with the following lyrics: WHEN THE MIDNIGHT CHOO-CHOO LEAVES FOR ALABAM', / I'LL BE RIGHT THERE, / I'VE GOT MY FARE. / WHEN I SEE THAT RUSTY-HAIRED CONDUCTOR MAN, / I'LL GRAB HIM BY THE COLLAR / AND I'LL HOLLER, / "ALABAM'! ALABAM'!" / THAT'S WHERE YOU STOP YOUR TRAIN / THAT

*BRINGS ME BACK AGAIN, / DOWN HOME WHERE I'LL REMAIN, / WHERE MY HONEY
LAMB / AM.)*

EMMIE AND MICHAEL. *(Sing:)*
I WILL BE RIGHT THERE WITH BELLS,
WHEN THAT OLD CONDUCTOR YELLS,
“ALL ABOARD! ALL ABOARD!
ALL ABOARD FOR ALABAM’.”
(BEN strolls on.)

(SONG #3. “DAT DRAGGY RAG.”)

BEN. *(Sings:)*
HONEY DARLIN’, TAKE YOUR TIME,
DON’T YOU HURRY, BABY MINE,
THROW YOUR LOVIN’ ARMS AROUND ME,
OH! OH! OH! I’M FEELIN’ SO FINE.
WON’T YOU SQUEEZE MY HAND AGAIN?
SQUEEZE IT HARD, I FEEL NO PAIN.
DON’T DENY ME, SATISFY ME
TO THAT DRAGGY STRAIN.

OH, THAT DRAGGY RAG!
OH, THAT EASY DRAG!
DON’T YOU HURRY, HONEY, OR YOU’LL CAUSE ME PAIN,
I WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN ON AN ERIE TRAIN.
SLIDE, GLIDE, NOT TOO FAST,
GO SLOW TO THE LAST,
I LOVE MY QUICK DECISION, HON,
BUT OH, THAT DRAGGY RAG

BEN, ALEX, MISSY, EMMIE, MICHAEL. *(Sing:)*
OH, THAT DRAGGY RAG!
OH, THAT EASY DRAG!
DON’T YOU HURRY, HONEY, OR YOU’LL CAUSE ME PAIN,
I WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN ON AN ERIE TRAIN.
SLIDE, GLIDE, NOT TOO FAST,
GO SLOW TO THE LAST,
I LOVE MY QUICK DECISION, HON,
BUT OH, THAT DRAGGY RAG!

(BROOKE strolls on. She is in her 20s, and beautiful.)

(SONG #4. "OH THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG.")

BROOKE. *(Sings:)*

OH! OH! OH! OH!

OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG,

ALEX, MISSY, MICHEL, EMMIE, BEN. *(Sing:)*

THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG.

BROOKE. *(Sings:)*

IT SETS MY HEART A-REELIN'.

OH! OH! OH! OH!

OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL DRAG,

ALEX. Aw, sing it, Brooke!

BROOKE. *(Sings:)*

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,

ALEX, MISSY, MICHEL, EMMIE, BEN. *(Sing:)*

THAT HEAVENLY STRAIN.

BROOKE. *(Sings:)*

IT MAKES ME FEEL SO FUNNY.

IF I EVER CRY, "DON'T PLAY IT AGAIN,"

ALEX. Then what?

BROOKE. *(Sings:)*

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.

(Now the music of the verse is played as underscoring, and BROOKE speaks to the audience.)

BROOKE. Irving Berlin published his first song in 1907. And within a few years, he was the world's most popular songwriter, billed as "the King of Ragtime." "That Beautiful Rag" was sung on Broadway by none other than Irving Berlin himself. He was slight, scrawny, unassuming, with glasses—he really wasn't cut out to be a star performer—but still, audiences flocked to see "the King of Ragtime" in person.
(JESSEE strolls on stage, wearing glasses, and sings.)

JESSEE. *(Sings:)*
OH! OH! OH! OH!
OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG,

ALEX, MISSY, MICHEL, EMMIE, BROOKE, BEN. *(Sing:)*
THAT BEAUTIFUL RAG.

JESSEE. *(Sings:)*
IT SETS MY HEART A-REELIN'.
OH! OH! OH! OH!
OH! THAT BEAUTIFUL DRAG,

ALEX. Such a pretty song!

JESSEE. *(Sings:)*
THAT FUNNY FEELING STEALING.
HEAR THAT TROMBONE BLOWIN', HON,
AIN'T DEM FIDDLES GOIN' SOME?
OH, DEAR! OH, DEAR! CUDDLE UP CLOSER,
SQUEEZE ME LIKE YOU WOULD A FLOWER,
MAKE A MINUTE LAST AN HOUR.
OH! OH! OH! OH!
OH! THAT HEAVENLY STRAIN,

ALEX, MISSY, MICHEL, EMMIE, BROOKE, BEN. *(Sing:)*
THAT HEAVENLY STRAIN.

JESSEE. *(Sings:)*
IT MAKES ME FEEL SO FUNNY.
IF I EVER CRY, "DON'T PLAY IT AGAIN,"

ALEX. Don't cry.

JESSEE. (*Sings:*)
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.

ALEX. (*To JESSEE.*) Jessee, are you playing the role of Mr. Irving Berlin?

JESSEE. Yes--well, at least when I'm wearing these glasses. We'll all be doing a bit of "doubling" tonight
[or "*this afternoon,*" if the performance happens to be a matinee]--playing more than one role.
(*We begin hearing the music for Song #4. "That Mysterious Rag." SAMANTHA strolls on.*)

Next, here comes Samantha. For this number, Sam will be representing Miss Fanny Brice. Do you know that name, Alex?

ALEX. Sure. I've seen the movie about her life, "Funny Girl."

JESSEE. At her peak, Fanny Brice was America's highest-paid singing comedienne. A great star in the Ziegfeld Follies--equally effective whether singing a torch song like "My Man," a comic song like "Second Hand Rose," or a ragtime specialty written by none other than Irving Berlin. Offstage, she was equally fascinating, with a lifelong appreciation for the mysterious. At parties at her home, she conducted seances, hypnotized guests, did experiments with psychic phenomena....

(SONG #5. "THAT MYSTERIOUS RAG.")

SAMANTHA. (*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.

ANY MINUTE THEY BEGIN IT,
E'ER YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ABOUT YOU'RE IN IT;
THEN A FEELING, MOST APPEALING,
COMES A-STEALING, SETS YOUR BRAIN A-REELING.

WHEN IT'S LATE AND EV'RYONE IS YAWNING,
GOOD MORNING, DAY DAWNING,
THEN IF SUDDENLY YOU HEAR A WARNING SHOUT,
LOOK OUT!

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.

ALEX. Any recollections of Mr. Irving Berlin you'd care to share, Miss Brice?

SAMANTHA. Of all the stars Irving Berlin wrote for, I knew him first. He was writing songs for me before either of us were famous. He knew me when I was just getting started, when I was touring in burlesque, at age 18—before I'd made it to the Ziegfeld Follies. I actually gave him the inspiration for one bit of special material he wrote for me back then.

JESSEE. I thought it was kinda funny—this nice little Jewish girl, touring in a burlesque show, doing those bumps and grinds. Except when they played towns that didn't approve of such improprieties, they'd claim that they were offering their interpretation of Salome's "Dance of the Seven Veils"—as mentioned in the Bible. They did the exact same, sexy hoochie-coochie dance moves as before, but claimed a "Biblical" tie-in, to try and seem "respectable."

(SONG #6. "SADIE SALOME GO HOME!")

JESSEE. *(Sings, with a Jewish accent:)*
SADIE COHEN LEFT HER HAPPY HOME
TO BECOME AN ACTRESS LADY,
ON THE STAGE SHE SOON BECAME THE RAGE,
AS THE ONLY REAL SALOMY BABY.
WHEN SHE CAME TO TOWN, HER SWEETHEART MOSE
BROUGHT FOR HER AROUND A PRETTY ROSE;
BUT HE GOT AN AWFUL FRIGHT
WHEN HIS SADIE CAME TO SIGHT,
HE STOOD UP AND YELLED WITH ALL HIS MIGHT:

"DON'T DO THAT DANCE, I TELL YOU, SADIE,
THAT'S NOT A BUSINESS FOR A LADY!

MOST EV'RYBODY KNOWS
THAT I'M YOUR LOVING MOSE,
OY, OY, OY, OY,
WHERE IS YOUR CLOTHES?
YOU BETTER GO AND GET YOUR DRESSES.
EV'RYONE'S GOT THE OP'RA GLASSES,
OY! SUCH A SAD DISGRACE,
NO ONE LOOKS IN YOUR FACE;
SADIE SALOME, GO HOME.”
SAMANTHA. *(Sings.)*
FROM THE CROWD MOSES YELLED OUT LOUD,
“WHO PUT IN YOUR HEAD SUCH NOTIONS?
YOU LOOK SWEET BUT JIGGLE WITH YOUR FEET—
WHO PUT IN YOUR BACK SUCH FUNNY MOTIONS?
AS A SINGER YOU WAS ALWAYS FINE!
SING TO ME ‘BECAUSE THE WORLD IS MINE!’”
THEN THE CROWD BEGAN TO ROAR,
SADIE DID A NEW ENCORE,
MOSE GOT MAD AND YELLED AT HER ONCE MORE:

JESSEE and **SAMANTHA.** *(Sing:)*
“DON'T DO THAT DANCE, I TELL YOU, SADIE,
THAT'S NOT A BUSINESS FOR A LADY!
MOST EV'RYBODY KNOWS
THAT I'M YOUR LOVING MOSE,
OY, OY, OY, OY,
WHERE IS YOUR CLOTHES?
YOU BETTER GO AND GET YOUR DRESSES.
EV'RYONE'S GOT THE OP'RA GLASSES,
OY! SUCH A SAD DISGRACE,
NO ONE LOOKS IN YOUR FACE;
SADIE SALOME, GO HOME.”

JESSEE. That's how far back Fanny Brice and I go. I even taught her how to do that Jewish accent she so often used on stage.

(SOPHIE walks on. She is a heavy-set woman, in fancy dress, with a boa; she carries herself confidently, as if aware she's a star.)

SOPHIE. Wait a minute! Wait a minute! I'm the one who taught Fanny Brice the accent.

JESSEE. Sophie! Sophie Tucker! The Last of the Red-Hot Mamas. Every inch a star.

SOPHIE. And there's a lot of inches to ol' Sophie here.

JESSEE. You wear your weight well, Sophie.

SOPHIE. Sophie Tucker wears everything well.

JESSEE. So, settle it, Fanny! Who was it taught you that accent—Irving Berlin or Sophie Tucker?

SAMANTHA. I'd like to think I got at least some of it from my own dear Mama. But yeah, Sophie and I go way back.

SOPHIE. Irving Berlin—we called him “Izzy” back then--was in his late teens when I met him, working as a singing waiter at Mike Salter’s Pelham Café. He was just beginning to make up songs—catchy little ditties that caught my attention. He used to write the lyrics he thought up, on the sleeves of his shirt. I offered to buy his shirt from him. But he said if I really liked a song of his, he’d have the piano player at the club—what was his name, Nick Nardozi?—write it out proper so I could sing it. Nick and I encouraged him to get his songs published. In vaudeville, I helped put over lots of his songs. Remember this one? A big hit in its day. My picture was on the cover of the sheet music.

(SONG #7. “THE INTERNATIONAL RAG.”)

SOPHIE. *(Sings:)*

WHAT DID YOU DO, AMERICA?
THEY’RE AFTER YOU, AMERICA.
YOU GOT EXCITED AND YOU STARTED SOMETHING,
NATIONS JUMPING ALL AROUND.

JESSEE and SOPHIE. *(Sing:)*

YOU’VE GOT A LOT TO ANSWER FOR.
THEY LAY THE BLAME RIGHT AT YOUR DOOR.
THE WORLD IS RAGTIME CRAZY
FROM SHORE TO SHORE.

SOPHIE. Everybody!

EVERYBODY. *(Sings:)*

LONDON’S DROPPED ITS DIGNITY.
SO HAS FRANCE AND GERMANY.
ALL HANDS ARE DANCING TO A
RAGGEDY MELODY, FULL OF ORIGINALITY.

JESSEE. *(Speaking while the music vamps.)* I wrote this song so quickly. I was over in London. We were putting up a show. We needed one more song for a certain spot. I made this up. We put it in the show the next day.

THE WHOLE GROUP. *(Sings:)*

THE FOLKS WHO LIVE IN SUNNY SPAIN
DANCE TO A STRAIN
THAT THEY CALL THE SPANISH TANGO;
DUKES AND LORDS AND RUSSIAN CZARS,
MEN WHO OWN THEIR MOTOR CARS,
THROW UP THEIR SHOULDERS TO THAT RAGGEDY MELODY,

FULL OF ORIGINALITY.

JESSEE. (*Speaking while the music vamps.*) I never did learn to read or write music. I could play a little piano—rather badly, to be honest. But I could plunk away, or hum to myself, or sing to myself, until I'd worked out something I liked. A musical secretary would then take down whatever it was I was playing, or humming, or singing. He'd write out the song properly for me.

ALEX. And that system worked?

JESSEE. I wrote more than 1200 songs that way.

THE WHOLE GROUP. (*Sings:*)

ITALIAN OPERA SINGERS
HAVE LEARNED TO SNAP THEIR FINGERS.
THE WORLD GOES ROUND TO THE SOUND
OF THE INTERNATIONAL
INTERNATIONAL
INTERNATIONAL RAG.

SAMANTHA. Irving Berlin always worked well under pressure. Flo Ziegfeld said he needed a new number quick, that could be performed in front of the curtain, to cover a scene change. The number Irving created became the theme song of the Ziegfeld Follies....

(SONG #8. "A PRETTY GIRL IS LIKE A MELODY.")

BEN. (*Sings:*)

A PRETTY GIRL IS LIKE A MELODY
THAT HAUNTS YOU NIGHT AND DAY.
JUST LIKE THE STRAIN
OF A HAUNTING REFRAIN,
SHE'LL START UPON A MARATHON
AND RUN AROUND YOUR BRAIN.
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE,
SHE'S IN YOUR MEMORY
BY MORNING, NIGHT AND NOON.
SHE WILL LEAVE YOU AND THEN
COME BACK AGAIN.
A PRETTY GIRL IS JUST LIKE A PRETTY TUNE.

For five decades, Irving Berlin was the most successful single songwriter in the world. He wrote more hit songs, and made more money, than any of his competitors.

SAMANTHA. Not bad for a man who had no formal education.

JESSEE. And never learned to read or write music.

EMMIE. And now, to tell us a bit about this show and how it came to be, we'd like to bring on our tenth cast-member, the playwright who conceived this show and put it together, Chip Deffaa—

PERUSAL SCRIPT-Irving Berlin Ragtime Revue by *Chip Deffaa*
DO NOT COPY IN ANY MANNER!

(CHIP enters.)

ALEX. Or--to be totally honest--an actor representing Chip Deffaa.

MICHAEL. The theater's all about illusion, anyway.

MISSY. Even if we couldn't actually get the playwright himself here today, this actor--standing in for him--will be speaking his words, and sharing his story about the development of this show.

ALEX. And this actor's a much better singer/dancer than the real playwright is, so it's a win-win for everybody.

CHIP. I can tell you exactly when I got the idea of writing something in celebration of Irving Berlin. It was a cold December night, years ago, when a friend of mine called.... Ben, would you mind being the caller for this scene? Thanks.

BEN. *(Speaking on the telephone.)* Chip, it's John Wallowitch here. You know how much I love the music of Irving Berlin, right?

CHIP. As much as I do, John. What's up?

BEN. I want to gather some friends together. We'll stand on the sidewalk in front of Irving Berlin's townhouse, on Beekman Place, and serenade him with songs that *he* wrote: "White Christmas," "God Bless America," "Always".... You won't even need to rehearse with us. You've been collecting Berlin sheet music. You know his songs.

CHIP. Maybe I can go next year, if you do it again. I haven't even begun Christmas shopping.

BEN. Irving Berlin is 95 years old. Do you really want to wait until next year? He's the last of the giants left. Cole Porter, the Gershwins, Jerome Kern--all gone. Only Berlin survives, from the very greatest songwriters of the Golden Age.

CHIP. And for years Irving Berlin has lived like a total recluse. No one's seen him. You'll be standing outside his home, in bitter cold. And you'll never even know if he's hearing you.

BEN. That doesn't matter. It'll be a fun way to spend Christmas Eve, honoring him.

CHIP. I always spend Christmas Eve with my family. You go, John! Sing your heart out. I'll be cheering from afar. Call me afterwards, tell me what it was like.

BEN. You're going to regret missing this, Chip.

CHIP. *(To the audience.)* And it turned out to be one of few things in my life I really did regret. I got the call from John Wallowitch.

BEN. *(Speaking on the telephone.)* You're not going to believe it! We sang and we sang--18 of us--and finally we rang the doorbell. Irving Berlin himself answered--in his bathrobe, with his initials monogrammed on it. And he invited us all in, and served us hot chocolate. I gave him my card, told him if he ever felt like talking on the phone, I'd be honored.

CHIP. *(To the audience.)* And from time to time, Irving Berlin would call my friend.

BEN. I didn't care if it was two in the morning when the call might come. If Irving Berlin wanted to talk about old times, and old songs, I was listening.

CHIP. I soaked up everything John Wallowitch told me.

BEN. Mr. Berlin complained that everyone always sang the same songs in salutes to him--"White Christmas," "God Bless America," "There's No Business Like Show Business." While there were other songs he'd written--not heard quite so often--that he liked at least as much: "I Love a Piano," "Say it with Music," "Everybody Step," "Pack Up Your Sins," "When the Midnight Choo-Choo Leaves for Alabam'," "Alexander's Ragtime Band"....

CHIP. When Irving Berlin passed away, at the age of 101, John suggested--

BEN. Maybe you should write something about him, Chip—an article, a book, a show... Find some way to celebrate his legacy.

CHIP. I wouldn't know where to begin.

BEN. Give it time. It'll come to you. What's the first thing YOU think of, when you hear the name "Irving Berlin"?

(SONG 9. "ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND.")

CHIP. *(Sings:)*

COME ON AND HEAR, COME ON AND HEAR
ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND.
COME ON AND HEAR, COME ON AND HEAR,
IT'S THE BEST BAND IN THE LAND.
THEY CAN PLAY A BUGLE CALL LIKE YOU NEVER HEARD BEFORE,
SO NATURAL THAT YOU WANT TO GO TO WAR,
THAT'S JUST THE BESTEST BAND WHAT AM,
HONEY LAMB.

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*

COME ON ALONG, COME ON ALONG,
LET ME TAKE YOU BY THE HAND
UP TO THE MAN, UP TO THE MAN,
WHO'S THE LEADER OF THE BAND,

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)*

AND IF YOU CARE TO HEAR THE "SWANEE RIVER" PLAYED IN RAGTIME,
COME ON AND HEAR, COME ON AND HEAR
ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND.

CHIP. *(Sings:)*

OH, MA HONEY, OH, MA HONEY,
BETTER HURRY AND LET'S MEANDER,
AIN'T YOU GOIN', AIN'T YOU GOIN',
TO THE LEADER MAN, RAGGED METER MAN?

ALEX. *(Sings:)*

OH, MA HONEY, OH, MA HONEY,
LET ME TAKE YOU TO ALEXANDER'S
GRAND STAND, BRASS BAND,
AIN'T YOU COMIN' ALONG?

Everyone!

ALL. *(Sing:)*

COME ON AND HEAR, COME ON AND HEAR
ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND.
COME ON AND HEAR, COME ON AND HEAR,
IT'S THE BEST BAND IN THE LAND.
THEY CAN PLAY A BUGLE CALL LIKE YOU NEVER HEARD BEFORE,
SO NATURAL THAT YOU WANT TO GO TO WAR,
THAT'S JUST THE BESTEST BAND WHAT AM,
HONEY LAMB.
COME ON ALONG, COME ON ALONG,
LET ME TAKE YOU BY THE HAND
EMMIE. (*Sings:*)
HERE'S MY LITTLE HAND

ALL. (*Sing:*)
UP TO THE MAN, UP TO THE MAN,
WHO'S THE LEADER OF THE BAND,

ALEX. (*Sings:*)
AND IF YOU CARE TO HEAR THE "SWANEE RIVER" PLAYED IN RAGTIME,

ALL. (*Sing:*)
COME ON AND HEAR, COME ON AND HEAR
ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND.

CHIP. That number was one of the biggest successes in the history of popular music. Millions of copies of sheet music were sold. The song was translated into countless languages. Written in 1911--only a few years after Irving Berlin wrote his first song--"Alexander's Ragtime Band" made Berlin rich, and internationally famous.

ALEX. And it's still so much fun to sing. It's catchy, it's got life.

CHIP. Oh, yes! It bristles with vitality--with the energy of early 20th Century America. To understand how fresh and modern it sounded when it was new, you have to contrast it with the popular music Berlin heard as a boy. The biggest hit of the previous quarter-century, the most-sung song of the 1890s was Charles Harris' "After the Ball." It's a lovely, thoughtful song, written with a stately grace. It comes from an era when life moved a bit more slowly.

(SONG #10. "AFTER THE BALL.")

EMMIE. (*Sings:*)
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.

(Spoken, while the music continues as underscoring.)

This sweet/sad song was by far the biggest hit of Berlin's youth; it evokes the spirit of its time.

(Sings:)

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.

CHIP. When you compare Berlin's ragtime songs with songs from his youth, Berlin's songs are fresh, bracing; they hit you with an impudent kind of energy. There was a rousing new spirit in America; Berlin was capturing it.

(SONG #11. "EVERYBODY'S DOING IT NOW.")

ALL. *(Sing:)*

EV'RYBODY'S DOIN' IT,
DOIN' IT, DOIN' IT,
EV'RYBODY'S DOIN' IT,
DOIN' IT, DOIN' IT;

BROOKE. *(Sings:)*

SEE THAT RAGTIME COUPLE OVER THERE,
WATCH THEM THROW THEIR SHOULDERS IN THE AIR,

JESSEE. *(Sings)*

SNAP THEIR FINGERS—HONEY, I DECLARE,
IT'S A BEAR, IT'S A BEAR, IT'S A BEAR.
THERE!

ALL. *(Sing:)*

EV'RYBODY'S DOIN' IT,
DOIN' IT, DOIN' IT,
EV'RYBODY'S DOIN' IT,
DOIN' IT, DOIN' IT;

BROOKE. *(Sings:)*

AIN'T THAT MUSIC TOUCHING YOUR HEART?

JESSEE. (*Sings:*)
HEAR THAT TROMBONE BUSTIN' APART?

ALL. (*Sing:*)
COME, COME, COME, COME LET US START,
EVERYBODY'S DOIN' IT NOW.

CHIP. When the great French star Gaby Deslys was hired to star in a new Broadway musical, she thought she'd get to sing the French specialties she was famous for. But she soon found that she—like seemingly all of America at the time—would be singing new Irving Berlin ragtime numbers.

(SONG #12. "EVERYTHING IN AMERICA IS RAGTIME.")

SAMANTHA. (*Sings, with a French accent:*)
EVERYTHING IN AMERICA IS RAGTIME.
THEY TALK IN RAGTIME,
IT SEEMS TO BE THE FASHION;
THEIR ONLY PASSION
IS SWAYING TO AND FRO,
SNAPPING FINGERS SO,
ACTING AS THOUGH THEY WERE HAVING A JAGTIME.
THE U.S.A. IS A LAND OF SYNCOPATION;
IT SEEMS THE NATION
IS JUST A MILLION ACRES OF SHOULDER SHAKERS.
COMPOSERS, JUST AS THICK AS BEES,
WRITING RAGGY MELODIES—
THEY'RE EVEN MAKING GABY DESLYS
SING RAGTIME.

IN THE SUBWAY EVERY NIGHT
FOLKS START SWAYING LEFT AND RIGHT
WHILE THEY READ THE EVENING NEWS.
WHEN A BABY STARTS TO CRY,
LONGING FOR A LULLABY,
MOTHER SINGS THE "MEMPHIS BLUES";
YOU CAN'T DRIVE IT AWAY,
BECAUSE IT'S HERE TO STAY.

EVERYTHING IN AMERICA IS RAGTIME.
THEY TALK IN RAGTIME,
IT SEEMS TO BE THE FASHION;
THEIR ONLY PASSION

IS SWAYING TO AND FRO,
SNAPPING FINGERS SO,
ACTING AS THOUGH THEY WERE HAVING A JAGTIME.
THE U.S.A. IS A LAND OF SYNCOPATION;
IT SEEMS THE NATION
IS JUST A MILLION ACRES OF SHOULDER SHAKERS.
COMPOSERS, JUST AS THICK AS BEES,
WRITING RAGGY MELODIES—
THEY'RE EVEN MAKING GABY DESLYS
SING RAGTIME.

(SONG #13. "THE SYNCOPATED WALK.")

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*
STRANGE,
BUT THERE'S A CHANGE
IN HOW PEOPLE WALK THESE DAYS.

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)*
YES!
YOU MUST CONFESS
THAT EVER SINCE THE DANCING CRAZE
EV'RYBODY HAS A SYNCOPATED WALK.

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*
WHERE?
IT'S IN THE AIR—
YOU'LL FIND THEM SWAYING AS THEY GO.

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)*
SMILE,
BUT ALL THE WHILE
YOU MUST ADMIT THAT IT IS SO.

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*
FOR THEY DO,
THEY DO,
IF YOU DON'T THINK IT'S TRUE,

EMMIE and MICHAEL. *(Sing:)*
LOOK AT 'EM DOIN' IT,
LOOK AT 'EM DOIN' IT.
THAT SYNCOPATED WALK.

LOOK AT 'EM DOIN' IT,
LOOK AT 'EM DOIN' IT.
I KNOW WHO INTRODUCED IT.
WAIT'LL HE REACHES YOU.
WAIT'LL HE TEACHES YOU
THAT SYNCOPATED WALK.
YOU'LL BE DOING IT TOO,
BECAUSE IT'S DONE
BY EV'RYONE.
YOU'LL FIND IT'S INTERNATIONAL,
THAT IRRATIONAL STEP,
IT'S FULL OF PEP, FULL OF PEP;
AND IN THE MORNING WHEN THEY RISE
FOR THEIR MORNING EXERCISE
THEY TAKE A SYNCOPATED WALK.

(Dance Break, while we hear the music corresponding to the following lines: LOOK AT 'EM DOIN' IT, / LOOK AT 'EM DOIN' IT. / THAT SYNCOPATED WALK. / LOOK AT 'EM DOIN' IT, / LOOK AT 'EM DOIN' IT. / I KNOW WHO INTRODUCED IT. / WAIT'LL HE REACHES YOU. / WAIT'LL HE TEACHES YOU / THAT SYNCOPATED WALK. / YOU'LL BE DOING IT TOO, / BECAUSE IT'S DONE / BY EV'RYONE.)

EMMIE, MICHAEL, ALEX and MISSY. *(Sing:)*
YOU'LL FIND IT'S INTERNATIONAL,
THAT IRRATIONAL STEP,
IT'S FULL OF PEP, FULL OF PEP;
AND IN THE MORNING WHEN THEY RISE
FOR THEIR MORNING EXERCISE
THEY TAKE A SYNCOPATED WALK.

(SONG #14. "EVERYBODY STEP:")

ALL. *(Sing:)*
EV'RYBODY STEP
TO THE SYNCOPATED RHYTHM;
LET'S BE GOIN' WITH 'EM
WHEN THEY BEGIN.
YOU'LL BE SAYIN' "YESSIR,
THE BAND IS GRAND"--
HE'S THE BEST PROFESSOR
IN ALL THE LAND.
LISTEN TO THE PEP

THAT EMERGES
FROM THE MIDDLE
OF THE JAZZY FIDDLE
UNDER HIS CHIN.
OH, WHAT MUSIC!
THE CLARINETER
COULD NOT BE BETTER;
HEAR THAT STRAIN–
I DON'T KNOW JUST WHAT IT IS, BUT IT'S GREAT.
THEY SIMPLY RUIN IT;
LOOK AT 'EM DOIN' IT.
COME, COME, DON'T HESITATE–
EV'RYBODY STEP.
IF YOU WANT TO SEE A GLUTTON
WHEN IT COMES TO STRUTTIN'
OVER THE GROUND,
WAIT'LL YOU SEE
MY LITTLE SWEETIE AND ME
STEP-STEP-STEPPING AROUND.

SOPHIE. (*Sings:*)
SOON
YOU'LL HEAR A TUNE
THAT'S GONNA LIFT YOU OUT OF YOUR SEAT.

CHIP. (*Sings:*)
IT COULD BE SWEETER,
BUT THEN THE METER
WAS WRITTEN ESPEC'LLY FOR YOUR FEET.

SOPHIE. (*Sings:*)
FLY
AWAY UP HIGH
UPON A SYNCOPATED BALLOON;

CHIP. (*Sings:*)
A LITTLE GINGER
WILL NEVER INJURE.
HEAR THEM TUNING UP–
THEY'LL BE PLAYING SOON.

ALL. (*Sing:*)
EV'RYBODY STEP
TO THE SYNCOPATED RHYTHM;

LET'S BE GOIN' WITH 'EM
WHEN THEY BEGIN.

(Dance Break, while we hear the music corresponding to the following lines: YOU'LL BE SAYIN' "YESSIR, / THE BAND IS GRAND"— / HE'S THE BEST PROFESSOR / IN ALL THE LAND. / LISTEN TO THE PEP / THAT EMERGES / FROM THE MIDDLE / OF THE JAZZY FIDDLE / UNDER HIS CHIN. / OH, WHAT MUSIC! / THE CLARINETER / COULD NOT BE BETTER.)

ALL. (Sing:)
HEAR THAT STRAIN—
I DON'T KNOW JUST WHAT IT IS, BUT IT'S GREAT.
THEY SIMPLY RUIN IT;
LOOK AT 'EM DOIN' IT.
COME, COME, DON'T HESITATE—
EV'RYBODY STEP.
IF YOU WANT TO SEE A GLUTTON
WHEN IT COMES TO STRUTTIN'
OVER THE GROUND,
WAIT'LL YOU SEE
MY LITTLE SWEETIE AND ME
STEP-STEP-STEPPING AROUND.

CHIP. When I first decided to celebrate Irving Berlin on stage, I invited some of my singing actors friends to my home to brainstorm. And to sing through some of the wonderful Berlin songs in my big sheet-music collection.

JESSEE. Let's not make it a linear show—not one that starts with Berlin's birth and goes through his whole life in sequence. Let's make it mostly about songs.

SOPHIE. I like the idea of bringing to light some real rarities, too. Good songs that we'll be the first to sing in many years.

BEN. And perhaps the first to ever record them.

CHIP. We'll focus on his early years—maybe the first 12 or 15 years of his career.

SAMANTHA. We'll focus on the Ragtime Era.

CHIP. *(To the audience.)* Ladies and gentlemen, don't be expecting to hear "White Christmas" or "God Bless America" in this show.

SOPHIE. They've been DONE. And nobody's going to improve on the way Bing Crosby and Kate Smith sang those numbers.

EMMIE. We'd rather offer you a few surprises

BROOKE. We can throw in a few insights about Berlin, here and there, in addition to the songs.

MICHAEL. We'll do our homework, study up on Berlin, and share some facts about him that really speak to us.

ALEX. I already know what I want to say.

CHIP. Oh yeah?

ALEX. I like the fact that Irving Berlin didn't go to school too much. That he became the most successful man in his field with just a grade-school education.

CHIP. I'm guessing, Alex, that maybe you're not too crazy about school.

ALEX. What kid is?

CHIP. Oh I dunno. I always liked school.

ALEX. Grown-ups always say that. They've forgotten how it really was.

MISSY. They're romanticizing the past.

ALEX. I've found a song of his that really speaks to me. And to my sister, Missy, here.

CHIP. It's got an important message?

ALEX. Oh yes! And it needs to be revived. An arpeggio, please....

(SONG #15. "SCHOOLHOUSE BLUES.")

ALEX and **MISSY.** *(Sing:)*

HOOKEY, HOOKEY, OH HOW WE LOVE TO PLAY HOOKEY, HOOKEY.

THERE'LL BE NO SCHOOL TODAY.

OUR LESSON KEPT US GUESSIN'.

THAT'S WHY WE RAN AWAY.

WE KNOW SOME FOLK WANT US TO GO TO SCHOOL.

BUT WE'D RATHER BE IN A SWIMMING POOL

WHEN THE SUN IS IN THE SKY.

THAT IS JUST THE REASON WHY

WE'VE GOT THE SCHOOLHOUSE BLUES,

WE'VE GOT THE SCHOOLHOUSE BLUES.

MISSY. *(Sings:)*

TIRED OF READING HISTORY,

ALEX. *(Sings:)*

DON'T CARE FOR GEOGRAPHY,

MISSY. *(Sings:)*

WE'RE GETTING OH SO SICK

OF GRAMMAR AND ARITHMETIC.

ALEX. *(Sings:)*

THAT'S WHY WE GAVE THE TEACHER THE SACK,

MISSY. *(Sings:)*

AND WE'RE NEVER GONNA GO BACK.

ALEX. *(Sings:)*

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

MISSY and ALEX. (*Sing:*)
WE'VE GOT THE SCHOOLHOUSE BLUES.

MISSY. (*Sings:*)
AND SAY, IF WE DON'T PASS OUR EXAM,
OH, WE'RE GOING TO BE IN A JAM!

ALEX. (*Sings:*)
SOMEONE'S GOING TO SPANK US,
BUT WE DON'T GIVE A... DARN.

MISSY and ALEX. (*Sing:*)
WE'VE GOT THE SCHOOLHOUSE BLUES.
WE'VE GOT THE SCHOOLHOUSE BLUES.

MICHAEL. Irving Berlin began writing songs while in his late teens—while supporting himself mainly as a singing waiter.. He was still young enough to remember well the thoughts and feeling of kids.

EMMIE. And what it was like for teens to discover the first stirrings of love

(SONG #16. "I LIKE IT.")

CHIP. (*Sings:*)
MARY GREEN, SEVENTEEN,
MOTHER'S ONLY CHILD;
MOTHER'S CROSS JUST BECAUSE
MARY'S RUNNING WILD.
SITS AND SPOONS AFTERNOONS
WITH THE BOY NEXT DOOR;
MOTHER CRIES, "YOU MUSTN'T DO IT!"
AND MARY STARTS TO ROAR:

EMMIE. (*Sings, with MICHAEL by her side to represent the boy next door she sings about:*)
I'M GONNA DO IT
IF I LIKE IT—
AND I LIKE IT.
I'LL LET HIM HOLD ME
THOUGH YOU SCOLD ME
WHEN I'M THROUGH.
I HATE TO MAKE MOTHER AND DAD
SO TERRIBLY MAD,
BUT THERE ARE TIMES
WHEN IT'S GOOD TO BE BAD.
I'M GONNA HOLD HANDS

IF I LIKE IT–
AND I LIKE IT.
A LITTLE SQUEEZING
IS SO PLEASING
IF YOU'RE BLUE.
AND SINCE THE BOY NEXT DOOR FIRST REALIZED
I'D LET HIM KISS ME, WELL YOU'D BE SURPRISED...
I'M GONNA DO IT
IF I LIKE IT–
AND I DO.

(SONG #17. "YOU'D BE SURPRISED.")

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*
HE'S NOT SO GOOD IN THE HOUSE BUT ON A BENCH IN THE PARK,

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)*
YOU'D BE SURPRISED.

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*
HE ISN'T MUCH IN THE LIGHT, BUT WHEN HE GETS IN THE DARK,

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)*
YOU'D BE SURPRISED.

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*
I KNOW HE LOOKS AS SLOW AS THE ERIE,
BUT YOU DON'T KNOW THE HALF OF IT DEARIE.
HE LOOKS AS COLD AS AN ESKIMO,

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)*
BUT THERE'S FIRE IN THESE EYES.

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*
HE DOESN'T SAY VERY MUCH, BUT WHEN HE STARTS IN TO SPEAK,

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)*
YOU'D BE SURPRISED.

EMMIE. *(Sings:)*
HE'S NOT SO GOOD AT THE START, BUT AT THE END OF A WEEK,

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)*
YOU'D BE SURPRISED.

ON A STREETCAR OR ON A TRAIN,
YOU'D THINK I WAS BORN WITHOUT ANY BRAIN.
BUT IN A TAXI CAB,
YOU'D BE AMAZED.

SOPHIE. Of course, Irving Berlin understood the needs of more mature women as well, writing with a frankness that songwriters in Victorian America didn't dare employ. None of his Tin Pan Alley rivals were writing as directly as Berlin was, of women who knew exactly what they wanted.

CHIP. You tell 'em, Soph!

(SONG #18. "I'VE GOT TO HAVE SOME LOVIN' NOW.")

SOPHIE. *(Sings:)*

I'VE GOT TO HAVE SOME LOVIN' NOW;
WON'T YO LET ME SHOW YOU HOW?
NOW HUG ME LIKE A BEAR,
COME AND MUSS MY HAIR,
GIVE ME A KISS ON THE BROW.
COME, BE NICE, SWEET HONEY, LIKE YOU SHOULD,
AND LOVE ME WHILE THE LOVIN'S GOOD;
I MAY DIE IN THE MORNING,
SO I WANT SOME LOVIN' NOW.

COME, BE NICE, SWEET HONEY, LIKE YOU SHOULD,
AND LOVE ME WHILE THE LOVIN'S GOOD;
I MAY DIE IN THE MORNING,
SO I WANT SOME LOVIN' NOW.

(SONG #19. "STOP, STOP, STOP (COME OVER AND LOVE ME SOME MORE).")

BROOKE. *(Sings:)*

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.

JESSEE. *(Sings:)*

CUDDLE AND PLEASE ME, HONEY.

ANCHOR AT THAT KISSING SHORE;

BROOKE and **JESSEE**. (*Sing:*)
MY HONEY, STOP, STOP, STOP, STOP,
DON'T DARE TO STOP,
COME OVER AND LOVE ME SOME MORE.

CHIP. Of course, he understood the more romantic side of life, too....

(SONG #20. "SAY IT WITH MUSIC.")

SAMANTHA. (*Sings:*)
MUSIC IS A LANGUAGE LOVERS UNDERSTAND;
MELODY AND ROMANCE WANDER HAND IN HAND;
CUPID NEVER FAILS ASSISTED BY A BAND—
SO IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING SWEET TO TELL HER:

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.

BEN. (*Sings:*)
THERE'S A TENDER MESSAGE DEEP DOWN IN MY HEART,
SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW—BUT HOW AM I TO START?
SENTIMENTAL SPEECHES NEVER COULD IMPART
JUST EXACTLY WHAT I WANT TO TELL YOU.

ALL. (*Sing:*)
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.

JESSEE. I like the fact that he was genuinely patriotic. He loved this country.

ALEX. His family left Russia when he was six, to escape religious persecution.

MICHAEL. Their home—along with the homes of friends of theirs—was burned to the ground in a pogrom. They were forced to flee.

MISSY. The family came to America with nothing, settling in New York City. They were grateful that this one nation existed to provide them a safe haven..

ALEX. The one phrase he recalled his mother saying over and over, when he was a boy, was: “God bless America.”

CHIP. For the rest of Irving Berlin’s life—for the next 95 years—New York City would be his home. He hated to leave it for long. He’d go to Hollywood if business required him to do so.

SAMANTHA. He wrote the scores for 19 Broadway shows, 18 Hollywood films—including some real classics. But he never stayed in Hollywood longer the necessary.

EMMIE. He enjoyed writing for Broadway more than for films. And he simply felt most comfortable in New York City.

CHIP. I pity his poor wife, who once persuaded him to take a European vacation with her. She told him a relaxing overseas trip would do him a world of good.

BROOKE. The first things she packed were some beautiful clothes.

SAMANTHA. The first thing he packed was his piano. Workmen crated it up, got it on the ocean liner. When they got to their first European hotel, a crane had to be used to hoist the piano up to their hotel suite.

CHIP. But he was too restless, and too driven to work, to stay for long.

BEN. Almost as soon as he got there, he said ideas were coming to him so quickly for new songs and shows that he couldn’t enjoy a vacation. He cut it short, just as it was getting started.

SAMANTHA. The piano was crated up again, put back on the ship. And on the voyage back, he focused on the new songs that were coming to him.

(SONG #21. “HOMESICK.”)

MICHAEL. *(Sings:)*

I FEEL VERY BLUE, YES, I DO—CAN’T YOU TELL?
WORRY QUITE A LOT, ‘CAUSE I’M NOT FEELING WELL.
FRIENDS HAVE COME TO ME
SAYING, “WE CAN SEE
YOU NEED COMPANY.”
BUT I’M NOT LONELY,
I’M ONLY

HOMESICK.
I KNOW JUST WHAT’S THE MATTER—
I’M HOMESICK, THAT’S ALL.
I SEE THAT COZY LITTLE SHACK
AND THE LITTLE RED SCHOOL,
DADDY ON THE BACK OF A FUNNY OLD MULE,
“GOD BLESS OUR HOME” ON THE WALL,

THE FIELDS OF CLOVER–
THEY SEEM TO SAY,
“WHY DON’T YOU COME OVER, PAY US A CALL.”
I MISS THE COWS AND THE CHICKENS
AND THE APPLE TREE SHADY,
AND THERE’S THAT LITTLE OLD LADY–
DO YOU WONDER WHY I’M HOMESICK?

ALL. (*Sing:*)
I MISS THE COWS AND THE CHICKENS
AND THE APPLE TREE SHADY,
AND THERE’S THAT LITTLE OLD LADY–
DO YOU WONDER WHY I’M HOMESICK?

(SONG #22. “WHEN I GET BACK TO THE USA.”)

JESSEE. (*Sings:*)
WHEN I GET BACK HOME AGAIN
TO THE U.S.A.,
IN THE LAND OF PEACE AND FREEDOM
I INTEND TO STAY.
SOMEHOW I NEVER FEEL AT HOME
WHEN I’M AWAY FROM THERE, ANYWHERE;
NO OTHER NATION
IN THIS CREATION
WOULD EVER DO FOR ME.
I GUESS I’M CRANKY
‘CAUSE I’M A YANKEE,
BUT THEN I’M PROUD TO BE;
ON THE PIER YOU’LL HEAR ME SHOUTING
“HIP HIP HOORAY!”
WHEN I GET BACK TO THE U.S.A.

(Now the refrain of this song is repeated–sung by JESSEE–with the music and lyrics to “My Country ‘Tis of Thee” sung in counterpoint by ALL OTHERS.)

ALL (EXCEPT JESSEE). (*Sing:*)
MY COUNTRY! ‘TIS OF THEE,

JESSEE. (*Sings:*)
WHEN I GET BACK HOME AGAIN
TO THE U.S.A.,

ALL (EXCEPT JESSEE). (*Sing:*)

SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY,

JESSEE. (Sings:)
IN THE LAND OF PEACE AND FREEDOM
I INTEND TO STAY.

ALL (EXCEPT JESSEE). (Sing:)
OF THEE I SING:

JESSEE. (Sings:)
SOMEHOW I NEVER FEEL AT HOME
WHEN I'M AWAY FROM THERE, ANYWHERE;

ALL (EXCEPT JESSEE). (Sing:)
LAND WHERE MY FATHERS DIED,

JESSEE. (Sings:)
NO OTHER NATION
IN THIS CREATION
WOULD EVER DO FOR ME.

ALL (EXCEPT JESSEE). (Sing:)
LAND OF THE PILGRIM'S PRIDE,

JESSEE. (Sings:)
I GUESS I'M CRANKY
'CAUSE I'M A YANKEE,
BUT THEN I'M PROUD TO BE;

ALL (EXCEPT JESSEE). (Sing:)
FROM EVERY MOUNTAIN SIDE LET FREEDOM RING!

JESSEE. (Sings:)
ON THE PIER YOU'LL HEAR ME SHOUTING
"HIP HIP HOORAY!"
WHEN I GET BACK TO THE U.S.A.

SONG #23. "I BEG YOUR PARDON DEAR OLD BROADWAY.")

SAMANTHA. (Sings:)
I BEG YOUR PARDON, DEAR OLD BROADWAY,
FOR LIST'NING TO A FOREIGN SONG;
I THOUGHT I'D FIND A STREET

WITH YOU COULD COMPETE,
I ONLY FOUND THAT I WAS WRONG.

BEN. (*Sings:*)
MY HAT'S ALOFT TO YOU, OLD BROADWAY,
YOU'RE IN A CLASS ALONE TODAY.
AND IF I THOUGHT FOR A MINUTE
THAT THE OTHERS WERE IN IT,
WON'T YOU PARDON ME, BROADWAY?

ALEX. (*Sings:*)
BROADWAY, I TOO
SAID GOODBYE TO ALL THE SIGHTS ACROSS THE SEA.

MISSY. (*Sings:*)
JOY! ONCE MORE, FOR SOON I SAW
THE STATUE OF OLD LIBERTY.

MICHAEL. (*Sings:*)
HAND IN AIR, SHE GREET'S YOU THERE,
TO DRIVE AWAY ALL CARE AND PAIN;

EMMIE. (*Sings:*)
JOY SMILES AT YOU, WHILE THE GREAT BIG STATUE
SEEMS TO SAY, "NEVER AGAIN!"

ALL. (*Sing:*)
I BEG YOUR PARDON, DEAR OLD BROADWAY,
FOR LIST'NING TO A FOREIGN SONG;
I THOUGHT I'D FIND A STREET
WITH YOU COULD COMPETE,
I ONLY FOUND THAT I WAS WRONG.
MY HAT'S ALOFT TO YOU, OLD BROADWAY,
YOU'RE IN A CLASS ALONE TODAY.
AND IF I THOUGHT FOR A MINUTE
THAT THE OTHERS WERE IN IT,

WON'T YOU PARDON ME, BROADWAY?

(END OF ACT ONE)

PERUSAL SCRIPT-Irving Berlin Ragtime Revue by *Chip Deffaa*
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ACT TWO

27 PAGES IN ACT TWO

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About the Playwright....

Chip Deffaa is the author of fifteen 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*.

Cast albums are available for such shows of his as *The Seven Little Foys*, *One Night with Fanny Brice*, *The Johnny Mercer Jamboree*, *Irving Berlin's America*., *Theater Boys*, and *George M. Cohan Tonight!*

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.

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.

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